



Colleague to Colleague: Staying Centered during Uncertain Times

The AAEP Wellness Committee has been reluctant to add to your crowded email inboxes but wondered if we might be able to breathe some fresh air and encouragement into our colleagues and members during this difficult time. We think everyone is receiving ample news, statistics and advice about what to do with their practices, but are you getting some big picture love? Gratitude, joy, fellowship (keep your distance and only in small known groups!) and encouragement are all great ways to manage the unknown and persevere through troubling times.

The following tips and resources are offered from your colleagues on the Committee as ways they have personally found encouragement and connection these last few weeks. We hope something here brings a lift to your spirit.

- **Emotional Wellbeing**

- Yale is offering its online Science of Wellbeing course for no fee: www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being You can read an article about the course here: [www.businessinsider.com/...](http://www.businessinsider.com/)
- Presentations and resources from a University of Florida faculty member and psychologist on managing stress during a pandemic: mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/...
- Sometimes when you have no control of your external environment, making some simple progress on projects around the house or clinic can give you a sense of peace.
- Work a puzzle or one of those massive coloring pages to get your mind off your worries.
- Reach out to your colleagues, classmates, friends and family. Since folks are somewhat busy right now, but it doesn't have to be a long communication. Simply sending a funny meme (and let's face it, this crisis has produced some memorable memes!) on a text message can brighten someone's day. It shows encouragement and support from our "community."
- Cook! And for those with children, it can be a science class as well, especially baking.
- Encouraging support of veterinarians who are also supplementing income with their art or craft or connecting colleagues who do this to others that do as well. I had never heard of the Facebook group Vetsy until about 6 months ago. As an example, many veterinarians active in this group (from around the world) have been sewing and getting out orders for fabric surgical face masks and other items for a long while now.

- Spend time with your horse: “There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a (wo)man.” — Winston S. Churchill

- **Physical Wellbeing**

- With gyms closed, workout apps such as Peloton and Strava provide access to virtual high-fives, challenges and competitions. Connection can bring peace and encouragement.
- If financially feasible, commit to at least one dinner or lunch a week that you purchase take out from a local restaurant in your practice area. It provides local support and it takes some of the brunt off of prepping and making every single meal.
- Take hikes or neighborhood walks with your family and/or dogs:
www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/well/move/...

- **Financial Wellbeing**

- Taking stock of our role in society as an essential service provider can give you a lot of peace. Many of our friends and family are not as fortunate and are deeply worried about their ability to work and provide for their families. We have plenty to be grateful for.
- Read Financial Peace University during this time of economic slowdown. Dave Ramsey’s course provides you with a simple process to help you organize your finances, eliminate debt, save for emergencies and the future. For those of you who own your own business, Ramsey’s Entleadership book and courses take a similar approach to your company finances and culture. <https://www.daveramsey.com/fpu/#in-progress=0>

- **Occupational Wellbeing**

- A practice can start an Angel Fund to allow clients to help others. This can be a "feel good" measure that can elevate people. One of my clients started one with his own donation of \$1,000 and in an hour had \$1,000 more. At the end of 2020, he stated to his clients that any remaining funds will be donated to the Foundation for the Horse, and he will donate another \$1,000 to the fund on Jan 1, 2021.
- If you are lucky enough to have a partner at home with you to help take care of your children while they're out of school, that's great! If you are still working and busy, remember to not put all of that on your partner because he/she is stuck at home. See if it is possible to condense appointments into three days a week so you can split up child care and help relationships stay strong.
- If you are part of a larger practice, consortium, etc., ask for those meetings to be conducted over Zoom/Facetime/Google Hangout. All have mobile platforms that are very easy, and just changing something from a phone call to a face to face makes a huge difference.

- **Spiritual Wellbeing**

- Try a virtual group bible study or book study. The Bible App, for example, has plans available for free that you can share with friends virtually everywhere. With churches, temples, synagogues and other centers of worship closed to in-person gathering, this can be a great way to establish spiritual community with others.
- Journaling daily during these epic times can relieve anxiety and will likely be something you will want to reflect back on in the future. Getting your thoughts and concerns on paper allows you to objectively assess the problems (or are they even really problems or just fears of the unknown?), formulate a plan and begin working the plan. Stress is diminished when you can stop the recurring narratives of worry in your head.

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