

Congratulations

SOMEONE WHO CARES HAS SENT YOU A VIRTUAL CARE PACKAGE FROM
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY'S COUNSELING CENTER

*We hope these contents help you continue
to strive for wellness during these
challenging times!*





Counseling Center Mental Health Care Package: Coping with COVID-19

Just like you, the Counseling Center is venturing onto a new path, a new reality associated with COVID-19. We are reaching out (virtually, of course! #PhysicalDistancing) and sharing ways to help you take care of yourselves, no matter if you are in Baltimore, in Maryland, in the US, or across the globe.

let's talk. choose connection

1. Host a virtual Netflix party. Google Chrome has an [extension](#) that lets you watch Netflix with friends.
2. Send a virtual hug.



3. If you are self-quarantining with loved ones, did you know that a **20-second hug** does wonders? Oxytocin (the “cuddle hormone”) is released, a hormone that relaxes us and lowers anxiety. When it’s released during these 20-second hugs, it can effectively lower **blood pressure** and reduce the **stress** hormone norepinephrine.
4. Have a dance off with friends and have a live virtual dance party!
 - a. DJ Mel of Austin, TX will host weekly [Living Room Dance Parties](#) via Facebook Live, or access past streams on his [YouTube channel](#).
5. Play online games together like Minecraft. [Discord](#) is a platform you can use to play and chat with friends at the same time.
6. Card games or Checkers more your speed? Have a [virtual game night](#) and use Zoom or FaceTime to chat while playing.
7. Go old school and phone a friend (but maybe text them first and give them a heads up).
8. Pets are benefiting from our increased time at home. Share some of our best furry friend's antics with others online.
9. Host a dinner party or charades with friends over FaceTime or Zoom.
10. Start a personal or public blog, website, or podcast.
11. Find a pen-pal or write handwritten letters to friends and loved ones.

let's talk. choose the arts

1. Explore [art museums](#) from around the world virtually.
2. Want to flex your sketchbook skills? This is just one example of an [art challenge](#) that you can find on social media, like Instagram or Reddit.
3. [Art-viewing](#) can help with social and psychological support for people caring for those with mental health challenges. Just do it virtually for now, though.
4. [Virtual concerts and Broadway shows](#) to watch are available during the COVID-19 shutdown.
5. Express your feelings through creative writing, painting, drawing, photography, clay, listening to and/or playing music, or experimenting with a new baking or cooking recipe.

let's talk. choose music

1. Free virtual concerts:
 - a. Rolling Stone's [In My Room concerts](#) (3 concerts a week!)
 - b. [John Legend](#)
 - c. NPR's [Tiny Desk concerts](#) for the arts (Harry Styles, Chika, Taylor Swift, Thundercat, Taimane, Coldplay, Tyler, the Creator, and more!)
 - d. Live virtual [concerts](#) from NPR ranging from Experimental to Jazz and Americana to everything in between

- e. Compilation of music and opera on demand, as well as live streams from the [Guardian](#) and [Classic fm](#)
2. Make a music video. Share it on social media or just keep it for yourself!
3. Create a variety of playlists highlighting different moods or activities (e.g., I'm rearranging my living space playlist)

let's talk. choose movement

1. [Stretching and movement](#) can help with anxiety and sleep.
2. Check out a gentle [yoga](#) video.
3. Choose from a variety of [free-trial workout](#) streaming services.
4. Suggestions on ways to [stay active](#) during COVID-19.
5. Free virtual classes through the [YMCA](#) – no membership required!

let's talk. choose kids' activities

If you have children, not having school or the ability to physically go to the library, museums, or parks can be especially challenging. Here are some free resources to entertain and engage with your young ones.

1. [Scholastic Lessons](#)
2. [Mystery Science](#)
3. [Storyline](#)
4. [Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems](#)
5. [Cincinnati Zoo](#)
6. [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#)
7. [Gemini](#) – free children's concerts
8. [LearnAway](#) – remote learning ideas, resources, tips, and tools from birth through 12th grade

let's talk. choose helping others

1. Donate to local food banks
2. Find ways to help young students who depend on school lunches
3. Buy a gift certificate to a local small business or restaurant
4. Check-in on your neighbors, friends who may be more vulnerable
5. Consider donating blood or plasma
6. Practice physical distancing
7. Share information responsibly and support those who create accurate and informative information
8. Practice patience, kindness, and understanding
 - a. Adapted from [PBS Newshour](#) and [U of Michigan Health Blog](#)

let's talk. choose nature

1. Breathe the fresh air and take in what is around you. Use your five senses to connect with nature.
2. Exercise your green thumb by purchasing a low maintenance plant or have someone gift you a baby plant (succulents are great). Plants are a great way to brighten up your workstation and improve [well-being](#).



let's talk. choose self-care

1. Acknowledge your feelings. David Kessler, a grief expert, discusses how COVID-19 may be bringing up feelings of [grief](#) and anticipatory grief, and provides strategies for coping.
2. Practicing the “Apple” technique can help decrease anxiety and worries:
 - a. **Acknowledge:** Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.
 - b. **Pause:** Don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Pause and breathe.
 - c. **Pull back:** Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are not statements or facts.
 - d. **Let go:** Let go of the thought or feeling. It will pass. You don't have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble or a cloud.

- e. **Explore:** Explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then shift your focus of attention to something else – on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry, or let’s talk else – mindfully with your full attention.
3. Being present eases anxiety and worry. Try one or all 52 [free mindfulness exercises](#).
4. Learn more about how to [cope](#) and stay emotionally well during the COVID-19 related school closures.

let’s talk. choose deep breaths

1. [Loyola.edu/relax](https://loyola.edu/relax) – engage with a self-soothing video, progressive muscle relaxation, breather bubble tool, guided meditations, a journal feature and more
2. [CALM](#) app – free meditations, stories, music, and yoga
3. More free mindfulness [meditations](#) and talks by Dr. Tara Brach on a variety of topics from anger to fear to compassion and caregiver resources

let’s talk. choose cooking

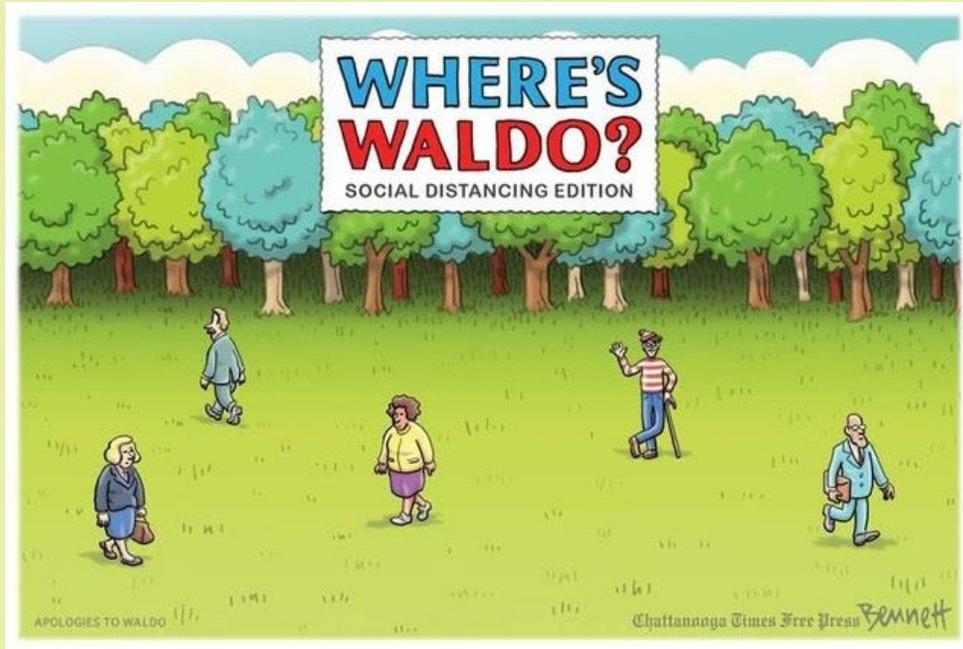
1. How about experimenting with some [new recipes](#)? Share your creations on social media and/or have a live cooking challenge with friends.
2. Discover some great food blogs and YouTube channels, whatever your skill level may be:
 - a. Watch [Binging with Babish](#) cook dishes from your favorite video games, movies, TV shows, and more. Or, check out his Basics with Babish series.
 - b. [The College Housewife](#) has dishes that look as good as they taste! Her blog is also a great place to see some amazing table design
 - c. If you’re looking for simple dishes at a low cost, check out [Budget Bytes](#).

let’s talk. choose sports

1. Desperately missing sports? Check out these free passes:
 - a. [NBA](#) League Pass: games from earlier this season, and classic games
 - b. [NFL](#) Game Pass: game replays

let's talk. choose laughter

1. Take time for some stress relief. [Laughter](#) can be one of these ways and has been associated with psychological health benefits



let's talk. choose sharing

Feel free to share this virtual care package on social media, or send it out to friends, family, and loved ones.

HEY, GREYHOUNDS!



Physical distancing is something we can do for the common good



1. Remember that you're not alone -- we're all experiencing this together.
2. You can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 by limiting contact with other people, and maintaining at least 6 feet when you do have to go out.
3. We may be physically distant, but we don't have to be socially distanced. When we feel isolated, we still have the connection of our common experiences.
4. Through our actions, we can positively impact these uncertain times, and help save lives.

Loyola University Maryland Counseling Center
410-617-2273 | www.loyola.edu/counselingcenter