

The Power of Community

By Dr. Margaret Rea

It was extremely hard for many of us to stay focused on school and work as we were reeling from the emotional impact of the events in Florida. I personally have struggled to remain present for the tasks at hand as my thoughts keep going back to making sense of the tragic loss of life. What has helped sustain me has been watching the students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School come together as a community. I was also inspired by the story of Marissa Schimmoeller, a teacher who is wheelchair bound, she wrote:

Today was the first time I had to teach the day after a mass school shooting. I dreaded facing my students this morning, and as the first students walked in, I began to feel the anxiety pooling in my stomach. I was dreading one, specific question. Soon after class began, a freshman asked me the question I had been dreading since I had heard about the tragedy in Florida.

"Mrs. Schimmoeller," she asked. "What will we do if a shooter comes in your room?"

My stomach sank. I launched into my pre-planned speech about our plan of action. Then, I knew I had to say the harder part: "I want you to know that I care deeply about each and every one of you and that I will do everything I can to protect you. But - being in a wheelchair, I will not be able to protect you the way an able-bodied teacher will. And if there is a chance for you to escape, I want you to go. Do not worry about me. Your safety is my number one priority."

Slowly, quietly, as the words I had said sunk in, another student raised their hand. She said, "Mrs. Schimmoeller, we already talked about it. If anything happens, we are going to carry you."

The students in Mrs. Schimmoeller's class and from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School have demonstrated one of the key factors that support resiliency in the face of unthinkable tragedy, social connectedness and community. Turning to one's community for support brings strength and helps with healing. Connecting with others is not only

helpful at times of tragedy, but can buoy us as we navigate daily stress.

Connectedness goes hand in hand with the feeling of belonging. Spending time with others who share your experiences, interest and values can help promote a rich community and be a vehicle for change. Belonging does not mean working to make yourself fit into a group. Instead, belonging is bringing your authentic self to a group. Consider building social connectedness as you face the stress that can come with finishing the last hurdles of the academic year. Some of you might tend to isolate in an efforts to focus on academics. Going underground into the social isolation bubble can work against your well-being. Reach out to individuals for a coffee date, set up a study group, join a student interest group or volunteer at one of the free clinics.

Those of you who completed the survey about what you wanted with regard to wellness curriculum, were clear that more opportunities for social connection were a priority. I was inspired by the camaraderie evident in our February wellness event when the therapy dogs came to campus.



Let's look for more opportunities to gather as a community. Let's be sure we support the members of our community, and like the students in Mrs. Schimmoeller's class, look out for each other. Building and supporting our community will leave us all feeling enriched, but also help us make important changes for ourselves, and like the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School make great impact on the behalf of others.

Wellness Events

Work Life and Wellness Events

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/index.html>

UC Living Fit Forever

http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml

Insomnia Webinar For MED Students

Learn how to manage your insomnia that may be triggered by stress
February 26, 2018
Email/RSVP to costerhout@ucdavis.edu
For more info, check out the [Flyer](#)

Wellness Tip: Meditation that Promotes Social Connection

Sharon Salzberg's loving kindness meditation that promotes social connection is a good fit with the theme of this newsletter;

1. Begin with someone who has helped you; maybe they've been directly generous or kind, or have inspired you though you've never met them. When you think of them, they make you smile.

Bring an image of the person to mind, or feel their presence as if they're right in front of you. Say their name to yourself, and silently offer these phrases to them, focusing on one phrase at a time.

May you live in safety.

May you have mental happiness (peace, joy).

May you have physical happiness (health, freedom from pain).

May you live with ease.

Don't struggle to fabricate a feeling or sentiment. If your mind wanders, simply begin again.

2. After a few minutes, move on to a friend. Start with a friend who's doing well right now, then switch to someone who is experiencing difficulty, loss, pain, or unhappiness.

3. Offer loving-kindness to a neutral person, who you don't feel a strong liking or disliking for: a cashier at the supermarket, a bank teller, a dry cleaner. When you offer loving-kindness to a neutral person, you are offering it to them simply because they exist—you are not indebted to or challenged by them.

4. Offer loving-kindness toward a person with whom you have difficulty. Start with someone mildly difficult, and slowly work toward someone who has hurt you more grievously.

It's common to feel resentment and anger, and it's important not to judge yourself for that. Rather, recognize that anger burns within

your heart and causes suffering, so out of the greatest respect and compassion for yourself, practice letting go and offering loving-kindness.

5. Finish by offering loving-kindness to anyone who comes to mind—people, animals, those whom you like, those whom you don't, in an adventurous expanse of your own power of kindness.

https://www.mindful.org/sharon-salzberg-connect-with-kindness/?utm_source=Mindful+Newsletter&utm_campaign=ea840864ef-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_06_26&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6d03e8c02c-ea840864ef-21555569&mc_cid=ea840864ef&mc_eid=08f60e91ca



Monthly Recipe from the UC Davis Community

This month's recipe is from Polly Latow, Clinical Curriculum Manager, Office of Medical Education, UC Davis, School of Medicine. Polly reminds us how cooking a meal together builds community.

"Cooking a meal with friends and family is a wonderful way to connect and show your care for them. It's not important how fancy the meal is or whether your house is clean or how together you are; all that's needed is a warm welcome and food prepared with thought for those you are feeding. One of my favorite meals to share with friends is a salad, bread that can be dipped in olive oil and a soup made the night before. Here is one my favorite soup recipes that is great for a crowd." [Click here for the recipe.](#)



Wellness App: Oak

Oak is a new app that has offers three dimensions that can support well-being" meditation, breathing exercises, and encouragement through, "wisdom," short audios with inspiring thoughts. You can set the amount of time you want for your meditation as well as the background sounds or soothing tracks.

Many people use Oak just for the powerful breathing exercises. Featuring Box Breathing, Deep Calm (4-7-8), and Awake breathes.

Whether you're in need of some quick relaxation or a boost of energy, these exercises are easy to perform, even on the go. Your Oak user profile tracks your meditation and breathing process over time

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/oak-meditation-breathing/id1210209691?mt=8>

Instagram - www.instagram.com/oakmeditation

