

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes in various shades, creating a modern and dynamic feel. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, some semi-transparent, layered on a white background.

Caring for One's Self, Family & Relationships in the Age of COVID

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Impact of COVID Pandemic Entering Year Two

The past year has been a year like none other

Now trying to move forward

Changes and Losses

- ▶ On us Personally
- ▶ On Our Families
- ▶ On Our Relationships
- ▶ On Our Work Experiences
- ▶ On Our Overall health and Well being

Personal Impact

- ▶ Loss of normal routines and structures
- ▶ Loss of habits and rituals
- ▶ Increased isolation
- ▶ Increased Uncertainty and fears of the future
- ▶ Loss of regular contact with friends and co-workers
- ▶ Stress of significant work related changes

Impact on Family

- ▶ Changes related to holidays, birthdays, special events
- ▶ Changes and loss associated with educational routines
- ▶ Changes and loss associated with extracurricular activities
- ▶ Changes and loss associated with community activities
- ▶ Changes in family routines and relationships

Impact on Health and Well Being

- ▶ Loss, grief, and mourning
- ▶ Increase in stress and distress
- ▶ Increased risk of anxiety and depression, isolation and withdrawal
- ▶ Increased risk of substance abuse and domestic violence
- ▶ Increased risk for deteriorating health and hesitancy to seek out medical care

Addressing Grief and Loss During COVID

- ▶ Grief - a deep sorrow or mental distress caused by loss
- ▶ Grief - an emotional, physical, and spiritual reaction to the loss, or perceived loss, of someone, something one has been deeply and emotionally invested in
- ▶ Mourning - the outward expression of one's thoughts and feelings of grief after the loss has occurred or as the loss is reoccurring

COVID Experiences that Cause us to Grieve

- ▶ Illness and or death of loved ones
- ▶ Restrictions and losses of normal everyday activities for our children and ourselves aka Pandemic Fatigue
- ▶ Loss of our past lives and opportunities
- ▶ Major role changes and multiple stressors
- ▶ Potential conflicts with family and friends over practicing COVID related guidelines

Symptoms of Grief

- ▶ Sadness
- ▶ Loss of concentration
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Distraction
- ▶ Disengaged
- ▶ Sleep and appetite disturbance

Symptoms of Depression

- ▶ Weight loss or gain
- ▶ Increased or decreased sleep
- ▶ Loss of interest, isolation, withdrawal, lethargic or agitated
- ▶ Irritability or anger
- ▶ Lacking joy or frequently crying
- ▶ Feeling helpless, hopeless, or suicidal
- ▶ Chronic aches and pains

Symptoms of Anxiety

- ▶ Cognitive- negative thoughts, trouble concentrating, obsessive thinking, confusion, memory loss
- ▶ Emotional- nervousness, worry, fear, panic, frustration and anger, sadness, numbness, loss of interest
- ▶ Physical- muscle tension, headaches, dry mouth, rapid breathing, illness, stomach trouble, and insomnia

What is Anxiety

- ▶ A response to internal feelings of fear.
- ▶ An adaptive system that helps us respond to or avoid events, situations that may put us in danger.
- ▶ Our brain's reaction to anything outside our comfort zone.
- ▶ Anxiety can develop as a result of genetics and or environment.

We Can Do Somethings About All This

Make a list of what you can and cannot control

Radically accept situations we cannot control

Focus on What We Can do

I Cannot Control

- ▶ How Long the COVID Pandemic will Last
- ▶ How others React (hoarding toilet paper)
- ▶ Other Peoples Motives
- ▶ Predicting What Will Happen
- ▶ Other Peoples Actions
- ▶ If others Follow Mask Wearing, Social distancing, Hand Washing Guidelines
- ▶ So I can LET GO of these things

I Can Control

- ▶ My Positive Attitude
- ▶ Turning off the News
- ▶ How I follow CDC Guidelines
- ▶ Limiting Social Media
- ▶ Finding Fun Things to do at Home
- ▶ My own Social Distancing
- ▶ My Kindness and Gratitude
- ▶ So, I WILL FOCUS On these Things

Strategies for Coping in the COVID Age

Focus on What We Can Do

My Double Down Theory:

Things WE CAN DO and that have been Proven to be
Beneficial

Are More important Than Ever

Self Care Themes

- ▶ Focus with Intention on Basic Self Care Practices That Are Doable
- ▶ Write Them Down. Create realistic goals that are achievable both on a daily, weekly and monthly time frame.
- ▶ Socialize while maintaining distance. The What's and The How's
- ▶ Be Open Minded and Willing rather than Closed Minded and Willful
- ▶ Build Your Daily Practices on What You Value
- ▶ Emphasis on Healthy Routines and Rituals

Self Care Strategies for Overall WellBeing

Doubling Down

- ▶ Develop and Maintain Good Sleep Hygiene
- ▶ Get Some form of Exercise both Indoors and Outside
- ▶ Identify and use what has Worked for You in the Past and what is Realistic Now
- ▶ Focus on Eating healthy
- ▶ Focus on Becoming Balanced (Not Too Much, and Not Too Little)

Specific Self Help Strategies

- ▶ Practice Mindfulness- meditation, Formal (breathing meditation). Semiformal (eating), and Informal (while driving)
- ▶ Mindfulness means increasing self awareness in the present moment with out judgement, rather simply noticing and paying attention using your five senses to your experience as it unfolds.
- ▶ Learn and Use Cognitive Behavioral Techniques- think about your thinking. Write down your thoughts. Look for trends like do you focus on the negatives and ignore the positives? Do you jump to conclusions? Can you identify and practice coping thoughts?

More Self Care Strategies

- ▶ Notice that Thoughts and Feelings are Like Waves- they come and go, recognize them without having to necessarily attach to them.
- ▶ Confide in Someone - share thoughts and feelings with someone you trust
- ▶ Journal
- ▶ Help Others to Cope - Listen, offer Compassion, offer Specific Help
- ▶ Focus on Family - game nights, family meals, outdoor activities using available community resources. Have family discussions about what you hope for the future and make plans around those discussions

Identify and Build Resilience

- ▶ Searching for and Finding Meaning in Negative Events
- ▶ Coping in Healthy Ways - Positive Self Talk
- ▶ Have a Positive Attitude and Hope for the Future
- ▶ Willingness to ask for Help/Support when you Need It and accepting it when offered
- ▶ Work to create and maintain close relationships
- ▶ Acceptance and appreciation for oneself

Resources

▶ Dow Resources

- ▶ Dow Family Medical (Quad Med)
- ▶ Dow Occupational Health (Health Services)
- ▶ Dow EAP

▶ Online Resources

- ▶ Calm.com
- ▶ Mindfulness.com
- ▶ Positive Psychology.com
- ▶ Pursuit of happiness.org

Quotes

“The Quality of Our Lives is Directly Related to the Quality of Our Relationships” - Esther Pearl

“Happiness is the new Rich. Inner Peace is the new Success. Health is the New Wealth. Kindness is the New Cool.” - Syed Balkhi

“Our Anxiety does not come from Thinking about the Future, but wanting to Control It” - Kahil Gibran