



“We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer.”

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison

Dear Friend in Christ,

As time drags on for many (doesn't it feel like we've lived in seclusion for months, not days?!) I'd like to share a few mental health tips with you:

1. Limit your exposure to “COVID News” via the internet, Tv, radio or gossip lines.

Its enough to go to a trusted source of news 1x a day.

The reason for this is to avoid Obsessing with this topic. While its important to be informed and to follow the recommendations of NS Healthcare providers, the basics on what to do are all out now. Remember that even as the infection numbers rise, daily recovery numbers are not posted. Yet, recoveries happen daily. Replace thoughts about the pandemic with thoughts about hobbies, friends, exciting plans for the future, and how you can find meaning in creating something hopeful.

2. Panic arises when we imagine “worst case scenarios”. You may be worried about your children, parents or your own health, but realize that if you let your brain go to “worst case scenarios” it will put out all those worst case scenario hormones and physical symptoms. In other words, if you imagine yourself having difficulty breathing you will probably experience difficulty breathing. On the other hand, when you imagine yourself well and focus on the here and now, the brain will calm down.

Identify what you need the most to feel better mentally, and share that with people you trust . It is not easy to do for self sufficient people, but do enlist help when you feel yourself going down an anxiety spiral. Call someone you trust; please.

3. Attached is a Self Care sheet that you may want to fill out.

4. Remember that you are part of God's beloved people, and that good people of all times have suffered and overcome great adversity. Faith does not protect us from suffering but faith brings endurance, courage and a sense of living for the greater good (solidarity).

5. I know of no one saying it better than **Edie Weinstein, MSW, LSW** , therapist in Pennsylvania when it comes to concrete mental health tips for Covid 19, so I'll close with these:

Call friends on the phone

Send letters and cards.

Interact on social media and via email.

Use affirmations that reinforce your health. “I am healed, whole and healthy.” “Wellness is my birthright.” “I am resilient and can sustain health.” Create your own.

Write in your journal.

Make a gratitude list.

Play the kinds of games with your children and grandchildren that you loved as a child. Monopoly, pick up sticks, jacks, marbles, cards and checkers beat electronics hands down.

Create vision boards with imagery that highlight health and wellbeing.

Be compassionate with yourself and others in the midst of this time.

- ☐ Know that it will eventually subside (one hallmark of anxiety is the belief that there will be no relief). If we know that there is an end point in sight, stressors are easier to handle.
- ☐ Check on health compromised neighbors and family members.
- ☐ If you are well, run errands for those who can't do so for themselves.
- ☐ Don't hoard-shop. Panic buying will prevent those who need staple items to purchase them.
- ☐ Watch fun, light-hearted movies, videos and television shows.
- ☐ Use Laughter Yoga as a tool to boost your immune system and provide mood stabilization.
- ☐ Contact friends or family you haven't spoken with in a while.
- ☐ Take virtual tours of works of art.
- ☐ Re-decorate your space.
- ☐ Meditate.
- ☐ Clean and purge your home, car or office.
- ☐ Get outside in nature when you can. Sunshine is a mood lifter.
- ☐ Exercise as able. Walk, bicycle, run, dance, practice yoga.
- ☐ Cook and bake, with appropriate handwashing first, of course.
- ☐ Support local businesses, since they may be strongly impacted.
- ☐ Join in community with song
- ☐ Attend spiritual services on-line as many faith communities are offering them.
- ☐ Attend 12-step meetings on-line.
- ☐ Eat nourishing food that boost your immune system.
- ☐ Greet people with elbow bumps, air hugs, virtual hugs, foot taps, bows, eye contact, winks, smiles, waves.

We humans are a resilient bunch and throughout history have survived war, famine, epidemics, trauma and tragedy of all sorts. If there are takeaway lessons from this challenge they are that disease knows no international boundaries, love is stronger than fear, a "we and not just me" attitude serves everyone, and we need each other to survive.

Join me this Sunday for worship and
may you and yours stay well. Blessings,

Rev. Elisabeth

Here's some resources:

[Guide to supporting your mental health: https://peak-resilience.com/blog/2020/3/15/covid-19-amp-your-mental-health-a-comprehensive-resource-guide](https://peak-resilience.com/blog/2020/3/15/covid-19-amp-your-mental-health-a-comprehensive-resource-guide)

[Nova Scotia Health Authority http://www.nshealth.ca/coronavirus](http://www.nshealth.ca/coronavirus)

[Nova Scotia Government - Corona Virus information https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/](https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/)

[If you are on Facebook, you can join a helpful group: Caremongering-AC Annapolis County Community Response to Covid19](#)