

Checking In and Coping with Covid-19

It's been a few weeks since my last writing and I wanted to check-in with our Fellowship Village community as everyone continues to work to get through and support one another during this health crisis.

Most of us have and are experiencing losses and upheaval in certain areas of our lives: loved ones, independence, safety, finances, social connections and routine. It's fair to say there is may be a communal grief as many of these aspects in our life have been impacted.

Experiencing some grief at this time is natural and even useful. George Bonanno, PhD, a psychologist who heads the Loss, Trauma and Emotion Lab at Teachers College, Columbia University. "Grief is really about turning inward and recalibrating, and thinking: 'This is not the way the world is anymore, and I need to adapt,'" he says. "It's okay to feel grief over what we're losing. When we do that, it allows us to let grief do its job, so that we can move on." Most of us while grieving will also be able to find our resilience and find something that can distract and entertain ourselves, and even to laugh.

It's really easy to neglect your own needs when feeling a bit stressed and out of your typical routine. So even while we are experiencing restrictions due to the present health situation, this a gentle reminder to embrace healthy habits.

Here is a review of healthy habits and some suggestions to achieve them even while "social distancing":

- Connect with others: call, write, email, text people in your life - your neighbor, the people you used to have dinner with, the people you exercised with, a staff member, a family member, a friend. It feels good to reach out to others and it feels good to be the recipient of the outreach.
- Leave a note in someone's cubby to just to say "hi, how are you, hope you are doing okay".
- Exercise: start somewhere, do something, everything counts.
- Eat a variety of foods: keep your nutritional and hydration needs in mind. Limit alcohol.
- Get enough sleep at night.
- Limit watching the news.
- Get some fresh air daily as the weather permits.
- Turn the lights on, let the light in (pull the window curtains back).
- Read, do a puzzle, knit/crochet, sew, paint, draw, write a poem, write a short story, write about your experiences, sing out loud.
- Clean out 1 drawer (this may lead to two), but feel good about starting with one.
- Pray.
- Check out Fellowship Channels 592 and 593.
- Create a new routine, a new structure for the day and establish some achievable goals each week. Writing them down and keeping them in a visible place increases the likelihood of following through and keeping you accountable. Check off what you have done and re-evaluate from week to week appropriate and realistic goals (it can be anything from getting up, getting dressed to making a phone call to reading a chapter in your book". Find what works for you.
- Be patient with yourself, be patient with your feelings and work to actively convert the negative thoughts to more positive ones. "I will get through this. I can do this."
- Using positive thinking doesn't mean that the problem of what is going on is ignored, but it allows us to have hope about a brighter future.

"What we do today, can make for a better tomorrow and day after that."

- Dr. Lori Katzman

Information above has been organized by Dr. Lori Katzman, Psychologist at Fellowship Village using her own thoughts and combining pieces of information from various articles from the American Psychological Association.

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