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**INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MINDED EMPLOYMENT 1ST MODELS**

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# **Practice and Exercises for Better Mental Health in Times of Stress**

**Jennifer White, CEO**

**206-406-9900**

**jennifer@ableopps.com**



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# Research is Sparse, but Consistent

**Large-scale disasters, whether traumatic (the World Trade Center attacks or mass shootings), natural (hurricanes), or environmental (oil spill), are almost always accompanied by increases in depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance use disorder, a broad range of other mental and behavioral disorders, domestic violence, and child abuse. This tells us attention to well-being becomes urgent.**

- ▶ **Isolation can lead to loneliness, we need to develop ways to intervene, setting daily contact within your team, or using a buddy system**
- ▶ **It is critical to have concrete plans in place to respond to individual and group emergencies, set protocol for response to mental health issues**
- ▶ **Establish long-term strategies, the aftermath will also require attention**



# Trauma, Make a Plan

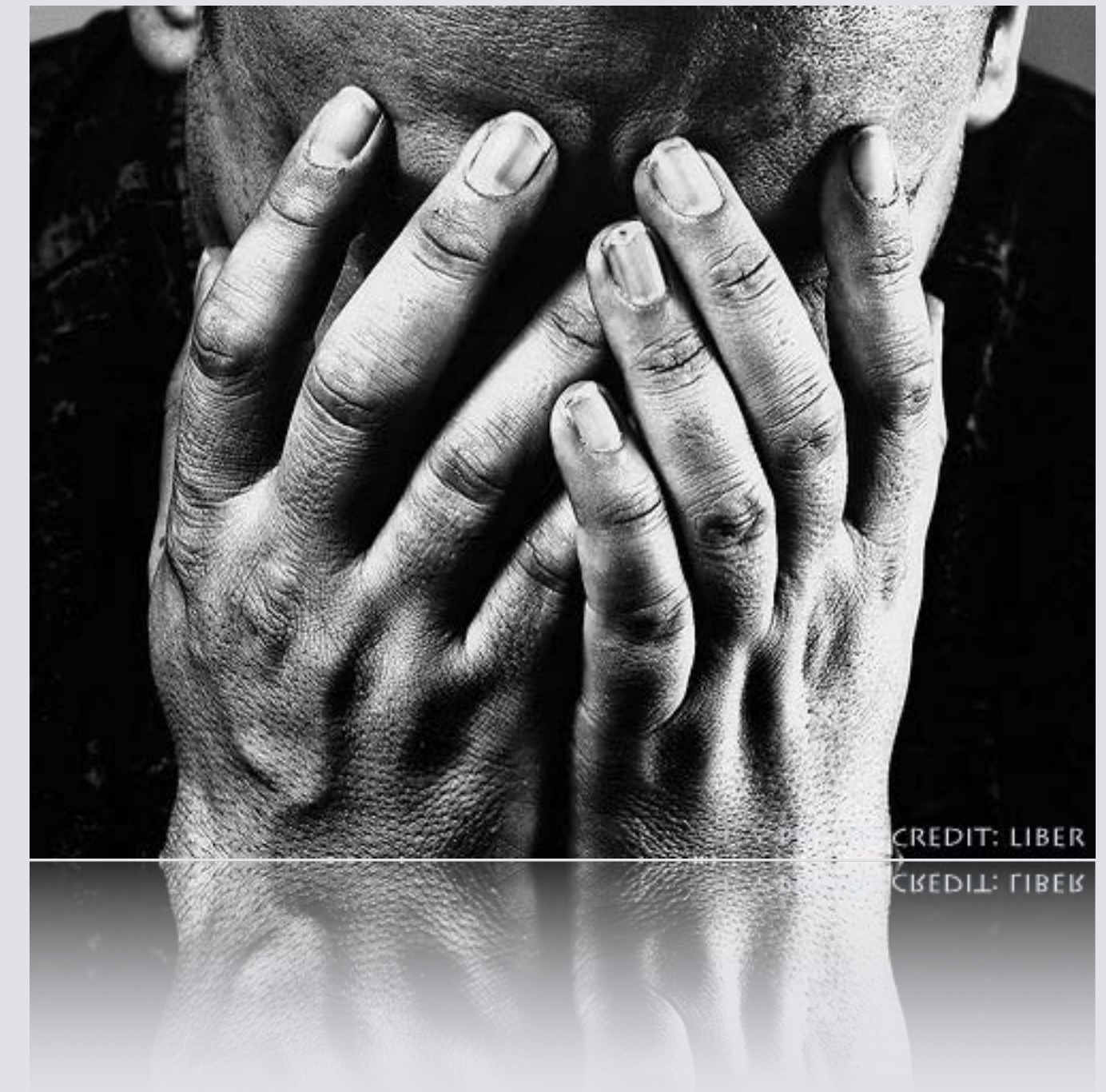
- ▶ **Understanding triggers to trauma: isolation, powerlessness, poverty**
  - \* **Trauma can be ancestral, and/or in my lifetime**
  - \* **“If it’s hysterical, it’s historical”, response requires awareness**
  - \* **Identify your team, create group email lists, a phone tree**
- ▶ **Build a safety net, define needs: use a scale of 1-5, then prep the care team on supports needed for each. For you, your families and your customers.**
- ▶ **Find and/or keep talking to your counselor/therapist**
- ▶ **Emergency Resources:**
  - \* **911, brings local services**
  - \* **Crisis Text Line, Text “home” to 741741**
  - \* **Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255**
  - \* **National Institute of Mental Health**



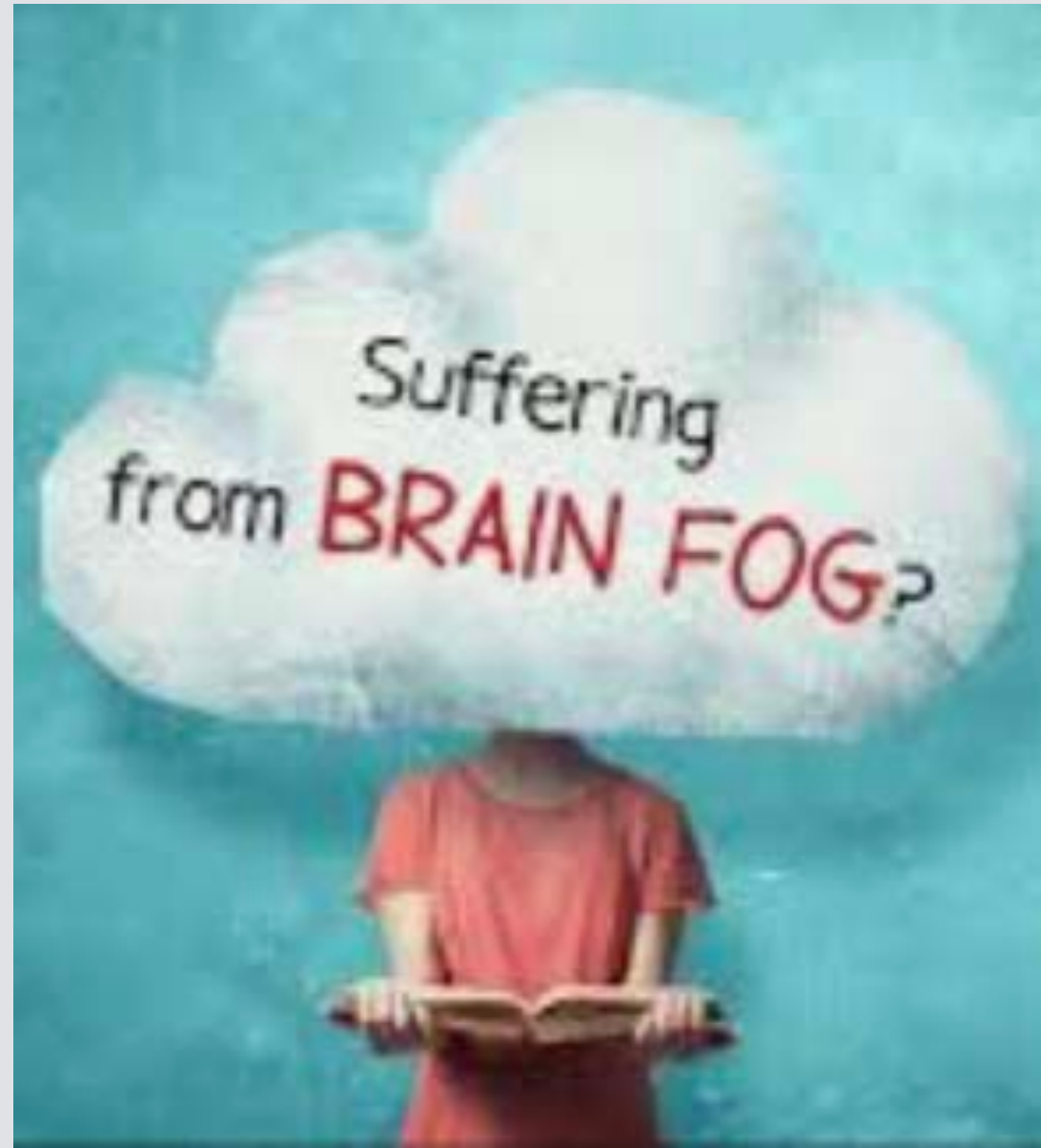
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

# Grief and Solutions, Balancing Needs

- ▶ Name the experience, “I see you are...” and create “containers” when triggered and emotions are flooding/overwhelming: project onto and roll up the Movie Screen, put it in Tupperware with a tight lid, inside an Envelope, etc. This can be a temporary hold while you get help
- ▶ Guide solutions that do not mask or override, but address the need to act productively to counter the scales (breath)
- ▶ Reminders that you are not alone. Find opportunities for Community Grief and Celebration
  - \* The Black Hole Story







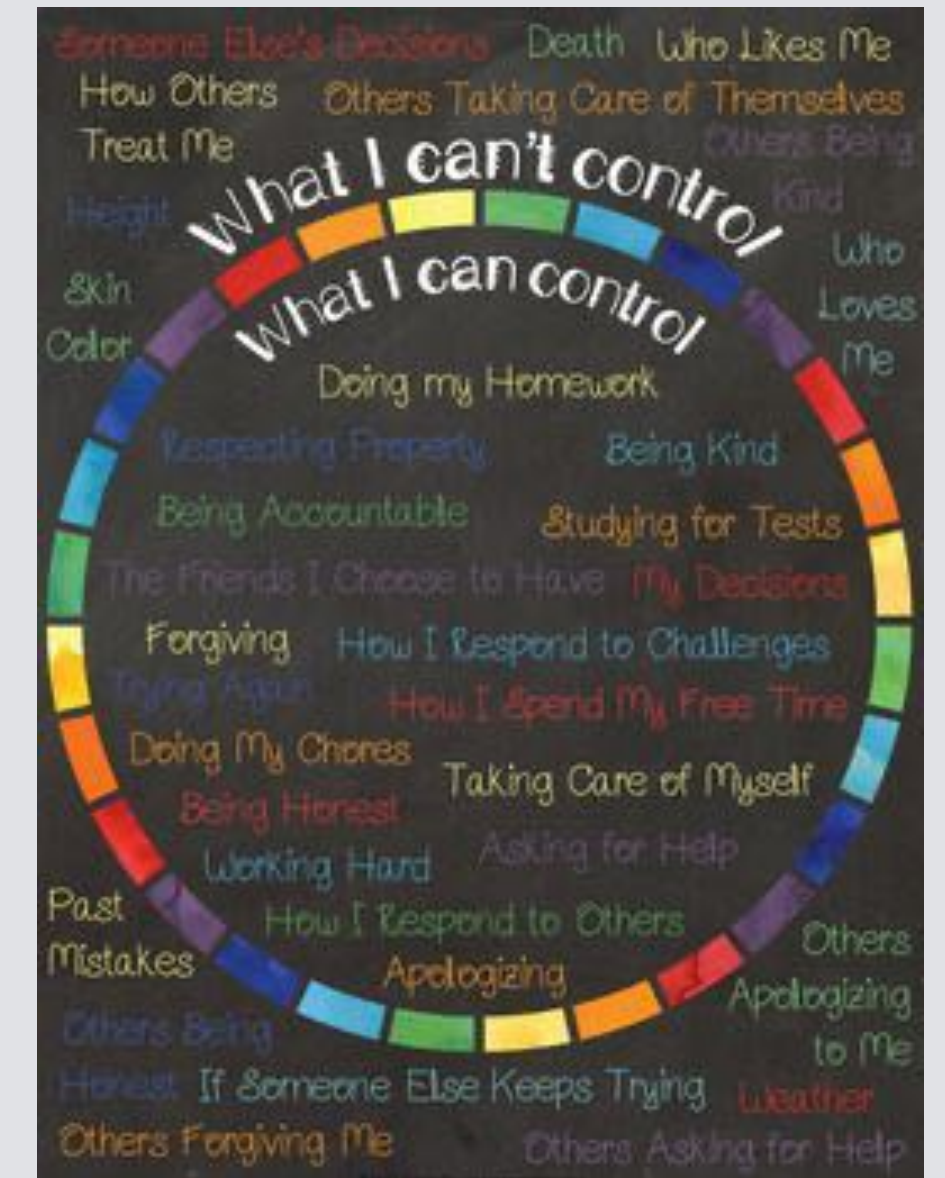
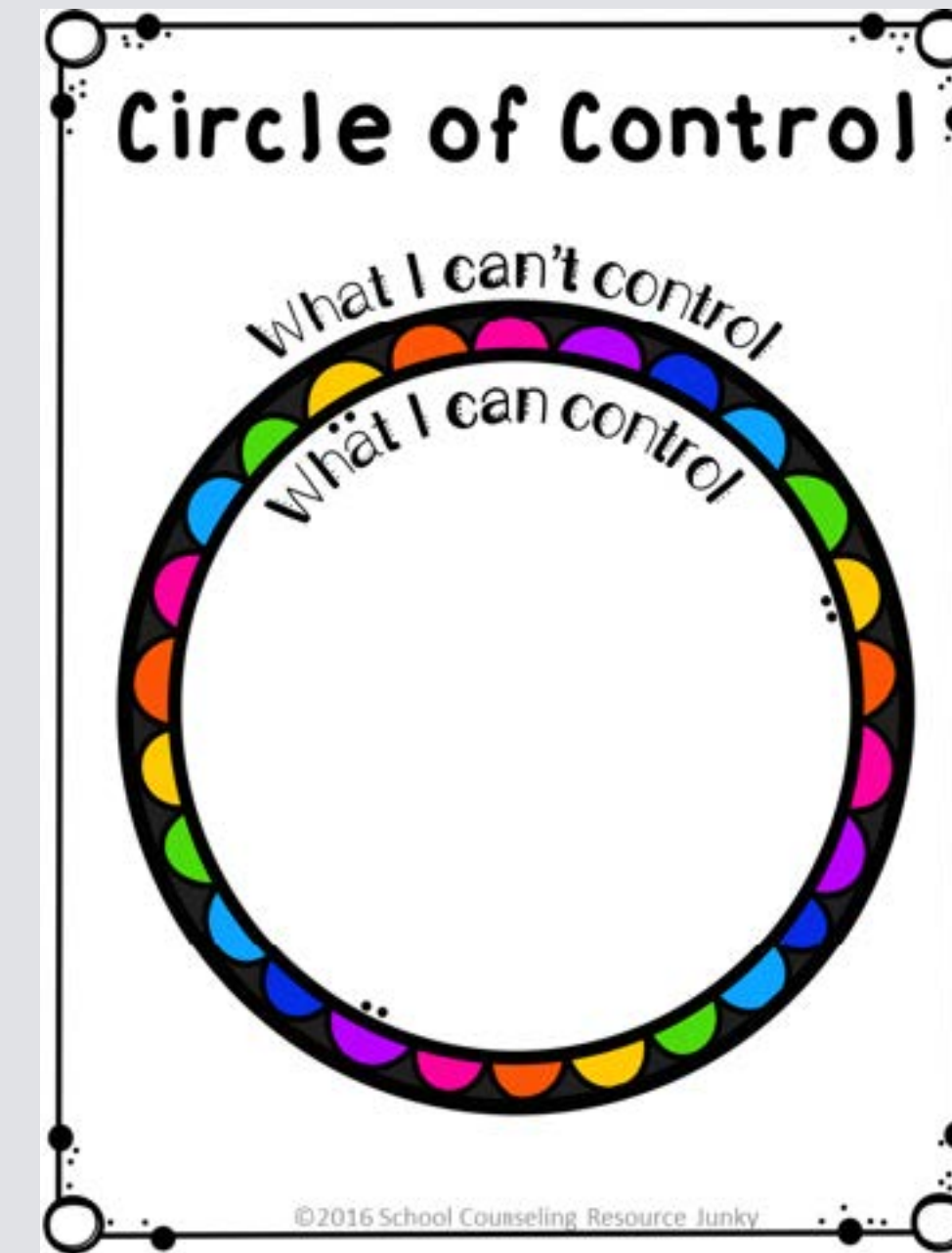
**Nancy Sin, assistant professor of psychology at the University of British Columbia, says that in stressful situations like this, “Our stress hormones increase. We prepare to fight or flee.” And as this pandemic continues and isolation drags on, “we’re having a lot of these adaptations, each time we feel stressed, each time we feel worried. Over time, these hits to our physiology and psychology can accumulate.”**

**That accumulation is called the allostatic load, essentially the damage on our bodies when they’re repeatedly exposed to stress. And while it feels like I’m doing nothing most days, my brain is still dealing with the anxiety and strain of this pandemic. I’m exhausted not because my body is working hard, but because my brain is.**

**Brain Fog, By Emily Baron Cadloff, April 2020**

# Strategies

- ▶ **Focus on What You Can Control**
  - \* **Make a list to define what you can/can't control**
- ▶ **Somatic Calming: eye tapping, hot hand rest, muscle by muscle, 5/1/5 breath to reset neurology**
- ▶ **5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Exercise**
  - \* **Describe 5 things you see in the room.**
  - \* **Name 4 things you can feel (“my feet on the floor” or “the air in my nose”)**
  - \* **Name 3 things you hear right now (“traffic outside”)**
  - \* **Name 2 things you can smell right now (or 2 smells you like)**
  - \* **Name 1 good thing about yourself**






# Strategies

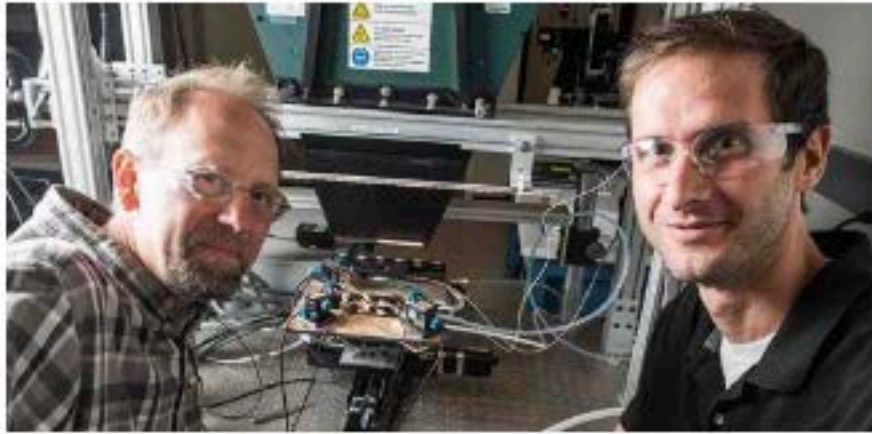
- ▶ Morning Mindset - Gratitude Lists    Evening Mindset- Review and Request
- ▶ Create Routines, find a “Comfort Spot”,  
schedule regular time there
- ▶ Set Boundaries for Media Consumption
  - \* No news before bed, limit social media
- ▶ Create Playlists
- ▶ Make a Self-Care list, reading? bath? art?
- ▶ Find something funny, every day!
- ▶ Check out the Good News Network!

Latest Articles



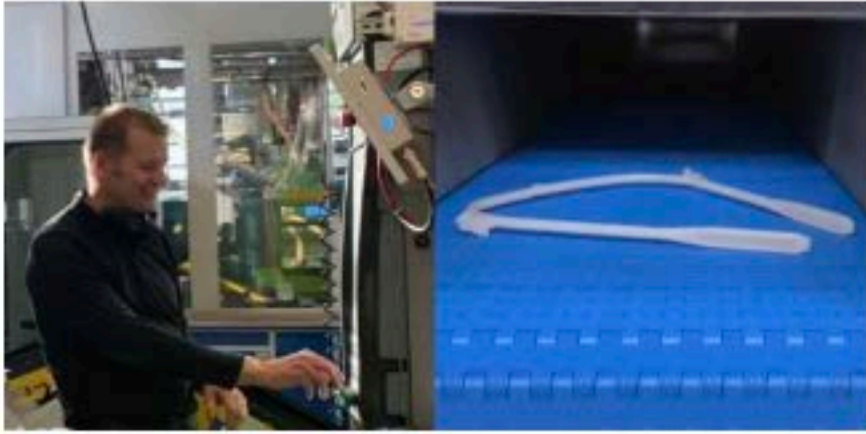
When Struggling Restaurant Tried to Sell Bourbon for \$20K, Anonymous Veteran Buys It for Twice the Price

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Apr 15, 2020 Science



LEGO Factory is Now Producing Thousands of Protective Plastic Face Masks for Medical Workers



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# Develop a Self-Care Toolkit, Keep it in Your “Comfort Spot”

Include sensory components:

<b>touch</b>	<b>soft blanket</b>
<b>taste</b>	<b>favorite tea</b>
<b>sight</b>	<b>photos of vacation</b>
<b>hearing</b>	<b>comforting music</b>
<b>smell</b>	<b>lavender or eucalyptus oil</b>
<b>vestibular (movement)</b>	<b>swing or rocking chair</b>
<b>proprioceptive (comforting pressure)</b>	<b>weighted blanket</b>

A journal, an inspirational book, or a mandala coloring book, bubbles to blow or blowing watercolor on paper through a straw are visually appealing as well as work on controlled breath. Mint gum, ginger ale, ice packs, and cold are also good for anxiety regulation.



# Food Feeds Well-Being

- Meal Planning Helps
- Keep It Simple
  - \* Soups & Salad
  - \* Veggie Wraps
  - \* Baked Eggs
- Bulk if You can Freeze
- Pantry of Options
- Hydrate, thirst can feel like hunger, reinforcing overeating, drink water
- Gentle is the way, have mercy
  - \* Reset as often as needed





# Movement & Music Feed Well-Being

- ▶ Repetitive & Left/Right
- ▶ Stretches
- ▶ Group Zoom
- ▶ Chair Exercises
- ▶ So many websites...

**Music, swaying, singing,  
humming all reset balance and  
bring presence to the moment.**





# Beauty Feeds Well-Being

- Move, Get Outside, Walk Barefoot



- Look for the beauty of humanity- This baby zebra has caretakers who wear special jackets so that he can “imprint” correctly and eventually return to the wild.



# TREES!!



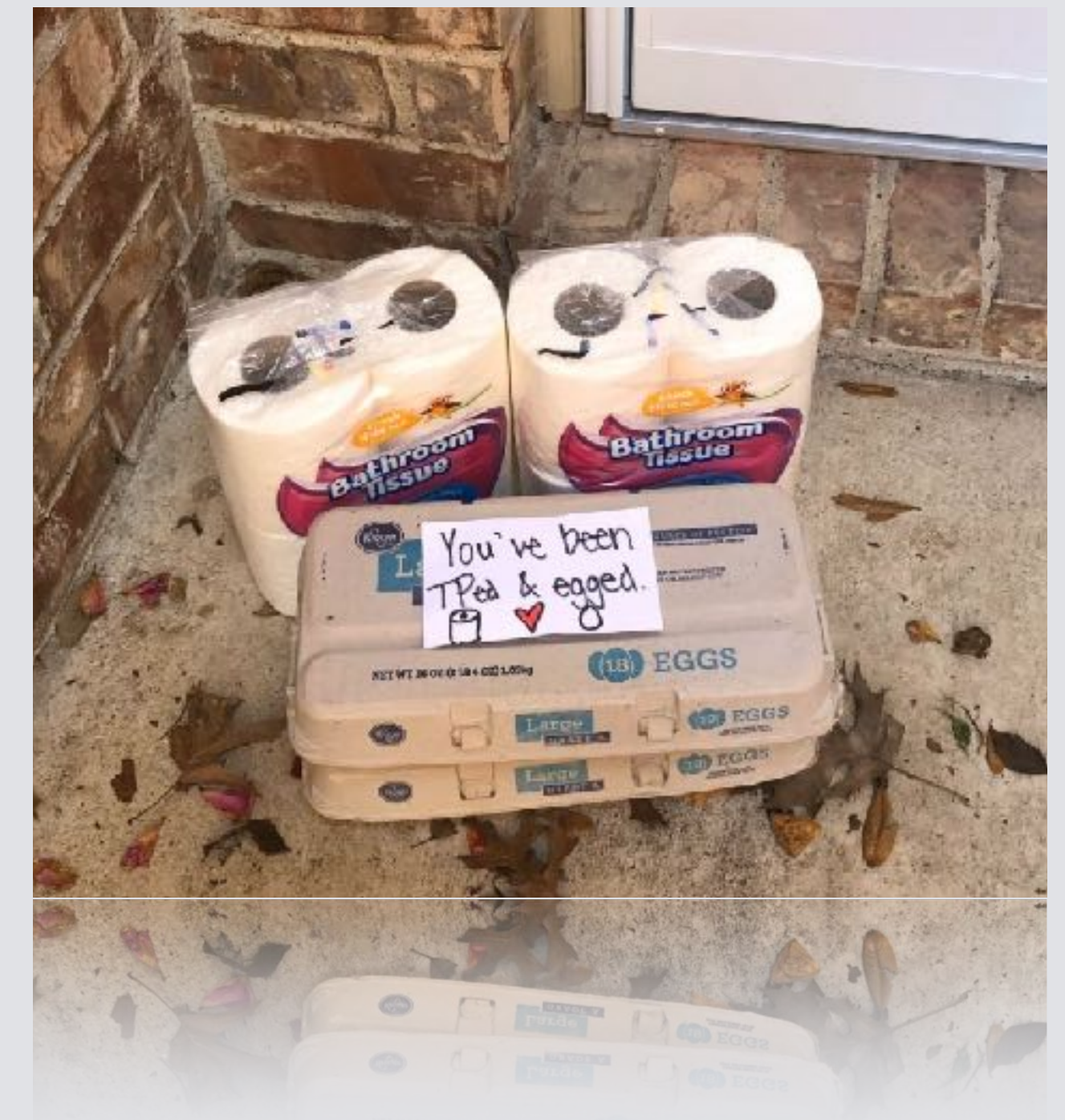
**\* The Forest Service  
Recommends Hugging Trees  
While You Can't Hug Others!**



# Look Outside Yourself

## Helping Others

- ▶ Writing a letter to someone you care about
- ▶ Write a letter to essential workers who are still working through this crisis:
  - \* your local hospital, doctors, nurses and janitors
  - \* your mail delivery person and/or delivery driver
  - \* the grocery clerk
  - \* garbage pick up workers
- ▶ Leave a note or draw a picture and leave it on your neighbors door. Or leave them a small gift of flowers or food
- ▶ Make phone and video calls to check on your friends and family





# Tonglen



**“Sending and taking,” an ancient practice to awaken compassion. With each in-breath, we feel the pain of others. With each out-breath, we send them relief. Include yourself when sending relief.**

**\* Breath and compassion practices are used by leaders across religions and spiritual practices. Find what is comfortable for you. Offer secular practices, to keep everyone feeling welcome.**



**Humanity is now in a  
Community Of Practice  
together, responding to the  
global pandemic**

**We are all in this together**

