



Finding the Silver Lining - Living and working with the Covid 19 pandemic

Managing your energy! And reaching beyond!

Goals for Today

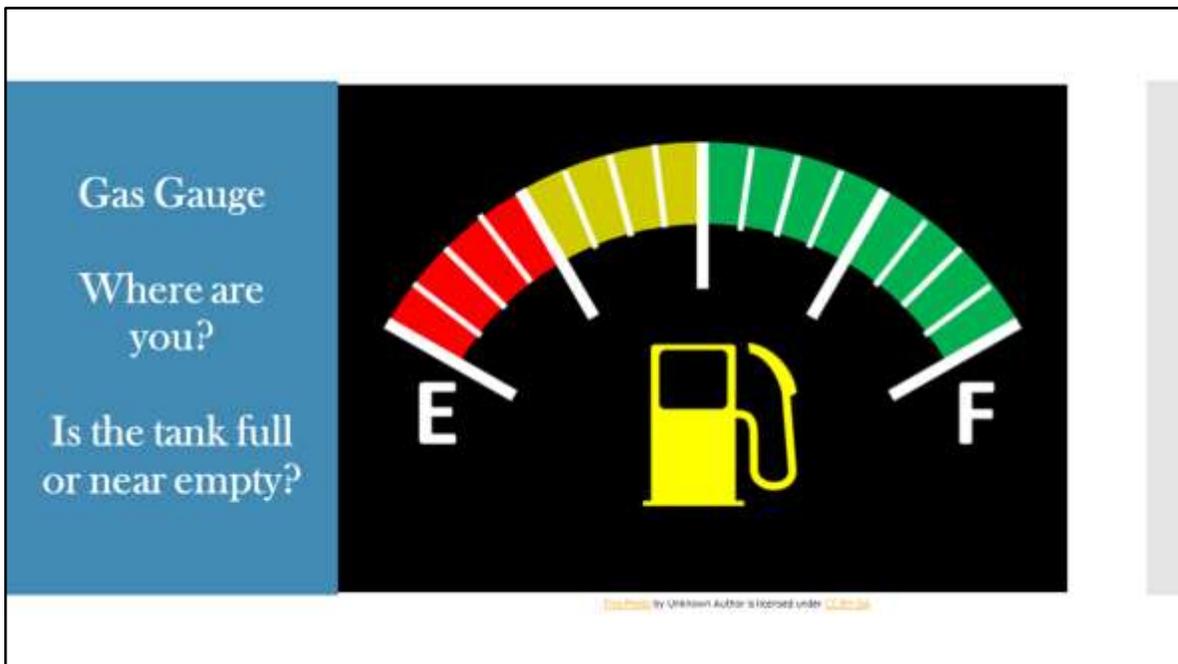


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- Reflect on your current situation and state of being.
- Put techniques into practice.
- What will you take with you and what will you shed?



Herbert Freudenberger lists these questions as a general gauge:

Do you tire more easily? Do you feel fatigued rather than energetic?

1. Are people annoying you by telling you things like " You don't look so good lately"
2. Are you working harder and harder and accomplishing less and less?
3. Are you increasingly cynical and disenchanted?
4. Are you often invaded by a sadness you can't explain?
5. Are you forgetting appointments, deadlines, personal possessions, etc..?
6. Are you increasingly irritable? More short-tempered? More disappointed in people around you?
7. Are you seeing close friends and family members less frequently?
8. Are you too busy to do even routine things like phone calls, read reports or send out cards?
9. Are you suffering from physical complaints?
10. Do you feel disoriented when the activity of the day comes to a halt?
11. Are you unable to laugh or joke about yourself?
12. Is joy elusive?
13. Do you have very little to say to other people?

How would you describe your energy level today?



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Strategies You Can Use Right Now

Square breathing

This simple exercise can help calm your nervous system and alleviate feelings of anxiety when you're getting overwhelmed.



The diagram illustrates the square breathing exercise. It features a central figure of a person in a meditative pose. Surrounding the figure are four colored arrows forming a square: a green arrow on the top pointing right labeled 'Breathe IN 1... 2... 3... 4', a blue arrow on the right pointing down labeled 'HOLD 1... 2... 3... 4', a blue arrow on the bottom pointing left labeled 'Breathe OUT 1... 2... 3... 4', and a green arrow on the left pointing up labeled 'HOLD 1... 2... 3... 4'.

www.ccsa.ca www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19

This simple exercise can be done anywhere, even in a challenging environment. Before you enter a patient's room, begin or finish a shift, or whenever you just need to ease some tension, take a moment to slow down your breathing. While this can be more difficult when wearing personal protective equipment like a mask, slower breathing can help calm your nervous system and alleviate the physical symptoms of stress and anxiety.

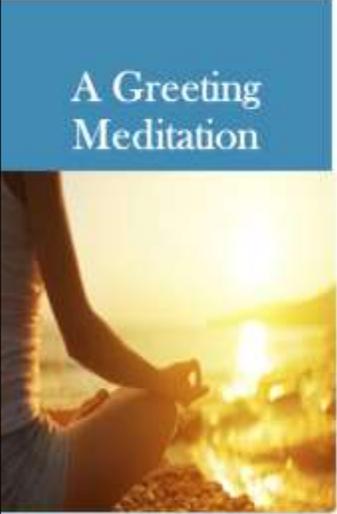
Code Lavender



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The purpose of the code lavender is to be a circuit breaker in times of stress. It allows a team member or leader to trigger a holistic relief valve for a specific team member or team. It is a coordinated response when a team or a team member needs support and allows for a reprieve or relief from the stress experienced during care delivery.

I was fortunate enough to have experience a Code Lavender with Father Austin at St. Joseph's Health Centre in Toronto. A Code Lavender was called for my team at the outset of the second wave.



A Greeting Meditation

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- Sit in a comfortable position. Gently get settled in your mindful body.
- Close your eyes either fully or half.
- Take a couple of deep breaths – breathe in ...deeply and breathe out... deeply.
- Keep your attention on your breath. The breath that flows into your body and fills you full of life.
- Now gently go with your breath, into your body, to the center, the core of your body, i.e., between your neck and your abdomen.
- Bring your attention, now, to your heart...
- (If you like, gently bring and place either of your hand or both the hands on your chest where your heart resides!)
- Continue to focus your mindful attention on your heart, inside of your heart.
- Now taking your name, gently and lovingly greet yourself in your heart.
- I am going to say my name, you may say your name "Hi, Susie". Stay with yourself in your heart...
- Now take a moment to greet the entire group... Hi/hello group. Stay with the group in your heart...
- Now slow gently open your eyes and greet those around you with a smile.

Austin Francis, ThM, MEd, RP, RMPFT, Spiritual and Religious Care, Unity Health Toronto – St. Joseph's Health Centre

Greeting yourself in your heart:

A Greeting Meditation (Mindfulness exercise & centering practice)

Sit in a comfortable position.

Gently get settled in your mindful body.

Close your eyes either fully or half.

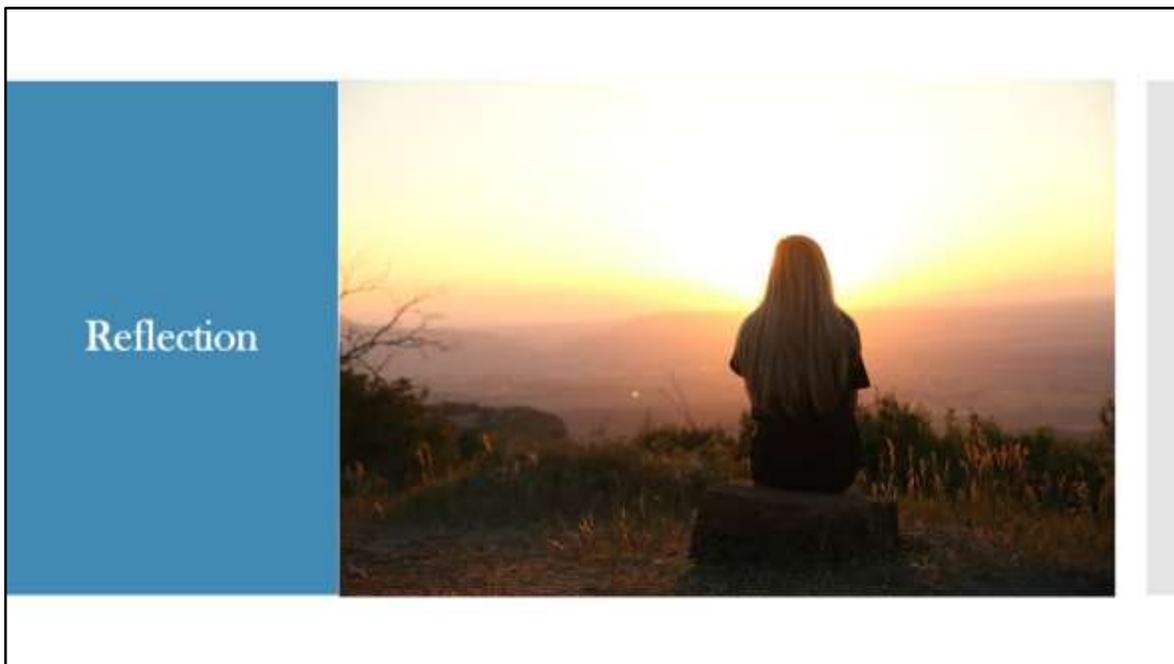
Take a couple of deep breaths – breathe in ...deeply and breathe out... deeply.

Keep your attention on your breath. The breath that flows into your body and fills yourself with full of life. Now gently go with your breath, into your body, to the center, the core of your body, i.e., between your neck and your abdomen. Bring your attention, now, to your heart. (If you like, gently bring and place either of your hand or both the hands on your chest where your heart resides!

Continue to focus your mindful attention on your heart, inside of your heart. Now taking your name, gently and lovingly greet yourself in your heart.

I am going to say my name, you may say your name "Hi, Austin". Stay with yourself in your heart... Now take a moment to greet the entire group... Hi/hello group. Stay with the group in your heart... Now slow gently open

your eyes and greet those around you with a smile.



The part of the Code Lavender that I appreciated immensely was the reflective piece.

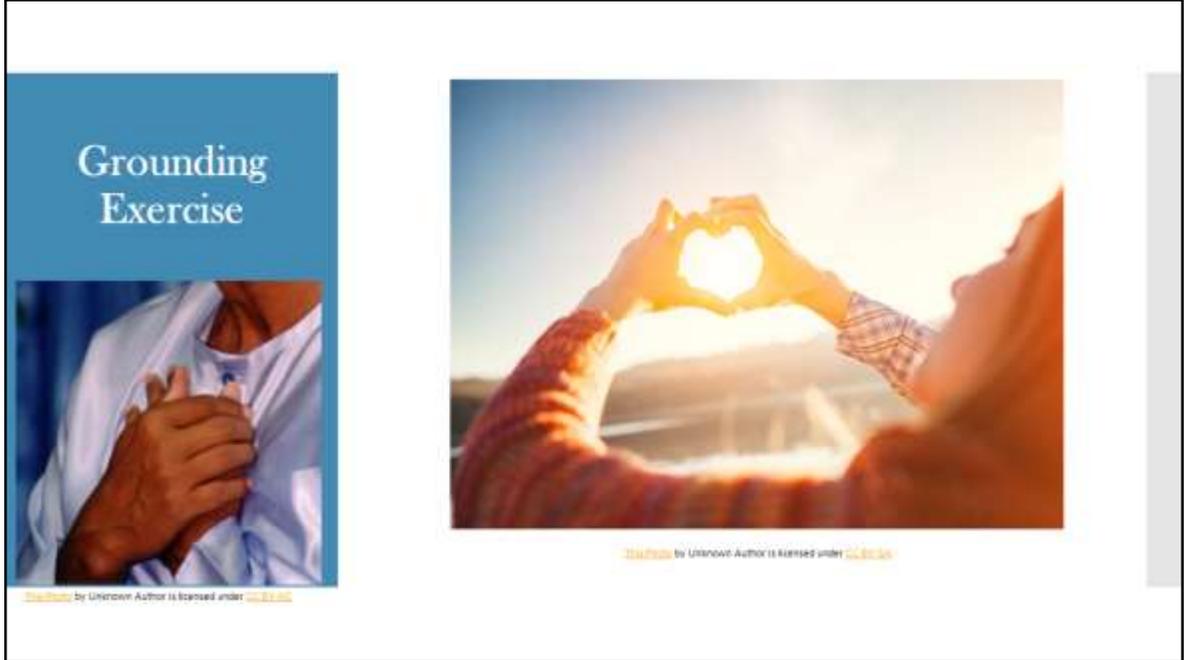
The opening greeting/ meditation set the tone in reconnecting with yourself despite the busy-ness of work even in the place of that busy-ness.

Objective level *What is seen, heard, touched or what you recall having seen and heard*
:E.g., What are some of the things we want to speak about our life today? What have I/we observed? Everything I/we know about it?

Reflective level *Associations, feelings, reactions and memories triggered by the facts*:E.g., What association do I have with this? What emotions/affects thoughts I have? What is my gut level reaction? What are my concerns about this? Where do I remember the whole team reacting”

Interpretive level *Implications, significance and meaning from this situation*: E.g., What have I learned? What seems to be missing? What are some of the options open to me/us?

Decisional level: *Resolution, action, future directions, next steps* E.g., What are our next steps? What have we learned here that we need to carry forward? What change is needed?



When you are feeling overwhelmed practice a Grounding Exercise one method is the five, four, three, two, one

- Acknowledge FIVE things you see around you. ...
- Acknowledge FOUR things you can touch around you. ...
- Acknowledge THREE things you hear. ...
- Acknowledge TWO things you can smell. ...
- Acknowledge ONE thing you can taste.



If you were going to use one word to tell your great grandchildren the positive lessons that we learnt from Covid 19 what would they be?

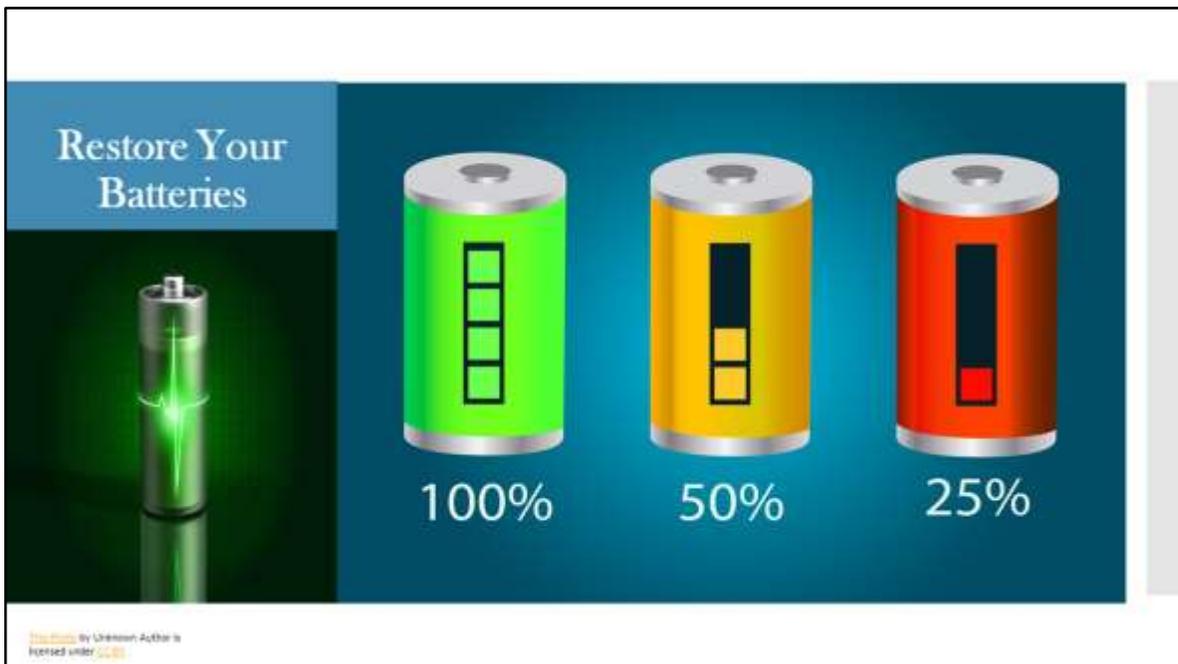


PARTICIPANTS TO ANSWER IN THE CHAT

- Connection with family and friends
- Not taking people for granted
- -Checking on others, neighbours, friends, co-workers
- Sense of community
- Your contribution matters – it the small that made a huge difference
- Truly listening to others and forming bonds, compassion, caring, reaching out, reaching beyond ourselves, breaking through fear and helping,
- Not alone, others do care
- For residents being the family that they were able to speak or see daily



- Coming out from under the mask
- There you are
- Communicating and interacting
- Letting yourself shine
- Resurfacing
- Permission to celebrate joy and happiness again

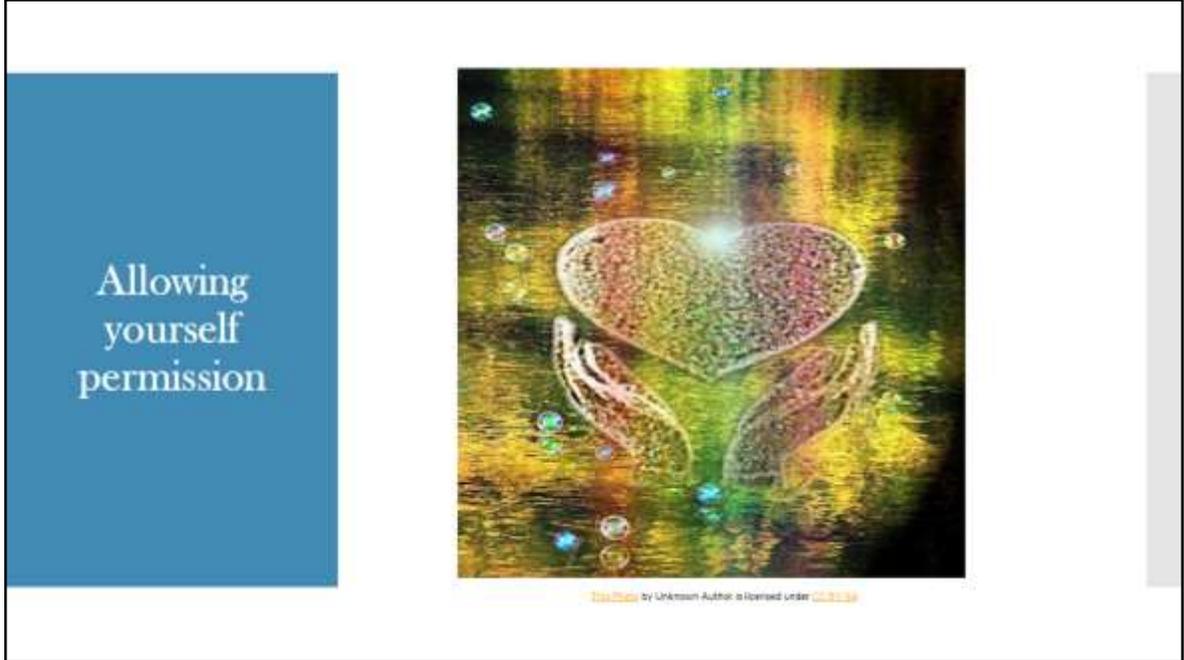


Recharging with positive emotions:

Dr. Robert Emmons a leader in gratitude research states:

“ Gratitude is about noticing the good in life and recognizing that this good often comes from outside ourselves.

Gratitude is not about minimizing our own struggle and suffering instead it allows us to make room for more positive emotions so, that we can balance our negative experiences. “



CMHA Return to work toolkit

Be kind to yourself. Practice 'contemplative acts of self-compassion' daily.

Give yourself the permission to feel a bit lost, worried or stressed.

Acknowledge that many are feeling this way, and that it is ok to take a moment to just breathe.

A brief pause does not mean you are inactive. It means you are readying yourself for the next bound

Reconnect with Self



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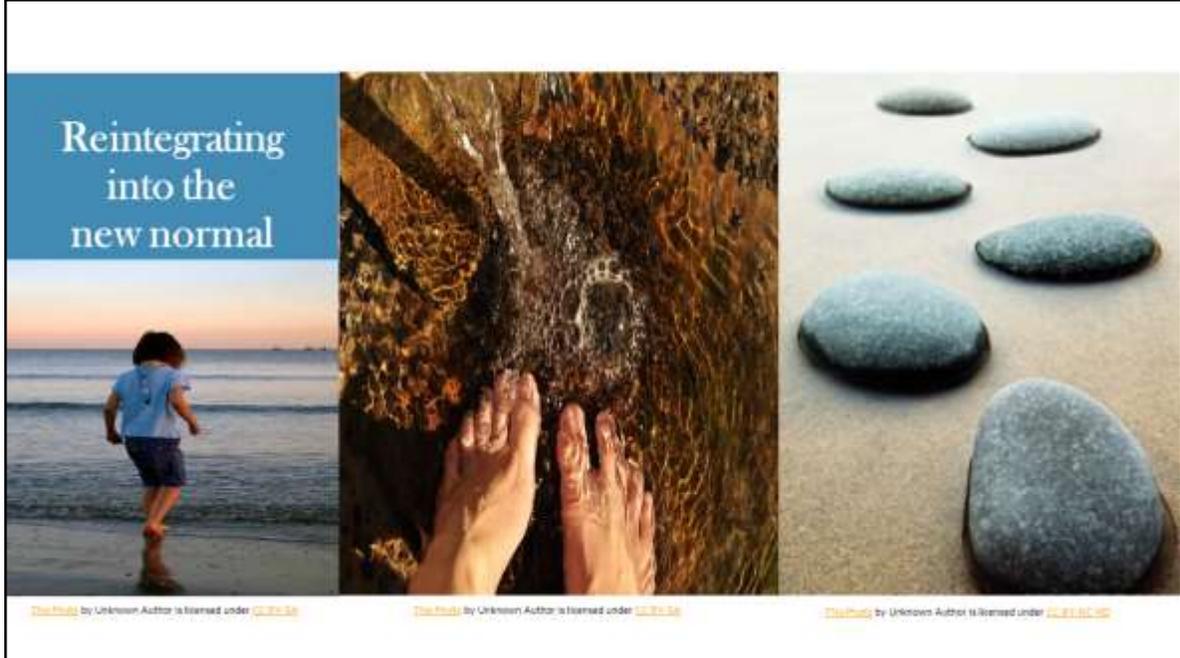
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and in creative ways.



CMHA Return to work toolkit

Build a support network. Seek out other leaders and learn from their experiences, actions and innovation. Since we are all learning how to navigate this current moment in history together, there is no shortage of people interested in connecting and learning from each other. If you are feeling isolated, reach out to your network and form peer groups that can help one another navigate these changes

Communicate intent, not task. Trust in your team will lead to success. There may be solutions to problems you haven't thought about, and by communicating your intent you provide the freedom of initiative to the people who will help the organization get closer to the finish line. By not micromanaging results, you instill a sense of trust and respect within the workforce while also allowing you to shift focus to other emergent concerns.

How do you get
your flow back?



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- State of being
- Sense of time and space
- Immersed in activity
- Rethinking our schedules
- Little things matter
- Micro breaks/activities – tend academy
- What are some self-care strategies that you would like to share?
- What recommendations do you have that would help others?
- “flow” - elusive state of absorption in a meaningful challenge/ momentary bond where your sense of time, place, and self melts away - but hard to find flow when you can't focus; pandemic also meant pressures of juggling work and other duties/ interruptions



CMHA Return to work toolkit

Practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is the awareness that arises when we pay attention, non-judgmentally, to what is happening in the present moment.²⁰

This includes events happening externally in the world, as well as internally inside each of us.

Practicing mindfulness helps us appreciate the small joys in life and combat negative thoughts by mitigating our negative responses to stress.

Your responsibilities can be incredibly taxing. Introducing moments of mindful practice into your day-to-day routine supports you when responding to crises.

Focusing on reading a book, being present and mindful while sitting down for lunch or focusing on your surrounding while going for a walk are all examples of everyday mindfulness practices.

More involved practices may include experiencing 'full body scan,' guided meditations or mindfulness-based therapies.

Incorporate the Mental Health Tips at [CMHA_MHTips-2021_Booklet-EN-FINAL.pdf](#) into your daily life. See link on resource slide

Future is bright



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- Continue to show compassion
- Continue to reach out to others
- Continue to truly listen
- Reflect on the important of family and friends
- Express your gratitude
- Acknowledge each other
- Take the good lessons learned during Covid 19 and keep them alive
- Let go of the negativity/fear and focus on the positive
- Sense of humanity and kindness

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Thank you



1. WAS THIS HELPFUL?



2. ARE THERE OTHER TOPICS
YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE?