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NEWSLETTER

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#stayhome

Sometimes we
are tested not to
show our
weakness, but to
show us our
STRENGTH



LIVING WITH CORONA VIRUS AND LOCKDOWNS

We are living in a time that will go down in history as a life changing global event. This is a time where everyone on the planet is getting a crash course on infectious disease terminologies and our news every evening is backed with images of the Corona virus.

Being socially isolated is not something new for many living with HIV but this is another level where human contact has ceased. A world of social distancing, long lockdowns and for some living unlike the image above living completely alone.

In Keeping with R U OK day this September keep others in mind too.

This month's newsletter will hopefully give some encouragement and idea's how to ensure our health is well in spirit, body and mind.



A conversation could change a life.



KEEPING OURSELVES HEALTHY IN MIND, BODY & SPIRIT WITH COVID LOCKDOWNS

While we might joke with our friends, family, and co-workers about the benefits of COVID-19 restrictions such as binge-watching Netflix or working from home in our PJs, the truth is, most of us are feeling some degree of stress and anxiety. If we don't find constructive, healthy ways to cope, our bodies and minds will eventually start showing signs that stress is taking its toll, whether we admit it or not.

Whether you are comfortable acknowledging the stress, or are attempting to keep your feelings below the surface, there are steps you can take to lessen the impact on your body and stay healthy mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Mind-body-spirit means that our wellness comes not just from physical health, but from mental health and spiritual health as well. To be "healthy," we must pay attention to all three aspects of our nature.

Here are some examples of the mind-body-spirit connection:

- Many of us will get a headache when we are stressed – that is a perfect example of how your mind is affecting your body.
- People who exercise regularly – whether it's a daily walk, a long run, an hour of yoga, or time in the gym strength training – will often experience depression if their exercise routine is interrupted.
- Are you a "stress eater?" I am sure many people who working from home or who have had their normal routines disrupted during this time are facing that challenge today.
- Remember that amazing feeling you had last time you pampered yourself by having a massage, getting your nails done, or having your haircut, colored, and styled? That's your mind and your body and possibly even your spirit all working together to make you feel great.



The main concept behind the mind-body-spirit connection is that we are all more than just our thoughts. We are also our bodies, our emotions, and our spirituality ... all these things combine to give us identity, determine our health, and make us who we are.

Here are a few things that you may not have tried that might be helpful.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

While mindfulness is something we all naturally possess, it's more readily available to us when we practice on a daily basis.

Whenever you bring awareness to what you're directly experiencing via your senses, or to your state of mind via your thoughts and emotions, you're being mindful. And there's growing research showing that when you train your brain to be mindful, you're actually remodeling the physical structure of your brain.

Its popularity has been supported by a growing body of research showing that it reduces stress and anxiety and improves attention and memory. Mindfulness has also been shown to reduce blood pressure, heart rate, and brain activity.

What is meditation?

Meditation is exploring. It's not a fixed destination. Your head doesn't become vacuumed free of thought, utterly undistracted. It's a special place where each and every moment is momentous. When we meditate we venture into the workings of our minds: our sensations (air blowing on our skin or a harsh smell wafting into the room), our

emotions (love this, hate that, crave this, loathe that) and thoughts (wouldn't it be weird to see an elephant playing a trumpet).

Mindfulness meditation asks us to suspend judgment and unleash our natural curiosity about the workings of the mind, approaching our experience with warmth and kindness, to ourselves and others.

Other ideas to keep your mind, body, and spirit in tune and bring some fun and joy into your days:

- Start a journal to record your emotions.
- Laughter is the best medicine. Watch a comedy – a fun movie or an online stand-up comedy routine.
- Feng Shui your home or clean out your closets – it will make you feel great and you can donate what you don't need anymore.
- Treat yourself to a home spa day – a facial, mani, and Pedi
- Reach to old friends – through Skype, Facebook, or FaceTime.
- Make plans to do something special when we can resume normal activities again. A night out with friends, a weekend getaway, or an evening at the movies will all feel like a treat.
- Try a new recipe.
- Spend some extra quality time with your pets!
- Gather all your friends online – download the Zoom Cloud Meeting app and have a virtual disco party.



The Basics of Mindfulness Practice

Mindfulness helps us put some space between ourselves and our reactions, breaking down our conditioned responses. Here's how to tune into mindfulness throughout the day:

Set aside some time. You don't need a meditation cushion or bench, or any sort of special equipment to access your mindfulness skills—but you do need to set aside some time and space.

Observe the present moment as it is. The aim of mindfulness is not quieting the mind, or attempting to achieve a state of eternal calm. The goal is simple: we're aiming to pay attention to the present moment, without judgment. Easier said than done, we know.

Let your judgments roll by. When we notice judgments arise during our practice, we can make a mental note of them, and let them pass.

Return to observing the present moment as it is. Our minds often get carried away in thought. That's why mindfulness is the practice of returning, again and again, to the present moment.

Be kind to your wandering mind. Don't judge yourself for whatever thoughts crop up, just practice recognizing when your mind has wandered off, and gently bring it back.

That's the practice. It's often been said that it's very simple, but it's not necessarily easy. The work is to just keep doing it. Results will accrue.



How to Meditate

This meditation focuses on the breath, not because there is anything special about it, but because the physical sensation of breathing is always there and you can use it as an anchor to the present moment. Throughout the practice you may find yourself caught up in thoughts, emotions, and sounds—wherever your mind goes, simply come back again to the next breath. Even if you only come back once, that's okay.

A Simple Meditation Practice

Sit comfortably. Find a spot that gives you a stable, solid, comfortable seat.

Notice what your legs are doing. If on a cushion, cross your legs comfortably in front of you. If on a chair, rest the bottoms of your feet on the floor.

Straighten your upper body—but don't stiffen. Your spine has natural curvature. Let it be there.

Notice what your arms are doing. Situate your upper arms parallel to your upper body. Rest the palms of your hands on your legs wherever it feels most natural.

Soften your gaze. Drop your chin a little and let your gaze fall gently downward. It's not necessary to close your eyes. You can simply let what appears before your eyes be there without focusing on it.

Feel your breath. Bring your attention to the physical sensation of breathing: the air moving through your nose or mouth, the rising and falling of your belly, or your chest.

Notice when your mind wanders from your breath. Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. Don't worry. There's no need to block or eliminate thinking. When you notice your mind wandering gently return your attention to the breath.

Be kind about your wandering mind. You may find your mind wandering constantly—that's normal, too. Instead of wrestling with your thoughts, practice observing them without reacting. Just sit and pay attention. As hard as it is to maintain, that's all there is. Come back to your breath over and over again, without judgment or expectation.

When you're ready, gently lift your gaze (if your eyes are closed, open them). Take a moment and notice any sounds in the environment. Notice how your body feels right now. Notice your thoughts and emotions.

Mindful Practices for Every Day

As you spend time practicing mindfulness, you'll probably find yourself feeling kinder, calmer, and more patient. These shifts in your experience are likely to generate changes in other parts of your life as well.

Mindfulness can help you become more playful, maximize your enjoyment of a long conversation with a friend over a cup of tea, then wind down for a relaxing night's sleep.

Common mindfulness questions

Is there a wrong way to meditate? A right way to meditate?

People think they're messing up when they're meditating because of how busy the mind is. But getting lost in thought, noticing it, and returning to your chosen meditation object— breath, sound, body sensation, or something else—is how it's done. That's about it. If you're doing that, you're doing it right!

Are there more formal ways to take up mindfulness practice?

Mindfulness can be practiced solo, anytime, or with like-minded friends. But there are others ways, and many resources, to tap into. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, and other mindfulness-based trainings are available through Albion St.

Daily guided meditations are also available by smartphone app, or you can practice in person at a meditation center. Read more about the types of programs currently available.

Do I have to practice every day?

No, but being that it's a beneficial practice, you may well find that the more you do it, the more you'll find it beneficial to your life.

What are the benefits of meditation?

Of course, when we meditate it doesn't help to fixate on the benefits, but rather just to do the practice. That being said, there are plenty of benefits. Here are five reasons to practice mindfulness.

1. Understand your pain. Pain is a fact of life, but it doesn't have to rule you. Mindfulness can help you reshape your relationship with mental and physical pain.
2. Connect better. Ever find yourself staring blankly at a friend, lover, child, and you've no idea what they're saying? Mindfulness helps you give them your full attention.
3. Lower stress. There's lots of evidence these days that excess stress causes lots of illnesses and makes other illnesses worse. Mindfulness decreases stress.
4. Focus your mind. It can be frustrating to have our mind stray off what we're doing and be pulled in six directions. Meditation hones our innate ability to focus.
5. Reduce brain chatter. The chattering voice in our head seems never to leave us alone. Isn't it time we gave it a little break.

Mindful movement can help you tap into that space beyond your busy mind where you are already calm and clear. By focusing on the breath while doing some simple movements you can synchronize your mind and body with breath and rhythm. What happens when you do that, even after just a few minutes, is you begin to pause and start to focus.

Namaste



FEATURED PET OF THE MONTH MEET – “ MRS POSS

Hello all, I'm Mrs. Poss. I'm a mother at the moment and my human is my neighbor from my parkland. When my

human moved in last year I noticed the nosey Rainbow lorikeet's not only visiting him outside but inside too! Cheeky Bady who our human also calls 'trouble' as well as heckle and Jeckle make up the rainbow lorikeets.

Our human seems to be very welcoming of all of us at the parkland and he cares for all of us. He leaves out food and isn't scared even of sleepy Charlie the snake and sunny George the blue tongue who make his home a safe place for them to stay.

My human is funny he says he should start charging bored and baby-sitting fees. I feel so safe with him I drop of my little bubba to sleep all day in his pot plant. I come back later in the

evening to pick up my baby safe and sound.

Kookie the kookaburra is there every morning as well as Maggie the magpie. Our human is a great bloke and we are so glad he moved in. He chats to us and leaves treats, we all are so grateful for the love our human shows us!





POSITIVLY REFRAME YOUR WORDS TO GET THROUGH THE LOCKDOWNS

When you consciously reframe your words it can change your perspective on life events. If done well turn your *gloom* into *blooms*.



Words are powerful and by simply looking for the positives you can in the short term find a way to cope with what we cannot change with lockdowns. By finding tools that can help us navigate isolation hopefully we can use this time to grow.

Bloom (noun) - A beautiful process of becoming.

In essence this is about reframing negative (non-constructive) thoughts to positive (growth-oriented) thoughts.

There is a saying instead of asking, “Why is this happening to me?” ask, “What is this trying to teach me?”

Try, practice and notice what phrases you use. Ask yourself how I can reframe that negative event or problem into a positive reframe and over time you will sub-consciously automatically do it.

An example is:

“I just lost my job what am I going to do?” (Negative event or non-constructive thoughts)

Reframe:

“This is my chance to do something I really want to do” (Positive reframe or growth orientated)

Try it and see opportunities abound.

I need to add as a word of caution some readers are going here we go big fluffy cloud of spring flowers and

I would like to acknowledge the need deemed as ‘negative’ or ‘bad myself as I write this because I had choose more healthy words than

As in the previous article about

it is healthy to recognize them, hear them and without judgment move them from your mind. We all have bad events/feelings it’s inevitable and as we know if we ignore anything it festers and grows until...KABOOM!!!



this is a temporary tool and I am sure again with the positivity overload, life is a kittens. I hear you loud and clear.

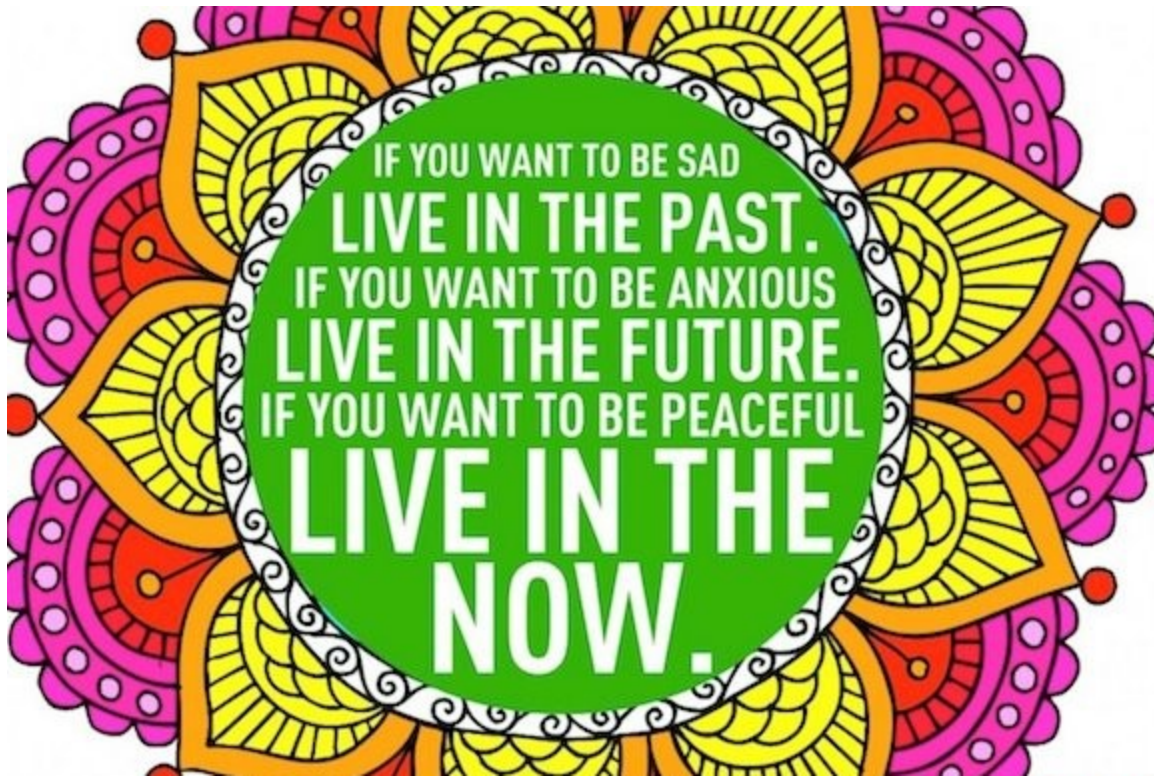
to notice and allow to feel what would be feelings/thoughts’. I am laughing at the strong urge to tell myself I had better negative and bad.

developing mindfulness and meditation

That’s the last thing we want is to get to a point of facing a meltdown. So over the lockdown as well as reaching out and staying in touch with others we can be mindful & use meditation as well as try positive reframing to push through what feels like forever. I hope these tools can help still your mind, bring it to a place of safety and comfort so you can find the positive in such a negative situation as being isolated in lockdown.

If you feel you need help call your case manager, call a friend, or call the online support call center’s on the last page of this newsletter.

Don’t forget September R U OK Day, reach out and ask your friends, loved ones and those especially living along during this lockdown.



Lifeline 13 11 14
Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
Headspace 1800 650 890
Men's line Australia 1300 789 978
Multicultural Mental Health 1300 726 289
Crisis Care (Counselling, accommodation & food) 9223 1111

Feel free to call these to talk or be referred for emergency assistance

WORD FROM OUR CONSUMER ADVISORY GROUP

“Remember when you feel alone and isolated reach out, we care, we may have been there and now we can share.”

WE can do this together, STAY SAFE

We acknowledge the traditional custodians
of the land on which we live and work and
pay our respects to the elders past and present.



HOT Consumer Tick