

Self-Care: 20 Ways You Can Cope with Stress, Anxiety, and Isolation in Difficult Times

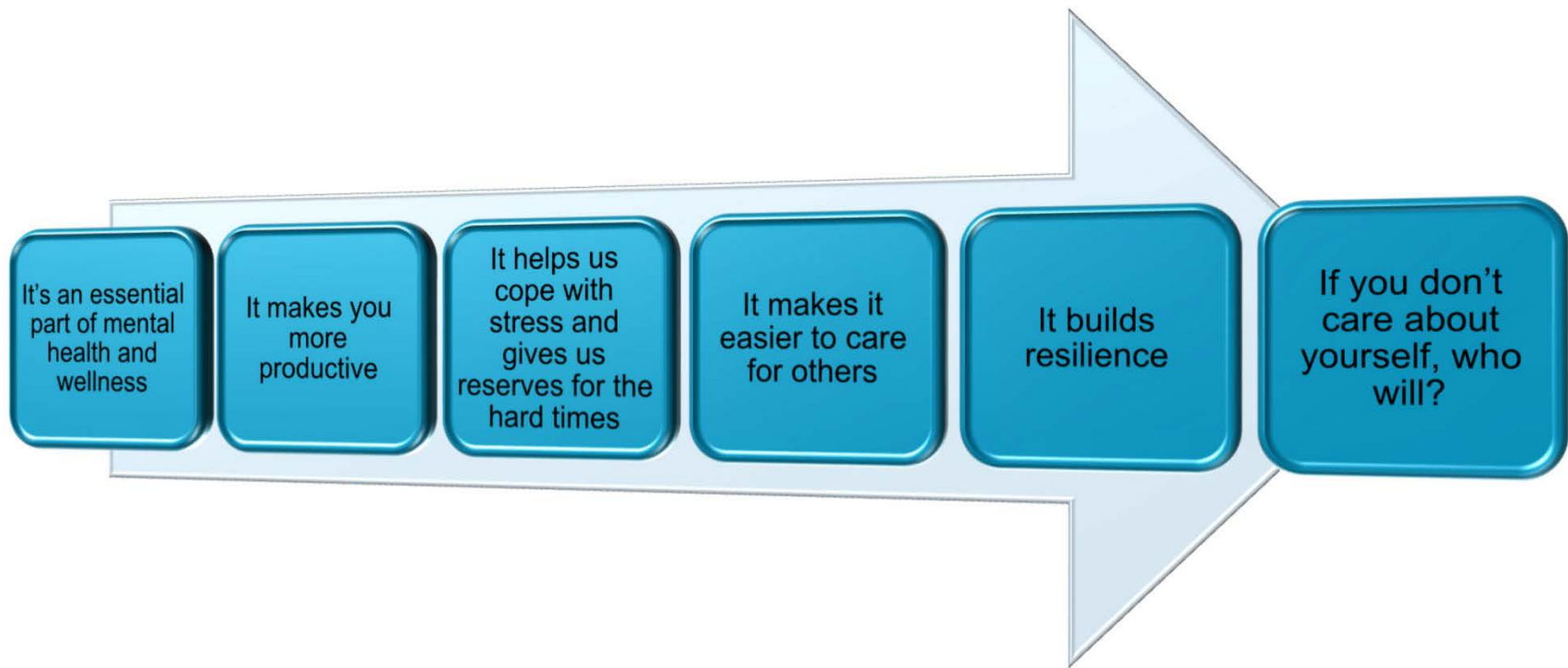
June 17, 2020

Dr. Avis Garcia

Self-Care and COVID-19



Why Is Self-Care Important?



Why Is Self-Care Important?

Burnout:

Characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness in the workplace, and by chronic negative responses to stressful workplace conditions (Maslach & Jackson, 1981)

Job-related form of depression with multiple overlapping symptoms (Bianchi et al, 2015)

21-67% of helping professionals (in particular mental health) (Morse et al., 2012)



Some Reasons That Helpers Don't Get Help



Stay ALWAYS Strong

- We think we should not have problems
- It's easier to help others than to get help for ourselves
- We think we should know how to solve our problems
- We view our problems as signs of failure or inadequacy
- We intellectualize to distance ourselves from emotional impact
- We feel embarrassed to seek help from our peers
- We can sabotage our own treatment

How Is This Crisis Different?

Universality

We are all experiencing this together

We are experiencing the same thing our clients are

Uncertainty

When will this end?

What will the world look like when this is over?



How Is This Crisis Different?



Grief

Loss of freedom

Loss of comfort

Loss of normalcy

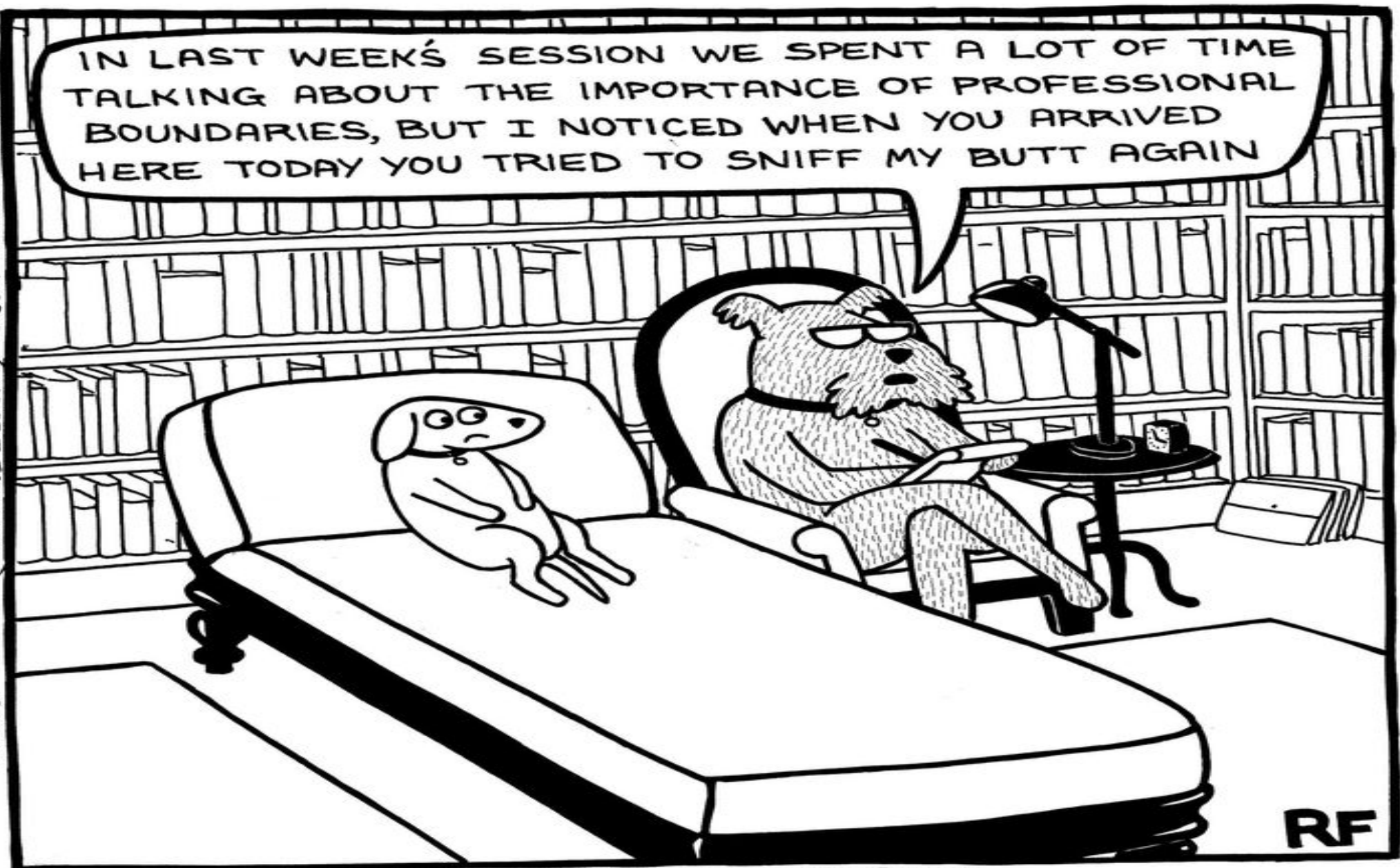
Loss of safety

Loss of connection - unable to grieve collectively

Loss of physical touch

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FACEBOOK.COM/OFF THE LEASH DAILY DOG CARTOONS

In this crisis, how do we handle it in when our clients ask us about ourselves and our families?

Mirror Neurons

Mirror Neurons



Mirror neurons allow us to imitate each other

They make up 10-20% of the neurons in certain areas of the brain (Keysers et al., 2011)

They are responsible for empathy (Rizzolatti and Craighero, 2005)

What happens if we can't rely on them the way we usually do?

Helplessness

Resource Scarcity

Being asked to do things counter to our training

- Unable to go to places we are used to feeling helpful
- New roles
- New responsibilities (e.g., keeping people isolated)

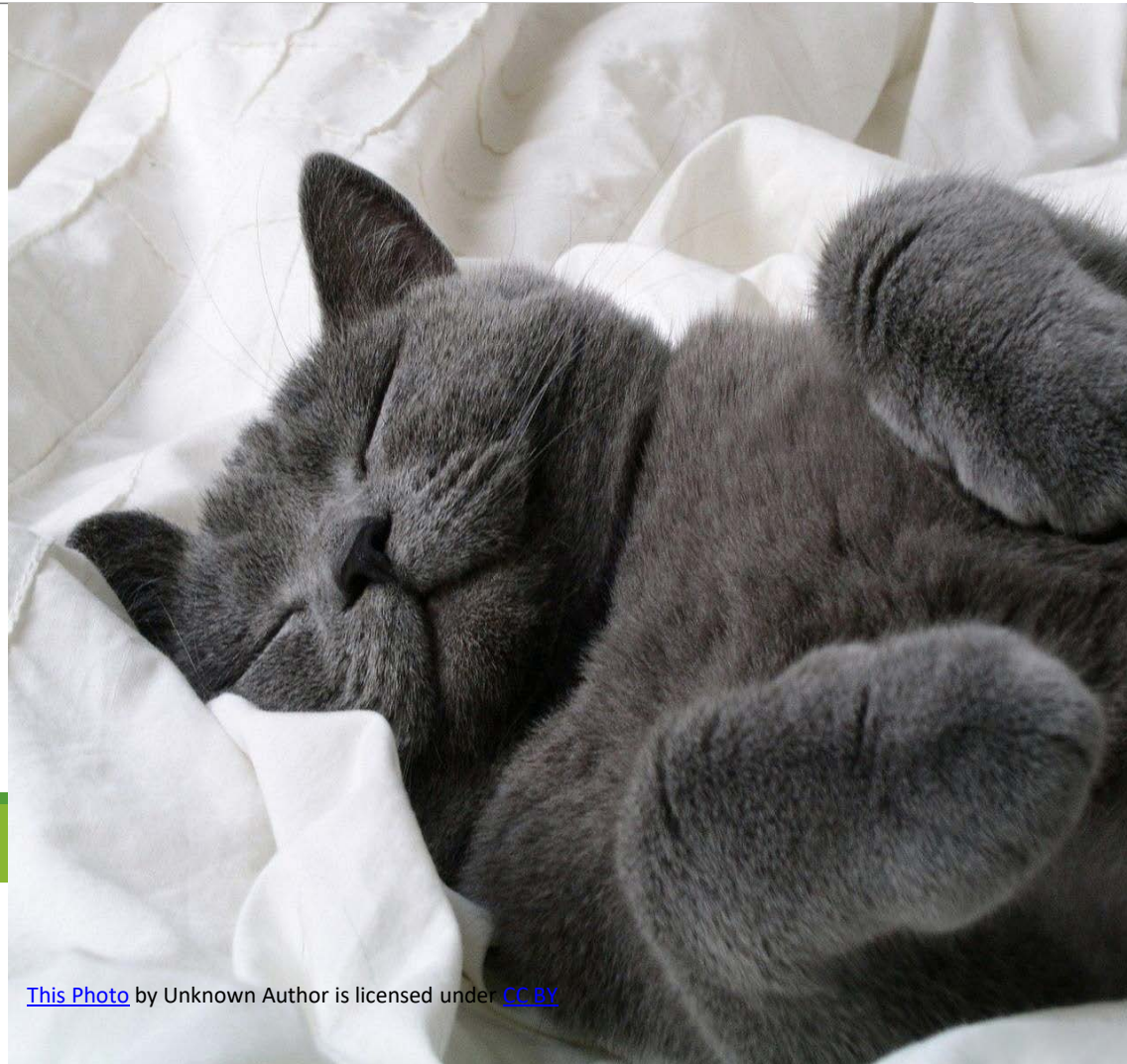
Coping with the impact in our own lives



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Sleep and COVID-19

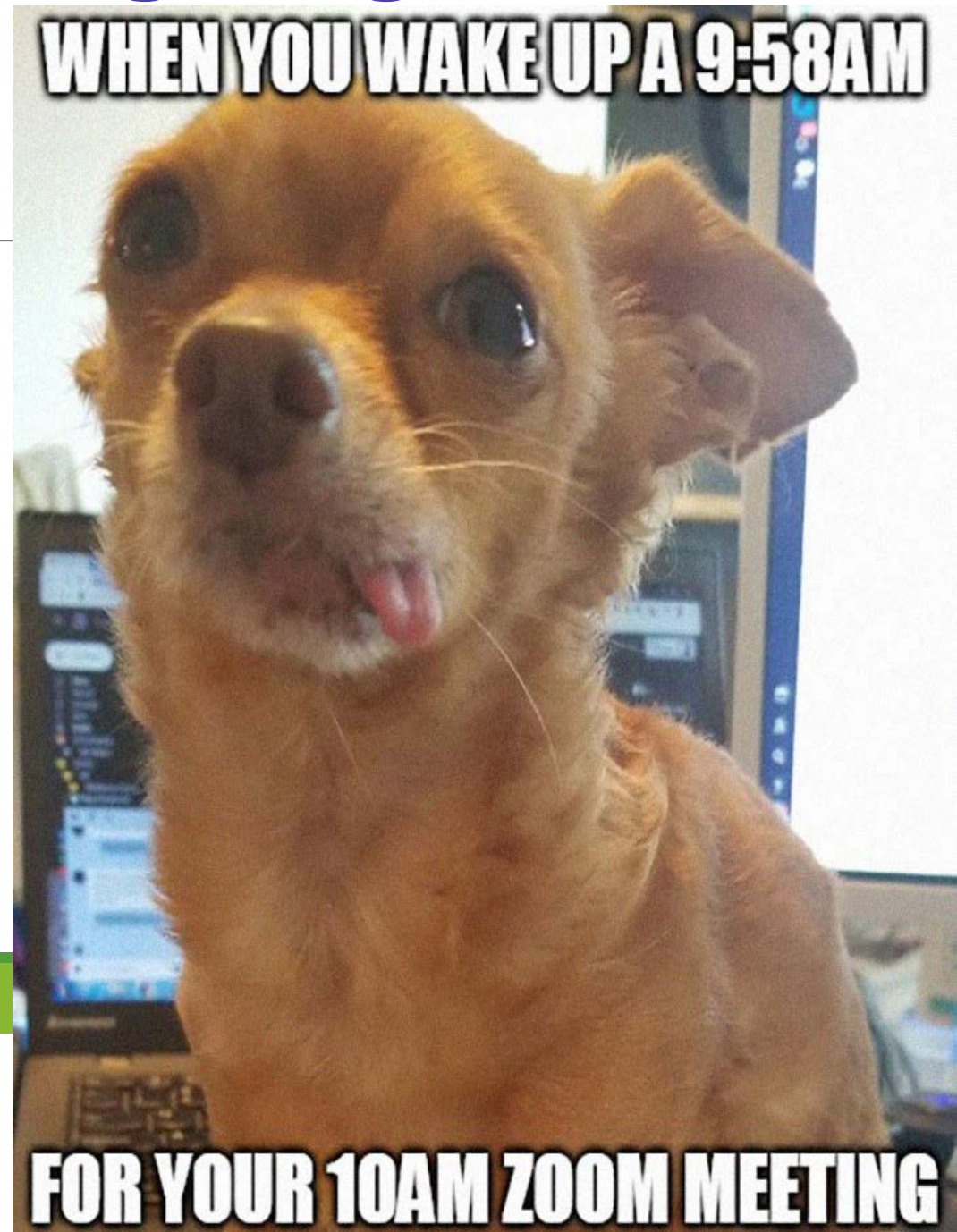
- Changes in dreams:
 - Bizarre
 - More vivid
 - Recurring
 - Better able to recall dreams
- Sleep
 - Parasomnia after REM
 - Broken sleep patterns



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Virtual Meeting Fatigue

- Zoom Fatigue
 - New slang term
 - Virtual interactions can be extremely hard on the brain
- Non-verbal cues are missing
 - Hand gestures and body language
 - Poor video quality affects facial expressions
- Continuous partial attention



Flexibility and Resilience

A Personal Story



Courage

**COURAGE
IS LIKE A MUSCLE;
IT IS STRENGTHENED
BY USE.**
RUTH GORDON

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INSPIYR.COM

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear.” -FDR

For the helping professions, we may be conditioned to embody courage by showing up despite being afraid.

We also need to embody courage by taking care of ourselves, despite the fears and discomfort that creates.

How do we do this...?

Tips from the APA for Mental Health Professionals

Prioritize

- What can be delayed?
- Prioritize self care

- What's on your back burner?

- Elements from "normal"
- Work clothes
- Packing lunch

- Designate an area for work
- Creates boundaries

Learn Something

- Free online courses
- Professional or personal

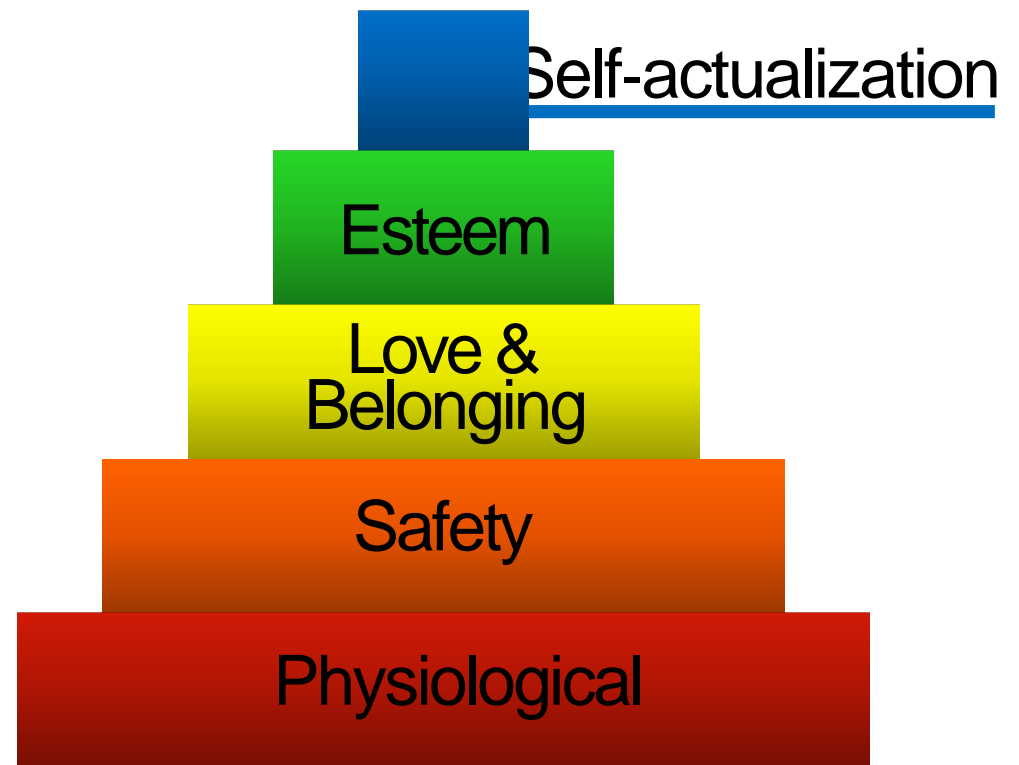
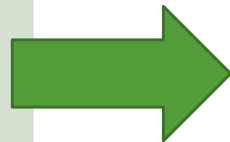
Stay Connected

- Zoom gatherings with family and friends
- Laugh!
- Connect with colleagues
- Common struggles

Tips from the APA for Mental Health Professionals

Cut Yourself Some Slack

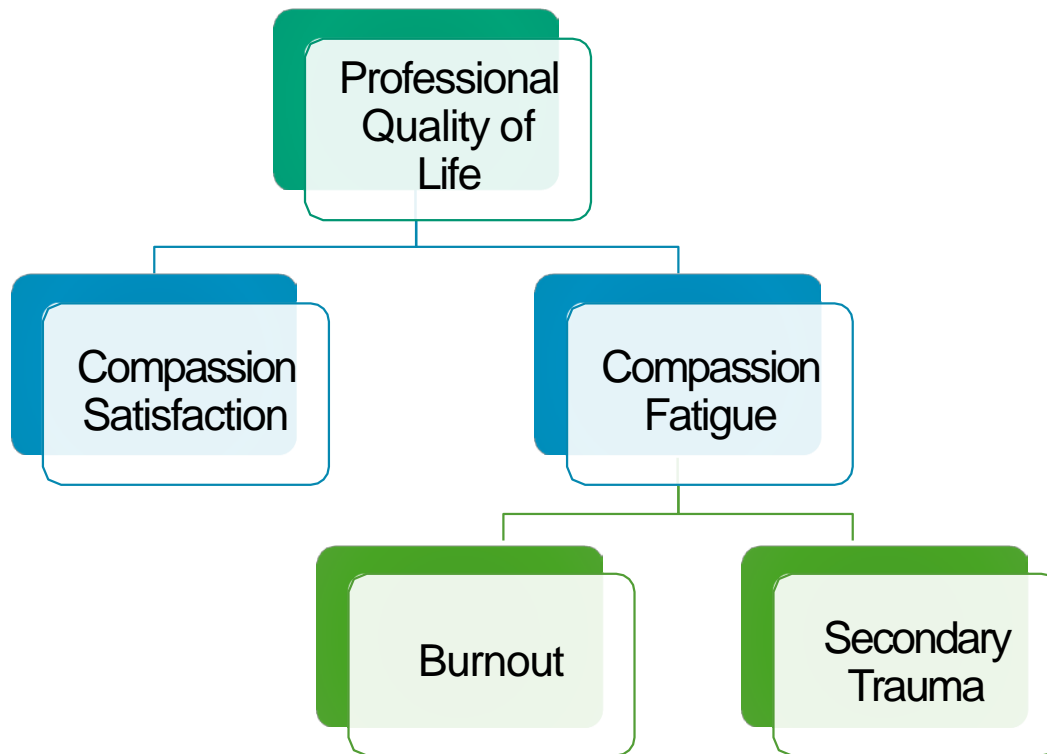
- Change in productivity level is normal
- Prioritize self care
- Remember Intro Psych from college....



Assess Your Stress Level



Professional Quality of Life Scale



PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND COMPASSION FATIGUE

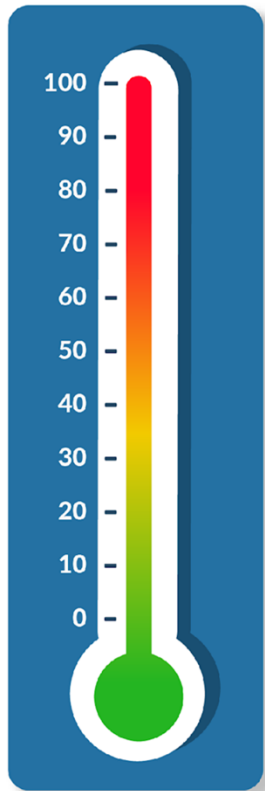
(PROQOL) VERSION 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some-questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

1=Never **2=Rarely** **3=Sometimes** **4=Often** **5=Very Often**

- ___ 1. I am happy.
- ___ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
- ___ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
- ___ 4. I feel connected to others.
- ___ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
- ___ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
- ___ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
- ___ 8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
- ___ 9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
- ___ 10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
- ___ 11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
- ___ 12. I like my work as a [helper].
- ___ 13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
- ___ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
- ___ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
- ___ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
- ___ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
- ___ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
- ___ 19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
- ___ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
- ___ 21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
- ___ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
- ___ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
- ___ 24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
- ___ 25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
- ___ 26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
- ___ 27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
- ___ 28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
- ___ 29. I am a very caring person.
- ___ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

Subjective Units of Distress



- 100 Highest anxiety/distress that you have ever felt.
- 90 Extremely anxious/distressed.
- 80 Very anxious/distressed; can't concentrate. Physiological signs present.
- 70 Quite anxious/distressed; interfering with functioning. Physiological signs may be present.
- 60 Moderate-to-strong anxiety or distress.
- 50 Moderate anxiety/distress; uncomfortable, but can continue to function.
- 40 Mild-to-moderate anxiety or distress. ← Intervene here
- 30 Mild anxiety/distress; no interference with functioning.
- 20 Minimal anxiety/distress.
- 10 Alert and awake; concentrating well.
- 0 No distress; totally relaxed.

High Distress

Moderate Distress

Low Distress

Track Your Mood



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20 Ways to Care for Yourself



#1

Limit Exposure to Distressing Content



Watch no more than one hour of news daily

Watch less, read more

If you must watch, watch more pleasant things

#2 Focus on What You Can Control



#3

Start a Gratitude Journal



- Write 3 things you are grateful for every day for at least 21 days
- No repeats
- Good for the whole family!

#4

Limit Junk Food Intake



Intake of
Junk Food



Overall Feelings
of Wellbeing



Focus on What You Can Do Now

#5

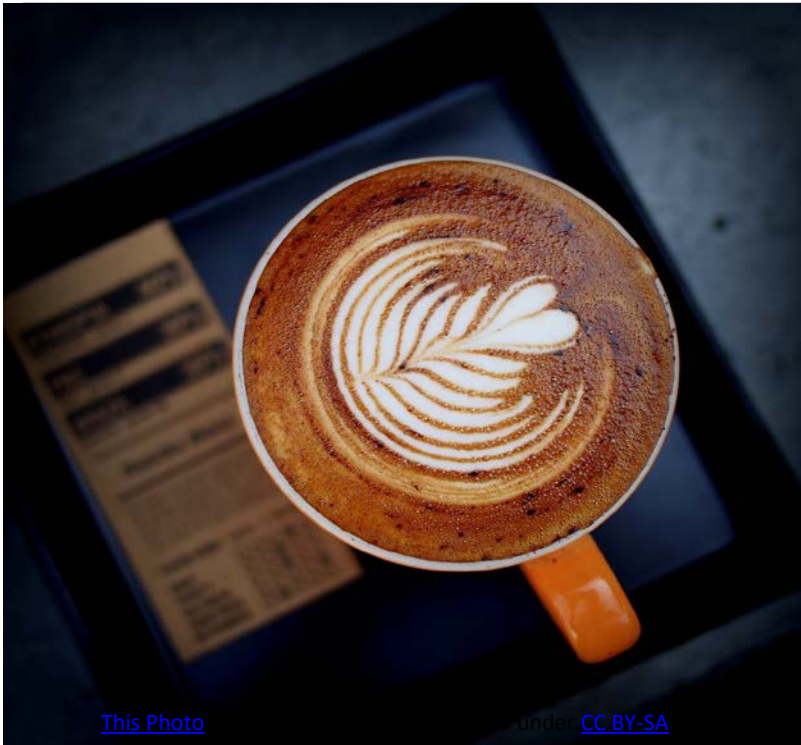
What we have no control or
influence over

What we
can influence

What we can control

#6

Be Kind to Yourself



Practice self-compassion

Immerse yourself in
simple comforts

Remind yourself that
you are doing the best
that you can

#7

Exercise 3-4 Hours a Week



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#8

Practice Mindfulness Meditation



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THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

Physical

- ✓ Boost energy levels
- ✓ Improves sleep
- ✓ Reduces chronic pain
- ✓ Improves heart function
- ✓ Helps with digestive problems

Mental

- ✓ Relieves stress
- ✓ Reduces anxiety
- ✓ Improves mood and happiness
- ✓ Boosts concentration and focus
- ✓ Improves self-esteem

#9

Plan at Least One Pleasant Activity Every Day



#10

Self-Soothe

(Comforting Yourself through Your 5 Senses)



Touch stuffed animal, stress ball, cozy blanket, stretch

Hear music, guided meditation, nature

See snow globe, pictures, videos

Taste mints, tea, sour candy, chocolate

Smell lotion, candles, perfume

#11

Engage in a Solo Hobby



Something that:

- isn't related to work
- doesn't involve another person

Go Outside

#12



#13

Practice Yoga

Mental Health Benefits:

- Decreases stress & anxiety
- Helps you focus
- Creates mindfulness
- Increases self-esteem
- Boosts confidence
- Increases awareness
- Encourages self-care
- Improves meditation
- Increases happiness
- Promotes wellbeing



#14

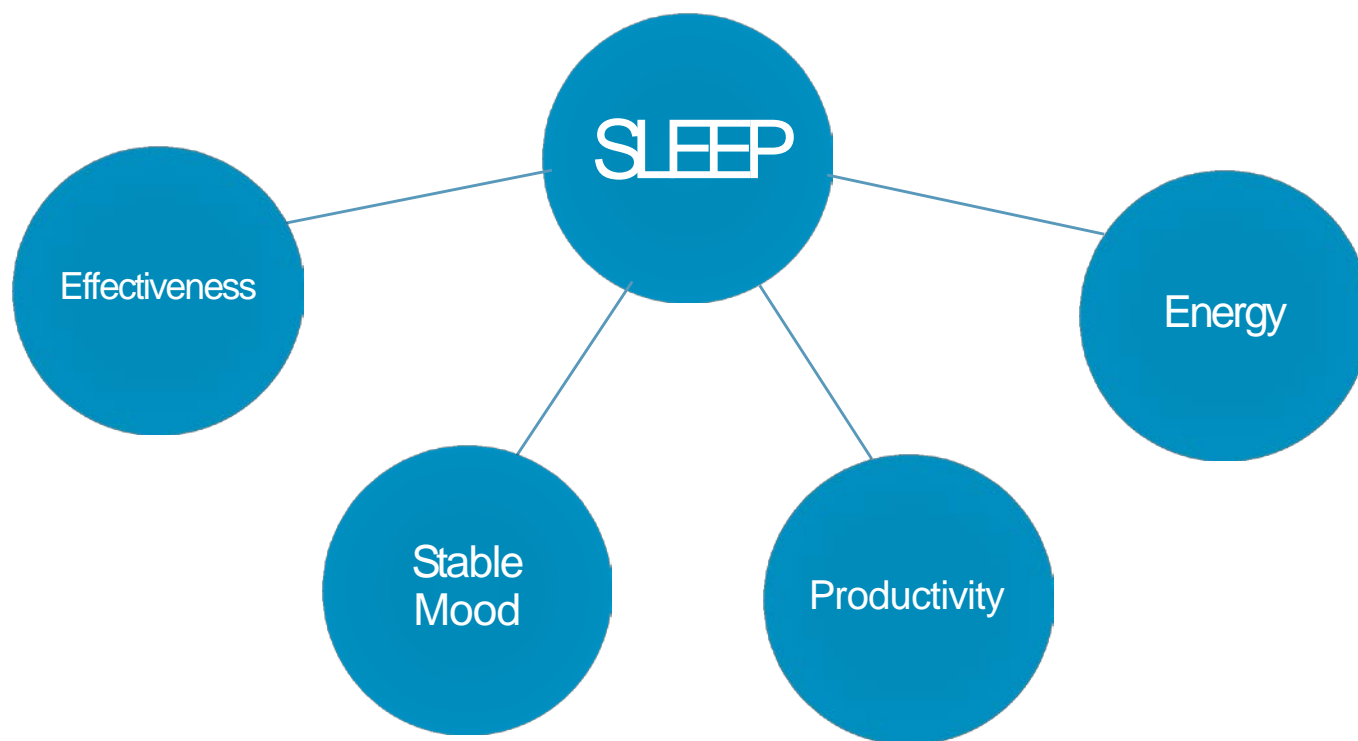
Everyone Needs ONE Person in Whom to Confide



- Family member
- Friend
- Minister
- Priest
- Rabbi
- Therapist
- Mentor
- Clinician

#15

Sleep 6.5-7.5 Hours a Night



Follow good sleep hygiene practices

Allow adequate time for sleep

If these things don't work, seek help from a professional

#16

Ask Yourself Two Questions:



1. What gives your life meaning?
2. What gives you joy?

DO MORE OF THOSE
THINGS!!!

#17

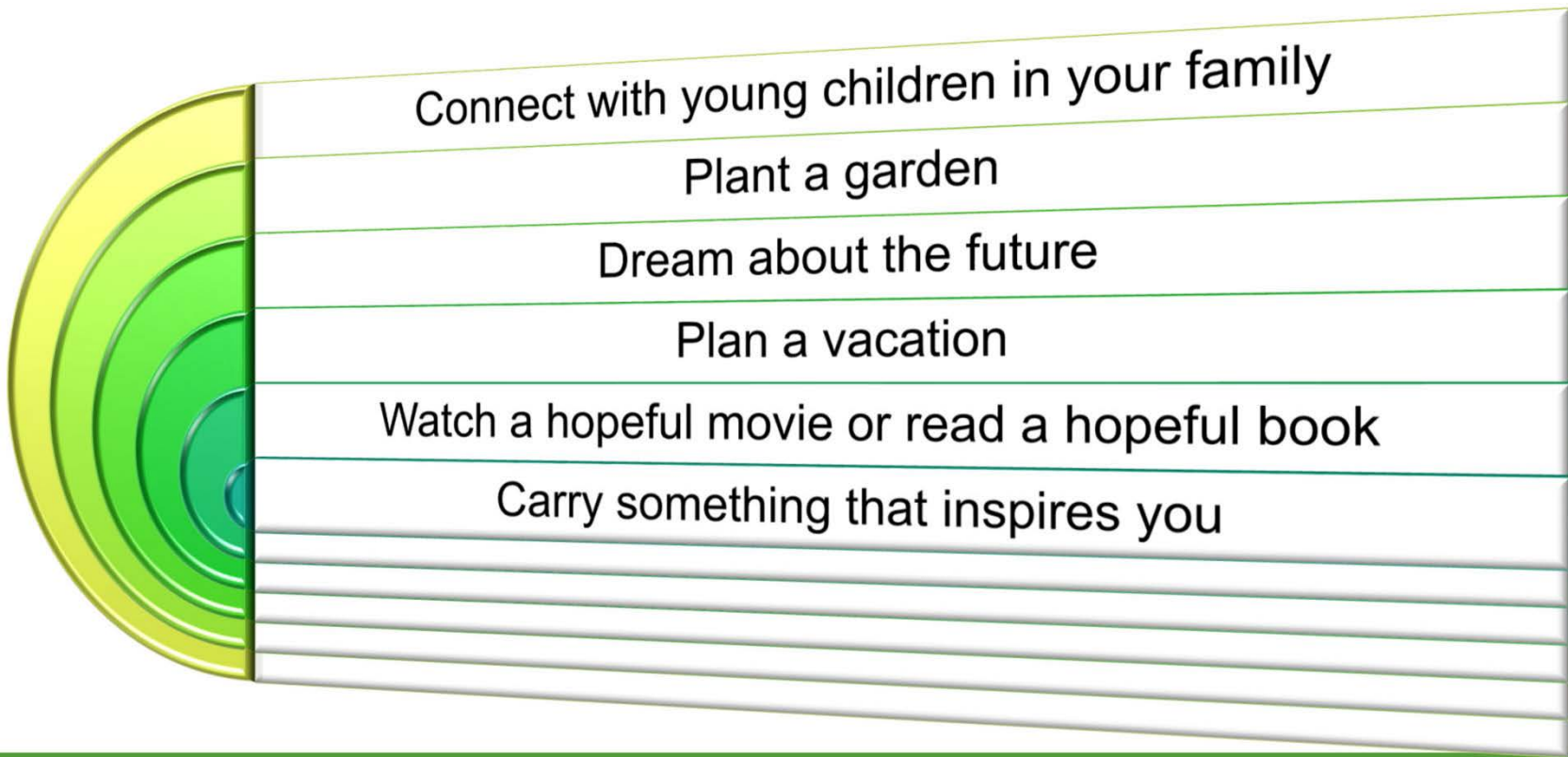
Connect with Other People Daily

- Eat virtual meals with friends
- Have a social distance picnic
- Call friends and family
- Play games virtually
- Reconnect with someone you haven't talked with recently
- Watch movies simultaneously and text with friends
- Talk with your neighbors



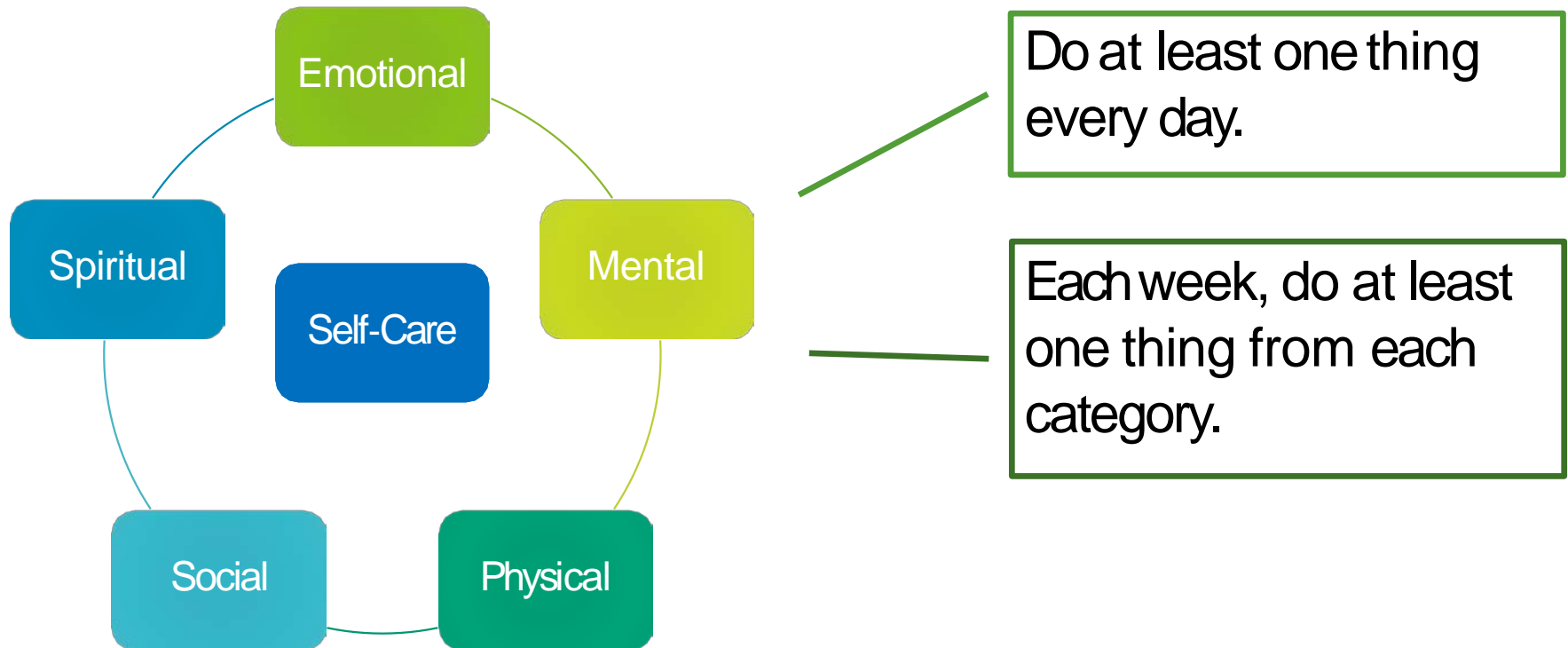
#18

Do Hopeful Things



#19

Develop a Self-Care Action Plan



#20

Look for Silver Linings

Find the good that's all around us...



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SAMEER SETHI
Photography

ADRIAN L. MALSHALL RAMSEY.COM
GAMSEY

OUR PETS ARE
LIKE...

WHY ARE
YOU
HOME?



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The dogs of the world are having the best day ever! @DogsWorkingFromHome



Nitrogen Dioxide Pollution Over China Plummets

This could
save 77,000
lives!

<https://www.sciencealert.com/nitrogen-dioxide-pollution-has-dramatically-dropped-over-china-because-of-the-coronavirus>



The
Himalayas
Became
Visible for
the First
Time in
Decades

1st IMAGES

VENICE CANALS CLEARER AFTER LOCKDOWN

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/18/photos-water-in-venice-italys-canals-clear-amid-covid-19-lockdown.html>

Venice's canals are clearer than they've been in decades



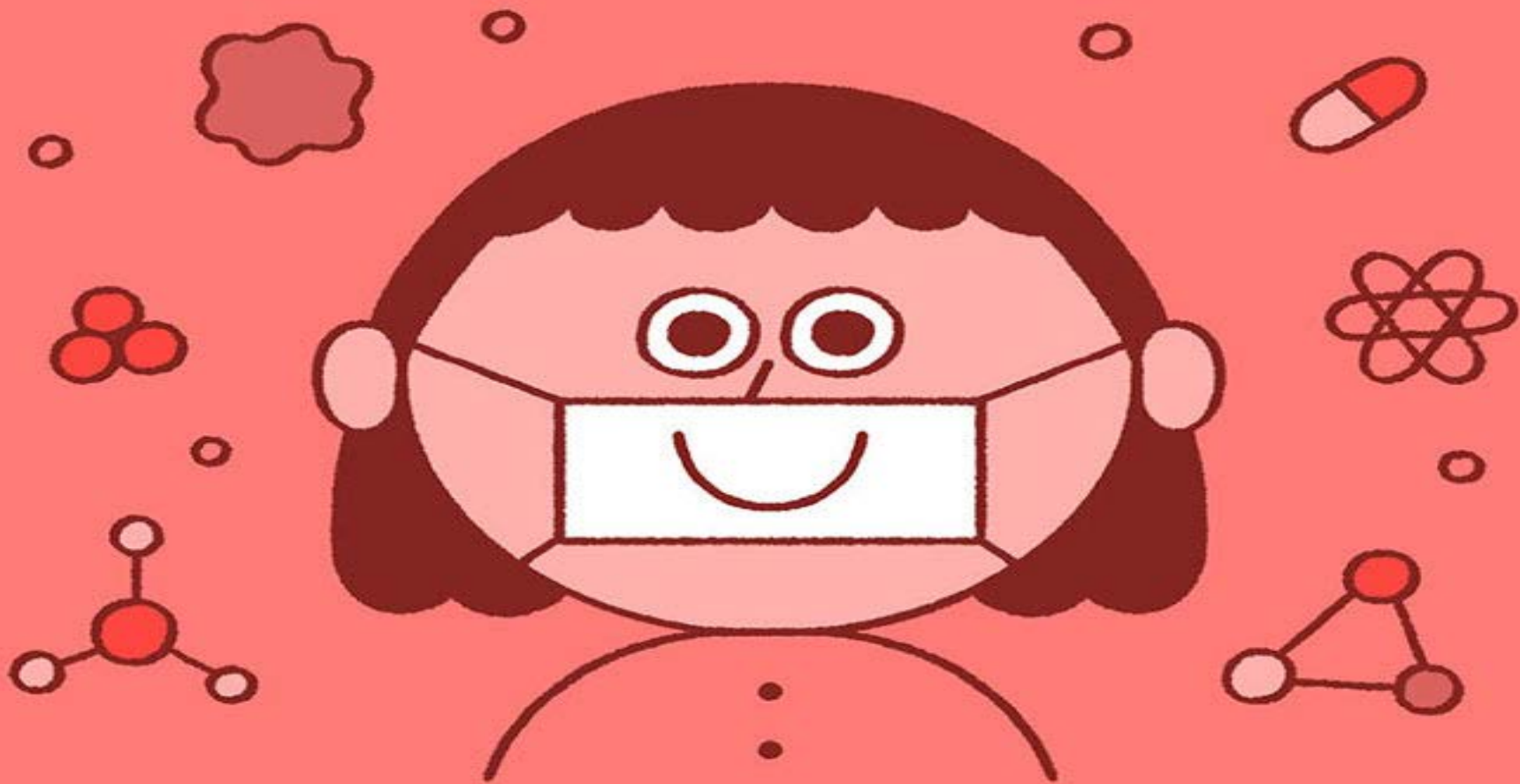
While India is on lockdown, hundreds of thousands of undisturbed sea turtles came ashore for the first time in years to lay 60 million eggs



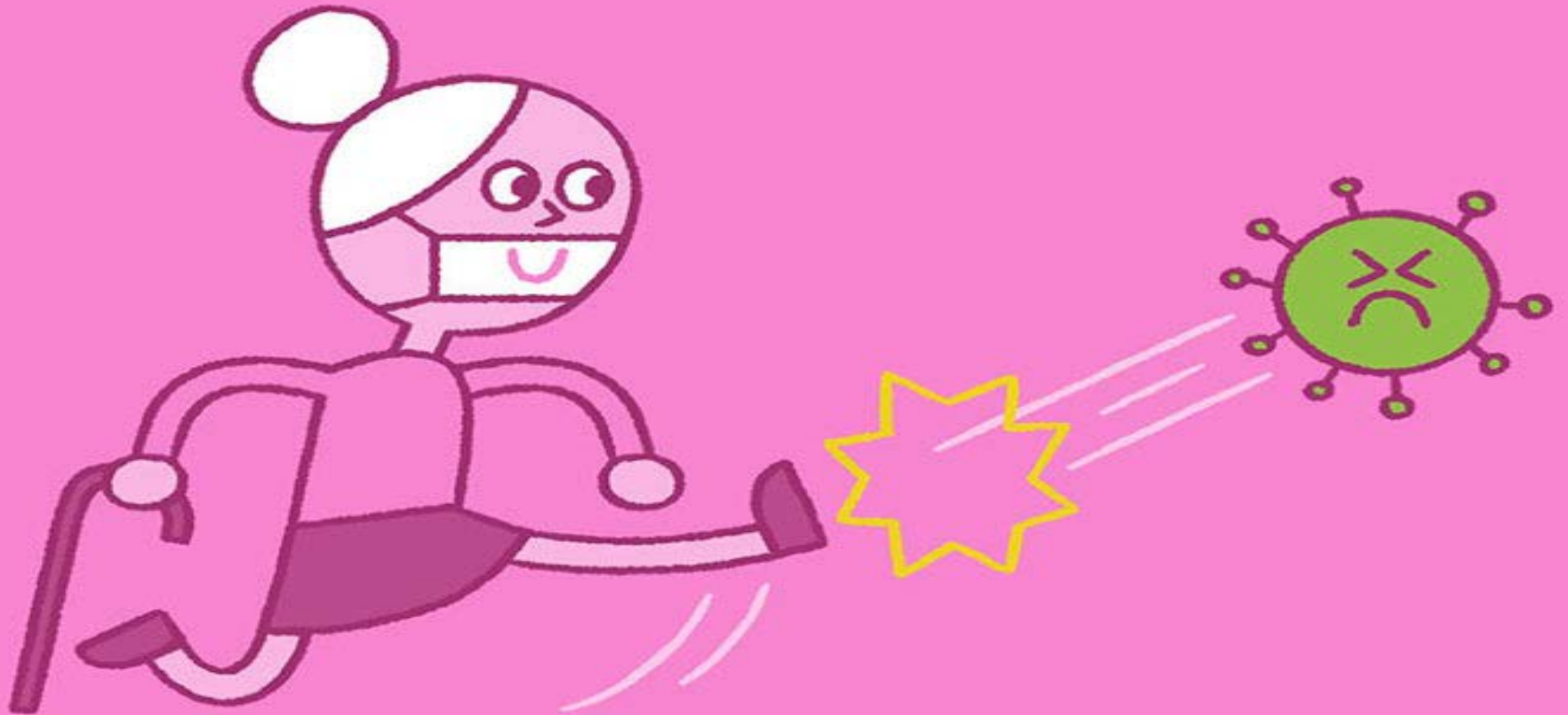
Thousands of retired doctors and nurses are coming out of retirement and risking their lives to join the fight against the coronavirus. Heroes among us!



Two pandas in a Hong Kong zoo tried to mate for a decade unsuccessfully. With the zoo closed to the public due to Coronavirus, they finally did it!



Never before, scientists say, have so many of the world's researchers focused so urgently on a single topic. Science is on it, globally!



Over 730,000 people have recovered from COVID-19 around the world thanks to testing and stay at home measures

- Spent more time with family.
- More cooking at home
- More movies
- More organizing
- Started exercising at home
- Ability to work from home
- More reading
- More writing

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/international/covid-19-social-distance-powwows-attract-thousands-online/videoshow/75075519.cms>

Some Good News

UCSF Health Care Workers to Serve in Navajo Nation

By [Scott Maier](#)

A team of UC San Francisco health care workers – seven physicians and 14 nurses – is traveling to Arizona and New Mexico on Wednesday, April 22, 2020, to begin a one month voluntary assignment providing urgently needed health care support for patients in the Navajo Nation, at the request of UCSF's colleagues in the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Nation is the largest U.S. American Indian reservation, covering about 27,500 square miles, with a population of about 175,000. In recent weeks, it has experienced a disproportionate number of COVID-19 cases, stressing its health care system. As of April 21, 1,206 positive cases had been reported, with 48 confirmed deaths.



UCSF nurse Jamilah Dula (center) waits to board a flight with fellow UCSF health care workers San Francisco International Airport en route to help care for COVID-19 patients in Navajo Nation. The group of staff, including 14 nurses and seven doctors, volunteered for the assignment in

Some Final Thoughts



Self-Care Can Be Cultivated

Self care is not
self
indulgence.

Self care is self
respect.

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- gateway -
WOMEN.COM

**You have only four days to start
caring for yourself in new ways**

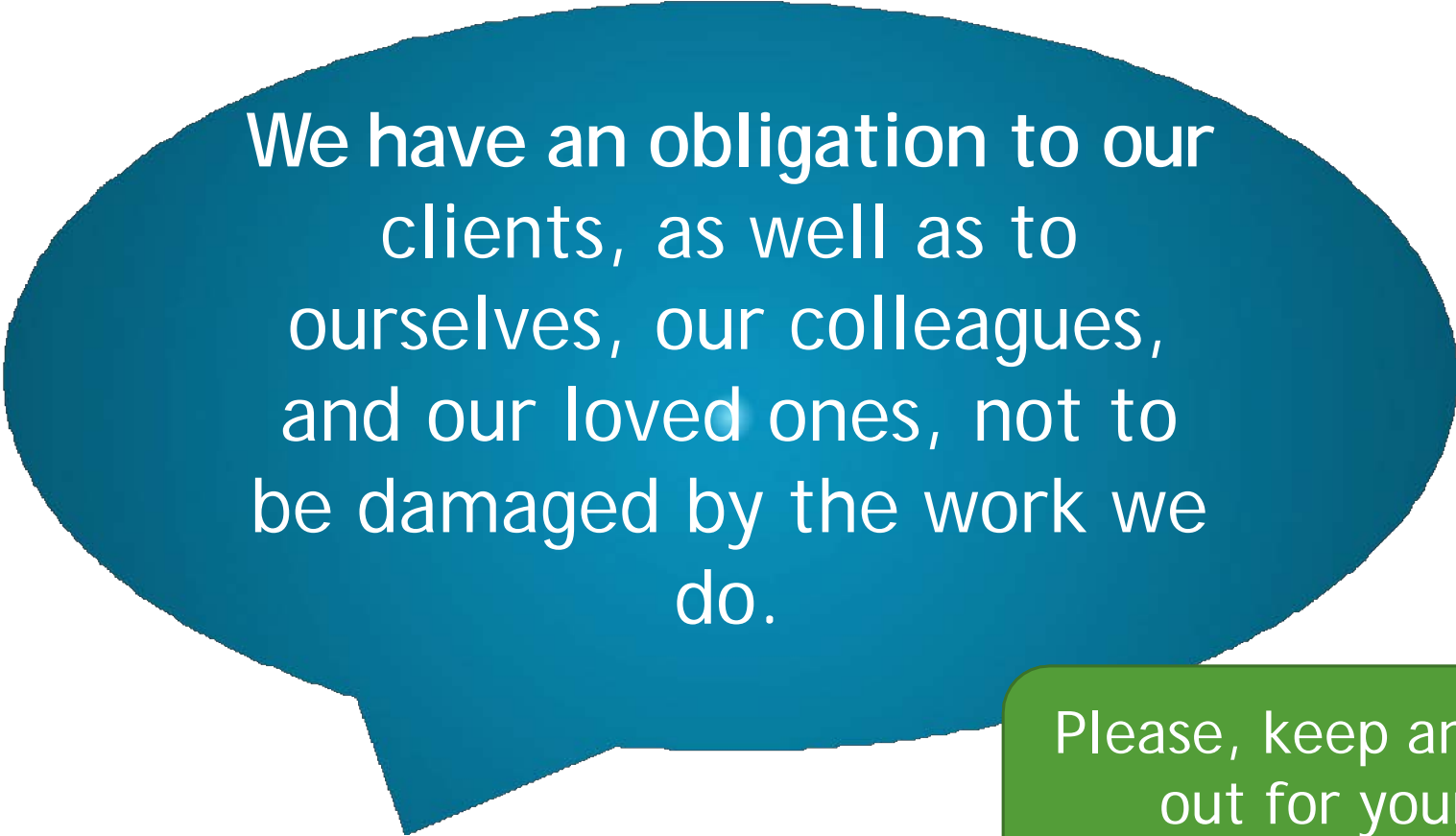
A Question



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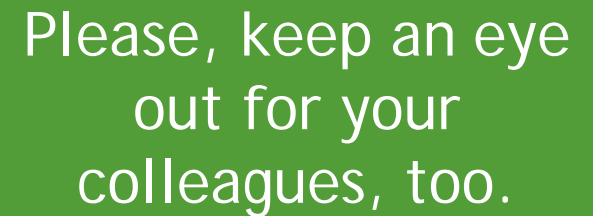
The Japanese word for “crisis” means both “danger” and “opportunity”.

Which will this crisis mean for you?



We have an obligation to our clients, as well as to ourselves, our colleagues, and our loved ones, not to be damaged by the work we do.

Karen Saakvitne &
Laurie Pearlman, 1996



Please, keep an eye out for your colleagues, too.

Resources



American Psychological Association

Resources for COVID-19

<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/>



Self-Screening Tools

- Professional Quality of Life Scale

http://proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_5_English_Self-Score_7_2011.pdf

- T2 Mood Tracker app
- 

Free Mindfulness App

UCLA
Mindful
Headspace
Insight Timer
Aura
Stop, Breathe & Think

<https://youtu.be/wfDTp2GogaQ>



Mindfulness Coach App

Designed to support independent mindfulness practice.

Features:

- Mindfulness Training

- Practice Now

- Track Progress

- Build Expertise



MINDFULNESS COACH

Download



Mindfulness Coach is a **free, easy-to-use mobile application**. It was first released by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2014. A redesigned and updated version was released in 2018. Mindfulness Coach helps you learn about and begin to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness may help you manage some of the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness means paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment without judgment. When you practice mindfulness, you bring focused awareness to a present moment, sensation, thought, or feeling without holding onto it, resisting it, or trying to change it.

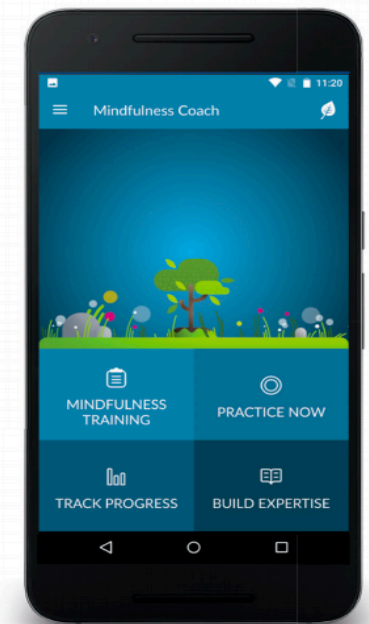
BENEFITS

One of the goals of practicing mindfulness is to improve your overall well-being. Some of the benefits of mindfulness include:

- Decreased impact of stress
- Improved sleep and ability to relax
- Increased concentration and ability to focus
- Decreased symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Improved blood pressure, brain & immune functioning
- Increased sense of self-acceptance and self-knowledge
- Improved ability to cope with negative thoughts & emotions
- Improved ability to cope with chronic pain or chronic health problems

LEARN

- Browse short articles on how to begin to practice mindfulness.
- Learn what to do when practicing mindfulness seems challenging.
- Take the Mindfulness Mastery assessment to see how you're doing with making mindfulness a part of your life.



Free Mindfulness Resources

- Free online Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction course:
<http://palousemindfulness.com/selfguidedMBSR.html>
- Guided mindfulness meditations available at
 - <http://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/resources/multimedia/index.asp>
 - <http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/mindfulness-meditation-podcast-series/>
 - <http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

Self-Care Workbooks

- Self-Care Workbook:

http://www.figleyinstitute.com/documents/Workbook_AMEDD_SanAntonio_2012July20_RevAugust2013.pdf

- When Compassion Hurts:

https://www.beststart.org/resources/howto/pdf/Compassion_14MY01_Final.pdf

COVID Coach App

The screenshot shows the VA Mobile website header with the VA logo and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs text. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'VA Mobile' and links for 'ABOUT', 'VA APP STORE', and 'NEWS & DISCUSSIONS'. The main content area features the 'COVID Coach' app listing, which includes a green and yellow app icon, the text 'VETERANS COVID Coach', a 3.6 star rating from 28 votes, and download buttons for the App Store and Google Play. A 'Description' tab is visible below the app listing, and the text below it states: 'The COVID Coach app was created for everyone, including Veterans and Servicemembers, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.' A URL fragment 'p/covid-coach#AppReviews' is visible at the bottom of the page.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Mobile ABOUT VA APP STORE NEWS & DISCUSSIONS

VETERANS COVID Coach

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Average: 3.6 (28 votes)

Download on the App Store GET IT ON Google Play

Description

The COVID Coach app was created for everyone, including Veterans and Servicemembers, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

p/covid-coach#AppReviews

Questions?

Final
Thoughts

Thank You!
