Getting through Disappointments Caused by the Coronavirus

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Alert: CofC moving to only online classes
Chipotle: No Dining in, but We are still available for takeout
Postponed: Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival

Being Disappointed Makes Sense
Let's be honest dealing with all this is hard.

But how do we handle all of these big and little upsetting changes?

First, Give Yourself Permission to Feel.
Take a little time to just sit with your feelings and experience it without trying to change it or fix it.

Second, Understand that part of what you are feeling is grief, specifically anticipatory grief.

Anticipatory Grief: the feeling we get when the future is uncertain. Often it is experienced when someone receives a bad diagnosis, but right now we are experiencing collectively because of uncertainty of this virus.

A note on the arrows: grief has stages, but it is normal to go back and forth between stages.
Anticipatory Grief Examples:

- **Denial**: (tends to be what we see more of in the beginning of grief)
  This virus won’t affect us.

- **Anger**: 
  You’re making me stay home and taking away my activities.

- **Bargaining**: 
  Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right?

- **Sadness**: 
  I don’t know when this will end.

- **Acceptance**: 
  This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed.

Cancellations & postponements have already happened

Like all things that have already happened we cannot change them.

Third, Take Some Steps Towards Feeling Better

Taking steps to feel better doesn’t mean it is going to be a linear process. It is normal in a time of such uncertainty to try something, feel better, notice you are struggling again with the situation, and then feel better again. If you are stuck, it is always ok to reach out for help.

ESSENTIALLY THIS MEANS WE NEED TO WORK ON ACCEPTANCE

STRATEGIES THAT CAN HELP WITH ACCEPTANCE.

- Processing It with Another
- Refocus your life lens: Finding the good
- Reducing the Rumination Trap
Processing What You Are Feeling with Another

Identify a person or a group that you know are helpful.

Talk or text about what you are feeling and experiencing with the goal of acceptance and moving forward.

Talking with friends, families and groups like Students 4 Support

- Release some of the internal pressure from your thoughts.
- Help you see things more clearly.
- Help you sort things out for yourself.
- Help you see what you are experiencing from another's perspective.

Refocus Your Life lens: finding the good

Remove focus from only the negatives to all the positives and negatives.

First some background

The human brain naturally has an "asymmetry" in how we process negative and positive information when understanding the world.

This is called the negativity bias, the brain's natural tendency to pay attention to, learn from, and use negative information more than positive.

Because of the brain's affinity for the negative we need to be proactive about balance.
REFOCUS YOUR LENS  

Strategies for finding the good

1. LOOK FOR THE GOOD FACTS IN THE NEWS & IN PEOPLE.

2. SAVOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES:
   - When you are really enjoy something give it your sole focus.
   - Extra credit for reviewing it later in the day or at another point.

3. PRACTICING GRATITUDE
   - 1. Take the time each day to figure out 3 to 5 gifts, strengths, talents, and advantages in your life.
   - 2. Keep a daily gratitude journal. Research has shown that keeping a gratitude journal helps people be more positive.
     - a. You can just write down 3 to 6 things a day
     - b. More varied, formal gratitude journal practice on CofC Health Education resource page

4. Reducing the Rumination Trap
   - Rumination trap: A vicious cycle of replaying the same distressing feelings, scenes, memories, and dire future potentials over and over again despite the continued increase in the unpleasant feelings it provokes.
Work on Reducing the Rumination Trap by Reframing Your Thoughts

LOOK FOR ANY HIDDEN POSITIVES

Your college cares about your safety.

What are the positives to online versus in person classes? Are you developing closer relationships with the people in your home? Is there a way that you can work with some of the disappointment about things like graduation to see it in a different perspective? Like, your graduation will become especially historic because of the unique events?

IDENTIFY ANY OPPORTUNITIES

Can you use this time to your advantage? Like having IT talents or AV talents that you can use remotely?

If you are in a lower risk category, can you help others?

Embrace the learning moment

What skills can you learn from the experience of remote learning?

Can you learn a way to connect with your friends using technology other than texting?

What things are you disappointed in that you can try to make better using a unique strategy?

Remember you can always reach out to The Counseling Center if these strategies are not helping and Students 4 Support when you want to talk it out.

Call 843.953.5640
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Text "4support" to 839863
12 to 9 pm, M-Th