

Health & Wellness: December 2020

Description

Everyone has an event that will be remembered forever that will represent the year 2020.

- Children will claim it as the year when schooling was disrupted. Even though every child supposedly now has a computer, using a computer specifically for educational purposes is not the same as using it to play Minecraft with friends! Every child can report of a period of this year as the time when trying to communicate with classmates, teachers and friends was most challenging.
- Adults will reflect on 2020 as the year they stepped into the shoes of teachers or the year they went to work in their pajamas or the year they lost their job and had to figure out creative ways to feed, clothe and shelter their families. Some may see 2020 as the worst year ever.
- Others may see it as the year where life began to slow down and be totally unpredictable.
- Some people had impressive jobs one day and the next day the business had to shut its doors!
- Graduates experienced a new way of graduating; seniors lamented over missing proms. College graduates are still wallowing in the ever-growing sea of unemployment.
- Many people found themselves in food pantry lines for the first time in their lives.
- Additionally, 2020 can be remembered for governmental mismanagement of the pandemic, the exposure of the gross failures of our social system, legitimate and important protests, a divorce from routines we rely on and people we love, coming to grips with the fact that our future is NOT in our control.

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By now, nine months into this pandemic, we are facing over 262,000 deaths and more than 12.6 million coronavirus cases. Even though people are wearing masks, washing hands and trying to be socially distant, exposure to people with the virus is not fail-safe when we still have to shop for food and feed our cars with gas.

But, in actuality, this may be the worst year for this generation, but equally horrible years have existed in the past.

- In the year 536, a volcano erupted in Ireland, causing the sun to dim for 1.5 years. That event led to a global cold spell.
- In 1918, there was the Spanish flu pandemic.
- And each year between 1929 and 1933, the people suffered from the Great Depression.
- In 1968 we were in the midst of the Vietnam War, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated, police beat protestors at the DNC and there were nation-wide rebellions.

Rating years from bad to worst is not the objective of this writing, but it is to bring awareness to the fact that we have suffered greatly this year and so have our ancestors. There is a constant embedded in each "bad" year and that constant is that the events have dropped an enormous amount of stress onto our lives.

Everyone reacts differently to stress and in many cases, our reaction is dependent on our background, our social support, our financial situation, our health and emotional background, and our community support, among others. From a mental health perspective, it is critical that while trying to manage the daily physical needs of our families, tending to our **mental health is a number one priority**.

- MAKE time to breathe deeply, stretch, or meditate daily.
- Consciously eat nutritious meals.
- Exercise as often as possible, even if it is taking a daily walk around the neighborhood.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Take intentional time to unwind.
- Connect with others via online, social media, phone or mail.
- YOUR attitude toward a situation is critical. Recognize that 2020 is a *moment* in time. It WILL pass.
- ?Meanwhile, look for the sunrise; find something to smile about, to laugh at. Look for the beautiful/the good.

Our lives are living proof that we can move through these hard times.

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