



Spring Newsletter 2021

Department of Counselor
Education

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A Message from the Chair:

A new normal...

If you've had me for the trauma and crisis class, you've heard me talk about "a new normal." During any crisis, if you ask people what they want, chances are they'll tell you some version of "I want things to go back to the way they were. I want things to be normal again."

As humans, we want and need to have consistency, predictability, and safety. Those things are what we define as "normal." We might not always like everything, but we at least know what's coming. The last year has been anything but consistent and predictable. New guidance, new rules, changing understanding of COVID. Stay six feet apart. No three feet. Outside is safer than inside. No, maybe it's not. Yes, we think it is. It all adds up to a lack of consistency, and in that, a lack of control.

So, we try our best to hold on to whatever we can that's normal. The fancy term is called "homeostasis" a natural tendency for things to return to equilibrium. But after a crisis, things can't go back to normal...they can't go back to the way they were, because normal isn't possible anymore. **Even if the world can go back to the way it was, WE can't...because our worldviews are changed by our experiences.**

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And that's when we move on to a "new normal." Someone recently said to me (over zoom, ironically), "I refuse to accept the words 'new normal' because I hate all of this." Well, that's the thing; New Normal isn't what we're living through now. New Normal will come after the vaccines are given, and when the masks finally come off, and when we're back in our classrooms and jobs, and concerts, and sporting events, and, and and...

New Normal will, hopefully, include what we've *learned* over the last year. *How can we be better? How can we live happier?* I know for me, the last year has challenged me to slow down, reflect, and really take stock in the people and things that are important to me. I was going too fast and my priorities were sliding out of balance. My goal is to try to slow down, both in the day-to-day, but also in my rush to return to normal. My goal for myself is to take the time to figure out how my New Normal can be better than the old.

Our department's New Normal will include a change in faculty. **Dr. Rick Parsons** has chosen to retire after many years in our department and in our field. I don't have the words to properly thank him or express my gratitude to him. He has changed many lives in his time at WCU, mine included. Whether we realize it or not, we are all a little (or a lot) better off because Dr. Parsons was part of our community here. I know that our New Normal will not be the same without him, but **I wish him all the joy in the world** as he begins the next step in his journey.

While we're not at New Normal yet, it's coming. Hope is on the horizon and we may want to get ready. **What do you want for your New Normal? How can it be better than the normal we left behind? What can you do to get there?**

Stay well everyone. We're almost there...keep your mask on and I really hope to see you soon.

-Dr. Owens



A Note from Dr. Dickinson...

April is **Counseling Awareness Month**, and the American Counseling Association (ACA) <https://www.counseling.org/> shared ideas for how to celebrate this month, including:

1. **Meet the Media:** celebrating your profession and increasing awareness of counseling benefits and resources.
2. **Be Social:** Acknowledging [Counseling Awareness Month in social media](#).
3. **Celebrate You:** It's your month ... why not take some extra time for yourself? [Self-care can be as simple](#) as making time to read a new book or catching up with friends, even [on a tight schedule](#).
4. **Grow:** What have you always wanted to learn or do to thrive as a counseling psychology professional? [Attend a conference](#), [consider a mentor](#), [give back](#) or learn [something new](#).

It's good practice to reflect on what we've learned and where we need to grow. What did you *learn* personally and professionally last semester? How about over the past year? Are there any changes that you will continue to keep in your life?

Who have you met that has become a colleague, friend and/or possible mentor or person to keep in your network?

The American Counseling Association is right to remind us to raise awareness for what counselors can do and to advocate for ourselves and our profession. Too many folks have no idea of the training and skill you are receiving and how much support you can offer. The global events of the past year have accentuated the need for mental health professionals – we need counselors more than ever. You may know acquaintances, friends and family members who need an empathic listener, someone to affirm their thoughts and feelings, who are in crisis – who need a counselor. How do we help them all?

It may seem overwhelming, and indeed if you think you have to help them all, it is overwhelming.

So, let's take a close look at the 3rd suggestion from ACA: Celebrate You. We celebrate that you have committed to starting your counseling journey at WCU. We celebrate that you have demonstrated resiliency as you've worked your way through Zoom classes, interruptions to daily life and all the responsibilities you have – and, a pandemic. **You have to take care of you before you can take care of anyone else.** So, whatever it takes to 'put that oxygen mask on yourselves', to take a break and breathe, to take a minute to notice the burst of spring as the crocus and daffodils bloom and leaves start to pop out from trees which were dormant, to watch a sunset and know you made a difference in the life of someone today, and to marvel at the next sunrise as it offers a chance to make another difference in the world – **whatever it takes to take care of you, do it** – do it because you matter and you will make a difference in someone's life, maybe one at a time, maybe one day at a day, and that's one more than yesterday.



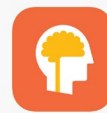
Some Resources for you and your clients/students!

Try continuing education through webinars!

- o American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.content.online>
- o American Counseling Association: <https://www.aca.digitellinc.com/aca/>
- o NAADAC: The Association for Professional Addiction: <https://www.naadac.org/2021-april-june-webinars>
- o Telehealth Certification Institute: <https://telementalhealthtraining.com/free-webinars>
- o If you are a member of Chi Sigma Iota, you also have access to helpful webinars through the CSI website: https://www.csi-net.org/page/Webinar_CE_Hours
- o <http://creativeplaytherapist.com/teleplaytherapy/>

Helpful Websites!

- o <https://www.therapistaid.com/>
- o <https://www.psychologytools.com/>
- o <http://www.expressivetherapist.com/group-activities.html>
- o <http://www.lianalowenstein.com/articles.html>
- o <https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month>
- o <https://www.psychologytools.com/articles/free-guide-to-living-with-worry-and-anxiety-amidst-global-uncertainty/>
- o <https://coronadosafe.org/blog/face-covid/#.XrXQfhNKg1h>



Apps

- o Calm
- o Luminosity
- o Happify
- o Talkspace
- o Headspace
- o The Mindfulness App
- o #SelfCare App

Mindfulness Exercise: 5 Senses

One example of a mindfulness exercise is called the **Five Senses Exercise**. The goal is to calm your mind by using your five senses to focus on your environment instead of your thoughts. Using the **5-4-3-2-1** technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.

Here are the steps to complete this exercise:

- **First**, notice **5** things that you can **see**. Look around you and become aware of your environment. Try to pick out something that you don't usually notice.
- **Second**, notice **4** things you can **feel**. Bring attention to the things that you're currently feeling, such as the texture of your clothing or the smooth surface of the table you're resting your hands on.
- **Third**, notice **3** things that you can **hear**. Listen for and notice things in the background that you don't normally notice. It could be the birds chirping outside or an appliance humming in the next room.
- **Fourth**, notice **2** things you can **smell**. Bring attention to scents that you usually filter out, either pleasant or unpleasant. Catch a whiff of the pine trees outside or food cooking in the kitchen.
- **Finally**, notice **1** thing you can **taste**. Take a sip of a drink, chew gum, or notice the current taste in your mouth.

Feel grounded yet?


SOURCE: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/grounding-techniques.pdf>



Self-Care Bingo

<p>Take a shower or bath</p> 	<p>Read a new book</p> 	<p>Go for a mindful walk</p> 	<p>Reconnect with a friend</p> 	<p>Hydrate!!</p> 
<p>Ask for help</p> 	<p>Practice self-compassion</p> 	<p>Get 7-8 hours of sleep</p> 	<p>Let yourself cry</p> 	<p>Create something</p> 
<p>Treat yourself</p> 	<p>Spend time with a furry friend</p> 	<p>FREE</p>	<p>Stand in the sunshine</p> 	<p>Take ten deep breaths</p> 
<p>Take a break!!!</p> 	<p>Get off social media</p> 	<p>Journal</p> 	<p>Hug someone</p> 	<p>Cook a new recipe</p> 
<p>Tidy your room</p> 	<p>Watch your favorite movie</p> 	<p>Play a game</p> 	<p>Listen to a favorite song</p> 	<p>Learn a new hobby</p> 

Closing Remarks and Reminders:

- ✚ To start off, sending a huge **congratulations** to all for making it to the end of another semester during a time of virtual challenges surrounding our global crisis. Way to go spring 2021 graduates!
- ✚ A second **congratulations** shout out to all of the summer 2021 graduates! **You made it!**
- ✚ Make sure to check your West Chester email for any updates and reminders that may come during the summer break as many of us forget.
- ✚ Make a note to obtain or renew any clearances for fieldwork in the fall! These are important.
- ✚ Make sure to file for degree candidacy before starting your internship semester. Check your West Chester email for instructions on how to complete this from Dr. Owens.
- ✚ Apply for graduation the semester before you plan to graduate on myWCU!
- ✚ If you have any news or announcements that you would like to be featured in the next newsletter, please email GA Monica Jampo (MJ940355@wcupa.edu).
- ✚ Lastly, keep your head **held high**. There is always a light at the end of tunnel. 

“Be fearless in the pursuit of what sets your soul on fire”

-Jennifer Lee

