



# **HEALING OURSELVES WHILE HEALING OTHERS:**

**NURSING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

*A Webinar Series with Tools and Resources for Professional Nurses*

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Donna is a psychotherapist, author and educator, has long addressed a wide range of life-altering experiences in the lives of children and families—loss, trauma, and stress. She has counseled professionals, young people and schools in the aftermath of individual and national tragedies — 9/11, Sandy Hook, and Hurricane Katrina. In addition to academic papers, Donna is the author of *The Seasons of Grief, Helping Children Grow Through Loss*. She taught at Columbia University and holds master's degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University; Rutgers University, and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. Her post-doctoral work includes the Prudential Fellowship for Children and the News at Columbia Journalism School. Donna consults for the New York Life Foundation and the Resilient Parenting for Bereaved Families Program at Arizona State University.

Anne holds an Adjunct appointment with the SONM and is a Visiting Professor at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK. She is a member of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) UK and Australian College of Nursing. Her current research is on translating the social neuroscience of empathy and compassion in the context of culture, networks and leadership in nursing and healthcare. Anne holds a PhD and a Master's Degree in Primary Health Care (palliative care specialty) from Flinders University, Australia. Following completion of her PhD in 2002, she was recruited to the Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta, Canada in 2003. In 2004, she completed an Intensive Bioethics Course at the Joseph P. & Rose F. Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, Washington DC.

Millie is the founder of M. Elia Wellness, LLC, a service which offers Integrative Health Program Design within local cancer survivorship communities, larger healthcare systems and organizations. She is the proud recipient of the (SIO) Society for Integrative Oncology's 2019 Clinician Stakeholder Award for the impact her services have had, and continue to have, on the cancer survivorship community. She has twenty years of experience as a Nurse Practitioner and received her Master's of Arts from NYU in Advanced Practice Nursing. Additionally, she is a certified Health and Wellness Coach and Yoga Instructor.

Peg is an Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurse and licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She works with children, individuals and families to help them become more aware of themselves and others through talking and experiencing their feelings. As a Disaster Crisis Counselor and therapist, Peg has counseled individuals after 9/11, hurricanes Rita, Floyd and Sandy. Peg has served as Adjunct Faculty and Guest lecturer in several nursing programs and taught family therapy at Drew University. As a facilitator for the Recovery and Monitoring Program (RAMP), Institute for Nursing, Peg helped nurses whose practice was impaired by drugs, alcohol or other issues. She has a Masters of Arts from NYU in Psychiatric Nursing, is a Graduate of Blanton-Peale Graduate Institute and earned a PHD from Union Institute and University. Peg has a private practice in Cranford, NJ and is a Certified Holotropic Breathwork Facilitator.



# FAMILIES AND RELATIONSHIPS MATTER



# GOALS

- Discuss how social distancing can narrow one's world of support and connection.
- Make a workable plan when practicing physical distancing and social connections.
- Find effective ways to bridge separations.
- Diffuse tension in relationships.
- Discuss longing for normalcy.



Tobias Mrzyk

# SOCIAL DISTANCING

## WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

- If you have COVID-19 or test positive for Coronavirus.
- If you have been exposed to another person who has the virus.
- If a member of your household contracts the virus.

- The impact of social distancing

Negative effects and possibilities of positive outcomes

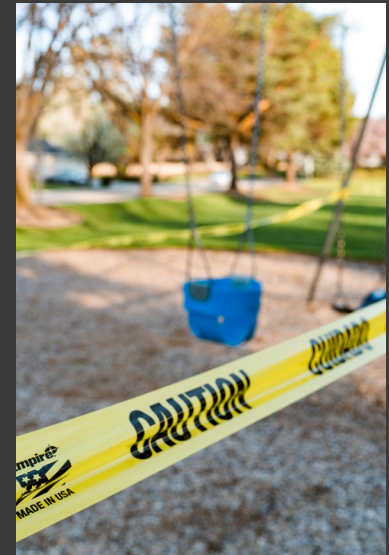
On you . . .

- Working at home
- SELF CARE versus OTHERS' NEEDS
- Nursing in hospital

New decision each day, "Do I go to work?"

Moral distress

Emotional stress of being family, rabbi and priest



Allie Smith

# TYPICAL REACTIONS TO SOCIAL DISTANCING

Anxiety, Worry or Fear – Anxiety is a tool that can help you understand what you value.

ACTUAL LIFE AND DEATH IS ON OUR MINDS.

- A) Your Own Health and challenging experiences
- B) Overwhelming Feelings
- C) Potential Unhealthy reactions





# FOR FAMILIES

- Loss of one partner's job
- Role reversals of parents
- Concerns about Emotional health of children
- Help children with disappointment when everything is cancelled.

## A FEW LINES FROM "LOCKDOWN"

- ... Yes there is isolation, But there does not have to be loneliness . . .
- ... Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now . . .
- ... Today, breathe . . .
- ... Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic . . .
- ... Open the windows of your soul. . .
- ... Sing

## LOCKDOWN

Yes there is fear.  
Yes there is isolation.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
Yes there is sickness.  
Yes there is even death.  
But,  
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise  
You can hear the birds again.  
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet  
The sky is no longer thick with fumes  
But blue and grey and clear.  
They say that in the streets of Assisi  
People are singing to each other  
across the empty squares,  
keeping their windows open  
so that those who are alone  
may hear the sounds of family around them.  
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland  
is offering free meals and delivery to the household.  
Today a young woman I know  
is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighbourhood  
So that the elders may have someone to call on.  
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples  
are preparing to welcome  
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary  
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting  
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way  
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality  
To how big we really are.  
To how little control we really have.  
To what really matters.  
To Love.  
So we pray and we remember that  
Yes there is fear.  
But there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation.  
But there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
But there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness.  
But there does not have to be disease of the soul  
Yes there is even death.  
But there can always be a rebirth of love.  
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.  
Today, breathe.  
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic  
The birds are singing again  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,  
And we are always encompassed by Love.  
Open the windows of your soul  
And though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,  
Sing.

- Richard Hendrick March 13th, 2020

"And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listening more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

O'Meara, K. "And They Stayed Home, 2020

**POTENTIAL** FOR A WONDERFUL TIME TO GET TO KNOW YOUR PARTNER AND YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS.

Romantic love and familial love are about dealing with the joy, the poop, the opportunity for growth.

## A WORKABLE AND HEALTHY WAY TO MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WHEN PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING

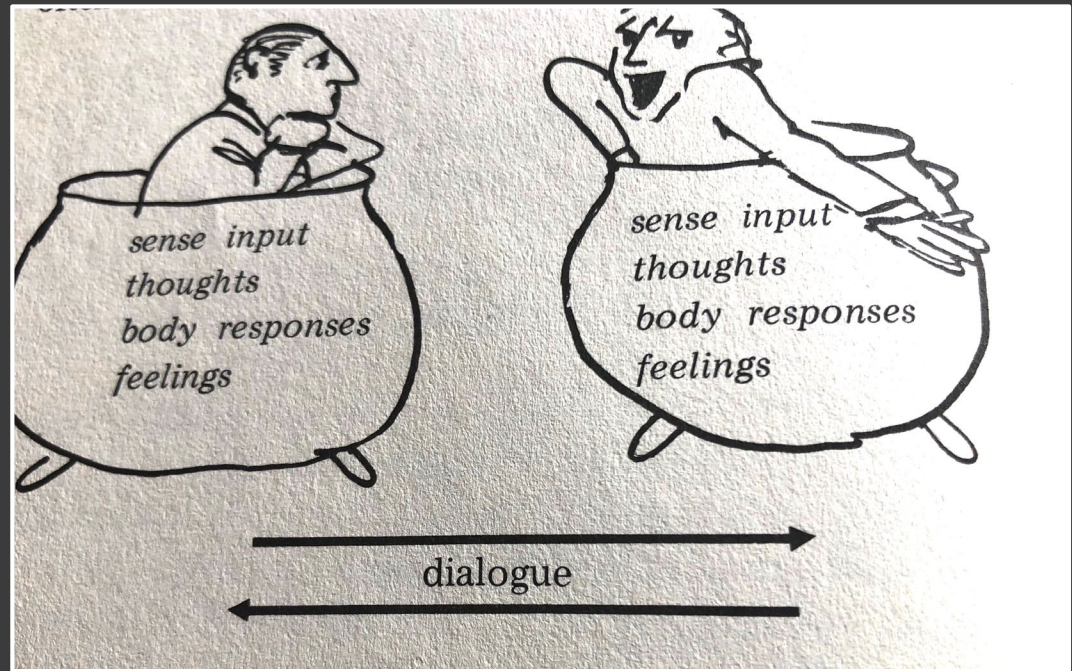
- **CREATE A ROUTINE** –Not military-like, but kids need it to be consistently ‘pleasant’.
- **SCHEDULE FAMILY MEETINGS**
  - At first allow 1 hour each week, then as time passes, or if time is short, you can use the time to check in with each member of the family. Be consistent.
  - Be sure it is at a time when everyone is well rested, fed and available.

“Talking is the most dangerous thing people do, especially when they are stressed.”

Hendrix, H. *Time Magazine*, March 27, 2020

- **DYNAMICS INVOLVED IN AN EFFECTIVE FAMILY MEETING**

- *Communication* – clearly talk about your work schedule and the demands you may be experiencing. Wiley, A.R., 2007
- Remember, when talking you and each family member bring their own body, values and expectations, sense organs, and words. Communication is like a video. It works only in the present, right here and now between ‘you’ and ‘me’.
- “Good human relations depend a great deal on getting to know one another’s meaning, whatever words they happen to use.” Satir, V., 1988



When we are Communicating,  
We are bringing the same needs  
As the other, and  
We need to know that,  
And act in that manner.

## LISTENING

To hear one's partner, family members and children with respect and empathy, without judgement.

Here are some tips for effective listening.

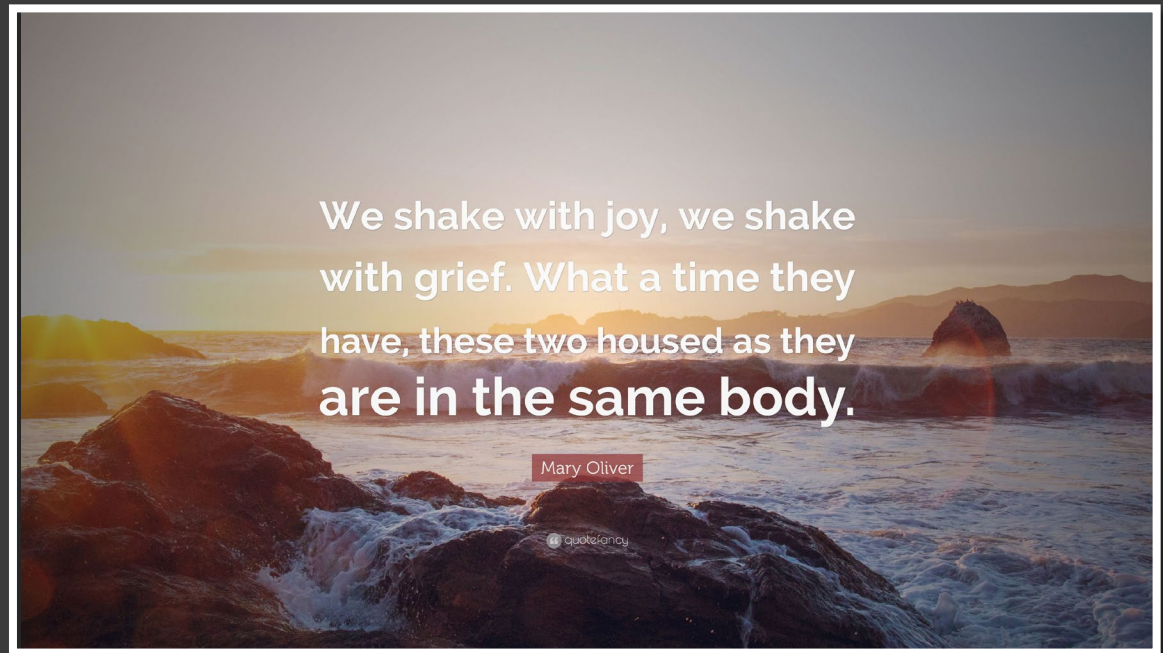
- Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.
- Be attentive with an open mind.
- Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
- Don't interrupt and impose your "solutions"
- Ask questions to obtain understanding.
- Pay attention to what isn't said – non verbal clues.

*EXERCISE: "WHAT I CARRY"* (Discussed in an earlier session).

Help family members develop ideas about what they carry or might want to carry.

It might be connecting and even fun to know what the others want and need.

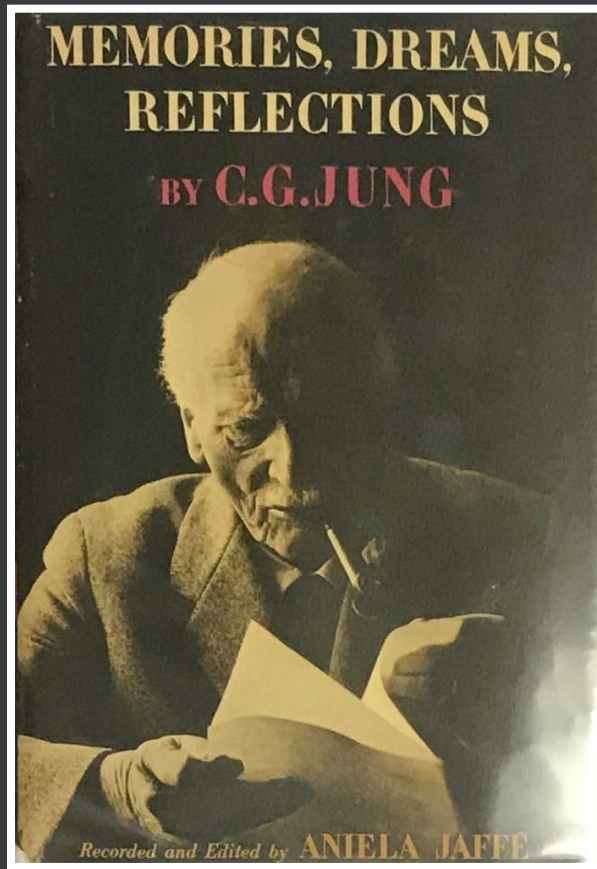
**Provide time each day** if possible to encourage each family member to express feelings, complaints, & wants in a safe environment. One way to achieve that is to allow each person 3-5 minutes to speak with no one interrupting *and* everyone listening. Be careful not to impose your own evaluation of stress on others.



Mary Oliver's poem . . .

Both Feelings – being able to hold opposite feelings side by side.

We human beings are complex.



“The world into which we are born is brutal and cruel, and at the same time one of divine beauty,”

Carl Jung , *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

We can allow ourselves to hold both sides, both the horror and the beauty, which moves us towards growth.

# RECOGNIZE EMOTIONS

- Recognize anger and unusual behaviors. These emotions are ways of expressing stress and explore what is underneath.
- Do not take them personally. Very often these emotions are helping reduce tension.
- Learn to accept imperfect behavior without ridiculing.



# MANAGING BOUNDARIES AND SETTING LIMITS

- When you are with your family be mindful of these boundaries and limits and **shed your work at the door**.
- If you do not already have bedtime and sleep rituals with younger children, now is the time to try to establish them.
  - This will help with reduction of anxiety and behavior problems. There is no excuse for children, especially teens, to not get enough sleep.
- Cancelled school and time with friends, parties, school trips, proms and graduations are all disappointing to children and teens.
  - Telling them that “LIFE is Full of disappointment” is *not going cut it*.
  - Know how you are feeling.
  - Children are very perceptive. Help them to talk about their feelings.
  - Let them vent.
  - When scheduling school activities include breaks for physical activity and snacks.
- Encourage reaching out to others and carrying out some activities that might alleviate others distress.
  - Requesting help with daily chores
  - Asking siblings to help one another
- Each day ask have each member of the family talk about what they grateful for in that day.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILY TIME TOGETHER

BREATHING TOGETHER – teach the family square breathing

Visualize a square

At the top of square breathe in to the count of 4,

Visualize the 1<sup>st</sup> side hold breath for count of 4,

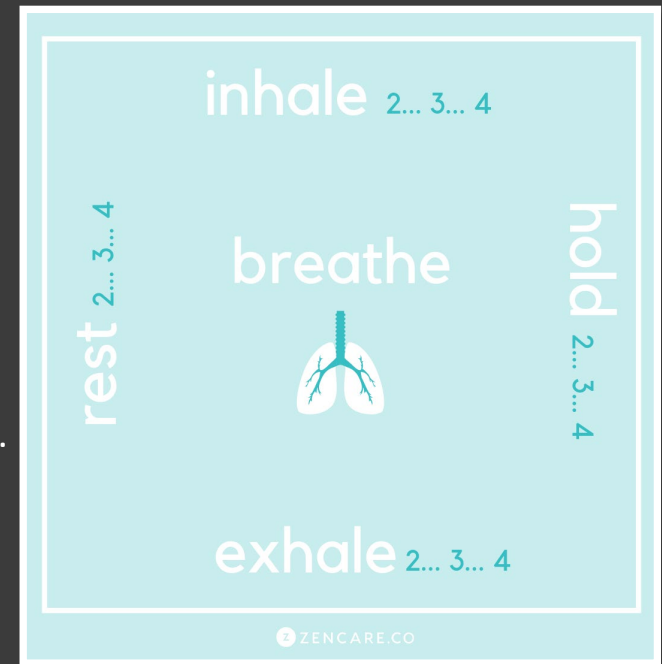
Feel the fullness,

Visualize the bottom line exhale for count of 4,

Now visualize the 2<sup>nd</sup> side,

Hold the emptiness to the count of 4.

- Watch comedies or sitcoms with each other. Laughter is healing.
- Ask each one to prepare a joke to share.
- Explore each others experience when you watch intense news broadcasts and reduce watching if it's too intense.
- Find ways to think outside the box/creatively and help family plan activities with you.
- Teach family members (and you) to hug yourselves.
- Yoga - Most yoga studios have free streaming – **caution** – only join beginner classes
- Music - Play calming music and encourage whole body listening.
- Dance- Play dance music and dance!



# MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILY TIME

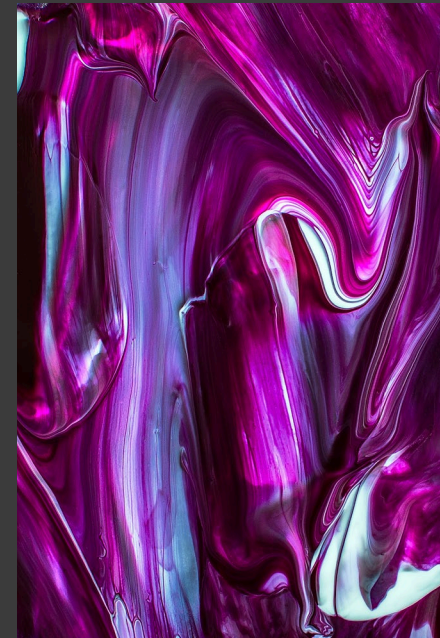
- Make Art together

- Find some crayons, markers, or paint.
- Ask each person to put their feelings into a color(s) or a drawing.
- Ask what they might be feeling and/experiencing about this time in their lives.
- Ask each one if they would like any comments from the other members,
  - Or do not allow any comments or criticisms.

“How can I do all of this?”

You may think “How can I do all of this?”

These are suggestions for the duration of your family life, not just for now. Be gentle with yourself.



Maria Orlova

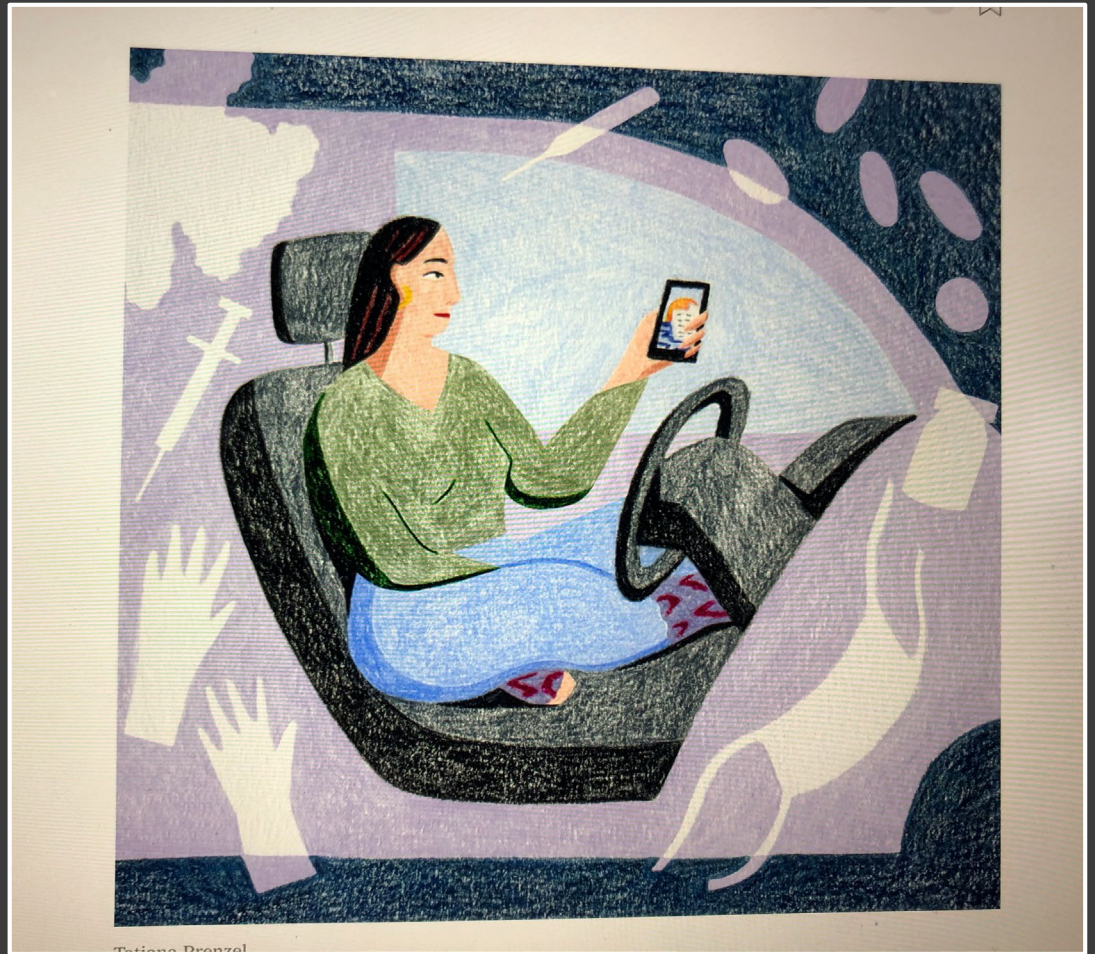
# COUPLE RELATIONSHIP

- Marriages that are struggling before the COVID-19 pandemic will feel the strain more intensely than those whose marriage is more stable.
- The quality of relationships within the family before and after the pandemic plays a role determining the likelihood for growth.
- If good relationships can be maintained or improved growth may be possible.
- Emotional support comes in the intimacy and communication.



Alex Iby

CRYING IN YOUR CAR—  
COUNTS AS SELF CARE!



Tatjana Dranzal

# EMOTIONAL STRAIN LEADING TO TENSION

Recognizing and reducing tension

Start with oneself - Impact of calming and knowing one's feelings affects others.

Crying in your car counts as self care!

Breathing is a healing measure.

Oh, would some power give us the gift  
To see ourselves as others see us!  
It would from many a blunder free us,  
And foolish notion:  
What airs in dress and gait would leave us,  
And even devotion!



Oh would some power the gift  
give us, to see ourselves as  
others see us!

~ Robert Burns

Explore within yourself—your attitude when being considered a ‘hero’ or ‘an angel’ at work and then coming home!

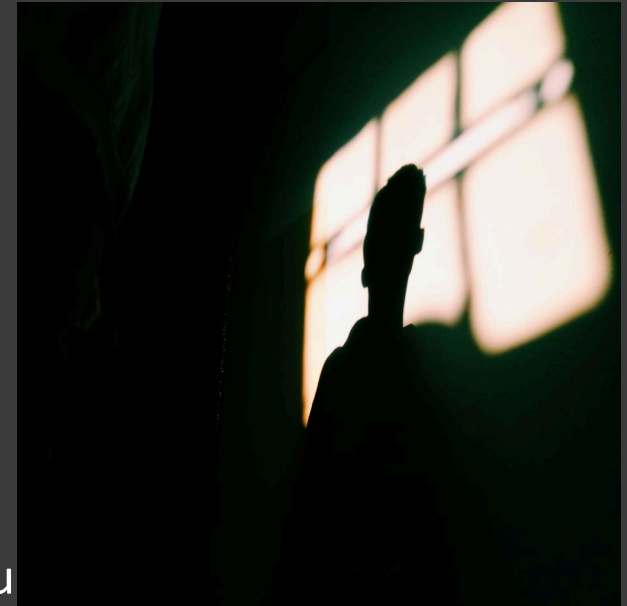
How do you bring up issues, do you store things up and bring them home?

# AWARENESS AND CONSCIOUSNESS

- **Pay attention** to how you sound.
  - Primitive brain will take over if your emotions are not identified.
  - If they are identified, and you are aware and convey that you are aware— you can set your tone.
- **Convey** kindness, compassion, gratitude, consideration and thoughtfulness
- **Recognize patterns** of blaming others as a way of warding off feeling like a failure or inadequate, or holding feelings of being at fault.

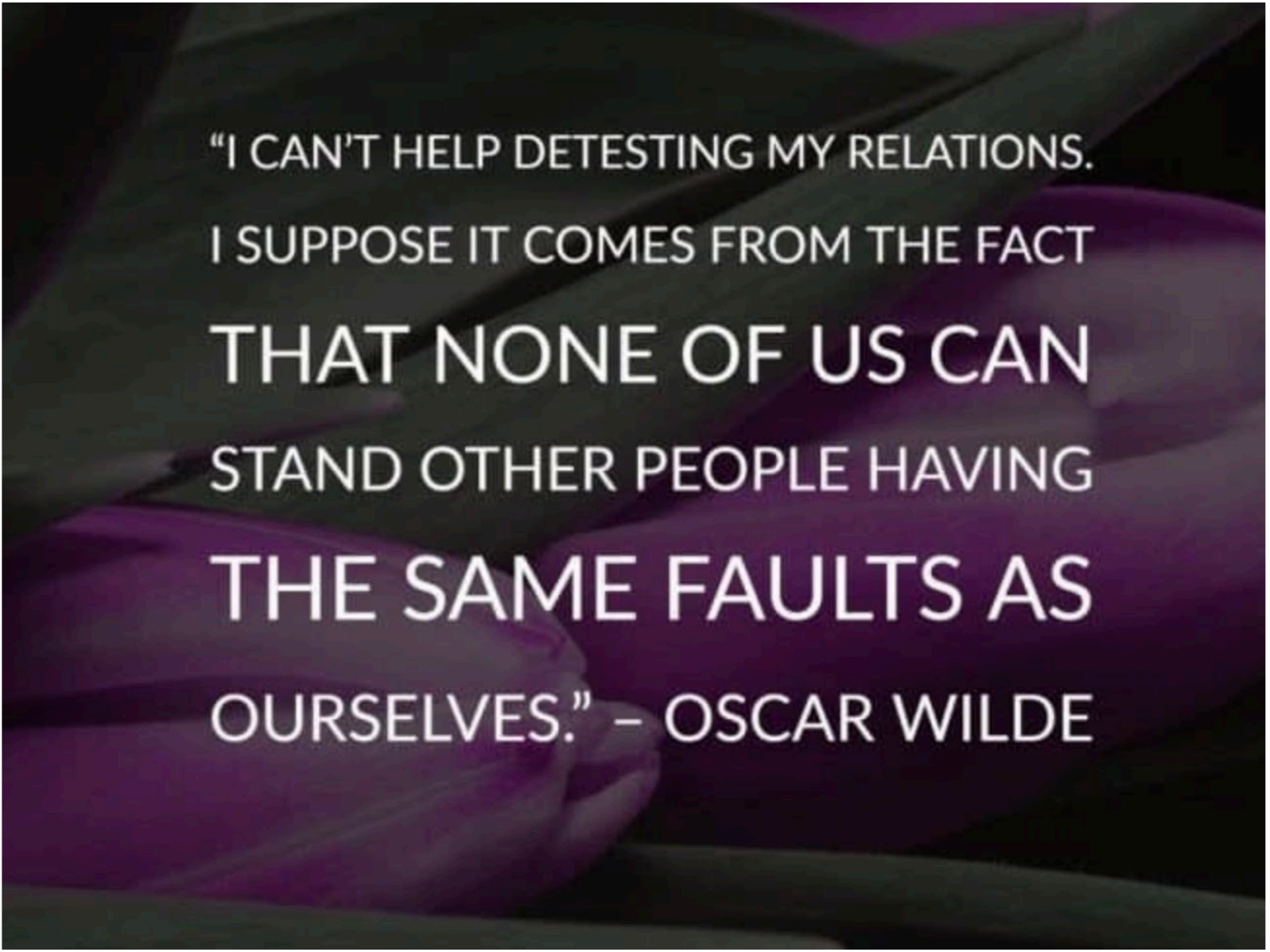
# SHADOW OR BLINDSPOTS

- We all have blind spots that a partner or family member can 'reveal' through conversations.
- During this time of stress and closer intimacy with partners, children or coworkers, we may experience ways of feeling or acting that feel foreign to who you know yourself to be.
- Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who found analytical psychology, said that the SHADOW personifies everything that we refuse to acknowledge about ourselves, and yet is always thrusting it upon us.
- This SHADOW can be negative or positive parts of ourselves that we don't like or can't recognize. We might project these onto others and at some point recognize it in ourselves.



Benjaima Kamel





“I CAN’T HELP DETESTING MY RELATIONS.  
I SUPPOSE IT COMES FROM THE FACT  
THAT NONE OF US CAN  
STAND OTHER PEOPLE HAVING  
THE SAME FAULTS AS  
OURSELVES.” – OSCAR WILDE

# SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Accept temperamental idiosyncrasies and allow some experiences that challenge but yet do not overwhelm one's coping abilities.
- Convey a sense of responsibility and caring and reward helpfulness and cooperation.
- Encourage activities that can serve as a sense of gratification and self esteem.
- Model a conviction that life makes sense despite the inevitable adversities, as well as faith that things will work out and that odds will be overcome.

# IMPACT OF HIDDEN STRESS AND TENSION

- The hidden stress **between** individuals and couples can manifest symptoms in children and those around the stressed persons.
  - We become entrenched in our habits and don't realize the effects behavior is having on each other, and not recognize the price paid.
- Stress is avoided but there isn't closeness.
- Immune systems can become compromised.
- Depression, raging, withdrawing.
- Constant bickering between adults /children.



Aditya Wardhana

# HEALING AND REDUCING STRESS AND TENSION

- Acknowledge that this is a stressful time.
- Practice 'square' breathing together. Suggest taking deep belly breaths.
- Soothe each other – tell what you want or need and ask what your partner wants.
- Explore the possibilities of meeting the wants and needs as expressed, but set boundaries and limits when necessary.
- We all need to be touched – provide touch and hugs.

COUPLES USUALLY IGNORE  
EACH OTHER'S  
EMOTIONAL NEEDS,  
OUT OF MINDLESSNESS,  
NOT OUT OF MALICE.



# FOR COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS



Age Barros

- Try to spend a minimum of 10 minutes a day in quiet, close physical contact *without* talking about “ conflicted issues.”
  - Do it even if it is uncomfortable initially.
  - You may begin to notice a reduction of conflicted feelings and less stress.
- Try to manage each others stress – eating healthy, sleeping enough, and relaxing.
- Learn what is stressing the other and ask about ways you can help
- To reduce the stress. Ask for help yourself.
  - You need to be able to
  - Explain your needs, and you need to be specific.

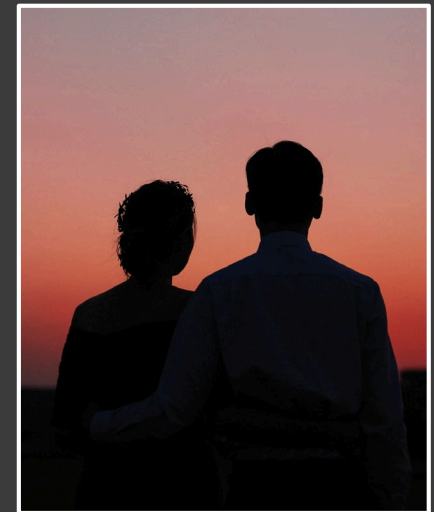
# WHEN THERE IS TENSION

- Frequently when there is tension, there is a pattern of blaming, which takes the form of devaluation and is destructive to couple relationships.
- Usually it is a way of warding off feeling like a failure, inadequacy or feeling like the one at fault.
- Based on the ability to accept imperfect behavior, feelings and motives, we human beings need to accept responsibility for behavior, feelings and motives.
- We are human beings and we are not perfect.

Sharpe, S., 2002

# BRIDGING THE SEPARATION

- MANAGING EMOTIONS DURING MOMENTS OF STRESS
  - Intense Emotions
  - Expressing emotions and sharing among others can give a sense of who we are as human beings.
  - Communicate emotions without dumping
  - Finding ways to soothe self and others
  - Healthy outlets to release Feelings



Gilstrap & Bernier, 2017



# HELPFUL AND HARMFUL AUTHENTICITY

- It is important to be able to share your feelings with your partner, and friends/family.
  - This is essential for you to have them understand what you have been experiencing as well as for them to understand your stress and anxiety.
- Authenticity
  - Expressing your inner thoughts and feelings on the outside, being vulnerable, without being self deprecating.
- Being aware of how you communicate
  - Know your attitudes, watch your tone, choose your words.



Grant, A., 2020

# ARGUING PRODUCTIVELY

- Arguments and disagreements aren't always bad.
- Unproductive arguments that happen over and over again are a time and emotional drain.
- Arguments are not just about trying to be right. It is an opportunity to understand things from a different perspective.
- There is skill to having a good argument.
- 3 Realms of Arguments
  - Realm of the head - what is true.
  - Realm of the heart- what is meaningful
  - Realm of the hands – what is useful and practical
- Be sure everyone arguing is in the same realm.

# ARGUING PRODUCTIVELY

- There is a sense of working with the same material (topics).
  - One thinks about arguing about facts and other more philosophical issues.
  - You will never reach an agreement.
- Arguments are not just about trying to be right.
  - They are opportunity for you to understand things from a different perspective.
- Need to engage in an open conversation and ask genuine questions.
  - Have a curiosity about what is being said.
- Try to summarize what you understand about their conversation.
- Conversations about differences are hard conversations.
  - If it doesn't turn out the way you would like, think about what went wrong.



Andriessen, 2006

# LONGING FOR NORMALCY AFTER COVID 19

## *NORMALCY? REALLY?*

- It is tempting to wonder when things will return to normal but the fact is that it will not be the 'old normal'. We can achieve a new kind of normalcy, even if this new world differs in fundamental ways.
- Chaos theory/ systems theory very simply states that . . .

Even seemingly insignificant systems can produce complex and confounding behaviors (chaos theory – butterfly effect) this ideas says that a small change in one place and moment of time such as a butterfly flapping its wings (Texas) can lead to an outrageous effect at another place and time (typhoon in Argentina).

“Exactly how the pandemic will end depends in part on medical advances still to come. It will also depend on how individual Americans behave in the interim. If we scrupulously protect ourselves and our loved ones, more of us will live. If we underestimate the virus, it will find us.”

Mc Neil, D. (2020, April 19). The Coronavirus in America: The Year Ahead. *New York Times*.



Veeterzy

# BREATHE

## Square Breathing

Visualize a square

At the top of square breathe in to the count of 4,

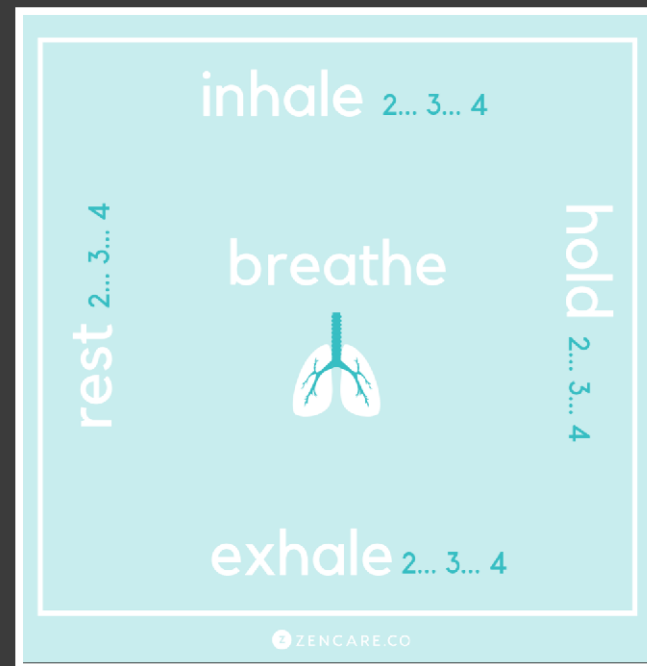
Visualize the 1<sup>st</sup> side hold breath for count of 4,

Feel the fullness,

Visualize the bottom line exhale for count of 4,

Now visualize the 2<sup>nd</sup> side,

Hold the emptiness to the count of 4.



# Questions



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Let us know how you are doing!

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