



Surviving the Storm of COVID-19 — BLOG POST

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I planned a new resource posting for this weekend a month ago, and I typically like to keep on schedule. And, a burning desire in my mind knows I cannot just list another resource today. It is not business as usual. I think it is fair to say it is not business as usual for anyone.

There is a greater topic at hand for all of us now.

COVID-19 has fully landed in the lives of every human on this planet, and we all fully face this threat together: hospitalizations and testing for some, infection risk, updates on policies and procedures changing by the day, unemployment for many, social distancing, fears, scarcity at the supermarkets, lack of handshakes and hugs, businesses shutting down, daily updates in the news that tend to bring about the beginnings of panic, hearing news of deaths and looming uncertainty seems to be a new presence living in each of our homes.

Everyone that is feeling overwhelmed has valid emotions. It is normal in this climate to experience this.

And, while these are happening, we can ride out the emotions in this storm. We can. And, while we do so, we can come together as a people to weather this. And be there for those who are struggling more than we are.

In fact, we already are.

Neighbors are helping neighbors. Friends are checking-in on friends. People are sharing their resources. It may not be to the level that it could be, and at the same time — it is happening.

In the midst of all that we are going through, I have some thoughts on ways we as a profession, and we as individuals can try to contribute to this end of coming together to ride this wave, and come out better in the end:

- Set boundaries. If we are in a work situation that is unsafe, we must take action. We need to advocate and do what is necessary to protect our health, first and foremost. Hard decisions may be coming down the road for us, as a profession. Also, there are a lot of unknowns at this point and we are all taking it day by day. Acknowledging this and moving forward as best we can, with the choices we do have at our disposal will help us. Recruiting help from others in setting firm boundaries for our individual health is necessary for surviving this storm. Contacting our personal physicians to take medical leave if our work situation is not safe might be a course of action for certain situations, given the circumstances. If safeguards that our employer has setup for us are deemed to keep us safe, it would be recommended set very firm boundaries in maintaining these guidelines.
- Check-in on a regular basis on those who are struggling financially, emotionally or physically. We need to touch base, and make sure we are there for one another. It can be as simple as a phone call, or stopping by to say “just wanted to check on you.” Brightening somebody’s day with a “How are you doing?” can be meaningful for everyone.



- Keep up daily health practices — step it up, even. Exercise, vitamins, water intake, sleep, balanced eating, mindfulness and relaxation tasks are all important for physical and emotional well being. We need these self-charging practices in our lives now more than ever and they will be foundational in having the energy and reserve to face each day with the capacity to make decisions as we need to in the upcoming weeks.
- Limiting news to only what is necessary. Hearing the loop of news over and over is not healthy, especially if a person notices that it triggers an emotional response of fear. We can quickly catch the news for the purpose of information, then turn it off. Or, we can read the news only and then move on about our day. Another way to limit news is to have a partner or loved one update us on the highlights of what they have heard or read on the news to avoid feelings of unrest, to avoid our first-hand hearing.
- Touch-base with friends for support when needed. Reach out when we are feeling overwhelmed. Call a friend and say “Hey, I just need to talk. Do you have time to listen?” Drawing dividends on the investments in the relationships we have in place, that is what friendships, and what family is all about — the give and take of being there for one another.
- Taking precautions in social distancing has been recommended, and it is helpful to follow all guidelines have been established in the community on our personal time. Knowing we are following what has been communicated to us in terms of safety will let us know that we are doing all we can in order to prevent the spread of infection for ourselves, and others.
- Contribute in some way. It is extremely helpful to find a way to be a part of the solution, even if it is just a small act of kindness. There is power in knowing we are making a difference.
- Keep up on activities that make us tick. Leisure tasks that we have always enjoyed are beneficial to keep up — even more so now in time of a pandemic. If it is music, art, or gardening, etc., we can pick our preferred healthy pleasure, and run with it — because anything that brings us enjoyment and peace at this time will benefit us. We truly at this time cannot out-pleasure or out-peace ourselves now, in what we are all facing.
- Seek out help, and apply for any and all benefits and services we are eligible for. If we are in a place where we have found ourselves unemployed, or in an unknown timeframe of how long we will be off of work, applying for eligible benefits would be indicated. We have paid into the system, and benefits are available for times like this. We can think creatively about ways to ask for help for when we need it. There are also resources in the community that we may not realize exist that we have not yet tapped into.
- Take care to problem-solve as effectively as we can, make decisions based on the options we have, then in peace — let go of the worry. Yes, it sounds easier said than done, I realize. At the same time, at the end of the day, all we can do is all we can do. We can make a conscious decision to not focus on the fear. We can decide to “let go” of the panic that may feel creeping up inside of us. We can take physical steps to address anxiety and fear. If it means that we write down our fear on a piece of paper, and then rip it up, we can do it. If it means yelling our fear from the top of a mountain to let it out, we can do it. If we need help doing this, we can seek out professional help. We can benefit from



even a “check-up” with a counselor on a short-term basis to evaluate how we are coping with the pandemic crisis — this may be effective for those who are feeling the need at this time.

- Spiritual or mindfulness practices can aid in bringing about a calm, and we can choose to pursue these paths. We can choose to seek out answers in multiple ways.
- Being our own cheerleader is extremely beneficial. Reminding ourselves that this will pass, and in the end we will have learned some valuable lessons from it that we wouldn't have learned any other way — could be helpful. As difficult and challenging as this time is, there could be small silver linings even in situations like this, and we just need to seek them out. Telling ourselves that we will be OK, and that we will get through this helps tremendously if we do so on a daily basis. Journaling, or performing expressive writing can be beneficial toward this end.
- Set limits on what is healthy for us, and what is not. Saying “No, thank you” is a healthy way to let others know what is indicated for us and our self-care. It is OK to say “no.” Setting limits also includes not rushing into decisions out of panic. If we are faced with a decision and we know in our gut that it is not something we should move forward with — then we can choose to wait. We don't have to make big decisions right now, we should only do so mindfully and when we are 100% confident.
- If we find ourselves having a surplus of time on our hands because our employment situation has changed, we can choose to use this time for self-improvement. Taking time for family, taking time to read books we have bought but have never set time aside to do, for example, could be beneficial. In this season of waiting, we can choose to invest in ourselves by learning a new skill, acquiring CEUs, work on self-improvement, etc.

Yes, there is much going on in our world right now. Yes, it can involve emotions. It is important to communicate to ourselves that what we are feeling is valid. It is OK to have emotional responses to this pandemic. Many people are struggling right now.

And, at the same time, we don't have to let this pandemic overwhelm us to the point that it impacts our daily functioning. There are things we can do, and hopefully the above suggestions may have reminded you of something helpful.

Nice Speech Lady wishes each of you a peaceful, safe and meaningful day today.

Thank you for reading. Please take care.



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