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A COLLECTIVE MEMORY Created For REFLEXOLOGISTS DURING THE PANDEMIC



This is the eighth and last Bulletin with contributions from reflexologists around the world sharing their experience during this Pandemic.

In this edition, I will be sharing my coping mechanisms and experiences below this editorial.

This Pandemic is possibly the most stressful experience for most people during their lifetime. Daily life has been upended, unemployment has skyrocketed and more than 6 million people around the world have been infected. According to the New York Times, an estimated 420,000 residents fled New York City, turning the most vibrant city in the world into a shell of its former self, and then we are facing challenges for our immediate future.

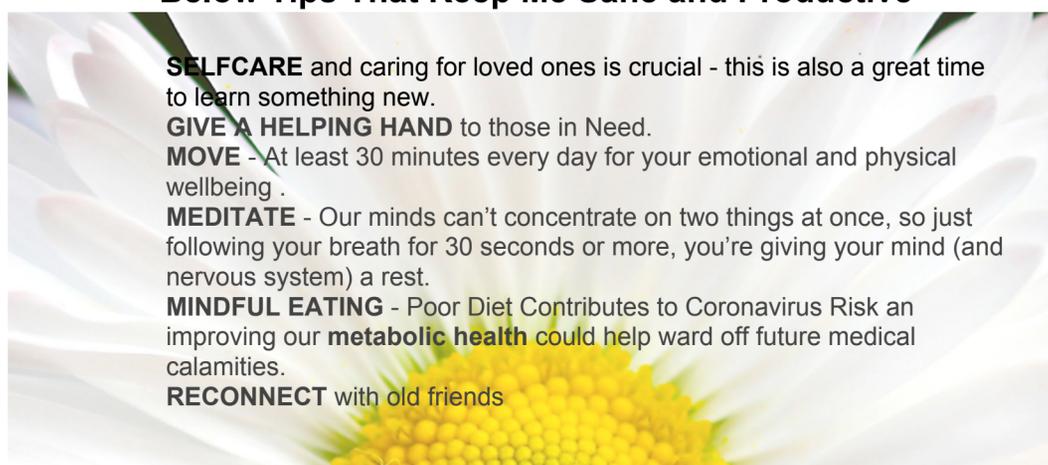
All this uncertainty of lock downs and social distancing yields wear and tear on our physical and mental wellbeing. Over an extended period of time, stress hormones like cortisol and norepinephrine can contribute to sleeplessness, anxiety and metabolic disorders .

FOCUS on the "Now" and stay in the present. We have to deal with reality. Putting your head in the sand might give one a safe feeling, but it doesn't produce anything

Those who have been living in an epicenter experienced first-hand the effects of this virus. They might have been sick themselves or might have lost a friend or loved one. It is difficult to believe that there are still people in our community who are immune to reality and pretend that the virus is no more harmful than a bad cold or the flu. No matter one's beliefs or convictions, how can one be blind, moreover where is the compassion and respect for the anguish and distress inflicted on over 2 million people just in New York City. There seems to be a conflict when being in a profession that practices "the art of healing" one is unable to feel empathy.

I am a cautious optimist, where flowers bloom, so does hope. **"Accept, Adapt, Practice Compassion and Gratitude for the Small Things In Life"**

Below Tips That Keep Me Sane and Productive



Don't Forget
Laughter

FACING MYSELF

Links and Widgets Work After You Have Downloaded this Bulletin

WHAT HAVE I BEEN DOING AND WHAT ARE MY COPING MECHANISMS DURING THE LOCKDOWN

Upon my return from my Mexican winter vacation, I worked exactly two days before everything came to a halt. I was supporting three "first-time" pregnancies, and the expecting mothers and their partners were terrified to be without support during the last 6-8 weeks before the birth of their baby. I had no choice other than to figure out how I could support them with quality care.

The only option was virtual support; thus, I adapted a reflexology handbook that I created a few years ago for doctors in Burundi, into an 18-page reference manual for my pregnant clients. Before the first virtual session, I emailed them this reference material together with a 3-minute instruction video with the breathing techniques that we normally use during the sessions. During the 50-minute virtual sessions, I taught the partners of the moms-to-be **three simple reflexology techniques** and was able to support them on a weekly basis until the birth of very healthy babies. Several regular and previous clients got also interested and one of them even referred me to a pregnant friend in the UK.

Nevertheless, my life has changed as much as everyone else's. Because I am doing mainly home visits, I had to adapt from a very active lifestyle that included six-days a week commuting and walking around New York City to a much more sedative lifestyle. That is not easy!

I miss the physical interactions with clients, family and the community that I have been working with for the last 24 years. I make sure to keep social contacts alive via FaceTime, Messenger and Skype. I even have a regular chat with a friend who I had not seen or spoken to in 58 years, lots of catching up to do. I have been organizing food for our local Foodbank and a shelter for Domestic Violence. I do grocery shopping and cooking for Nora, who used to be the caregiver of my mother-in-law, and then stayed on as housekeeper after my mother in law passed away. Nora stopped working a few years ago (she is now 89) but stayed on as a member of the family. Almost everyone in my family lives either on the West coast or in Europe and only my son lives relatively close by, which is still a two-hour ride away. I was thrilled to finally see him last week for the first time since January. I do talk or text with most of my family, especially with my granddaughter and my sister.

My lecture in Paris for the "Reflexology In Europe Nexus" (RIEN) was postponed until next year. However, I **just** heard, that after we canceled my two workshops scheduled for September in Denmark, we might go ahead after all. Denmark will be opening its borders on July 1, and with cautious optimism, it is great to have something to look forward to.

So, what else do I do? I stay on top of current affairs and science by reading about 4-6 national and international newspapers plus various magazine. I was included in several Zoom conferences with the doctors I work with and conducted a lecture for the Perinatal community. In addition, I morally support a close friend, a doctor who has been working in the Covid19 unit of a major NYC hospital since day one. He has been giving me first-hand feedback of what's happening inside.

Staying fit and healthy was crucial, and I had to figure out HOW to incorporate DAILY walking into my life as long as we are on "stand-still". As much as I like walking around in New York City (We live about 10 minutes from the George Washington Bridge), suburban walking was not very enticing. I resolved this by executing this as a "routine action", and it is the first thing I do after I wake up, immediately after brushing my teeth. By incorporating podcasts and audiobooks, my 1 ½ hours walking routine has become a pleasant daily ritual, and it is the perfect occasion to practice my own breathing method "Effortless Diaphragmatic Breathing". This helps to strengthen my diaphragm and respiratory system. My other exercise is "rigorous housework", including walking up and down the stairs.

I just got my certification for a 10-week psychology course offered by Yale University in the "Science of Happiness". We started out by getting our "Character strength " evaluated via a survey from the VIA institute of character <https://www.viacharacter.org/> When you discover your greatest strengths, you learn to use them handling stress and life challenges. Everyone can take this 10-minute survey for free, and you might be surprised what you discover about yourself. Nutrition has been an integral part of my work and currently I am doing a certification course "Nutrition and Lifestyle in Pregnancy: from the University of Munich. As practitioners we can never stop educating ourselves.

To connect the Tristate reflexology community and beyond, I started this temporary bulletin. From the reactions, these bulletins have been a source of support to many reflexologists in this community. Though this is my last weekly bulletin, but I do my best to keep the reflexology community informed and connected via our Facebook page. Just click on the Facebook widget in the Masthead of this bulletin or on the following link <https://www.facebook.com/TristateReflexology/>

I am realistic about the immediate future, because even if I can work again, many of my clients are among the 420,000 who left the New York City. Once I know the date that I can physically work again, I will have a dialogue with the obstetricians I work with. Pre-COVID19 they usually referred their patients as early as week eighteen. I have to discuss the safest possible solution for me to continue home visits. If needed I have to adapt and change my structure of my practice.