

## *Caring for Ourselves and Loved Ones in a Time of Upheaval*

- Create Stability + Flexibility
  - Develop a Routine— regular sleep habits, eating at regular mealtimes, daily movement, and *grounding practices*. Schedule blocks of time for study, work, and faith or spiritual practices if this applies to you.
  - Daily Grounding Practices -- Mindfulness, breathing exercises, acupressure, massage (on yourself & others!), journaling, *Tapping* (see *The Emotional Freedom Technique* on google), walking in nature, meditation and/or prayer are all excellent options.
  - PLAY! Schedule *Free Time* in your routines. This gives kids something to look forward to *and* a sense of autonomy for periods in the day. Allowing freedom and a sense of choice in a time when so many choices have been limited is wonderfully helpful. And then, come together *as a family* for play and laughter as well!
  - Post your schedule for yourself or your family somewhere in your home. Having a visual can provide a sense of stability to hold onto in a time that is unknown and full of change.
- Maintaining Relationships
  - With *Yourself*— do you have a quiet space and time just for you? Space is important when we are living in close quarters. How can you find time and space that is *only yours*? Be sure to ask others to respect this *Quiet Time* – this is also great modeling for younger people to see how we take care of ourselves so that we can show up better for others;
  - With *Others* – initiate and maintain connection with friends and family. This is not the time to shy away from reaching out to people! Have ‘coffee dates’ on Skype, schedule game-time with a group of friends on Zoom’s free online platform, schedule a weekly check-in with a friend or small group of people. Be *intentional* about reaching out and finding creative ways to create connection.
  - Asking for Help –is there someone you can talk to who has the experience of working through difficult times? A therapist, counselor, pastor, mentor, teacher, coach, healer or advisor? There are so many people in these professions who continue to offer a helping hand, and this can do so much as we navigate through uncertain times.

- Create Boundaries
  - During transition, some of our boundaries come down and shift. Continue to *create good boundaries* by setting limits on the things that *don't* contribute to a sense of well-being. Ask yourself: what causes me anxiety in this time, and what can I let go of in order to decrease that discomfort? This can be hard sometimes! But limiting news, social media, unhealthy food consumption or sleeping in too late; changing out of our pajamas or maintaining personal hygiene; or having discussions about other parts of our lives besides this pandemic crisis are all important. This is about finding *your* balance between staying responsibly informed and mindful about your self care.
  
- Demonstrate Grace
  - Keep in mind that everyone's minds, emotions, and bodies are not functioning normally at this time. This is a time of collective trauma, and grief. Give people the benefit of the doubt, a larger scope of grace to make mistakes, and try not to be judgmental. This goes for your attitude toward yourself, as well!
  
  - We are all trying our very best. If you find yourself making a mistake, or saying something unkind, the best thing you can do is model for others that this is *okay* – just acknowledge your mistake and say *I'm sorry!* This is always important, but can be even more so when we are living in close quarters with one another. This will avoid the buildup of hurt feelings in a time that is already emotionally a struggle for people. NOTE: this can be a great incubator against furthering feelings of isolation and developing depression as well. It is a *simple* and *effective*.
  
- What Are the Lessons I Am Learning Right Now?
  - Reflect on this personally, in conversation with a friend, or by having a family discussion. This is a time of character building and resilience amid the loss. Anchor yourself in what is being learned during this time. Where are you discovering your strengths? How is this helping to shape you into a stronger person? Do you see ways that this may be helping our community grow closer together? There are gems hidden within this time of difficulty, and when we dig, we find them...