

WEEKLY WELLNESS AND COUNSELING NEWSLETTER

When Life Gives You Lemons...

Staying (Realistically) Positive



THE LEMONS

Now that you are settling into the semester, you may notice your coursework is starting to pile up and you're having less free time than you had before. With COVID-19 still in the mix, you may be starting to feel a little bogged down.

THE SOUR SIDE OF "POSITIVE" VIBES

Trying to make lemonade out of lemons can be a great way to keep your spirits up, however, it's not always realistic. #positivevibes has been used on Instagram over 59 million times, often accompanied by images of incredibly happy looking people talking about how "great" life is going. Since social distancing is still a thing- social media use has skyrocketed and for good reason- it can be a great tool to stay connected. However, it can also be really detrimental looking at these messages. Why? Well, it's IMPOSSIBLE to be happy all of the time, and being inundated with these images can make us feel like there is something wrong with us if we aren't feeling happy. Especially during a pandemic, it is normal to be feeling worn down, disappointed, frustrated, and lonely.

Glossing over other emotions and overgeneralizing happiness is known as **TOXIC POSITIVITY**, and it results in denying, minimizing, and invalidating the authentic human experience of life and emotions. In other words- it's unrealistic and is an impossible (and unhealthy) standard to try and live up to.

What's the big deal?

Toxic positivity can result in suppressing emotions, and research shows that emotional suppression increases stress and can actually make it harder to avoid the distressing thoughts and feelings.

SPOTTING TOXIC POSITIVITY

1. *Hiding or masking your true feelings*
2. *Pushing down or dismissing your emotions*
3. *Feeling guilty for feeling what you feel*
4. *Minimizing other people's experiences with "feel good" quotes or statements*
5. *Saying things like "it could be worse" instead of validating the emotional experience of others*
6. *Trying to shame others for expressing or experiencing emotions other than positivity (like anger, frustration, and sadness)*
7. *Brushing things off that are bothering you*



WHAT TO TRY INSTEAD

1. *Allow yourself to experience your emotions*
2. *Accept your emotions and know that what you are feeling is important and valid*
3. *Tell yourself that it is okay to feel difficult emotions*
4. *Practice good listening when friends or family are sharing how they are feeling*
5. *Ask how you can support your loved ones*
6. *Validate other people's feelings (even if you think you would feel differently in that situation)*
7. *Don't brush things off. Take a moment to acknowledge how you are feeling, and give yourself time to process your feelings*

2020 has brought a lot of lemons...so what do we do with these hard experiences?

MAKING LEMONADE

(Realistic Ways to Stay Positive)



SELF AFFIRMATIONS

Spend a few minutes each day saying some positive self affirmations. This is an easy way to lift your spirits- you deserve to feel good about yourself! Here are some affirmations to try:

"I deserve to feel happy"

"I will live live in the present"

"I love myself more and more each day"

"I am safe and I am at peace with myself"

"I am a fighter and I will get through this"



GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Each day, take a few minutes to jot down things you are grateful for. You can keep an actual paper journal, a document on your computer, or even a note in your phone to write down your thoughts. Maybe you're grateful for your friend who texted you today, the fact that the dining hall served your favorite pizza, or maybe you're grateful because you slept well last night. Gratitude doesn't have to be for "big" things- we can be grateful for anything!



FAVORITE THINGS LIST

Make a list of your favorite things, and try to experience or do a few of those things each week. Here are some examples:

- Going on walks or exercising
- Watching Netflix
- FaceTiming Family
- Journaling or creating art
- Listening to music
- Drinking coffee/tea

CONTACT WELLNESS

If you are struggling to juggle your lemons and need support, reach out to the Wellness Center! We have a virtual crisis hour M-F from 2:00-3:00pm. Find the link as well as how to make appointments on our website:

<https://www.ursinus.edu/offices/wellness-center/>