

CONNECTION IN THE TIME OF DISCONNECTION

THE YESHIVA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
COUNSELING CENTER NEWSLETTER

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We know that the Internet and other technologies keep us connected... constantly - sometimes too much so! There are tips for disconnecting and how to connect in person. But what about when we can't? How do we juggle the *right* amount of technology based connection? What if we still feel lonely?

It's okay to not feel connected in the ways you want to.

As we navigate this period, allow yourself space to have different reactions and moods. Remember to be compassionate towards yourself and others.

CONTENT

But what am I feeling?
Managing grief & anxiety

How to find connection

What about Pesach?



What you're feeling might be grief ...

Many are struggling to label what they're feeling. This article (<https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>) puts confusing feelings about the disruptions to our lives into the lens of a grieving process. The steps are not linear and you may find yourself oscillating between them - this is normal.

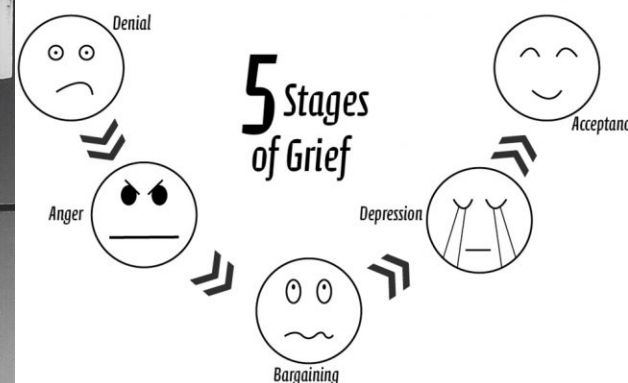
Denial: early on, feeling this wouldn't affect us

Anger: Losing independence and normalcy

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.



I'm anxious...

In addition to grief, it is normal to feel anxiety.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/newsletters/archive/2020/03/how-to-manage-your-coronavirus-anxiety/608542/>



Practice the "**BOTH/AND**" method examples:

"This is horrific **AND** I need a break from news"

"I'm sad **AND** I'm also angry this isn't over yet."

"I can't focus **AND** I'm doing the best I can."

"I love my family and feel lucky to be home

AND they're also driving me insane."

How to work with your anxiety

If we see anxiety as our enemy, going into fight/flight mode when we feel it coming on, it is harder to tolerate. When we begin to use self talk to engage with it, talk back to it, we can reclaim some control. Notice when you're anxious - name it, validate your reason for it, and talk to it -- **"Oh hi anxiety, thanks for trying to protect me but you're not helping at this moment"** or **"I hear you - can you turn the volume down for now?"**



Resource:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/13/well/mind/a-brain-hack-to-break-the-coronavirus-anxiety-cycle.html>

Example:

If we are starting to worry: "Oh no, I touched my face, maybe I'll get sick!" → **Take a deep breath and ask:**

"When was the last time I cleaned my hands?"

Think → "Oh, right! I just washed my hands."



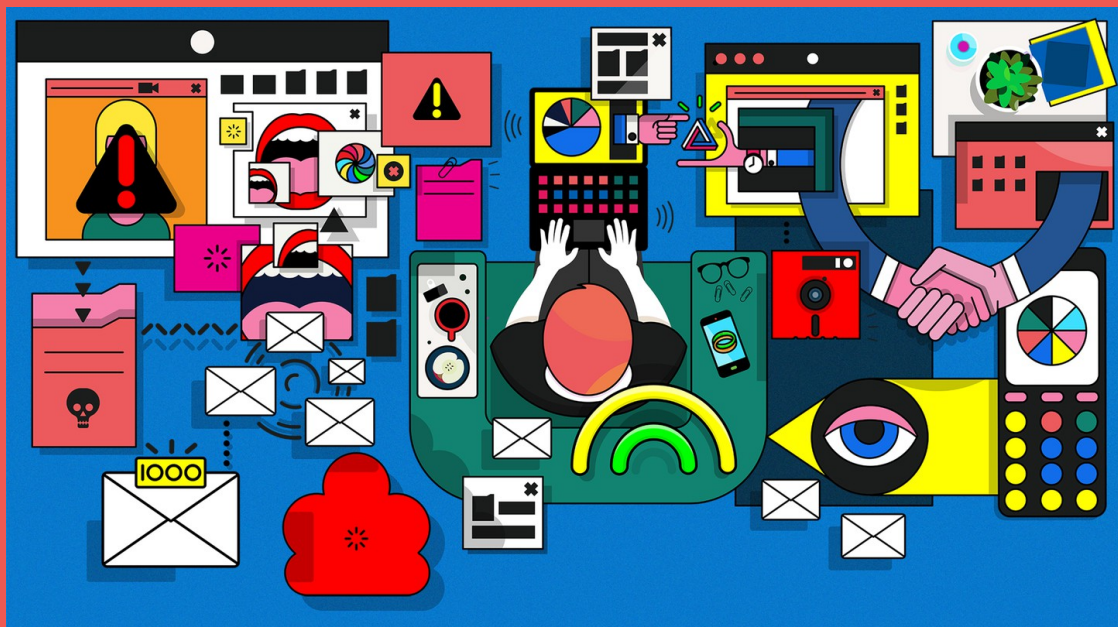
If you've found it hard to study, you're not alone



NYT: Stop Trying to Be Productive
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/01/style/productivity-coronavirus.html>)

--- this article can help provide a new framework for thinking about what it means to be productive during this window

--- the grief concept applies here too - it is okay to **miss** feeling more productive



Finding connection....

- weekly FaceTime with friends
- write letters to friends
- leave chat on in the background so that you can "hang out" with someone while doing different things, like roommates do
- exercise together (come up with a body weight circuit or stretches)
- plan a trip you will take when it is safe to do so - get excited for it by researching, planning itineraries
- journal all the things you usually "don't have time for" - aim to try one each week
- watch Netflix together using Google Chrome extension
- start gardening (with idea to ultimately use ingredients to make
- a meal/floral arrangement with friends who also planted something!)



Making meaning

- RATHER THAN ISOLATING FROM OTHERS, REMAIN AT A SAFE PHYSICAL DISTANCE BUT CONNECT WITH PEOPLE IN OTHER WAYS BY SHARING THOUGHTS ON PESACH
- TAKE NOTE OF RESILIENCIES YOU'VE NOTICED IN YOURSELF OR OTHERS - TELL THEM!
- MAKE HOW TO VIDEOS AND SHARE WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY - THESE COULD BE ABOUT HOBBIES, TIPS FOR COPING WITH QUARANTINE, OR WHAT'S BEEN WORKING FOR YOU WITH ADAPTING TO REMOTE STUDY
- WRITE ABOUT WHAT'S BEEN CHALLENGING AND CONSIDER SHARING WITH OTHERS WHO MAY NOT REALIZE THEY'RE NOT ALONE IN FEELING SIMILARLY
- SET UP OBSTACLE COURSES, PLAY HIDE AND GO SEEK, CHARADES, BOARD GAMES, TWISTER, ETC. WITH VERY LIMITED NUMBER OF FRIENDS WITH PEOPLE IN YOUR FAMILY OR JOINT QUARANTINE-REDISCOVER YOUR YOUTHFUL REVERIE



Building these remote connections

TIPS

- Schedule as you do other commitments
 - dinner by Zoom
 - movie dates
 - phone calls
- Enter these into your calendar so that you're less likely to not do them
- Challenge your friends and family to engage in non-Corona related conversation
- complete gratitude exercises in pairs
 - for each statement about what has been lost during this time, reflect on what has also been gained



Balancing alone time

As important as it is to maintain connections while we are all stuck at home, it's also okay to need alone time. Perhaps being on Zoom all day feels overwhelming or draining; maybe managing family and family members' needs takes a lot of energy. Your phone may be inundated with calls and texts, but it's okay to:

- leave phone in a drawer for a period of time
- tell a friend you don't feel like talking
- ask family to take a phone/news break
- plan times for drawing, meditating, just sitting and allowing thoughts to wander, journaling, prayer
- check in with yourself daily about how the balance of these things is going - maybe it needs a tweak
- consider utilizing walks for your alone time
- if possible, set a zone in your house which cannot have schoolwork in it

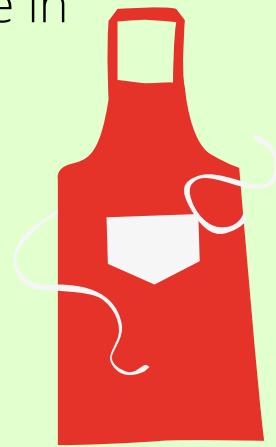


Cooking to cope



Food has always been a way to connect with others - it still can be.

- Consider cooking extra to deliver to those in quarantine (if you can) or to provide a family member who may be in quarantine with a special treat
- Pick new recipes each week
 - try making (virtually) alongside friends
- Start a "cooking during quarantine" blog



Check out --

<https://www.theatlantic.com/newsletters/archive/2020/03/our-quarantine-cooking-guide/608890/>

<https://www.jewishfoodsociety.org/posts/2020/3/20/tradish-connect-with-your-family-through-cooking>

<https://www.bonappetit.com/gallery/cooking-at-home-coronavirus>

Pesach... isn't what I thought it would be ... what do I do?



Resilience in the face of trauma and trauma is at the core of Judaism. It is important to reflect on what *won't* be the same this year - allow time to process these as losses. Then get creative.

NYT:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/opinion/sunday/passover-covid.html>

CNN:

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/07/opinions/passover-coronavirus-lesson-vulnerability-held/index.html>

What you CAN do



- virtual pre Seders
- open conversations with family about what freedom means to each person (as well as historical context in Judaism)
- think about how conversation might benefit from being more intimate
- think about what you can control
 - objects on tables, recipes
- maintain traditions in new ways - what can you keep constant, what stand-ins can you put in place, how can you still bring joy?

We are here for you

The Counseling Center is here for you. If you are in need of a consultation with a therapist please email the Counseling Center at **Counseling@yu.edu**. If you are in need of speaking to someone urgently, during business hours, please call the Counseling Center at **(646)592-4210** (Undergraduate Beren and Cardozo Law School) or **(646) 592-4200** (Wilf). If you are experiencing an emergency after hours, please call 911. If you are already receiving counseling or psychiatric services at the Counseling Center, please contact your counselor directly to coordinate your upcoming appointments.