



NEWCOMERS

AN INFORMAL SOCIAL GROUP
WELCOMING NEW ARRIVALS TO ATHENS

<http://www.newcomersinathens.com>
newcomers.bulletinboard@gmail.com

Newsletter April 2020

Dear Members,

Since COVID-19 became a global pandemic in March, it has wreaked havoc on populations and economies worldwide. Everyone reading this newsletter is likely under some form of lockdown in their homes as a result of the virus, our daily lives have been turned upside down, and life everywhere is dramatically different from what it was four weeks ago. It certainly feels strange to be writing another monthly letter, knowing that yet again we will not be meeting each other face to face at Vathis to enjoy a chat with our fellow members and pick up some great used book bargains. We miss our friends at this time. I do hope, however, that just receiving this electronic newsletter will cheer you up a little and go some way to remind you of the importance of staying connected even while we stay at home.

We all face a current life style that would have been undreamt of just a couple of months ago. We are all in quarantine. Perhaps, like me, you are struggling with the anxiety of being disconnected from friends here in Athens and from family overseas. Despite the advantages of digital communication with those we love and whose company we enjoy, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the prospect of many more weeks of isolation. So I have tried to put together an issue that helps us to stay connected; it contains valuable information and helpful hints!

*I owe a thanks to our members who have so willingly contributed to this issue. For example, Alexandra's article on *The Effects of Social Isolation* is timely and informative; the "Take away" suggestions from Tatiana will prove most welcome, as is Mary's simple recipe suggestion at a time when supermarket shopping is not high on our lists. Look out for more of Di's book reviews next month, too – it's such a gift to have the time to read those titles that have been languishing on the book shelf. And Martina's news from lockdown in Tunis reminds us that we are not facing this pandemic alone, we are all being asked to work together unselfishly for the common good. And thank you, Lynne, for keeping the Bulletin Board going too.*

Because we plan a May Newsletter, do please send me any material you'd like to be considered for inclusion in that issue. Send it to chrisgrantbear@gmail.com.

So until then please stay well, stay home and stay connected with Newcomers!

Chris Grant-Bear, Editor



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NEWCOMERS MEMBERS USEFUL INFORMATION

Website: www.newcomersinathens.com

Bulletin Board: newcomers.bulletinboard@gmail.com

Emergency Numbers

<u>EU-WIDE EMERGENCY</u>	<u>112</u>
<u>POLICE EMERGENCY:</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>FIRE BRIGADE:</u>	<u>199</u>
<u>TOURIST POLICE</u>	<u>171</u>
<u>AMBULANCE</u>	<u>166</u>
<u>SOS MISSING CHILDREN:</u>	<u>1056</u>
<u>DOCTORS SOS</u>	<u>1016</u>
<u>EMERGENCY HOSPITALS</u>	<u>1535</u>
<u>POISON FIRST AID</u>	<u>210</u>
<u>8081464</u>	

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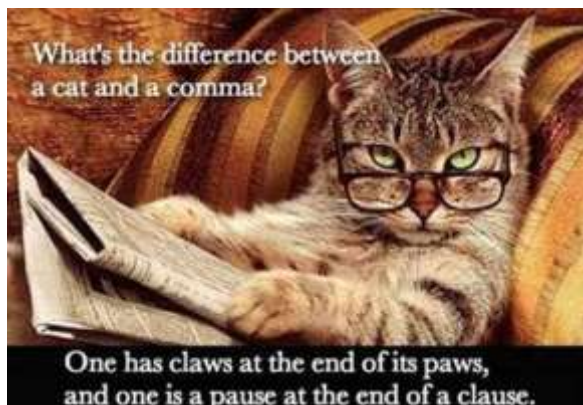
Newcomers is an informal, non-profit, social group run by a committed team of volunteers offering support, advice and information to new arrivals in Athens via monthly meetings, activities, a newsletter and an e-community Bulletin Board. Newcomers is also dedicated to doing rewarding work in the local community by helping a small number of worthy causes.

Formed to encourage people to meet each other, make new friends, and cope with the practical side of living in Greece as well as enrich their lives with culture, Newcomers welcomes all nationalities, with English as the common language.

Although informal, we have a team of committed volunteers who meet together regularly to take decisions and agree on issues affecting the group. Each volunteer provides help in various capacities. There are no membership or annual fees – only a small charge at each general meeting to cover costs.

If there are surplus funds left over from an event, the monies are donated to the charities supported by the group.

Newcomers Monthly General Meeting is held on the second Wednesday of each month from September to June in the Northern Suburb of Kifisia. Twice a year the meeting includes special luncheons. Meetings usually include a speaker who shares information about a specific topic of interest. New people are introduced, general announcements are made, upcoming activities are announced and any questions are answered.



An Outline of Quarantine Guidelines

Many of us find the new regulations about staying at home somewhat confusing. This is understandable, because this is a new situation for all of us, including the persons who write our laws. Most of the quarantine legislation is described in Joint Ministerial Decisions (KYA – as they are called in Greece). A quarantine is a limitation of the circulation of people, animals or goods that have been exposed to infectious or contagious disease.

Here are some of the quarantine rules that are well worth remembering:

- A. Those who come from abroad MUST stay in quarantine inside their homes for 14 days. The police are really strict with this rule, which is valid for both Greek and foreign citizens and the fines are very steep (5.000 euro per violation). In this case, even being found by the police circulating close to your home (walking the dog, for example, or jogging), counts as a violation and both criminal charges, as well as the fine will be imposed.
- B. People are told (not merely “advised”) to stay inside their homes and not to circulate, in order not to spread the covid-19 virus to others. There are exceptions to this rule, however, and you can download permits to print, sign and carry with you when outside your home at the site www.forma.gov.gr. These permits are in Greek. If you do not speak Greek at all, you can write a handwritten note in English which you will then have to sign and carry with you, mentioning your name, address, the date and time, and the reasons you are out of your home, which will have to be one of the following reasons allowed by law:
 1. Going to a pharmacy or visiting a doctor
 2. Going to a shop (super market or mini market) in order to get necessary supplies
 3. Going to a bank
 4. Going to help persons in need
 5. Going to a marriage, baptism or funeral service (if allowed by law) or, in the case of separated or divorced parents, going to visit your children, in accordance to existing legislation
 6. Exercising outside your home or walking your pet, either alone or in the company of another person, keeping a distance of 1,5 meters between the two people.

If you do speak Greek, then you can download from the same site a form for temporary movement, in which you will have to fill in and sign, checking the reason for having to go outside your home which will have to be one of the six reasons stated above.

Finally, you may choose the SMS method to declare that you will be leaving your home, by sending an SMS to 13033. Here are step-by-step instructions for doing this:

- i. Write the number of the cause for which you are going out, as above
 - ii. Leave a blank space
 - iii. Write your name
 - iv. Leave a blank space
 - v. Write your address
 - vi. Send it to 13033
 - vii. You will receive back an SMS saying “Metakeeneeese” (in Greek METAKINHΣΗ, i.e. movement), followed by your main and address, which you can show if you are stopped by policemen.
- C. If you need to go to work every day, you have to be equipped with a “Certificate for the Circulation of an Employee” which you can print out from the same site as above and it has to be filled in and signed by your employer or by yourself, if you are self-employed. In the certificate the employee’s name and the employer’s address are stated, as well the phone numbers of the company manager and the times where the employee will be working.

by Marylou and Karolina Andriakopoulou

Four Food Shops to Get you Through Coronavirus Season in Athens

Tatiana Harkiolakis

The spread of coronavirus in Athens has turned many of our social lives upside down. But cooking at home instead of going out doesn't have to be boring or tiring. Below are four of the coolest food stores in Athens that will deliver hip food products and easy-cook meals right to your door!

Nestled in an unsuspecting corner of Holargos, **Bekiaris Meat & More** (*Faneromenis 2A; 2106516779*) is a hip butcher-deli that stocks a wide range of deli products, from free-range chicken to chutney. Their hidden secret, however, is their ready-made meat dishes that come fully prepared and ready to be cooked. Try the chicken tortillas or the *beef-tekara*, a large beef-pork pattie stuffed with cheese and onions.



Another hidden gem is **Oi Synteknoi** (*Kassomouli 46; 2109029232*), a store stocking authentic Cretan food products in the suburb of Neo Kosmas. Delivering all around Athens, they stock everything from deli meats to nuts and spices to soap. For a quick meal that everyone will love, buy their frozen *kalitsouniaournou* (small Cretan pies) stuffed with either *mizithra* (a light cheese) or *hortarinia* (greens).



Up north in Kifissia, **Varsos** (*Kassaveti 5; 2108012472*) is a classic stop for dairy products and sweets; but did you know they do delivery, too? You can stock up on their yogurts, creams, and *rizogala* (rice puddings), and even order their classic *tirópita* or *spanakópita tapsiou*. For those days when you and the fam just need a sweet treat, however, order a piece of cheesecake, mille-feuille, or *karidópita* (walnut cake).



And finally, every parent's dream, **House of Wine** (*Eth. Antistaseos 40; 2106773315*) in Halandri stocks a huge variety of drinks, from rosé to sake to gin. What you'll really fall in love with, however, is their wide range of gourmet snacks and sweets. We recommend the *Gavottes* mini crepes, *Darlings* strawberry cookies, and *French Truffles* chocolate truffles with salted caramel—but don't be surprised if the kids get to them first!



In the days that come, let's all be grateful for our health and safety—and grateful that we live in the age of Facebook and delivery!

IMPORTANT! From Chris Grant-Bear

I am not a huge fan of Facebook, and I don't twitter, but I admit that I have found it a useful tool for keeping in touch since this crisis began. But, for the sake of my mental health, I am making a great effort not to check in all day long, not to become obsessed with knowing the latest about everything, and not to forward every inspirational saying, every quote, every statistic, every reference, every ad that floods my screen. Why?

Coronavirus misinformation is flooding the internet. Experts are calling on the public to practice "information hygiene". Here's how you can stop bad information from going viral (adapted from an article on BBC Trending on 27.03.2020)

1. Stop and think Because you want to keep help family and friends in the loop when you receive fresh advice by email, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc., you might quickly forward it on. But one thing you can do to halt misinformation is to simply stop and think. Then if you have any doubts, pause, and check it out further.

2. Check your source Ask some basic questions about where the information comes from. It's a big red flag if, for sources of information remain public health bodies like the **NHS**, the **World Health Organisation**, or the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** in the USA. Experts are not infallible. But they are much more reliable than a stranger's distant relative on WhatsApp.

3. Could it be a fake? Appearances can be deceptive. It is possible to impersonate official accounts and authorities, including BBC News and the government. Screenshots can also be changed to make it look like information has come from a trusted public body. Check known and verified accounts and websites. If you can't easily find the information, it might be a hoax. And if a post, video or a link looks fishy - it probably is.

4. Unsure whether it's true? Don't share Don't forward things on a "just in case" they might be true basis. **You might be doing more harm than good.** And beware - that photo or text you share might later be stripped of its context.

5. Check each fact, individually When you get sent long lists of advice, it's easy to believe everything in them just because you know for certain that one of the tips (say, about hand washing) is true. But that's not always the case.

6. Beware emotional posts It's the stuff that gets us fearful, angry, anxious, or joyful that tends to really go viral. Urgent calls for action are designed to ramp up anxiety - so be careful. People want to help their loved ones stay safe, so when they see something like 'Tips for preventing the virus!' or 'Take this health supplement!' they want to do whatever they can to help." Again, stop and think before you press that share button!

7. Think about biases Are you sharing something because you know it's true - or just because you agree with it? **It seems we are more likely to share posts that reinforce our existing beliefs.**

Remember that it's when we're angrily nodding our head we are at our most vulnerable. So that's when, above everything else, **we just need to slow down everything that we do online.**

Bits and pieces from my inbox Chris Grant-Bear

- Laura wrote: *This is the time to be more resourceful than ever and I am very happy to be living in a culture that has this important trait. It is most useful during these extraordinary times of adjustment on all levels, and precaution with sensibility... not fear and panic... Dear ladies I wish you all a lovely day as we are once again bestowed with such beautiful weather.*
- From Mary: *Hello all ye in solitary confinement! Hope everyone is staying well and busy.*
xxx Mary
- **Please be safe and cautious, we are looking forward to seeing you all as soon as all this is over. from Katerina and Aris x**
- From Tunis - wishing you all the best in this crazy time and looking forward to next month's writing already. filaria Martina
- **Major Ray Lamont The Salvation Army – Canada & Bermuda Territory**
Good Morning, I hope you are all well. This is my new email address: rachele_lamont@can.salvationarmy.org
Thanks!

Stay Home! Stay safe!

From Martina in Tunis

**Dawning of day 14 on lockdown and day 4 of distance learning
March 27th 03:07 o'clock.**

How foolish we have been all this time to undermine this creeping threat. How confident and western of us to think that this sort of problem simply never reaches "us". How naive to actually believe that "we" are untouchable. And yet here we are, we are part of the calamity now, not only are we part of it but "we" and our moralistic and ethically superiority are the reason why it is perpetuated 1000 fold. But still as Armageddon is knocking at our door and even in the midst of our most profound global catastrophe since the 2nd World War, we enjoy food a plenty, electricity and water galore, and WiFi connection unhindered, while crying over our isolation and distress. We have all the systems in place to weather the storm in luxury, while we sniffle through our makeup, and fight for toilet paper in the supermarket isles. "How long will it last?", is the question in everyone's lips. Impossible to answer. One thing we have learned so far from this threat is that it is not to be underestimated and it attacks at the very heart of a most profound western credo, that sense of freedom absolute, coupled with unbridled self-righteousness. We risk failing to contain it because "we" suffer communally from a far worse ailment called "entitlement", whose main symptoms are "I-know-better" and "I-can-because-I-am-right".

Like most people all over the world my family and I are on lockdown. The streets around our apartment in the Lac 2 suburbs of Tunis are empty of cars, the school next door is closed, our local mini market operates with one shutter closed and people entering inside one by one. A curfew has been instated for almost a week now between 6pm and 6am. I am motivated each day to wake up early, tidy, and clean to make the house appetizing and cozy. The living room has become the common working space, with two big tables placed in perpendicular, on one of the tables my easel faces the window and I face my boys. At 8am the boys have their headphones on and laptops open, they await the days instructions from their teachers online. Classes are continuing as before simply through a computer. How lucky are they, it looks like their education won't suffer. Their father is at home too. He navigates between the kitchen and the living room depending on his meetings and interactions, drowning in trying to coordinate scenarios that are changing by the hour, he is scrambling to keep his teams a float. Even he is lucky, he still has a job and a reason to feel important and needed. In between my functioning as general support system, I read my book club quota of reading for the day, then paint, then cook, then knit, approximately. How lucky am I, I have solid purpose, motivation, inspiration and entertainment.

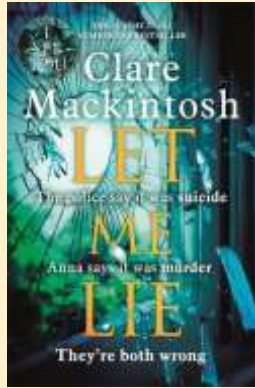
How lucky are we. Even as calamity is knocking at our door we are able to weather the storm in luxury. It's early days yet, but there is no point in thinking about the worse-case scenarios. We want for nothing and enjoy the solidarity. One day at a time is the only way, with dignity, respect, patience and a full face of makeup. May this experience teach us humility and help to remind us of our dependence and complicity with nature and the world around us.



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twitter: @managnostou facebook: Martina's Art Studio

LET ME LIE by Clare Mackintosh

Ever since I read her first book - I LET YOU GO - I've been a keen fan of Claire Mackintosh. After a few chapters of LET ME LIE I thought I knew exactly what was going on, and who Anna definitely shouldn't trust. Well, I got that wrong! I was totally wrong on all counts!



This book is just as exciting as her previous novels, with plenty of unmistakable twists and turns along the way and plenty to throw you off track, so you're never quite sure if you've solved the puzzle or not!

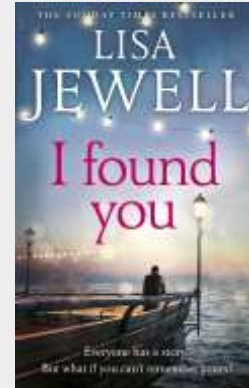
The story follows Anna, an only child, who is coming to terms with the loss of her parents after both took their own lives. Anna was a likable character and it was easy to connect with her in an attempt to understand what she was going through. She begins to receive clues which suggest that maybe her parents were murdered, and that someone might be coming for her too. The short and gripping chapters added so much suspense to this book. Some clearly titled as being written from Anna's perspective, but then other chapters were unnamed. I found myself constantly trying to guess who was writing those extracts. My guesses continually changed as more was revealed in the story, which moves along at a cracking pace and at times had me holding my breath.

I enjoyed the side line story of the ex-detective, Murray Mackenzie, who investigated the case at Anna's request. His relationship with his wife Sarah, is both touching and tragic and really drew me in. I felt that the topical issues of mental health, running like a thread throughout the story, were very delicately explored and gently treated. The story was not complicated by too many characters or unnecessary relationships and the simplicity of the characters involved made the family structure clear from the start, yet wasn't so simple that it could have been easily worked out! The family structure within this story was key to understanding the events and making all the links.

The pace of this book is exciting, culminating in a way that made me draw breath with shock. Oh, and that final sentence . . . just when you think all has been revealed Clare Mackintosh throws you a curve ball! I wasn't expecting that!

I FOUND YOU by Lisa Jewell

This was my first Lisa Jewell read. For some reason I had thought of her as a 'chick-lit' writer. I found it compelling reading and will now explore more of her books!



-“Lily has only been married three weeks. When her new husband fails to come home from work one night she is left stranded in a new country where she knows no one.....

-Alice finds a man on the beach outside her house. He has no name, no jacket, no idea what he is doing there. Against her better judgement, she invites him into her home. But who is he and how can she trust a man who has lost his memory?”

-1993 and we meet the Ross family – we are led to believe the man with no memory is the son Gray.

What kind of shock would bring about a total memory-wipe? That's the question I kept asking myself. The book did not disappoint. Gripping, visceral, shocking - I Found You takes the reader on a psychological and emotional rollercoaster - dark and gritty but beautifully written and absorbing.

The three separate narrative strands gradually coalesce, but even at the beginning, when we have no idea how they are connected, each story is compelling and I didn't feel any urgency to guess the outcome. I just enjoyed the journey. And, while there are certainly twists and moments of high drama, this is a surprisingly moving novel. The book stirred up many emotions and though I found some of the scenes distressing, it turned out to be a really superb mystery-thriller with great characters.

Recommended! But I have to admit I finished the book late at night and had difficulty sleeping afterwards with rather disturbed dreams. Perhaps better to read it in the daytime!

Environment in the times of Coronavirus

As I write this, we have all been in lockdown for a week although since the restaurants, bars and cafes were closed it has been two weeks, and three weeks since schools were closed, so it does feel like a long time at home. It's hard to put a positive spin on this crisis with so many people suffering and the huge worries about the worldwide economy and specifically the concerns about the Greek economy.

Of course, for the environment there have been some benefits, such as cleaner air caused by the grounding of airplanes, the shutdown of heavy industry, people working from home, less consumerism and there have been reports on social media of dolphins and swans being seen in the canals of Venice. Nature it seems is having a rest!

Conversely, I'm sure we will have more plastic in the bins with the use of masks, gloves and anti-bacterial hand wash. Each of us has to consider what we need to do to keep ourselves and our families safe. I reluctantly bought my first bottle of chlorine in two years so I could disinfect door handles and light switches. It will last me for years, I'm sure! I mix 4 teaspoons of chlorine with 900mls of water in a spray bottle, give it a good shake and then use it to clean door handles light switches and surfaces. I'm following the guidelines for hand washing using soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds and avoiding antibacterial hand wash, wipes, gloves or face masks.

For most of us the lockdown has meant more time at home. I suspect that like me, you have probably been tackling some of those jobs that you never seem to have time to do. Some of these tasks for me have included looking at my systems in the home for making it more environmentally friendly. I thought I would share some of these tasks here with you.

Ideas to do at home

1. Reduce your rubbish/trash.

Sort out bathroom cupboards. Use up any creams, shower gels, soaps, shampoos, perfumes, I was surprised at how many sachets of face creams I have been given over the years that were just sitting in my cupboards. Gather everything into one place - a basket or tub and use them up before buying new items.

Recycle any empty containers or better still if you can repurpose them to make something else.

Reduce the space that rubbish and recycling takes up in the bin by opening up boxes to flatten them.

Collect plastic film and any other plastic items which cannot be recycled and start an ecobrick (see Ecobrick.org for instructions). I wash plastic film and put it in an old pillowcase to dry until I'm ready to do my ecobrick. Ecobricks are a great way to take plastic out of the environment.

2. Sort out your kitchen cupboards. Use up any tins and packets of food.

Put any cutlery or kitchenware that you don't need in a box to give away (this crisis will pass and you will have everything ready to give to different worthy causes when it does).

Limit your time at the shops by shopping only once a week. It is suggested that it is good to buy fruits and vegetables that do not decompose quickly - apples, oranges and any fruit with a thick skin. Buy local fruits and vegetables and eat lots to boost your immune system!

3. Sort out your Compost. Start one up if you don't have one!

If you have a compost bin, now might be a good time to empty it! I emptied ours at the weekend - remove the compost from the bottom of the bin and leave the rest in the bin. Try and turn your compost once a day to aid decomposition.

Set up a Compost if you don't have one. You've nothing to lose! Landfills contain waste food that releases methane as it decomposes. Allowing food to decompose in a compost bin significantly reduces methane release. (There are loads of ideas on YouTube - see How to Compost on a Balcony or How to Start a Compost Bin or see <http://WWW.THEEARTHLINGDREAM.COM>).

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4. Plant some vegetables

Now is the time to try planting some fast growing vegetables in pots on your balcony or a garden. We have the time and there is nothing to lose by trying. Root vegetables, green beans, courgettes and lettuce grow quickly and are easy to grow. Why not trying growing some herbs so that you limit your trips to the shops. Again there is a wealth of information on the internet for growing vegetables.

5. RESEARCH

We've all heard of the Rs to help the environment: Refuse; Reduce; Reuse; Repair; Repurpose; Recycle; Rot. So why not use this time to add another R – RESEARCH, whilst you have the time so that when this crisis passes - and it will - we will all in a better place to help our environment.

Keep safe and keep well everybody.

Pauline Leyden Zoulias

Psychological Wellbeing in Time of Quarantine



by Alexandra Kovacevic Konstantatou

Effects of Social Isolation – Distress of Disconnection

As the number of outbreaks of coronavirus increases, the authorities are increasingly taking measures to limit the spread of the virus. We have all been encouraged to 'socially distance' so we can reduce the spread of the Corona Virus. And while social distance can protect us physically from the coronavirus, does it emotionally isolate us? And how will all this isolation affect our mental health or overall mood? As a counsellor and a psychotherapist, I am keenly aware that the distress of disconnection, whether within ourselves or with the others is one of the main reasons to seek a professional help. My colleagues all over the world agree that the precautions of isolation can have a psychological cost.

To stay physically healthy, we are doing exactly what will not be good for our psychology later. Being alone is interpreted in our mammalian brain as 'Danger', and Being Connected is interpreted as 'Safe'. Especially when we are in a period of threat or danger, it is natural to want to interact with others. It is known that hugs and other forms of affection that require physical contact are particularly important for our mental health as they reassure us by lowering the levels of cortisol, a "stress hormone".

Though our mammalian DNA is coded for connection, most of us live in 'a tribes of two', (if we are lucky), many of us live alone. Isolation can lead to fear, loneliness, depression, decreased immune system. Social distance is related to the malfunction of the immune system, which poses risks of infection. The findings came from a study of people in quarantine and provided some initial information on the impact of social distance on mental health. A recent review of published studies in the medical journal The Lancet showed confusion, anger and symptoms of post-traumatic stress as potential psychological effects of quarantine.

Equally important is whether the quarantine is voluntary or involuntary. If the authorities do not adequately explain that this mandatory process is for the general good, we feel we have less control over the situation and quarantine can be characterized as punishment. People want to be responsible for their activities.

Millennials are also vulnerable. Although most have a large following on social media, many of them report feeling isolated and this is due to the fact that the majority of their interpersonal contacts are usually in the school or a workplace. They have begun to confuse Twitter and Instagram with true friendship, which is far from reality.

Unfortunately, the stress hurts our ability to cope and compromises our immune system. *According to the American Medical Association, 80 to 90% of disease is stress-related. That means*

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that if you don't want you or your loved ones to get sick, become better at handling your stress — since stress greatly lessens your immunity."

Dr. Andrew Goliszek Ph.D, writes in Psychology today: "The ability to fend off illness and disease depends on several factors, some of which are beyond our control, but the way we react to stress and the general health of our immune system are things we can influence. If we're not able to change our response to stressors, we'll find ourselves in a constant hormonal battle that will lead to serious health issues like hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease. The brain and the immune system are in constant communication in his delicate balance that can be disrupted by any kind of physical or emotional stress."

By being faced with a tremendous challenge, like the pandemic spread of the virus, we are losing our ability to find meaning in our (decreased) daily activities.

Man's Search for Meaning

Victor Frankl, the psychiatrist who survived Auschwitz, gives a lesson on spiritual survival. Terrible as it was, his experiences in the concentration camp reinforced the ideas that he was working on: Life is not primarily a quest of pleasure as Freud believed, or power, as Adler taught, but a quest for meaning. The greatest task for any person is to find meaning in his own life. Frankl saw three possible sources for meaning: in work (doing something significant), in love (caring for another person), and in courage during difficult times. Suffering in and of itself is meaningless: we give our suffering meaning by the way we respond to it. These three axioms (he had courageously helped others in the camp, by sharing his food rations and raising their moral, and kept his hope high that he would reunite with his beloved wife) had helped him personally to survive the Holocaust and to complete his work.

Online Connection as Antidote to the Distress of Disconnection

Attachment Theory confirms that we need each other to survive. Connection is in our strength. And though we need to 'social distance' in order that we can help prevent and slow the virus spreading, we do not need to give up connection.

During these times we are more and more turning to connecting on line. This does not mean that it is impossible to maintain meaningful relationships online. Quality counts more than quantity. Focusing on few relationships can be more useful in times of need. Social distance and other coronavirus-related precautions push us to consider when treatment is worse than the disease.

In these stressful times of this global epidemic, with all the unknowns we are facing, it becomes even more important to know we are not alone, and that we can rely on others.

During the devastating fire that destroyed big parts of California last year, we saw how important the need for connection and the community to support each other became so crucial. Secure Attachments help with Stress in Times of Adversity. What we saw across Northern California communities is how bonded and available communities can become for each other.

The same question that I explore with couples as a relationship therapist: A.R.E, (Accessible, Responsive, and Engaged), YOU there for me? Is answered with a resonating YES in our communities?

In my work with couples who started the therapy before the quarantine and managed to find the way to communicate more effectively, this decision could make all the difference now that they are literally 'quarantined' together. It is important to remember that we're all in this together. Let's give each other get-out-of-jail-free passes when our responses to mundane matters seem a bit over the top. Let's let the small things slide. Let's use this down time to find new and creative ways to connect rather than blame each other.

Reach out to family, colleagues, friends, and associates. Reach out to your therapist, reach out and connect in whatever format that is possible. Sometimes, even one person, the one that makes us feel understood, accepted and safe to be ourselves is enough to make all the difference.

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Just for Fun!

We are all learning that self isolation is not easy, not only for members who enjoy super food at a variety of great eateries on their regular monthly date with Lunch Bunch, but also for members who enjoy that opportunity to spend time with Kathy and friends.

But have no fear, your favourite Lunch Bunch Organiser has not forsaken you in these difficult times! Read on . . .

ANTI-STRESS DIET

by Kathy Cambas

Is the stress of the coronavirus situation getting to you? Are you having trouble sleeping or concentrating as anxiety gets the best of you? At times like these, try and take good care of your body. Take deep breaths, exercise, meditate, and try this fantastic anti-stress diet that's very easy to follow:

BREAKFAST: 1 – 2 grapefruit
1 slice whole wheat toast
8 oz. skim milk

LUNCH: 4 oz. broiled chicken breast
1 cup steamed broccoli
1 Oreo cookie

MID-AFTERNOON SNACK:
Rest of the package of Oreo Cookies
1 quart of Rocky Road Ice Cream
1 jar Hot Fudge sauce

DINNER: 2 loaves garlic bread
1 large pepperoni pizza
Pitcher of beer
3 candy bars
Entire frozen cheesecake (can be eaten straight from the freezer if you're feeling really tense)

Also, remember these diet tips to help you through the day:

1. If no one sees you eat, it doesn't count.
2. If you drink a diet soda with a candy bar, they'll cancel each other out.
3. Calories don't count if you eat with someone and they eat the same thing.
4. Food taken for medicinal purposes doesn't count.
5. Snacks consumed while watching TV or a movie do not count as they are part of the entertainment.
6. Pieces of cookies contain no calories.

And finally, remember: if you fatten up everyone around you, you'll look thinner!

Couscous Primavera

A great recipe from Mary, who reminds us that these fresh ingredients can be got from your local "manaviko", (greengrocer) so no need for a supermarket trip.



Recipe by: Chef John

"This is a healthy, delicious, and easy side dish that takes about 10 minutes to make. I'm borrowing the name from Pasta Primavera which, like this recipe, takes advantage of fresh, seasonal, green produce."

Ingredients

- 2 cups dry couscous
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 1 fresh jalapeno pepper, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper
- 1 pinch ground black pepper
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1 cup shelled fresh or thawed frozen peas
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- salt and ground black pepper to taste

Directions

1. Combine couscous, green onion, jalapeno, olive oil, cumin, cayenne pepper, and black pepper in a large bowl; stir until olive oil is completely incorporated.
2. Bring vegetable stock, asparagus, and peas to a boil in a saucepan over high heat.
3. Pour stock, asparagus, and peas over couscous mixture; shake bowl to settle couscous into liquid. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork, then stir in mint and season with salt and pepper to taste.

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