Psychological Wellbeing During the COVID Crisis: Strategies for Self Care

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Hello !

Introduce Yourself:

+ Name, Department, Role/Job on campus
+ Something special about you that you bring to your job

First thought/feeling you woke up with this morning:

+ Excited, Nervous, Tired, Sad, Anxious, Worried, Blank ? A mix of many ?
+ If possible identify and share the reason for the feelings/thoughts.

Objectives for today

+ Understanding how the COVID crisis and work from home is affecting our psychological wellbeing.

+ Exploring the concept of self-care and the obstacles to taking care of our psychological wellbeing.

+ Identifying effective strategies for working and coping during this crisis.

+ Committing to a self care plan and implementing it on a regular basis.

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What are we dealing with here ? Psychological impact of COVID crisis

+ **Stressors**: loss of freedom to do important and basic things, financial stressors, lack of information/too much information, stress about getting infected, isolation from important people, inability to do basic things such as grocery shopping or running errands.

+ **Typical emotional responses**: frustration, anger, boredom, anxiety, confusion, grief, sadness, numbness, irritability, daily mood fluctuations

+ **Work related responses**: low motivation, inability to focus and concentrate, indecisiveness, lower productivity.

**Each person responds to stress differently. Don't compare yourself to others and judge yourself for your reactions. **

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What are we dealing with here ? Psychological impact of COVID crisis

+ **Unpredictability/Uncertainty**: generates anxiety

+ Disruptions in our sense of time and day.

+ Difficulty thinking, focusing, remembering, planning and decision-making - simple things take longer

+ Juggling different roles without clear breaks and boundaries that a regular workday provides including commuting.

+ Cognitive load with zoom meetings: more fatigue and less productivity.

+ Existential angst and worry about mortality and humanity in general.

some may be thriving, enjoying more family time, discovering hobbies, engaging in generative tasks such as cooking, gardening

THINK   PAIR   SHARE

3 things that I am struggling with the most.

Things that I am currently doing to cope and take care of myself.

What is Self Care ?
What is Psychological Wellbeing?

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Awareness is key !

Self Awareness

+ Listening to one's mind- cultivating a relationship with it to attend to one's thoughts and feelings.
+ Knowing yourself is key to knowing how to take care of yourself
    + Do I really need a snack or a walk right now ?
    + Do I need a zoom happy hour with friends or do I need to go for a drive?

Strategies for cultivating Self-Awareness

+ Creating time for self-reflection (being in nature really helps)
+ Creating alone time and giving it priority
+ Checking in with yourself- journaling,

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Strategies for Self Care and Psychological Wellbeing

Structure and Routine in a day (in an adaptive and flexible way).

- Regulates feelings, structures our mind, creates emotional safety
- Sleep, Exercise, Nutrition
- Grooming !

Saying no ! Healthy Boundaries

- Question yourself- why am I saying yes ?

What is in my control and What's not ?

- Choosing our battles
- Letting go – of unrealistic expectations ?

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Strategies for Self Care and Psychological Wellbeing

Self Soothing (distress tolerance and emotional regulation)
- Express yourself: write about it, vent to a friend, journal
- Mindfulness, meditation, deep breathing

Sparking Joy !!!!!!!!
- Find activities that are meaningful, not necessarily fun
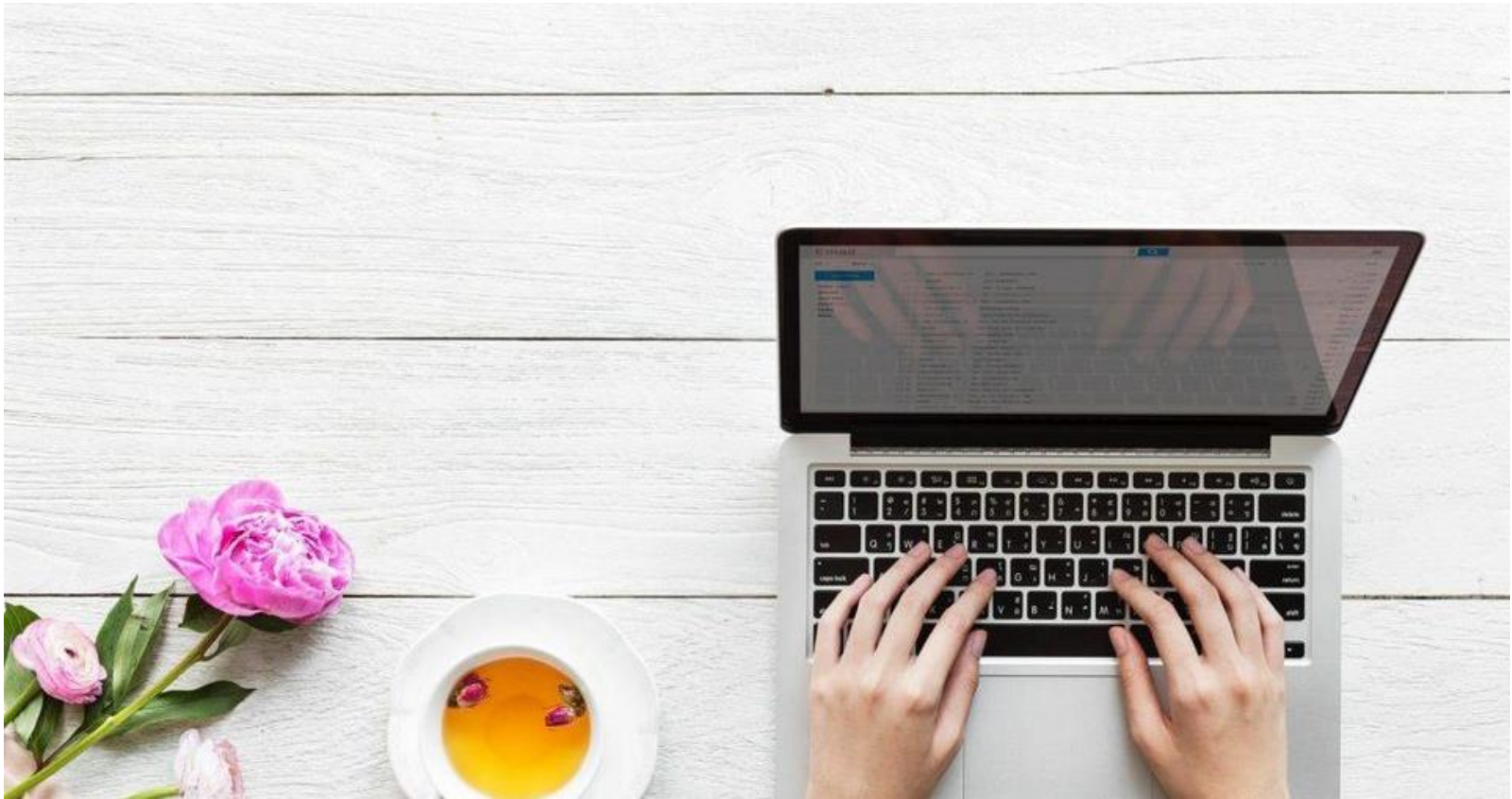- Use of humor, music, singing, artistic activities

Cognitive Reframing: what would I tell a friend ?
- I'm excited v/s I'm stressed

Practicing Gratitude

Helping others

Working, Performing and Staying Sane during COVID-19

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Find and create meaning

- **+** Take on new challenging tasks
- **+** Help colleagues
- **+** Take on a leadership role

Select goals that are meaningful and achievable

- **+** To combat feelings of futility

Break down big tasks into smaller achievable goals

Avoid Perfectionism

Working, Performing and Staying Sane during COVID-19

Organize your work station

Take breaks, Move !

Say no to multitasking !

Disconnect from devices

Reward yourself for achieving small goals

FORGIVE YOURSELF !! YOU ARE HUMAN !!

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO SLOW DOWN

Commit to yourself

- Identify 2-3 things you will do weekly to take care of yourself
- Evaluate your plan and if its helping in 2-3 weeks
- Try some new ideas
- Don't give up !!!

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