

Letter: Mental health needs and challenges are growing

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Dear Editor:

Though time has a different meaning these days, and we're all living in what feels like an alternate reality, the month of May is, in fact, Mental Health Awareness Month. And while we've heard much about the physical side effects and economic fallout from COVID-19, there's a quieter, more insidious downside to the pandemic: Anxiety, stress and depression are on the rise.

According to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll conducted in late March, 45 percent of adults say the pandemic has affected their mental health, with 19 percent claiming it has had a "major impact." Maybe you are a parent, forced to work from home and also home-school your children in a cramped apartment. Perhaps you are a nurse, working long hours on the front lines. Maybe you lost a loved one to the virus and are grieving alone. Or you may be a child whose entire life has been changed in what feels like an instant.

All of the above, along with spikes in service by mental health organizations like Astor Services for Children & Families, prove that mental health needs and challenges are growing. If this hits close to home, please consider the available resources in your community. Here in the Hudson Valley, Astor is available to help families and children ages 26 and under. Call our toll-free hotline at (866) 278-6701 (ASTOR01) or visit www.astorservices.org.

Yvette Bairan, CEO

Astor Services

for Children & Families

Rhinebeck, N.Y.