

Fall Newsletter 2020

Department of Counselor Education

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I thought it would be better by now.

I really did. It feels so naïve to write that now. Back in March, when we closed up our offices and our classrooms, I figured things would be straight by summer. I had the same thought about Fall when we started summer term. And then I hoped for Spring when we started Fall semester back in August.

My point friends, is that **I keep hoping**. I'll admit, as the hopes turn to reality, and the reality is nothing like my expectations, I get discouraged. And it's easy to get discouraged again, and again...and with all that discouragement, comes anger.

Anyone who has ever had me for class has heard my treatise on anger, that it's a secondary emotion, and that it masks what I really feel and am having trouble accepting. Well, most days I'd rather be angry, but if I'm being honest, I'm frustrated. I'm disappointed. I'm sad. I'm scared. It's been a tough couple of months. I've watched a lot happen from my living room since March. I've seen cases rise, and hospitalizations increase. I've seen people I know and care about get sick, and luckily, get better. I've known people who weren't as lucky. I've seen anger and sadness and fear and frustration spill out into the streets, and I've seen it pushed back with tear gas and batons and riot shields. I've seen an election come and go, and weeks later, we still don't have resolution.

I thought it would be better by now.

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Pandemics end. So do elections. But systems and institutions don't change nearly as fast, or as easily. **But they can change.** It takes a lot of energy, and a great deal of courage, and a whole lot of patience. I realize we're running low on all three.

But I still have faith, and I still have hope, and I'm still encouraged. I'm encouraged by all of you, and no pressure or anything, but we're counting on you. We're counting on you to learn to be the best counselors you can be, and by becoming great counselors, you can really change the world. I'm not just saying that; it's true. Pandemics and elections impact the world, sure, but most days it's nothing that dramatic. Our daily battles aren't usually these epic fights of good versus evil or dramatic acts of heroism.

It's usually doing something versus doing nothing. **I genuinely believe you will all be the ones doing something. And in doing so you will change the world.**

The last chapter of my favorite book reads, ***"Trials never end, of course. Unhappiness and misfortune are bound to occur as long as people live, but there is a feeling now, that was not here before, and is not just on the surface of things, but penetrates all the way through: We've won it. It's going to get better now. You can sort of tell these things."***

If you've read this far, then email me and let me know what book it's from, and I'll owe you a cup of coffee when we can all get back together again.

Be well, stay healthy, and keep wearing those masks. We'll win it. **It's going to get better soon.** You can sort of tell these things...

Dr. Owens



A Note from an Upcoming Graduate:

Here are some words of encouragement from an upcoming graduate of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program.

Hey There!

I'm writing to you at the end of probably the longest and shortest 2.5 years I've ever completed. It's a hell of a journey, but I'm all the better for it. With that in mind, I have some advice. I don't know you specifically or what you're going through, so take it as you see fit.

I hope that you take a minute to be proud of where you're at. You're in an accredited program that not only benefits you but benefits from you. You're helping the field grow and flourish in new ways. There's something in **you** that is valuable, and I hope you see it soon. Don't be afraid to question your teachers if there's something that you don't understand or agree with. You're learning from them as much as they are from you—and a lot of these sidebar conversations turn into some cool info from time to time.

Keep up with your hobbies and other interests. There's a lot to do in grad school, but having outlets to stay relatively sane help. It also can give you a unique perspective and a way of connecting with others. It also really helps to not be so bogged down in work all the time. (You don't want to live stuck in work mode forever, right? You deserve a break.)

Some of your professors might drive you nuts and push you really hard, but all of these people want to see you thrive and believe in you. **You're not alone in a lot of the experiences that feel like they're only happening to you.** Reach out to your professors and reach out to your peers in your cohort/program/friends. There are people who believe in you.

Anyway, go drink some water, eat something tasty/healthy, and take a break from looking at a screen. I look forward to meeting you as colleagues soon.

Sincerely,

Chris, Class of 2020



Some resources for you and your clients/students!

- **Try some continuing education through webinars!**

- American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.content.online>
- American Counseling Association: <https://www.aca.digitellinc.com/aca/>
- If you are a member of Chi Sigma Iota, you also have access to helpful webinars through the CSI website:
https://www.csi-net.org/page/Webinar_CE_Hours
- <http://www.creativeplaytherapist.com/teleplaytherapy/>
- <https://courses.clearlyclinical.com/courses/free-ceu-racial-awareness>

- **Combatting Zoom Fatigue**

- <https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/psychological-exploration-zoom-fatigue>
- <https://www.bestcounselingdegrees.net/resources/combating-zoom-fatigue-for-online-counselors/>
- <https://telehealth.org/blog/zoom-fatigue-what-it-is-what-you-can-do/>
- <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/montclair/articles/how-to-relieve-zoom-fatigue>

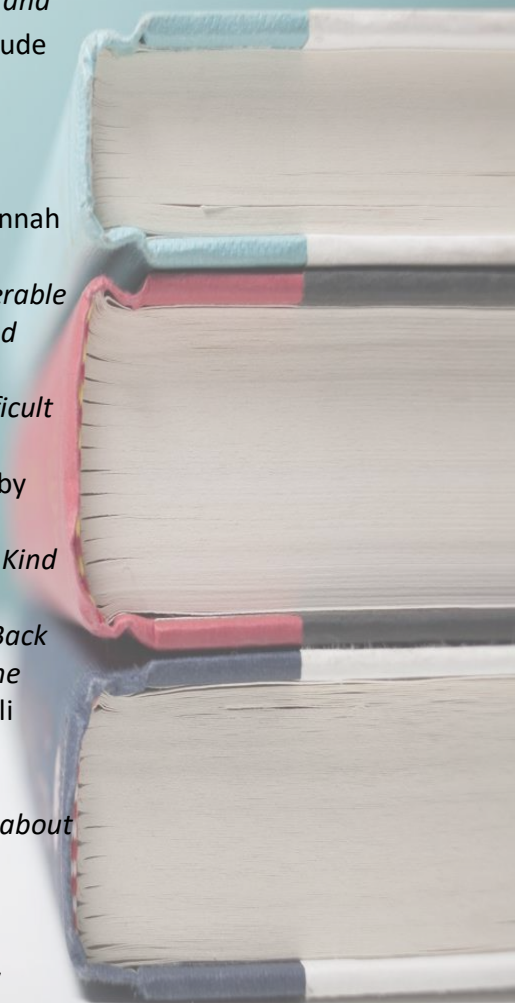
- **Social Justice**

- Resources for counselors
 - How to Talk Effectively About Race:
<https://www.socialwork.career/2015/09/race-matters-how-to-talk-effectively-about-race.html>
 - Healing the Wounds of Racial Trauma:
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/545cdfc4b0a64725b9f65a/t/54da3451e4b0ac9bd1d1cd30/1423586385564/Healing.pdf>
 - <https://courses.clearlyclinical.com/courses/free-ceu-racial-awareness>
- Resources for clients
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/parenting/kids-books-racism-protest.html>
 - <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/03/869071246/how-white-parents-can-talk-to-their-kids-about-race>



Recommended Reading

- *Group: How One Therapist and a Circle of Strangers Saved My Life*, by Christie Tate
- *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do (Issues of Our Time)*, by Claude M. Steele
- *Far from the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity*, by Andrew Solomon
- *Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness* by Susannah Cahalan
- *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way we Live, Love, Parent and Lead*, by Brene Brown
- *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times*, by Pema Chodron
- *Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia*, by Marya Hornbacher
- *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Ourselves*, by Kristin Neff
- *Stop Walking on Eggshells: Taking Your Life Back When Someone You Care about has Borderline Personality Disorder*, by Paul T. Mason, Ranoli Kreger
- *The Choice*, by Dr. Edith Eva Eger
- *Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know about the People We Don't*, by Malcolm Gladwell
- *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Viktor Frankl
- *Know My Name*, by Chanel Miller
- *The Gift of Therapy: An Open Letter to a New Generation of Therapists and their Patients*, by Irvin D. Yalom
- *Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression - and the Unexpected Solutions*, by Johann Hari



Mindfulness Activity:

Check in with Your Personal Weather Report

Sit still and observe everything around you and inside you. It helps you find out what you're thinking, feeling, and doing. Notice your breathing as you breathe in and out. Feel your chest and belly rising. Be still. Relaxed and calm. Take your time to focus your attention. Start to notice small things. Some movements are okay; just notice it. Now, think about your feelings at the moment like a weather report.

Sunny, stormy, rainy, calm, tornado...? Just reflect on and observe your feelings. Like the weather, **you can't change your feelings. But you can adapt the way that you respond to it.** You are not your feelings and emotions. Just like the weather, they come and go. As they happen, just accept them.

SOURCE: <https://openforest.net/3-easy-mindfulness-exercises/>



Closing Remarks and Reminders:

- ◇ First of all, a big **congratulations** to all for making it to the end of another semester during a time of global crisis.
- ◇ A second **congratulations** to all of the summer and fall 2020 graduates!
- ◇ Make sure to **check your West Chester email** for any updates that may come during the winter break.
- ◇ Don't forget to obtain or renew any **clearances** for fieldwork in the spring!
- ◇ File for **degree candidacy** before starting your internship semester. Check your West Chester email for instructions on how to complete this from Dr. Owens.
- ◇ Apply for graduation the semester before you plan to graduate on myWCU!
- ◇ If you have any news or announcements that you would like to be featured in the next newsletter, please email GA **Monica Jampo (MJ940355@wcupa.edu)**.
- ◇ Hang in there.

