



City of Somerville

Council on Aging

SCOA News

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As we try new ways to stay connected to you we just wanted to thank you all for your kind words as we continue working remotely. We wanted to share some of the responses we have received over these last few months.

First, I want to thank you all at COA for all that you are doing for us during this tough time. Your information, encouragement, sense of humor, and health tips are great! Again, thank you all for all that you do for us Seniors. You are part of those who make Somerville a great city! -Karen

I want to thank you for your amazing emails to seniors. You are a cheerleader urging us on to self-care and fun. I appreciate the time and thoughtfulness you invest in these daily communiques. All the best for good health -Kathy

You and your fellow SCOA crew are doing a fantastic job keeping us on our toes mentally, emotionally, physically (that's Chris literally). Thanks to all -Laura

Thank you for the daily tips, good and meaningful suggestions, I am sure these daily notes are welcomed by many members of the community. And the exercise suggestion are really helpful, even for myself, I have my routine, but they inspire to go beyond routine which I find important. Cordially and wishing you health. -M

This is a great way to help folks stay connected and positive while they are self isolating. Keep up the good work and stay well -Lisa

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Social Workers Corner

Let's Talk Resiliency!

Everywhere we look we hear about resiliency, but what does it really mean to be resilient? Resiliency is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity or significant stress—like we are all doing now! Research has shown that resiliency is ordinary, not extraordinary, and that people commonly demonstrate resiliency.

Resilient people are not happy all the time, or live without fear or negativity. Mental Health America and Massachusetts Councils on Aging tell us that resilient people feel a wide range of emotions but they also rely on ten tools to help them navigate through difficult times.

Nobody can rely on one method to make them happy, to get them out of a funk, or to ease their worry.

So, let's learn ten coping strategies to help us when facing a challenge!



Connect with Others: Did you know that connecting with others can increase happiness and lead to better health and a longer life? Even though we can't connect with others as we could in January, we can still foster great relationships. Chat with a friend on the phone, write a letter to your family member, or sign up for our Friendly Phone Caller program and meet someone new!

Get Enough Sleep: Not getting enough sleep can lead to a greater risk of anxiety and depression, impaired memory and reduced immune system functioning. To increase your sleep, try: setting a regular bedtime, stay away from caffeine 6-8 hours prior to bed, or try some gentle stretches prior to going to bed.

Eat Well: Eating well can boost our energy and lower the risk of developing certain diseases. Over the past few weeks, we may have noticed some changes in our diets. Today, let's be mindful not to skip meals and to focus on a varied diet.

Get Physically Active: Exercise helps us to improve our sleep, increases our energy and boost our immune system. Experts report that exercise can stimulate feel good hormones, burns off stress and relieves muscle tensions. Let's try to incorporate exercise in some unexpected ways! Some suggestions are: walking in place or doing leg lifts while watching TV, or turn on the music and dance!



Stay Positive: Let's choose to be positive. Fostering optimism doesn't mean ignoring the negative, it means that we acknowledge the bad, but focus on the good. Let's foster optimism by thinking about a positive future or searching for the silver lining. We can also practice gratitude by writing a letter to someone who has been kind to us, or writing a few things we are grateful for in a journal.

Help Others: Research shows us that those who help others experience less depression, greater calm, and better health. Even if you feel as though you can't make a grand gesture, there are many small ways to be helpful. Try, letting a car go in-front of you, holding the door open for a stranger or calling a friend.

Create Joy and Satisfaction: The good feelings you have when you do a pleasurable activity can decrease stress and build emotional strength. Laughter can reduce anxiety and promote muscle relaxation. Try to focus on creating these moments of joy; read a joke book or revisit an activity you once loved.

Take Care of Your Spirit: Spirituality means connecting to whatever you consider meaningful and holy. For some, that means a focus on religion, for others it is on nature, art or kindness. Some people achieve greater peace and reduced anxiety by turning towards a daily prayer, meditation or reading inspiring essays.

Deal Better with Hard Times: Each one of us has and will experience difficult times. When faced with a stressful situation don't blame others or wallow in self-pity; tackle your problem by listing solutions and trying them out one by one until one works. Shift your thinking to consider what you are able to learn from this situation and seek support if you need it.

Get Professional Help if You Need It: You don't have to be in crisis or suffering before seeking professional help. A mental health professional can help you feel stronger during difficult times, help change behaviors that hold you back and help come up with plans for solving problems.

**Tips are from Mental Health America and are used at the SCOA course on resiliency, Living Your Best Life. For further information please refer to their website: mhanational.org*

Health & Wellness Corner

If you follow sports, at some point in time you have probably heard that sports is largely mental. Some athletes will spend time before each game mentally going over the entire game in their head to get prepared. It is amazing the affect mental preparation can have on your day.

Even for non-athletes, mental preparation and positive thinking can be a game changer for our day. Positive thinking can lead to a better quality of life, can give you more energy, and can improve your physical health and lower rates of depression.

Take some time this month and see what positive thinking can do for you. To help you get started, try spending time each day and focus on the good things that are happening around you, try practicing some gratitude, or try keeping a gratitude journal if you like to write. Also, try to surround yourself with positive people. Even though we are in the midst of social distancing, doesn't mean we can't pick up the phone and talk with people who make you happy. And lastly, try to start everyday on a positive note and some positive self-talk. You might be amazed at what a little positive thinking and mental preparedness can do for your health.

Can you find the FIVE Differences in the picture?

