

JFS@CHAI HOUSE STAYING CONNECTED



April 2, 2020

WELCOME!

For as long as we're all sheltering in place, we will continue to keep in touch with you via phone calls and with our weekly newsletter. And stay tuned for virtual groups!

One of us will also be dropping by Chai House once a week to take care of business in person. Let us know if you need anything! See contact info below.

Stay safe!

MANAGING IN TRYING TIMES:

We feel the world has changed, and it has. We know this is temporary, but it doesn't feel that way, and we realize things will be different. The loss of normalcy; the fear of economic toll; the loss of connection. This is hitting us and we're grieving, collectively.

We can feel different types of grief. These days, it is common to feel anticipatory grief. Anticipatory grief is that feeling we get about what the future holds when we're uncertain. We feel it when someone gets a dire diagnosis or when we have the normal thought that we'll lose a parent someday. Anticipatory grief is also more broadly imagined futures. There is a storm coming. There's something bad out there. With a virus, this kind of grief is so confusing for people. Our primitive mind knows something bad is happening, but you can't see it. This breaks our sense of safety. We're feeling that loss of safety.

What can you do to cope?

Understanding the stages of grief is a start. But whenever we talk about the stages of grief, it is important to remember that the stages aren't linear and may not happen in this order. It's not a map but it provides some scaffolding for this unknown world. There's denial, which we say a lot of early on: This virus won't affect us. There's anger: You're making me stay home and taking away my activities. There's bargaining: Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right? There's sadness: I don't know when this will end. And finally there's acceptance. This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed. Acceptance, as you might imagine, is where the power



lies. We find control in acceptance. I can wash my hands. I can keep a safe distance. I can learn how to work virtually.

Unhealthy anticipatory grief is really anxiety. Our mind begins to show us images. My parents getting sick. We see the worst scenarios. That's our minds being protective. Our goal is not to ignore those images or to try to make them go away — your mind won't let you do that and it can be painful to try and force it. The goal is to **find balance in the things you're thinking**. If you feel the worst image taking shape, make yourself think of the best image. We all get a little sick and the world continues. Not everyone I love dies. Maybe no one does because we're all taking the right steps. Neither scenario should be ignored but neither should dominate either.

Anticipatory grief is the mind going to the future and imagining the worst. To calm yourself, you want to **come into the present**. This will be familiar advice to anyone who has meditated or practiced mindfulness but people are always surprised at how prosaic this can be. You can name five things in the room. There's a computer, a chair, a picture of the dog, an old rug, and a coffee mug. It's that simple. Breathe. Realize that in the present moment, nothing you've anticipated has happened. In this moment, you're okay. You have food. You are not sick. Use your senses and think about what they feel. The desk is hard. The blanket is soft. I can feel the breath coming into my nose. This really will work to dampen some of that pain.

You can also think about how to **let go of what you can't control**. What your neighbor is doing is out of your control. What is in your control is staying six feet away from them and washing your hands. Focus on that.

Finally, it's a good time to **stock up on compassion**. Everyone will have different levels of fear and grief and it manifests in different ways. A neighbor got very snippy with me the other day and I thought, That's not like this person; that's how they're dealing with this. I'm seeing their fear and anxiety. So be patient. Think about who someone usually is and not who they seem to be in this moment.

Also, **remember that this is a temporary state**. It helps to say it. History tells us that. This is survivable. We will survive. This is a time to overprotect but not overreact.

And, in those darkest hours, let's believe we will find meaning in it. We can find light in those times. Even now people are realizing they can connect through technology. They are not as remote as they thought. They are realizing they can use their phones for long conversations. They're appreciating walks. We will continue to find meaning now and when this is over.

To summarize, keep trying. There is something powerful about naming this as grief. It helps us feel what's inside of us. When you name it, you feel it and it moves through you. Emotions need motion. It's important we acknowledge what we go through. We tell ourselves things like, I feel sad, but I shouldn't feel that; other people have it worse. We can — we should — stop at the first feeling. I feel sad. Let me go for five minutes to feel sad. Your work is to feel your sadness and fear and anger whether or not someone else is feeling something. Fighting it doesn't help because your body is

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Special Senior Shopping Hours

Costco: 8-9am Tuesday & Thursday

Lucky: 6-9am Tuesday & Thursday

Ranch 99: One hour before opening to public

Safeway: From 7 to 9 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday

Target: First hour of operation

Walmart: First hour of operation

Whole Foods Market: One hour before opening to the public

Zanotto's Family Market: 8-9am daily

Second Harvest Food Bank home deliveries Hotline 1-800-984-3663

Avenidas Without Walls- Remote Resources for Seniors

<https://www.avenidas.org/programs/avenidas-without-walls/>

producing the feeling. If we allow the feelings to happen, they'll happen in an orderly way, and it empowers us.

Stay well and healthy!

This information is taken from: <https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>

Important!

Need help completing your 2020 Census?

Call Caroline & leave a message 408-947-7256

RESOURCES & INFORMATION:



Call **Cyber Seniors**

1-844-217-3057

Trained volunteers are standing by to answer their tech questions and to help them sign up for online training sessions.

Tech savvy seniors can also:

- register online for a group session or one-on-one tech-support by visiting our website at www.cyberseniors.org
- access the over 1200 training tutorials and the Cyber-Seniors discussion forum by calling us at 1-844-217-3057 to register.

Well Connected - activities, education, support groups, and friendly conversation over the phone or online. To register, contact 877.797.7299 coviaconnections@covia.org
Newcomers are always welcome!

Meditation Apps

Headspace

<https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>

UCLA Mindful App

<https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/ucla-mindful-app>

MindShift CBT

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/>