



February 11, 2021

It has been over a year since we started hearing about Covid-19 and almost a year since it turned our lives upside down. At first, we did our best to stand together and keep each other safe; A year later we are still doing our best, but you are not alone if you are feeling tired of it. Many of us are going through the stages of grief and loss and have been moving back and forth in different stages for a long time. Loss of the life we had before, missing friends and family, sadness, anger, resentment, fear and anxiety. There are no rules on how people move through the stages, how long they stay in each stage, or even if everyone goes through all the stages. The stages of Grief according to Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. This pandemic is causing us to feel a type of “anticipatory grief”; anxiety and fear of not knowing what is coming next or what lies ahead, and David Kessler states:

With a virus, this kind of grief is so confusing for people. Our primitive mind knows something bad is happening, but you can't see it. This breaks our sense of safety. We're feeling that loss of safety. I don't think we've collectively lost our sense of general safety like this. Individually or as smaller groups, people have felt this. But all together, this is new. We are grieving on a micro and a macro level.

Your body has been under a constant level of added stress for a year, which has depleted your ‘surge capacity’. Your ability to push through is likely feeling harder to do. It is important to recognize that it is normal in a situation of great uncertainty and chronic stress to get exhausted and to feel ups and downs, to feel like you are depleted, or experience burnout. It is okay to not be okay. Allow your brain time to make sense of what is happening. Attached is a document “10 signs you have pandemic fatigue and how to cope” which was forwarded to me by some of our knowledgeable School Counsellors and it has some useful tips and information. Here is a short video on self-compassion that I really enjoyed as well, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11U0h0DPu7k>.

If you are feeling like you cannot manage on your own, [Vancouver Island Counselling](#) is only a phone call away, and they are here to help, 250-746-6900. They also have many mental health resources available on their website on the right side of their home page. LifeSpeak is also good place to go for information about physical and mental health and it also has strategies on how to cope during this difficult time. Click on the link [here](#) to see what all it has to offer (password: lifespeak).

Some things I have found helpful to cope with the stress are, listening to podcasts, practicing mindfulness, writing in my gratitude journal and getting out for daily walks. The science behind mindfulness and meditation are increasingly showing the positive impacts on brain health. There are many sites online with free guided meditation exercises, here is one if you would like to give it a try <https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/>.

Lastly, this is a simple grounding exercise that I will use when I need to get out of my head:

Breathe in for four seconds and out for more than four.

(Continue deep breathing throughout the exercise)

Notice five things you can see

Notice four things you can feel

Notice three things you can touch

Notice two things you can smell

Notice one thing you can taste. Or

Notice one positive thing about yourself

I have plenty of other resources available if you are interested. Please do not hesitate to ask.

Remember to take care of yourself because you are worth it!

Cheryl Fotos

Health & Wellness Coordinator

wellness@sd79.bc.ca

250-510-0379