

Checking In Holistically



with Noteworty Resources

www.nwralbany.org

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Checking in

with family, friends, co-workers & community members helps our sense of belonging, feeling of not being alone, validation, expressing emotions, & awareness of what the other is experiencing.

Holistically

treating the whole person, taking into account physical, emotional, mental & social factors, rather than just the physical health.



How have you been treating yourself?

How have you been talking to yourself?

What emotions are you experiencing?

How is your physical health?

Have you been social with others?

Who do you feel comfortable communicating with about your holistic health?



Coping with Crisis

A crisis presents an obstacle, trauma, or threat, but it also offers an opportunity for either growth or decline.



The word crisis in Chinese is formed with the characters for *danger & opportunity*.

Diverse Reactions & Experiences: Family dynamics, social distancing- but more so physical distancing, personal health conditions, lack of safety & protective materials, isolation, mental illness, chronic illness, death, loss of job, substance use/abuse, domestic violence, homelessness.....

How do we respond to these crises?

Our perception matters:

-threat of harm

-prior experiences

-pre-existing vulnerabilities



Stress *is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand.*

Eustress, or positive stress characteristics:

- Motivates, focuses energy.
- Is short-term.
- Is perceived as within our coping abilities.
- Feels exciting.
- Improves performance.

Examples:

- Receiving a promotion or raise at work.
- Starting a new job.
- Marriage.
- Buying a home.
- Having a child.
- Moving.
- Taking a vacation.
- Holiday seasons.
- Retiring.
- Taking educational classes or learning a new hobby.



Distress, or negative stress characteristics:

- Causes anxiety or concern.
- Can be short- or long-term.
- Is perceived as outside of our coping abilities.
- Feels unpleasant.
- Decreases performance.
- Can lead to mental & physical problems.

Examples:

- Death of loved one (people/pets)
- Filing for divorce, Separations of partners
- Losing contact with loved ones.
- Hospitalization (oneself/other).
- Injury or illness (oneself/other).
- Being abused or neglected.(M, E, P, S..)
- Conflict in interpersonal relationships.
- Bankruptcy/Money Problems/Unemployment.
- Sleep problems.
- Children's problems at school.
- Legal problems.



Stress Reactions During Pandemic

Fear & anxiety during a disease outbreak can be overwhelming & cause strong emotions. Symptoms can include:

- Fear & worry about your own health, loved ones, the people you provide support to (for work or community)
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of substance use & abuse/ relapse risk
- Change in time management



- Change in mood & feelings (sad, worried, angry)
- Impatient or irritable
- Anxious or overwhelmed
- Somatic systems (stomach, headaches, & sensory nerves)
- Sleep interruptions
- Loss of appetite or even forgetting to eat or hydrate
- Avoidant behaviors, withdrawing



Managing our holistic wellness during these times...

- Awareness of self & environment
- Compassion (self & others)
- Self-Talk
- Setting & Maintaining Healthy Boundaries
- Explore coping strategies that work & you enjoy
- Creative Activities to boost self-esteem



Be aware of your Chakra Balance & Healing

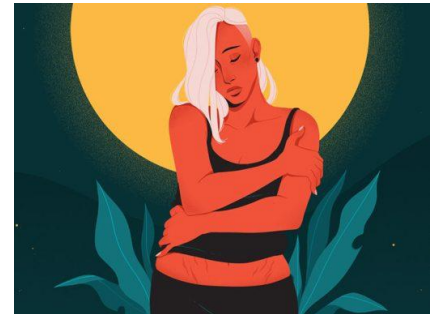
We have many energy centers all throughout the human body that **help to regulate all its processes, from organ function to the immune system & emotions**; called chakras (*wheels of energy*).



7 chakras are positioned throughout your body, from the base of your spine to the crown of your head. Each chakra has its own vibrational frequency, color, & governs specific functions that help make you human.

You are energy! All living things are created by & composed of energy.

The ability of your energy centers to function optimally is what keeps you **psychologically, emotionally, physically, & spiritually balanced**.



Chakras related to stress...

Crown Chakra (*spirituality, wisdom, and our higher self*): stress from feeling alone & disconnected from the Divine

Third Eye Chakra (*inner strength, thought patterns & intuition*): Stress from feeling like we're not expressing ourselves next in our lives, or from being unable to see the bigger picture up front

Throat Chakra (*communication, self-expression, & truth*): Stress from feeling like we're not expressing ourselves the way we'd like, or that we're not being heard in the way we want to be heard; stress around speaking out truth

Heart Chakra (*compassion, love & forgiveness*): Stress stemming from disconnection with self & as a result, with others

Solar Plexus Chakra (*confidence, personal power & vitality*): Stress coming from lack of self-worth & a sense of powerlessness

Sacral Chakra (*sexualality, creativity emotions*): Stress from pent-up emotions, not expressing ourselves creatively (artistic or making things) or in healthy sexual ways (sex or masturbation)

Root Chakra (*survival, safety, grounding self*): Stress from feeling like our basic needs are not being met



Compassion

If someone shows kindness, caring, & a willingness to help themselves & others, they're showing compassion. It's positive emotion that has to do with being thoughtful & showing love/respect.

When you have compassion, you're putting yourself in someone else's shoes & really feeling for them.



Exercise for self-compassion:

Imagine you as a child & they are experiencing stress, feelings, & situation as you right now or when you're having a hard time. To nurture & *love them through it*, we can find a way to soothe, forgive & move forward.

We need to go backward and heal and soothe our inner child so we can build a stronger relationship within ourselves. This boosts our self-esteem and self-love.

The time when you're able to show yourself time to love yourself you can then nurture & soothe yourself through the hard times.

Your ego, the mean girl, comes in so fast & knows what to say to push you & cause you conflict. With the power of love we're able to allow ourselves to heal.

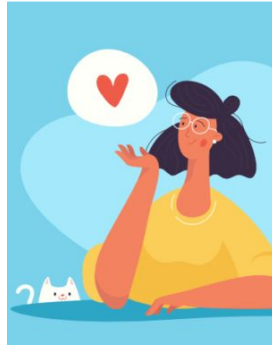
What would you say to your inner child?

Self-Talk

Self-talk is your internal dialogue. It's influenced by your subconscious mind, & it reveals your thoughts, beliefs, questions, & ideas. Self-talk can be both negative & positive. It can be encouraging, & it can be distressing. Much of your self-talk depends on your personality.

Positive self-talk & a more realistic-optimistic outlook can have other health benefits, including:

- increased vitality
- greater life satisfaction
- improved immune function
- reduced pain
- better cardiovascular health
- better physical well-being
- reduced risk for death
- less stress & distress



Negative thinking & self-talk generally falls into 4 categories:

- Personalizing.** You blame yourself for everything.
- Magnifying.** You focus on the negative aspects of a situation, ignoring any & all of the positive.
- Catastrophizing.** You expect the worst, & you rarely let logic or reason persuade you otherwise.
- Polarizing.** You see the world in black and white, or good & bad. There's nothing in between & no middle ground for processing & categorizing life events.

Examples:

Negative: I'll disappoint everyone if I change my mind.

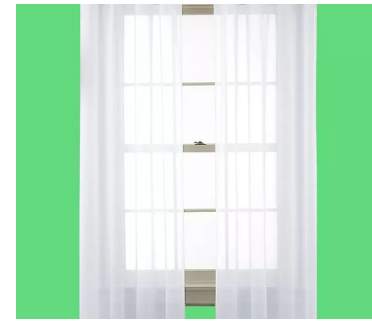
Positive: I have the power to change my mind. Others will understand.

Negative: I failed & embarrassed myself.

Positive: I'm proud of myself for even trying. That took courage.



Setting & Maintaining Healthy Boundaries



Healthy boundaries helps us take care of ourselves instead of sacrificing our wellbeing for others. Boundary setting & respecting is an important skill for people of all ages to learn. It is vital to healthy, lasting relationships.

Types of boundaries:

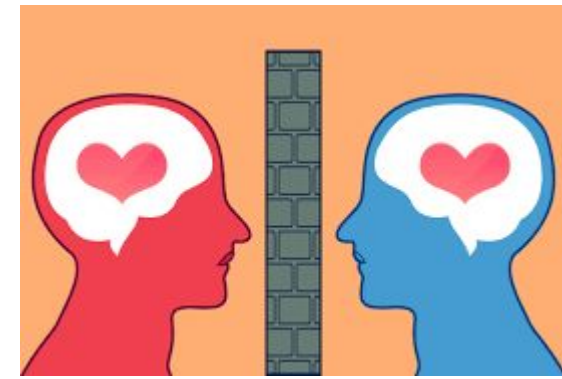
- **Material boundaries**- give or lend things, *such as your money, car, clothes, books, food, or toothbrush.*
- **Physical boundaries**- your personal space, privacy, and body. *Do you give a handshake or a hug – to whom & when? How do you feel about loud music, nudity, & locked doors?*
- **Mental boundaries** -thoughts, values, & opinions. *Are you easily suggestible? Do you know what you believe, & can you hold onto your opinions? Can you listen with an open mind to someone else's opinion without becoming rigid?*
- **Emotional boundaries** -separating your emotions & responsibility for them from someone else's. It's like an imaginary line or force field that separates you & others. *Healthy boundaries prevent you from giving advice, blaming or accepting blame.* They protect you from feeling guilty for someone else's negative feelings or problems & taking others' comments personally. High reactivity (aggressive, defensive) suggests weak emotional boundaries. Healthy emotional boundaries require clear internal boundaries – knowing your feelings & your responsibilities to yourself & others.
- **Sexual boundaries** -consent & protect your comfort level with sexual touch/activity (what, where, when, who)
- **Spiritual boundaries** relate to your beliefs and experiences in connection with God or a higher power.



Tips & Maintenance

5 Tips to Understanding Boundaries:

- 1. Ask what needs to be different-** What needs to change? Think about what feels unhealthy or bad & what do you wish wouldn't happen anymore. Getting clarity is the first step to setting boundaries.
- 2. Make the message clear-** If you are setting a boundary with someone, they should know exactly what you want or don't want. It is important to use clear & firm language & not words like "maybe", "it would be nice if", or "I think" (dilutes what's being asked).
- 3. Be consistent & follow through-** After a boundary has been set, it may or may not be respected by others & you may have to protect your boundary. If someone continues to disrespect the boundary, it's important to let them know every time that it's not ok.
- 4. Treat others how you want to be treated-** Model behavior you desired. If you want your boundaries respected, then you need to respect the boundaries of others. Boundary setting & respecting go two ways.
- 5. Remember NO means NO-** "Boundary setting & respecting is an important skill for people of all ages to learn." Everyone has a right to set their own boundaries. Sometimes boundaries won't make sense. Just because something may not seem like a big deal to them, doesn't mean it isn't an issue for someone else.



In order to keep a boundary with others we have to maintain:

- AWARENESS & noticing the boundary is being kept or not
- Establish your STANDARDS & how you treat yourself is how others will treat you
- RESPOND with taking action & communicating confidently/ assertive



Coping Skills

Coping means to invest one's own conscious effort, to solve personal & interpersonal problems, in order to try to master, minimize or tolerate stress & conflict.

What coping skills work for you?
Share your coping toolkit with others to give each other choices & ideas.



Practical Considerations for Coping with change



- Keep a consistent schedule & routine (time management, meals, sleep, self-care)
- Activities involving creativity, music, exercise & DIY crafting is essential
- Be flexible with changes & time- Adjust due to safety & comfort level
- Focus on what's Important & your resources.
- Find Support locally & online
- Go outside for a walk & get fresh air- even open windows
- Create calming space for yourself
- Process Your Feelings- acknowledge, feel & move forward
- Take Care of Yourself- Nourishing your holistic body (mind, body, soul) (vitamins)
- Be Patient With Yourself.
- Check that you are getting medical, psychological & legal help if you need it.
- Monitor screen time, watching news, & social media
- Process info & what is going on with roommates/ family you're home or quarantined with - Be open & honest, Offer reassurance & Validate feelings (if necessary).
- Use a mood tracker to identify feelings
- Listen to music, create art, coloring books, blogging, and read books
- Practice mindful breathing, meditation, exercise, yoga, garden and plant flowers/herbs
- Create worry stones, calming jars, coping bracelets, start creative or home projects



Helping others & Asking if they are okay...



When you're worried about someone, sometimes the best thing you can do is listen & let them know you're there for them realistically & specifically.

- **Having the chat**- Pick the right place - somewhere quiet & away from other people. Try to remove any distractions before you start. Don't push it; if they say they don't want to talk, let them know you're there if they change their mind.
- **Starting the conversation**- 'Hey, how have you been lately? What's been happening?' 'You haven't seemed yourself lately. Is there something you'd like to talk about?' 'How are you doing today? Anything you want to chat about?'
- **How to respond**- Be a good listener by paying attention, asking questions & checking you've understood what they've said. Don't try to solve the problem for them. Ask them why they may be feeling that way. Let them know you're there for them. Don't judge what they say, even if you don't agree with them. (*Cannot cure, control or fix anyone*)
- **If they say they're NOT ok**- Ask them what's going on for them, listen & acknowledge their feelings. Ask what they think will help them to feel better. If you feel like they need more support you could ask if they're considered talking to an adult they trust or seeing a mental health professional. If you're worried about their safety, let someone know.



Resources & Support Services:

Click links highlighted in blue to view



- **Resources on our website:** COVID-19 updates, grief & loss, mental wellness, DV support, Eating disorder support, FREE webinars, Addictions, Family services, hotlines & more! www.nwralbany.org/resources
www.facebook.com/nwralbany
- **Northeastern Community Action Partnership (NECAP)** is a regional addictions resource collaborative within the Capital District of NY that provides resources, support, & community awareness of substance abuse issues. *Multi-County Initiative serving: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren & Washington* www.northeasterncap.com
- **Family Support Navigators**- Free support service for families with a loved one suffering from substance use disorder - helps with treatment, insurance, education & more www.theacca.net 518-465-5829 x 416
- www.Mentalhealthdnys.org - www.Foodpantries.org - www.211.org
- **Healthy Capital District Initiative** works to increase access to coverage, provides health planning expertise, & supports health prevention programs across the Capital Region <http://www.hcdiny.org/>
- **Crisis Hotlines:** <https://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/crisis-hotlines>
- 24 hour sexual assault crisis hotline Please call 518-447-7716 to speak with a sexual assault counselor.
- **NYS Emotional Support** during COVID 19 1-844-863-9314 (OMH)
- **NAMI COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Resource and Information Guide, Find Your Local NAMI, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association: Pandemics, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, Psychology Today Therapist Directory, Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline: 800-985-5990, NAMI HelpLine: 800-950-6264, Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 & National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255.**