

Supporting Clinicians Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tip Sheet: Finding Gratitude



This tip sheet offers suggestions on finding gratitude and supporting overall wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appreciate what you bring to the table.

- Everyone has something to offer.
- Reflect on your value and what you bring to the table.
- Say thanks for your knowledge, your skills, her ability to perform, and your willingness to help.



Gratitude is about attitude.

- What do you say when you see tragic events and the results of the daily COVID-19 death rates?
- Pessimists say the glass is half empty and that is bad, while the optimist says the glass is half full and that is good. Be as Dr. Martin Seligman termed it, “a learned optimist.” Optimist also promotes resilience.
- When we see events in life, we get to choose how we react or respond.
 - To react is to express our gut feeling – anger, fear, or sadness in whatever way we experience it.
 - To respond is to feel the gut feeling and then give thoughtful consideration as to how to express your thoughts and feelings.
 - Many tend to look at the worst possible scenario first – this is just human nature.
 - We can influence our responses to stressors and events through discussion and reframing.
 - Recognize events. Recognize how you feel. Chose how you want to respond.
- Use empathy to connect with the individual(s), family members, and those who are trying to make a difference. How can you connect but keep yourself from feeling overwhelmed? Remember, it is ok to cry when you empathize and feel compassionate toward others. Healthcare providers are human too!
- Encourage your positive attitude while you manage your negative attitude.
- Reframing might look something like this: This is terrible and tragic that so many people lost their lives last month. I am grateful I am not sick and am here doing what I can.
- If you want to read a great book, try Norman Vincent Peal’s, The Power of Positive Thinking.



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How much gratitude do you have?

- Try this self-assessment from Sansone and Sansone – 2010

	1SD	2D	3SD	4N	5SA	6A	7SA
1. I have so much in life for which to be thankful.							
2. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.							
3. When I look at the world, I don't see much for which to be grateful.*							
4. I am grateful to a wide variety of people.							
5. As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.							
6. Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.*							

Sansone RA and Sansone LA. Gratitude and Well Being: The benefits of appreciation. Psychiatry 2010; 7(11):18-22. (pg 20)

Charlene M. Davis, M.D., M.Ed., MACP – Center for Professional Health, Vanderbilt University Medical Center. © 2018 All rights reserved.

Scoring: Add up scores for Q1, 2, 4, and 5; Reverse scores for Q3 and 6 (1=7 and 7=1); Add all and this is your total GQ Score: _____ (38 = 50th percentile; 42= top 13%)

Does gratitude change anything?

- Yes – finding gratitude can make you happier. Almost 90% of our happiness is due to our internal processing of events/the world. Only 10% is predicted by your external world.
- Keep your positivity through stressors can make you happier and reduce risk/prevent burnout.
- Gratitude promotes well-being
- Maintaining a positive brain results in a 31% more productive brain, more resilience, less burnout, and it increases dopamine – so you have more energy, makes you more euphoric, and turns on your learning centers.
- Allows us to manage expectations and stressors better. Allows us to think better.
- You can train your brain to be happier in just 2 minutes a day! (See below.)
- Consider watching a TedTalk or YouTube video by Shawn Archer – 2017



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Find those silver linings where you can.

- Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still something positive to see, find, and experience.
- Look for the silver lining or the bright spots in the day or the little bit of happiness in the moment.
- What can you laugh about? We still need joy and happiness in our lives even as we are to pass through this miry place in time.



How can you focus on the positives in a time like this?

- We must find the positives as it fosters hope. When we have hope, we survive.
- In the book Good To Great by Jim Collins, he interviewed Admiral Jim Stockdale and defined the Stockdale paradox. This is how he and others survived while captives as prisoners of war in the Hanoi Hilton camp during the Vietnam war. It means, we must face the brutal realities of our current situation, while we retain hope that we will prevail in the end.
- Our current situation is like being in a war. Although we are not fighting with guns, we need our unit (meaning our teams and those who support us) and we need great commanders. We need successful plans. We need a process for implementing the mission. We need the tools to execute the plan appropriately in order to be successful. We need recognition for our commitment and service. We need to keep focus on our goals, priorities and purpose of the mission.
- Understanding viewpoints and thought positions is also important – try using the three-lens approach:



- **The Wide Lens:** We are all in this together (families, departments, offices, cities, states, countries, and the world)
- **The Reverse Lens:** We as society have faced past challenges and we survived those. We'll make it through this – although maybe differently.
- **The long Lens:** This event is upon us. What can we learn and do to move everyone and the world forward and protect us in the future?

“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose.”

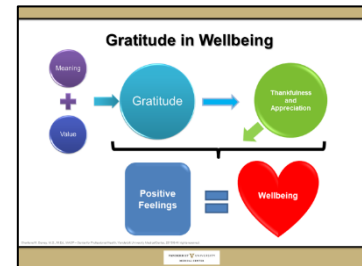
~ Viktor E. Frankl

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What else should I focus on?

- Focus on priorities, personal values, and meaning.
- Go back and think, why did you become a physician, nurse, etc.
- What about those reasons are still true?
- What are your values in life? How are you living your values?
- What are your priorities? Think of this daily – it may just be getting through the day and being protected or sleeping better.



What tools should I use?

- Journaling:
 - You can start by simply using your own time and/or journal
 - Write gratitude in one of two ways:
 1. Journal or list things you are grateful for in the past day. Set a timer for 2 minutes and write as many as you can.
 2. Write or reflect on at least 3 things you are grateful for and explore them more deeply for at least 2 minutes
 3. Journal about a gratitude or positive experience – explore this one event and write in details what happened, how you feel about it, what you learned about it, why it is demonstrating gratitude, and anything else you want to reflect on from the event.
- Exercising:
 - Exercise to your favorite, most positive music, podcast, prayer, or own personal reflections you create for yourself
- Meditate:
 - Use guided meditation
 - Prayer
 - Walking meditation
 - Body scans
 - Art
 - Music
- Implement random acts of kindness:
 - Send your colleagues a supportive, uplifting email
 - Buy groceries for a poorer/disadvantaged family
 - Pass on a poem or phrase to people you zoom meet with
 - Send card to elderly in a nursing home



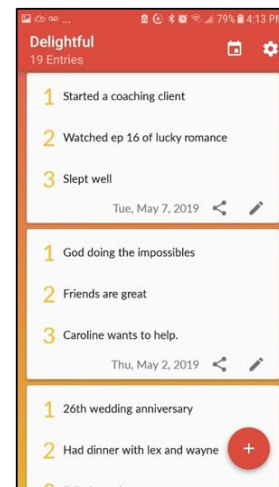
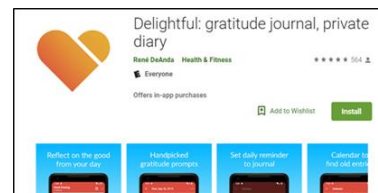
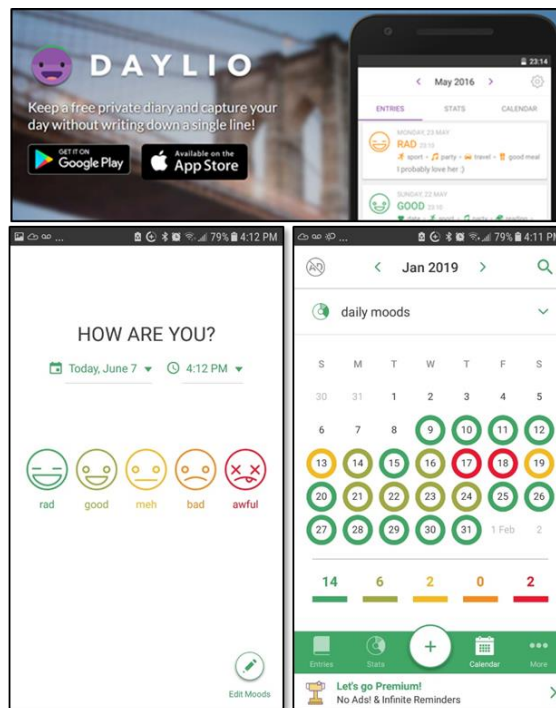
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- Donate money to the American Red cross, YWCA, Food pantries in your neighborhood, etc.
- Create a list of acts of kindness to do each week
- Send flowers, chocolates, fruit baskets, etc. to your administrators
- Write kudos stickers to family members, colleagues, neighbors, leaders, etc.

Thank you
for...

- Share positive stories, reflections and emotions with others
 - Recall stories from internship – how you never thought it could be as bad and as good.
 - Share dreams of the future
 - Discuss in a small group – how are you feeling right now?
 - Practice mindful listening in pairs for 2 minutes at a time as each person shares a gratitude and positive story
- Count your blessings.
 - Look for your blessings in everyday life.
 - Who is a blessing to you?
Who are you a blessing to?
- Gratitude apps
 - Daylio: a mood/emotion and/or gratitude tracker (free)
 - Delightful Gratitude Journal: Write three gratitude entries a day (free)



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Resources: MH specialists, coaches, psychiatry, primary doctor, etc. Each picture is hyperlinked to the actual webpage. Simply click on the picture.

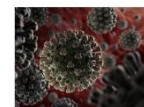
- American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/> - click on *psychological help center*, then *find a psychologist*.
- International Coaching Federation: <https://coachfederation.org/> - click on *find a coach*.
- American Psychiatric Association: <https://www.psychiatry.org/> - click on *Patient/Families* then click *find a psychiatrist*.
- The American College of Physicians – COVID-19 Resources for physicians. <https://www.acponline.org/>
- The American Medical Association – resources for Physicians. <https://www.ama-assn.org/>
- The National Academy of Medicine – Well-being resources. <https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/clinician-well-being-resources-during-covid-19/>

Resources

- Find a Psychologist
- Order Free Brochures
- Request a Speaker

Find a Coach

PATIENTS & FAMILIES



PUBLIC HEALTH
COVID-19 (2019 novel coronavirus) resource center for physicians
10/15/2020

