

**COVID-19: Supporting  
Students' (and Our Own)  
Mental & Emotional Health  
& Well-Being**

# What to Expect: Individual & Collective Grief



# What to Expect: Stages of Grief

Denial – Shock; Avoidance; Disorientation; “This is not really happening!”

## Anger, Anxiety & Fear

- Anger about imposed disruptions/restrictions and loss of agency/control
- Anger towards decision makers (politicians, health authorities, Fordham) & perceived source(s) of pandemic (China, Asians, Asian-Americans)
- Health & safety concerns for ourselves and others
- Worry about academics, internships, job market, finances, etc.

Bargaining – negotiating to change or circumvent the reality of the situation

## Depression

- Sadness about abrupt and unexpected losses (milestones, celebrations, future plans, relationships, sense of safety, \$\$; etc.)
- Loneliness, Boredom and Helplessness

Acceptance – Reconciliation; Meaning Making; Pivoting; Planning; → Resiliency/Growth

# What to Expect: Anticipatory Grief

DID YOU EVER HAVE THE  
FEELING OF IMPENDING DOOM?



Uncertainty about  
duration and  
implications of  
pandemic.

Uncertainty about what  
the future holds.

Sense of foreboding &  
apprehension.

Loss of safety.

## What to Expect: Stages of Grief

**THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF ARE TOOLS TO HELP US FRAME AND IDENTIFY WHAT WE MAY BE FEELING. BUT THEY ARE NOT STOPS ON SOME LINEAR TIMELINE IN GRIEF. NOT EVERYONE GOES THROUGH ALL OF THEM OR IN A PRESCRIBED ORDER.**

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler  
From *On Grief and Grieving*

# Students Who May be More Vulnerable

- Students with pre-existing mental and behavioral health concerns, such as anxiety, depression and substance abuse/dependence.
- Graduating seniors who are grieving the abrupt loss and disruption of their anticipated "senior experience."
- Asian and Asian-American students who may be experiencing sinophobic and anti-Asian bias, stigmatization, discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping, etc.
- International students due to travel related restrictions and potentially extended separations from family and friends.
- Students who experience being in school and campus life as protective factors.
- Students who struggle with loneliness and social isolation.
- Students who are returning to family or home environments that may compromise their mental and emotional health.
- Low income students who may not have secure housing, food, wifi, or other essential resources for online and remote instruction.

# Strategies for Coping & Protecting Mental Health

## Practice Self-Compassion

- Be kinder, gentler and more patient w/ ourselves rather than judgmental, punitive or harsh
- Recognize and accept that imperfection and vulnerability are inevitable and part of the human experience
- Be flexible w/ expectations and goals
- Set reasonable boundaries for ourselves and w/ others

## Limit & Monitor Social Media & News Consumption

- Reduces risk for vicarious trauma
- Increases likelihood that our emotional & behavioral responses are proportional to actual rather than hypothetical or sensationalized situations.
- Stay informed, but not be flooded or overwhelmed

## Sustain Social & Relational Connections

- “Social distancing” involves “physical distancing” not relational or emotional distancing.

# Social Distancing ≠ Social Disconnection



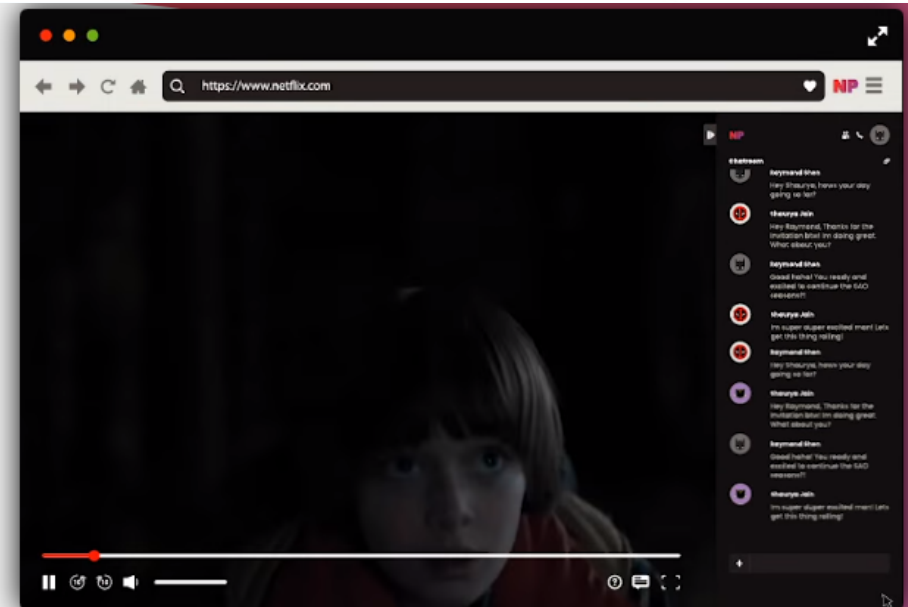
## A new way to watch Netflix together

Netflix Party is a new way to watch Netflix with your friends online. Netflix Party synchronizes video playback and adds group chat to your favorite Netflix shows.

Join over 500,000 people and use Netflix Party to link up with friends and host long distance movie nights and TV watch parties today!

Get Netflix Party for free!

\*ONLY available on Chrome browsers on desktop or laptop computers.





# Strategies for Coping & Protecting Mental Health

- Maintain Reasonable Structure & Routine
- Attend to Basic Needs (sleep, nutrition, exercise, etc.)
- Gratitude – research demonstrates that practicing being thankful enhances resiliency, happiness and well-being; counterbalances negative news
- Accept Vulnerability- acknowledge, lean into and process negative emotions rather than denying, neglecting or suppressing them; healthy distractions, however, are ok as long as we return to the feelings; embrace uncertainty and impermanence
- Get Outside (while maintaining physical distancing)
- Strengthen Self Care Practices - exercise, yoga, reading, journaling, art, video games, movies, cooking, music, etc.
- Internal Locus of Control – focus on internal rather than external locus of control

# I CAN CONTROL

(So, I will focus on these things.)

IF OTHERS FOLLOW THE RULES OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

THE AMOUNT OF TOILET PAPER AT THE STORE

THE ACTIONS OF OTHERS

MY POSITIVE ATTITUDE

TURNING OFF THE NEWS

FINDING FUN THINGS TO DO AT HOME

HOW LONG THIS WILL LAST

HOW I FOLLOW CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

LIMITING MY SOCIAL MEDIA

MY OWN SOCIAL DISTANCING

MY KINDNESS & GRACE

PREDICTING WHAT WILL HAPPEN

HOW OTHERS REACT

OTHER PEOPLE'S MOTIVES



Clipart: Carrie Stephens Art  
TheCounselingTeacher.com

# Mindfulness Meditation

- Reduces anxiety & “fight or flight” response by de-escalating autonomic nervous system arousal/activation.
- Promotes moment to moment awareness of internal experiences (feeling, thoughts, bodily sensations, etc.) while decreasing over-identification with those experiences.
- Cultivates equanimity or the mental capacity to relate to experiences non-reactively and with evenness, calmness and composure.
- Promotes living and being in the present moment.

# Mindfulness Meditation

“  
If you are depressed,  
you are living in the past.  
If you are anxious, you are  
living in the future.  
If you are at peace,  
you are living in the present.”

- Lao Tzu



# Recommended Mindfulness Resources

## The Best Meditation Apps of 2019

The Mindfulness App | Headspace | Calm | buddhify | Sattva |  
Stop, Breathe & Think | Insight Timer | 10% Happier | Breethe | Omvana |  
Simple Habit | Meditation & Relaxation Pro

<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/top-meditation-iphone-android-apps>

### [Koru Mindfulness for College Students](https://student.korumindfulness.org/free-guided-meditations.html)

<https://student.korumindfulness.org/free-guided-meditations.html>

# When to Seek Professional Help, Support & Consultation

- Persistent sadness, anxiety, anger, hopelessness, worthlessness, loss of interest in pleasurable activities, and/or feelings of being overwhelmed.
- Significant impairments or changes in functioning, such as sleep, getting out of bed, appetite, concentration, and/or hygiene.
- Impulsive, reckless or risky behaviors (substance abuse, self-injury, etc.)
- Thoughts or expressions about death, dying and/or suicide

# University of Miami Resources

**[Student Health Services](#)**

**[Academic Resources](#)**

**[Wellness From Home](#)**

**[Dean of Students Office](#)**

**[Stay Connected](#)**

**[University of Miami Counseling Center](#)**

# Off Campus Resources

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273 –TALK (8255)

## Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741

## Counseling Center After Hours Line

305-284-5511, press 1



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