

CBMHS WEEKLY REFLECTION

Maintaining Mental Health During Challenging Times

Dear Friends, As we move into a new week of isolation and a greater intensity of illness in our communities, we can take small moments in our daily routines to be mindful of our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. A simple practice is this **Hand Washing Loving-kindness Meditation** which uses your 20 seconds of hand washing to connect in loving-kindness with ourselves and others through our intentions. Replace singing happy birthday with these words. You can also replace “we all” with a specific person that may need encouragement or love. After your handwashing, you may want to connect with that person through phone or a note.

May I be peaceful and happy

May we all be peaceful and happy

May I be strong and healthy

May we all be strong and healthy

May I be safe from inner and outer harm

May we all be safe from inner and outer harm

May I care for myself with ease

May we all care for ourselves with ease

When you find yourself anxious and overwhelmed, slow things down by coming back to your breath and what’s important with this short exercise - STOP.

S = Stop

Stop what you’re doing right now, get in a comfortable position, either seated or lying down.

T = Take

Take a few deep breaths. In through the nose initially, and then out through the mouth. With each exhalation allow your body to soften. Allow your body to settle into its natural rhythm of breathing.

O = Observe

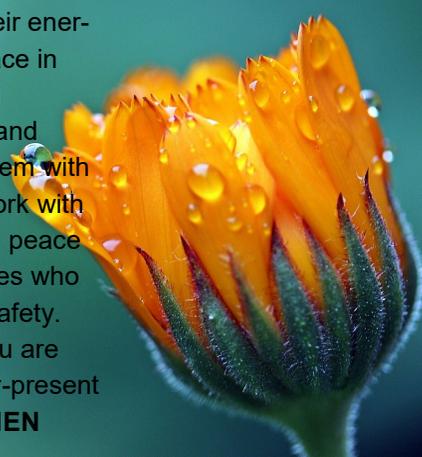
Begin to observe your body, noticing if there’s any tension or tightness anywhere, including the face. Release and soften those areas. Be aware of how you’re feeling emotionally right now. If there’s a sense of calm or ease, anxiety or irritation, sadness or something else. Notice how it feels physically in the body. Observe, breathe and let be.

P= Proceed

Ask yourself: “What’s most important for me to pay attention to right now?” or “What am I needing right now?” Allow whatever answer is there to simply percolate and arise. Before ending the meditation, return to your breath. Proceed with what you were doing, and acknowledge yourself for taking the time to stop, slow down, breathe, and let go.

A PRAYER FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS

God watch over our healthcare workers and first responders, and all those on the front lines of this fight. Renew their energy, sustain them. Bring them peace in the storm of this virus. Give them strength in moments of physical and emotional exhaustion. Provide them with wisdom and protection in their work with patients and those in need. Bring peace to their families and the loved ones who miss them and worry over their safety. And help us to remember that you are “our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1) **AMEN**



Church Based Mental Health Services is available to you and your community during this time of social isolation related to COVID19—via phone/video call.

If you or someone you know is in need of low cost mental health services, call 732-867-8647 in Middlesex & Somerset Counties; 732-784-3394 in Monmouth & Ocean Counties for a free screening. This service is not appropriate for anyone in crisis, but is designed to assess strengths and needs, identify appropriate referrals, and when appropriate provide short-term individual psychotherapy. Services are provided by a licensed professional counselor.