



PSA

Date: April 16, 2020
To: All Media
From: Stephanie Krell, PIO Unified Command Team
Subject: **Mental Health and Stress Relief Resources**

The coronavirus pandemic has caused upheaval in everybody's life, be it job loss, illness, or working and studying from home, and it has come on top of the normal stresses of life.

To cope with the grief, loss and shock, Lindsay Pietsch, a therapist with Cascade Centers Inc., a Portland counseling service, encourages people to be patient with themselves and others and to stay virtually connected with friends and family, either by phone or video, at least three times a day.

Multiple big changes have happened quickly, she said. Nobody has gone through this before and nobody knows how to proceed, she continues. Job loss or work at-home orders mean people are no longer around co-workers with whom they could share this burden. Students are similarly separated from classmates.

She urged people to give themselves and others grace and patience. She defined grace as giving something to someone that in the moment, least deserves it. She described patience as "suffering with purpose." Patience doesn't feel good, she said, but it ultimately leads to reduced stress and anxiety as patience gets reciprocated.

Her other tips:

- Recognize it is an extraordinarily uncomfortable time for everyone.
- People who don't have children should understand that others do, and now those people have everyone at home at the same time, multiplying stressors.
- Don't compare yourself to others and feel you have no right to be stressed.

- Watch funny movies or do things that create compelling emotions.
- Push away thoughts about what isn't fixable. Think of five things you are proud of and return to them during feelings of hopelessness.
- Distract yourself with safe physical sensations, like holding an ice cube or eating something sour. Anything that will jolt and reset the brain.
- Focus on what you can choose, control or create.
- Reconnect with people you've lost touch with.
- Post home office images on community message boards. Help normalize the frustration everyone is feeling.
- Choose kindness. It begets kindness in return.
- If you're overwhelmed, focus on what you can do. Make a short list of what you want to engage in.
- Accept the shift in your life and figure out how to get the most comfort out of it.
- Keep a schedule.

Additional Resources

Move Your Way is a physical activity campaign from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promote the recommendations from the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. The Move Your Way tools, videos, and fact sheets on this page have tips that make it easier to get a little more active. And small changes can add up to big health benefits. (<https://health.gov/moveyourway>)

PREVENTS, The President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS) will focus on a holistic public health approach to suicide prevention. PREVENTS seeks to change the culture surrounding mental health and suicide prevention through enhanced community integration, prioritized research activities, and implementation strategies that emphasize improved overall health and well-being.

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