Here we are, trying to figure out each day in a different environment as we learn to restructure our lives in the midst of a pandemic. In these uncertain times, it is important to add in as much consistency as possible and share our strengths, hope and compassion with each other.

**Going on a Bear Hunt**   Coronavirus: quarantined Italians sing from balconies to lift spirits

**Coronavirus: Germans sing Bella Ciao from rooftops in solidarity with Italy**

**Inspired By Italy, Dallas Residents Sing Together From Their Apartment Windows**

**A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood:** Residents put on concert for their community | WNT

Here are some tips to help bring some structure and balance into our new normal.

**Be Flexible**- Things are changing rapidly. Things are not the same. Make it **ok** to be flexible

**Get Connected**- 1). Try to connect with 3 friends or family members each day (text, phone, and video).

2). Contact that old friend that you’ve been thinking about. 3). Check in on your neighbors.

4). Try a support group online. 5). Try a fun group online. 6). Board games through zoom with friends and family, Dinners through Zoom, Charades through Zoom- etc.

**Balance**- 1). Balance getting fresh air, and exercise with being in the house and online.

2). Get out for a walk, its spring. Hear the birds singing, see the new growth appearing Along with the early flowers coming up. 3) Learn to love the smell of springtime dirt.

4). Clean up the yard from winter and if you don’t have a yard, rake for a senior neighbor as a kind gesture. 5). Plant seedlings. 6). Go to the beach- make a sand castle. 7). Hike!

**Schedule**- 1). Get a Plan. 2). Make a New Schedule- If you use to drive to work or take the bus- take a walk or use this time to Exercise 3). Schedule your meals. 4). Schedule study time, online time, a virtual connection with others, fun time... 5). Shower and dress for your online day, the same as you would have when you were going to school or work.

**Be Mindful** - “the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.”

Basically, mindfulness means being aware of and controlling your experience.

(Merriam-Webster)
Ways to remain Positive and reduce Stress

1. Be Kind to Yourself and others. Reflect on the positive things in your life right now. Notice and appreciate the small things.

2. Find an uplifting movie, podcast or book and share it with others.

3. Make a positive collage with old magazines of your goals and your future.

4. Practice Gratitude. Each day write down at least 1 thing you are grateful for. Write letters of gratitude to others; family, friends and co-workers.

5. Tear up old grudges. Write those old grudges on a piece of paper and tear them up! Get rid of them.

6. Recognize your accomplishments. Each Day write down at least 1 thing you have accomplished. Try for 3!

7. Spend time in Nature.

8. Meditate. Here are some Meditations to try: JackKornfield Meditations

9) Use Mantras. A Loving Kindness meditation is a type of Mantra where you practice well wishes to yourself such as; I am strong, I am well, I am at peace. Whatever feels the most natural to you to support yourself. Here’s an example of Loving Kindness Meditation:

Loving Kindness Meditation or Metta Meditation / Mindfulness Meditation / Mindful Movement

10) Use Mantras and positive self-talk to counteract Negative talk.

11) Write yourself a love letter.

12) Visualize your best possible self and hold this in your mind.

13) Set your intention. There is power in intention. Visualize and believe in how you want your day, your week and your life to be.

Using the Power of Intention in 5 Easy Steps

14) Do something Kind for someone else.

15) Recognize the good in others and tell them.
Immune System Support

How to strengthen your immunity during the coronavirus pandemic: Exercise, meditation, sleep and stress management

Sleep is Vital to the Immune System

How Sleep can Boost your Immune System

How Alcohol interferes with Sleep

Substance Misuse

In times of stress, and isolation sometimes people have a tendency to use substances even more to alter or change their current state of mind. This brief relief can damage our body’s immune system.

How smoking, vaping and drug use might increase risks from Covid-19

Alcohol and the Immune System

In these times of uncertainty, community can help. We can connect with each other in so many ways.

Elliot, a Graduate Student at USM is hosting the Silver Linings community support group through Zoom.

The Silver Linings group seeks to ask and answer the question "when all this is over with, how do I want to have spent my time of social distancing/ social isolation/ quarantine?" Perhaps it will be a period of personal growth, a period of increased self-reflection, an opportunity to learn new hobbies, a time to find and enjoy new movies or shows? Participants in the group can share and seek inspiration from others about how to find the silver linings during a period of social distancing. All are welcome to join!

Here’s the link to the Silver Linings recurring zoom meeting, every Tuesday at 3pm: https://maine.zoom.us/j/893913075

The ROCC will be hosting several support groups via Zoom. Please check for these groups on the ROCC website

For resources on Wellness and to learn about our NEW Tele Mental Health Counseling over Zoom at USM, go to:

USM Health, Wellness and Well-Being Page
To learn about online support groups and telephone recovery support visit:

Portland Recovery Community Center

Virtual Recovery Resources

Other information:

Governor Mills Launches New Online Resource Outlining Ways Mainers Can Help Mainers During COVID-19 Pandemic

Taking Care of your Behavioral Health- Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak

A video share from Sam:

Arnold Schwarzenegger Made an Incredible Coronavirus PSA with His Mini Donkey and Mini Horse


Coronavirus upside? Fish and dolphins seen in Venice canals during coronavirus lockdown

For Comments on this, newsletter or suggestions for future articles please contact: Diane Geyer, LCPC, LADC, CCS, NCC~ Clinician and Coordinator of Clinical Substance Use Services at USM~ 207-780-4050 Email: diane.geyer@maine.edu