Dear Friends,

With the Covid-19 pandemic we have a heightened sense of anxiety, vulnerability and isolation. In normal grief there is free floating anxiety that occurs and now it actually has a focus.

I've heard it expressed from our bereaved like this, "It's like a double loss", "I don't have the person I could have talked to about it", "I'm really alone in my house now", "I didn't get the closure and support I needed with the funeral postponed", "I didn't get to be with them in their last days", "I can't do the things that would have helped me cope in the past like go out with friends for coffee". These are all valid statements. You are grieving the death of your loved one and now you are also grieving a way of life, what used to be normal and facing daily changes and uncertainty.

But I've also heard from bereaved what has helped them. Some tell me they reach out to others with encouragement via the phone or learning to FaceTime with grandchildren.

Some are doing things that they have control over like sorting out file cabinets, pantries, putting pictures in albums and getting rid of things.

Some say they listen to the news just long enough to get updates but don't stay there or they get overwhelmed.

Some tell me they are doing more praying, meditating and always looking for what they can be grateful for.

Some have found a mantra or favorite saying that they repeat when they need it.

Anxiety creates a loop in our mind especially in the middle of the night. It needs to be taken out and examined. Journaling our thoughts and feelings is helpful at those times. I hope by the time you get this the impact of COVID 19 has lessened but in the midst of the storm we wish you peace, God's peace.

Thinking of you,
Autumn & Joyce
Bereavement Coordinators

"Grief is the emotion that the heart can't utter or speak"
COVID-19 CARE

BREATHE
- Breathe in five, hold, breath out for ten.
- The slow exhale tricks the brain into relaxing the body.

PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION
- Tense a group of muscles as you breathe in, relax them as you breathe out
- Do it in an order (top to bottom, bottom to top).

MINDFULNESS: 5 SENSES ACTIVITY - this is a great way to stop a panic attack
- Notice five things you can SEE
- Notice four things you are FEEL
- Notice three things you can HEAR
- Notice two things you can SMELL
- Notice one thing you can TASTE

DO SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE
- Activity is a great distraction (i.e. rearrange furniture, learn something new)
- Do an activity which gives you satisfaction (i.e. plan your 2020 garden, look at photos of grandkids)

KEEP ON A SCHEDULE
- A schedule helps us feel more in control
- Put things on it that are
  o Solitary (reading, crafting, baking, self-care, learning).
  o Social (calling friends and family, checking in on social media)
  o Necessary (cleaning, laundry)
  o Physical (exercise - walking is a GREAT exercise)
- Do not stay on news or social media sites for long amounts of time.
- Avoid too much input without a rest for your system
- Take breaks to switch activities
- Spend some time away from your phone
- Eat at regular meal times

CONTROL WHAT IS YOURS TO CONTROL (WHAT CAN YOU CHOOSE?)
- Remind yourself of what you are doing to help contain the spread
  o I am staying home, I am washing my hands and keeping an appropriate distance
  o I am not putting myself or those around me in danger
  o I am trusting the experts to do their jobs. EVERYONE wants this to be controlled and eradicated soon.
- I do not have to spend time dwelling on what is not mine to control. What can I choose?

HELPFUL MENTAL HEALTH APPS
- Calm
- Headspace
- Breathe2Relax
- CBT iCoach (insomnia)
- Take a Break
- Mindfulness
- Breathe
- Mood Tools
- Mood kit
- Vistaril Hope Box
- Ten Percent
- Insight Timer

NATIONAL HOTLINES
- Suicide 1-800-273-8255
- Domestic Violence 1-800-799-7233
- Crisis Text Line- text CONNECT to 741741
- National Substance Abuse Helpline 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)

Nesrin AbuAta, MD
drnesrinabuata@gmail.com