

CBMHS WEEKLY REFLECTION

Maintaining Mental Health During Challenging Times

Dear Friends, This has been a month of sacrifice, learning to protect ourselves and others from the impact of the Corona-19 Pandemic. But for many of us, the consequences of this Pandemic continue to come near. People we know and love are losing jobs, losing heart, or falling ill. We are losing the comforting illusion that we can be safe when others are suffering. Although most of us will recover eventually, some of our losses are permanent: loved ones have died, and we are broken hearted. Some of us are overwhelmed with loss and isolation. **How can we help ourselves? How can we help those we love?**

SEARCH FOR MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

After this crisis, most of us will acquire a newfound sense of purpose, develop deeper relationships, have a greater appreciation of life and report other benefits. It's not the adversity itself that will lead to this growth. It's how we respond.

Step 1: Name the pain. Reflect and journal. Do not deny the tragedy of what is happening to you and those you love. Experience the despair and stress. Acknowledge the pain of what's happening. But even in the darkest of places, look to see glimmers of light that will ultimately sustain you. Resilient people find a way to take positive meaning in the wake of tragedy and loss.

Step 2: Claim the gain. Remember that your life has meaning and purpose. Create Authentic Affirmations. Restate the personal meaning of your life in one or two simple declarative sentences... make it positive and be as specific as possible... For example: My Life has meaning and purpose: I am here to ... fill in the blank. State the affirmation aloud when you can and repeat as often as needed.

Step 3: Use your time well. Today is a good day to tell someone that you care, to say thank you to the people who support and inspire you. To forgive and seek forgiveness.

A SIMPLE BREATHING PRACTICE

Step 1: Focus on your heart. Imagine that the breath is flowing in and out of your heart space.

Step 2: Activate a positive feeling. Visualize yourself, or a person that you love, resting in your heart. Allow yourself to experience all the gratitude and care that you have for this person.

Step 3. Send a positive feeling. As you visualize the person you love, resting in your heart, name your concern during the Inhale and send out your love with the Exhale. (For example, inhale 'My friend is hurting;' then exhale, 'Send my love/God's peace.')

(Adapted from the quick coherence method for adults by Heart Math).

This Is Not The End

This is not the end
This is not the end of this
We will open our eyes wide, wider

This is not our last
This is not our last breath
We will open our mouths wide, wider

And you know you'll be alright
Oh and you know you'll be alright

This is not the end
This is not the end of us
We will shine like the stars bright, brighter

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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.