

Countering Toxic Positivity with Authenticity, Mindfulness and Compassion

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COMMENTS


- It could be worse.
- Look on the bright side.
- This, too, shall pass.
- It will be fine



COMMENTS

- All will be well in the end and if all is not well, it is not the end.





Comments such as this often have the impact of implying that we should be upbeat and happy all the time.

It's okay not to be okay.

BENEFITS OF POSITIVITY

- Boost immunity



- Lower stress



- Lengthen our lifespan





Toxic Positivity can be

Toxic!

DANGER

- Being forced to be positive in situations that are unnatural.
- When a problem exists that needs to be acknowledged.



IMPACT OF TOXIC POSITIVITY

- Denial
- Minimization
- Invalidation of the authentic human experience





SIGNS YOU MAY BE EXPERIENCING TOXIC POSITIVITY

- You feel guilty about what you feel.
- You feel shamed or chastised by expressing frustration.
- You brush off things that are bothering you with an – it is what it is – attitude.
- You feel as though you need to hide or mask your true feelings.

Divided Life

A long-exposure photograph of a river flowing over rocks at sunset. The water is blurred, creating a sense of motion and flow. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple, reflecting on the water. The foreground is dominated by large, dark, mossy rocks. The background shows a dense forest of evergreen trees. The text "Divided Life" is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, sans-serif font.



LIVING A DIVIDED LIFE

- We live a divided life when we feel pressure to conform or when we feel that it is unacceptable or even unsafe to show up as who we really are.

Parker Palmer



LIVING A DIVIDED LIFE

- A life in which our words and actions conceal or even contradict truths we hold dear inwardly.
- Sadly, most of us learn early on that it's not safe to be in the world as who we really are with what we truly believe and value.



LIVING A DIVIDED LIFE

- Everyone pays a price when we live behind a mask.
- Have you had a masked relative, colleague, teacher or health care provider?
- Impossible to establish trust with such a person.
- The person who lives a divided life also suffers.



Toxic positivity is the excessive and ineffective overgeneralization of a happy, optimistic state across all situations. It doesn't feel good to be on the receiving side of it.

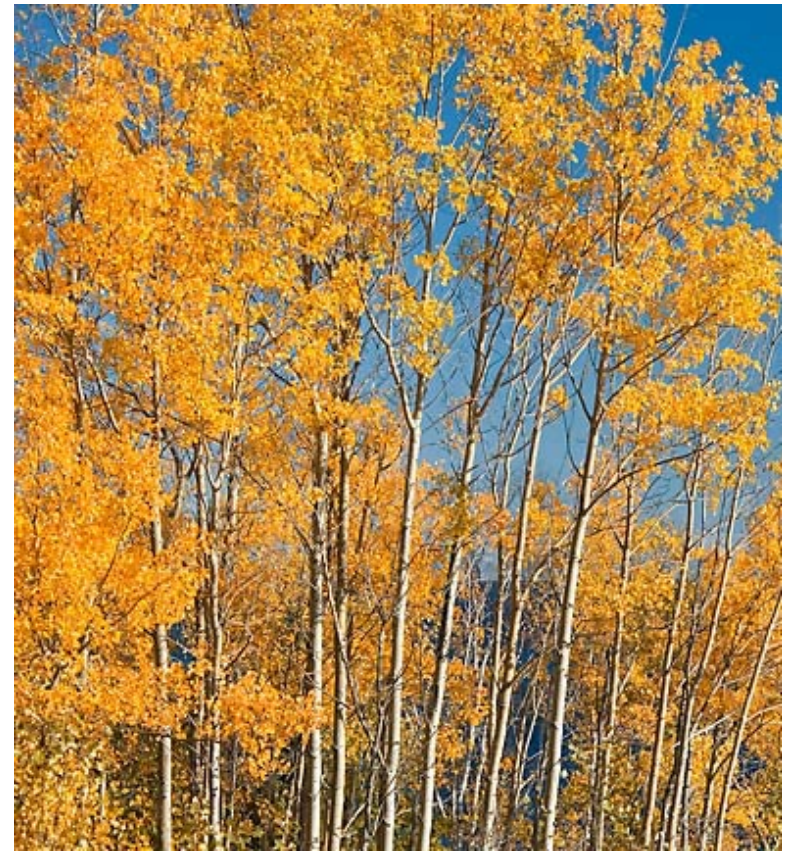
REALITY

- Pain and suffering are uncomfortable to experience and to talk about.
- While positivity has many benefits, it becomes toxic when someone is forced to be or seem to be positive in situations.



REALITY

- Toxic positivity is a way of denying challenges and asking people to be inauthentic. This doesn't build relationships or resilience.





IF YOU WANT TO OFFER SUPPORT

- Remind yourself – that you don't need to make them feel better all the time.
- The most important thing you may be able to offer is to listen – and acknowledge and validate their feelings.

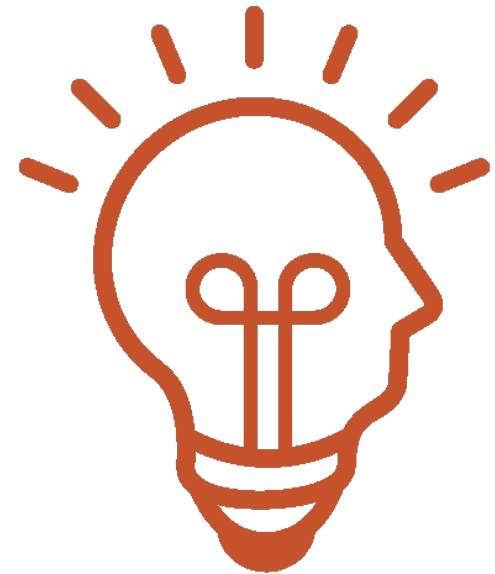


IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

- Allow grief – fighting an emotion doesn't help. Suppressed emotions often emerge in unexpected days.
- Find ways to explore and process your feelings.
- Notice positive moments – even in the midst of loss or grief, there is kindness, beauty, joy.
- Practice gratitude

IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

- Practice mindfulness
- Find meaning, perspective,
lessons learned
- New insights? Discoveries?



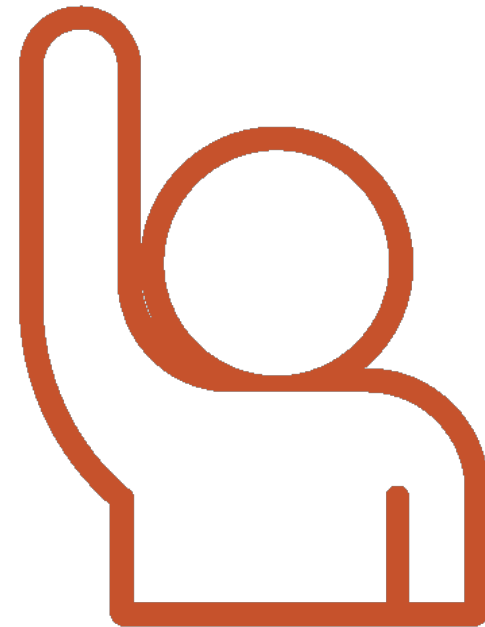
IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

- Bring compassion to self
and others



IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

- Ask for help



IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

- Allow yourself to love
and be loved.



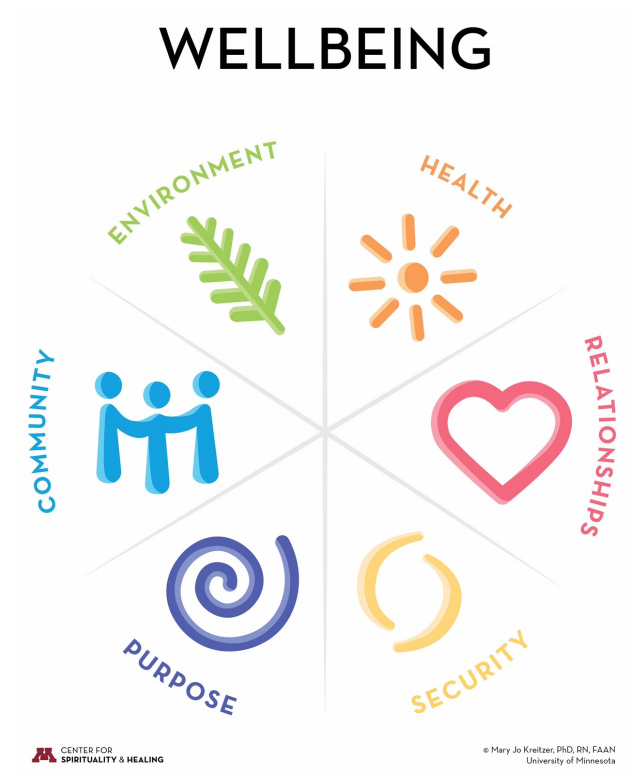
IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME

- Be authentic.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR SELF

- Eat
- Move
- Sleep
- Stress
- Emotions





TAKING CHARGE

of your

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Manage Health Conditions

Try Holistic Practices

Search this site



be MINDFUL live HEALTHY create CONNECTION feel SAFE find MEANING healing ENVIRONMENTS

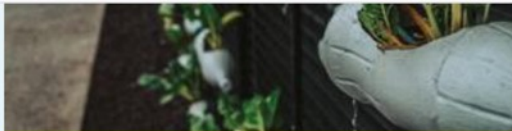
Enhance your wellbeing

You're in charge. Learn how a holistic approach to [wellbeing](#) can help you discover health, contentment, purpose, and connection.

Assess your wellbeing

Set a goal





ENVIRONMENT

10 tips for planetary health



COMMUNITY

Mindfulness for racial justice



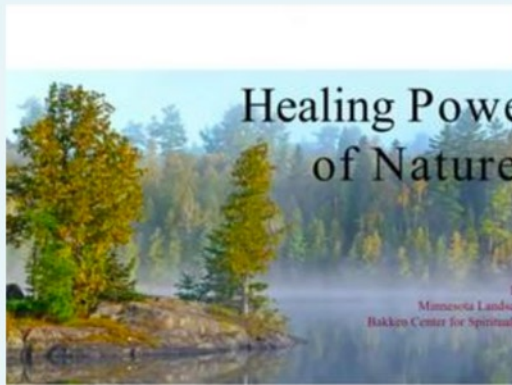
HEALTH CONDITIONS

COVID-19 anxiety



RELATIONSHIPS

Inclusivity and wellbeing



HEALTH

Free wellbeing webinars



STUDENT CORNER

COVID-19 uncertainty



Wellbeing 101:

Tips and Strategies to Help
You Focus on Wellbeing
This Semester



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MINDFUL MONDAYS

- Mindful Mondays is free, drop-in sessions that include gentle movement and guided meditation led by experienced instructors. Held live via Zoom at 12-1p.m. central time on most Mondays.
- **More than 50,000 registrations** since we began hosting sessions online in March 2020

YOU DO MATTER CAMPAIGN

You may be asking "Does what I do make a difference?"



YOU DO MATTER

Supporting the Front Line

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, you - our front line workers - have faced unprecedented stress, trauma, and burnout.



Today, try this:



Reach out to a coworker, look them in the eye, and let them know that they matter, and what they're doing matters. Call out something special that you've observed.



Open your camera app and point it at the QR code below to visit our website - which includes free short activities that you can do on your own or with others, audio, and videos.

Thank you for what you do.

Brought to you by the University of Minnesota's Bakken Center for Spirituality & Healing, your trusted wellbeing resource.

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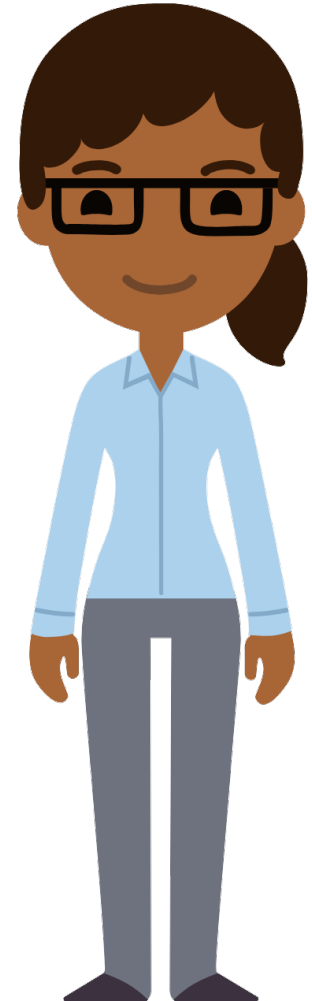
YOU DO MATTER CAMPAIGN

- Each week's video comes with resources for a Skim (1 minute), Swim (2 minute tip), or Dive (5 minute tip)
- The video series is posted across social media to reach front line workers where they are, and shared directly to leaders via email. This campaign has been widely shared across University of Minnesota systems.

YOU DO MATTER CAMPAIGN

- **Topics**

- You Matter and What you do Matters
- Talk about your Emotions and Experiences
- Dealing with Anger
- Grief and Loss are Everywhere
- Toxic Positivity
- Mindfulness
- Self-Compassion



YOU DO MATTER CAMPAIGN - WEEK 1


- What you do matters



Just Three Breaths
Whenever you are, pause. Close your eyes if you can.
Take a breath, watching the entire length of the in-breath, the slight pause, and the out-breath.
Do the same for the second breath and third breath.
Open your eyes, open all of your senses, and just be aware - of sound, color, movement, touch, smell, etc.

30 Seconds

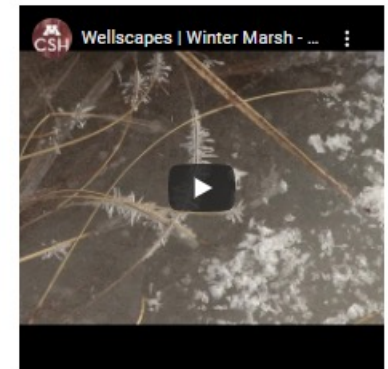
Center yourself with a few deep breaths.



Savor Positive Moments
Reflect on your day and identify three moments that connect to what you love about your profession - what inspires and energizes you at work?

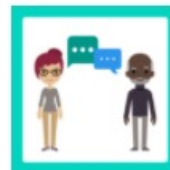
2 Minutes

Reflect upon and savor positive moments.



5 Minutes

Immerse yourself in music and nature.



Take Care of Each Other

Reach out today to a coworker. Look them in the eye, and let them know that they matter and what they are doing matters. If you can, call out something special you observe.

Explore More

- [4-7-8 Breathing](#) is simple, takes almost no time, requires no equipment, and can be done anywhere.
- [Kindness 360](#) Practicing kindness every day can improve your wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of people around you.

YOU DO MATTER CAMPAIGN - WEEK 2

- Emotions + Experiences



30 Seconds

Use RAIN to work through challenging emotions.



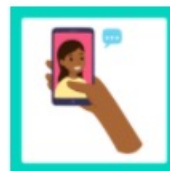
2 Minutes

Reset your breath and focus with this short guided meditation.



5 Minutes

Practice emotional shifting.



Take Care of Each Other

Offer your support to someone you think may be struggling with the challenges they are facing. Give them opportunities to talk openly about their experiences. Use [Deep Listening](#) to explore their feelings, emotions, wants, and needs.

Explore More

- [Being Mindful of Anxiety](#) guided meditation (6 minutes)

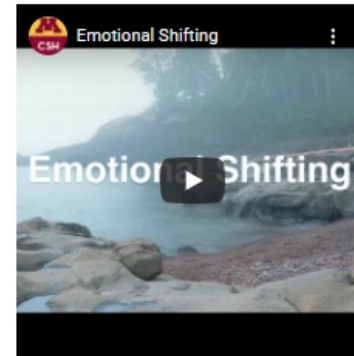
YOU DO MATTER CAMPAIGN - WEEK 3

- Dealing with anger



30 Seconds

PICK your words before responding.



2 Minutes

Practice emotional shifting after an interaction has passed.



5 Minutes

Try mindful communication strategies.



Take Care of Each Other

Create a standing ritual with someone that allows you both time and space to de-stress. Talking on the telephone on Fridays, for example, or sharing a walk during lunch breaks, are ways to keep in contact with the ones you care about the most. Check out our Taking Charge website for more ideas on how to [nurture your relationships](#).

Explore More

- [Work on Communication for Healthy Relationships](#)
- [How to Let Anger Out](#) Thich Nhat Hanh answers children's questions about how to deal with anger constructively and mindfully-Applicable to people of all ages!



Everyone has a

Story



Thank You