

WELCOME!



Happy Teacher Appreciation Week!

SFF Steans Family Foundation





Connect 2 Kids

Working With Parents and Caregivers During Remote Learning:
From a Mental Health Perspective



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Connect 2 Kids:

A mental health consultation program informed by, and designed for, educators and schools to help them to

- **Improve their relationships with all of their students, and especially those with the highest needs**
- **Be more aware of the social emotional needs of their students and the meaning behind challenging behaviors**
- **Develop and implement relational and environmental strategies for helping students**
- **Feel more confident and effective; reduce job-related stress and increase job satisfaction**
- **Program Components:**
 - Weekly classroom observations and consultation meetings
 - Classroom SEL lessons
 - School staff trainings and workshops
 - Parent groups





Key Mindsets

Teachers are so important to their students.
Teachers need and deserve support, just as much as their students.

Caring relationships are vehicles for positive change.

People are better able to function when their social & emotional needs are attended to.

All behavior has meaning and is an adaptation to person's context and environment.

Trauma and loss impact the way people view themselves and the world.

Responsive expectations lead to growth.



Q& A: How are you making sense of all of this?
Your questions will lead to our collective growth and understanding!



Navigating New Experiences with Caregivers

Why Does Working with Caregivers FEEL SO HARD?

- **The role of a teacher has changed**
 - IT Support/YouTube star
 - 30 families instead of 30 kids
 - Impact/ability/feedback
- **A long schedule somehow just got longer**
 - Transitions to/from work
 - Caregiver schedules don't match "school day schedule"
- **Teaching teams/teacher support is also remote**
 - Virtual school communities
 - Difficulty with technology
- **Seeing the lives of students from a new perspective**
 - Video chats/phone calls
 - Increased reliance on caregivers
- **SO much is NEW - AND things KEEP CHANGING**



Caregiver Engagement Comes in Different Shapes and Sizes

- **Non existent** → no response since schools closed
- **Inconsistent** → unreliable responses, responding to other school staff but not you
- **Needy** → constantly asking for help no matter how many times you have shown them what to do
- **Overwhelming** → sharing painful realities of their experience in shelter in place (losses due to COVID, food scarcity, unsafe environments)
- **Explosive** → High emotions (anger) that feel targeted and personal
- **Star** → reliable, helpful, understanding, praising of your efforts



Intentional Responses

- **Consider the meaning behind caregiver engagement**
- **Adapt expectations for yourself and your families**
- **Give yourself permission for boundaries**

No intentional response is ever simple or easy – it's okay if this is hard!



Making Meaning of Caregiver Engagement

- **What's the subtext:**
 - Stress Responses are High: Fight vs Flight vs Freeze
 - Our assumptions can play a big role
 - Mismatch between needs of school and needs of families
- **Respond to the subtext:**
 - Validate what families are going through
 - Challenge your assumptions
 - Bring your curiosity to your interactions
 - Advocate for your families when necessary
 - Use each contact as an opportunity for relationship building



Responsive Expectations

Expectations are powerful. They provide clarity and purpose, and can create a sense of predictability during a time when almost everything else feels unpredictable.

1. **Identify your goals**
2. **Assess whether the goals are realistic – for you, for your class, for individual families**
3. **Collaborate with families around their goals – is there a mismatch that needs to be considered**
4. **Make necessary adjustments to each goal**
5. **Share goals with your families**
6. **Repeat as necessary**



Boundaries are... OK!

School hours feel like 6am – 5:59am

- Caregiver schedules vary
- Need to connect with caregivers can override need for personal time
- Increased worry about students and families
- “School” is at the kitchen table/on the couch/in your bed

Boundaries give you permission to be someone other than an educator

- Set a time when you “leave” work. Even if you have to “come back”.
- Find ways to make home feel different when “at work” and “at home”
(Move furniture, light different smelling candles, change your clothes)
- Give yourself permission to call them back
- Incorporate ways you used to transition between work/home
(Listen to music/podcast, take a drive/walk)





Key Takeaways

1. The role of an educator during virtual learning comes with innumerable challenges. Working with caregivers is just one of them.
2. It isn't always easy, but be intentional with your responses with caregivers.
3. Working to understand and respond to caregiver engagement, and allowing flexible and responsive expectations will help bridge powerful connections to your families.
4. Boundaries are not the enemy!
5. **This work is NOT easy.**





Fostering Strength and Resilience By Attending to Self Care



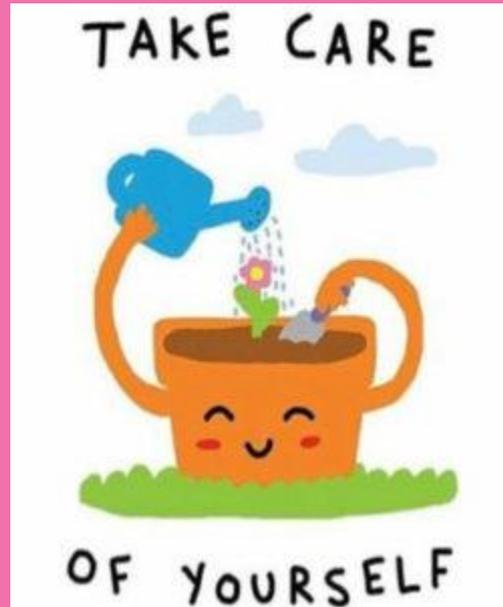
1. Proactive Self Care



2. Respond to Feelings



1. Proactive Self- Care



Self-Care

Self Care is GUILTLESSLY doing or not doing whatever we need to ensure the healthy ongoing development of our mind, body and spirit.



TYPES OF SELF-CARE ^{1/2}



PHYSICAL

- Sleep
- Stretching
- Walking
- Physical release
- Healthy food
- Yoga
- Rest

EMOTIONAL

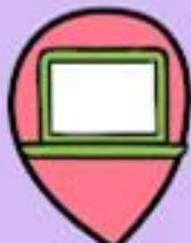
- Stress management
- Emotional maturity
- Forgiveness
- Compassion
- Kindness

SOCIAL

- Boundaries
- Support systems
- Positive social media
- Communication
- Time together
- Ask for help

SPIRITUAL

- Time alone
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Connection
- Nature
- Journaling
- Sacred space



PERSONAL

- Hobbies
- Knowing yourself
- Personal identity
- Honoring your true self

SPACE

- Safety
- Healthy living environment
- Security and stability
- Organized space

FINANCIAL

- Saving
- Budgeting
- Money management
- Spurging
- Paying bills

WORK

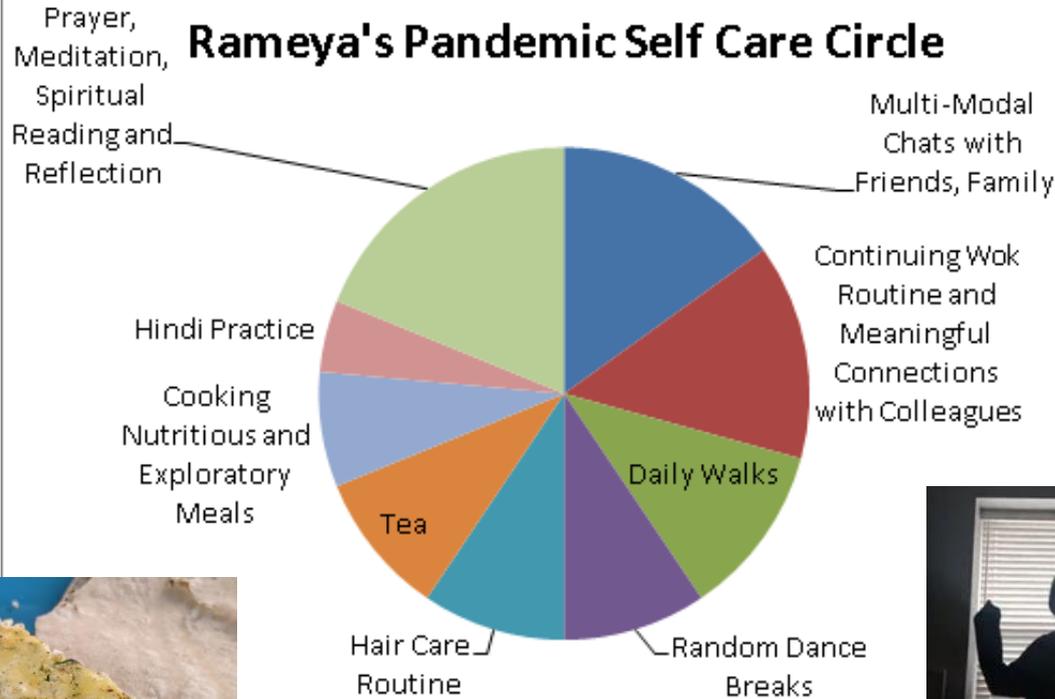
- Time management
- Work boundaries
- Positive workplace
- More learning
- Break time

VISIT BLESSINGMANIFESTING.COM FOR MORE!

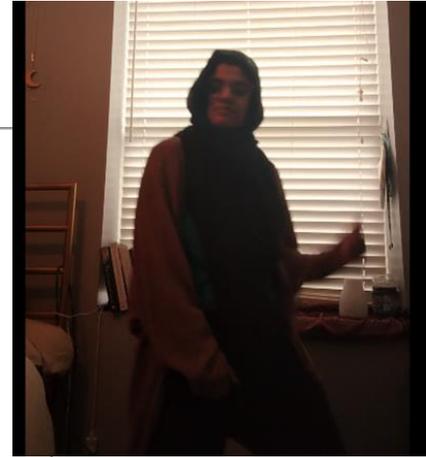
Self-Care Through a Sensory Lens

| | |
|---|---|
| Ear:  | Silence, nature sounds, different genres of music, city scapes, white noise; ASMR videos, noise canceling headphones |
| Nose:  | Candles, essential oils, perfumes, incense, (Sage, lavender, eucalyptus, pine, orange, mint, frankincense); baked goods |
| Mouth:  | Sweet, savory, acidic, sour, bitter (food, drink, gum); texture; spice |
| Eyes:  | Darkness, brightness, netflix, cleaning your space/decluttering, animal live streaming, sunshine, sleeping masks |
| Hands:  | (Temperature, texture); Lotion, knitting, watercolors, baking, arts/crafts(calligraphy, stenciling), gaming, gardening, playing with leggos, coloring books, draw something |
| Muscles:    | Dance, Sports, Massage, Yoga,  Stretching, weighted or heated blanket |

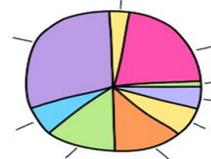
Self- Care Circles



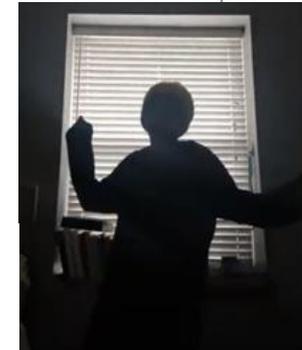
Bonus self-care: Candles, Diffusers, Extra hot long showers with music



MY SELF-CARE CIRCLE



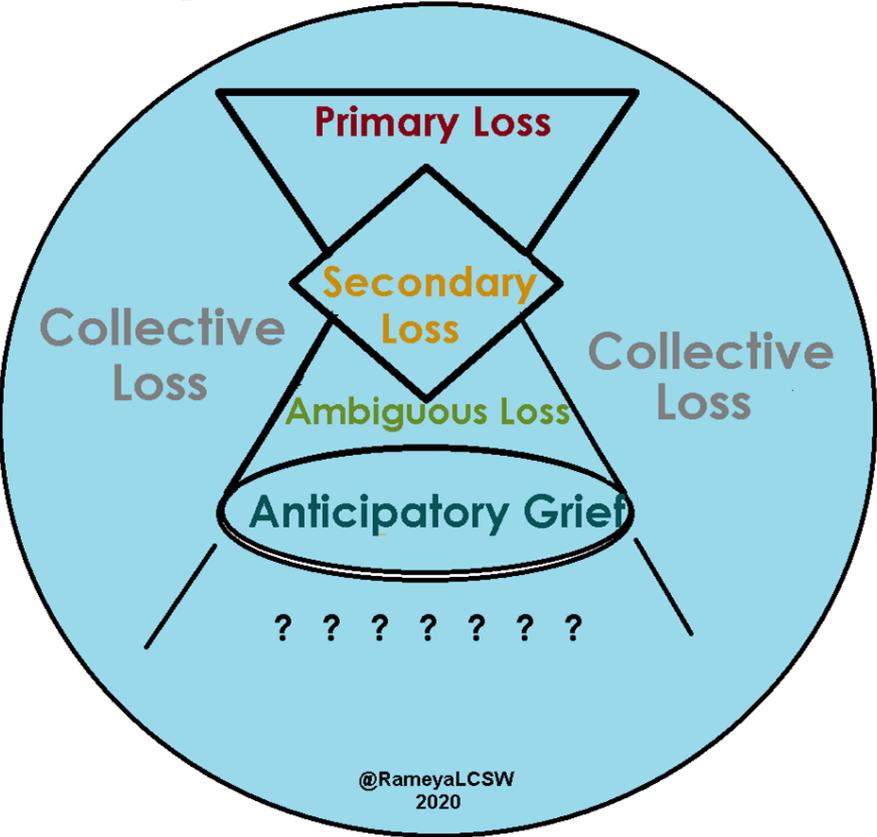
@Blessing manifesting



2. Responding to Feelings



What is that weird feeling I get when I'm not being "Pandemic Productive"?



Primary Loss: Death of of an immediate family member, close relative or friend

Secondary Loss: The “ripple effect” that happens after a major loss

Ambiguous Loss: Occurs when you don't really know who or what you've lost but something or someone changes or disappears . **“A person feels torn between hope things will return to normal and the looking sense that life as they knew it is fading away like a Polaroid developing in reverse”**(What's Your Grief)

Anticipatory Grief: A feeling of uncertainty/ dread/ doom about the future.

Collective Loss: A loss that is impacting a community

Stages of Grief in this Context

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Denial | This virus is not that bad. Do we really need to do all this? |
| Anger | I can't believe I have to stay at home this is so stupid. |
| Bargaining | If I follow the rules and social distance for two weeks then we can all go back to normal |
| Sadness/ Depression | When is this going to end? This feels so hard. |
| Acceptance | This is what it is. I have to find a way to cope with this new normal. Baking anyone?  |



Illustration by Emily Roberts, Verywell

Don't Social Distance from your Feelings!

- Treat your feelings like visitors
- Name, greet and welcome in the different feelings as they come.
- Know that they will come in for a little bit and then they will go away.
- Acknowledging feelings can feel hard but you let those feelings in as they come up they won't continue banging at your door or multiplying.
- No matter how hard you try you can't keep Joy hostage.



The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

- Rumi



Key Takeaways

1. Maintaining strength and resilience during this time demands an intentional self-care plan and a willingness to non-judgmentally respond to whatever feelings come up.
2. Self- Care is GUILTLESSLY is doing or not doing whatever you need to ensure the healthy ongoing development of our mind, body and spirit.
3. There is no one size-fits all approach to self-care. Find something that works for you based on your values and sensory-preferences.
4. The weird feeling in our bodies/minds/hearts right now is grief- it comes in many forms.
5. Don't Social Distance from your feelings! Treat your feelings like visitors. They won't be around forever.

*my best
yesterday*



*my best
today*



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Questions & Discussion





CPDUs- return completed forms that will be emailed to you following this event and you will receive your certificate by email.

- 1) ISBE Evaluation of Workshop Form
- 2) Form for Signature of Confirmation of Your Attendance
- 3) Link to google form: JPA Feedback Survey





JPA's New Light Program: Teacher Support Therapy Group

Meeting time: Thursdays from 6 pm to 7 pm
Group start date: Thursday May 14 2020 (ends Thursday June 18 2020)
Group length: 6 weeks

Accepting BCBS PPO, Blue Choice PPO, Cigna and United healthcare plans. Insurance billed per session. \$180 for group series (\$30 per session) for members without insurance. Reduced fee/scholarships may be available for those without insurance.

Contact **Jenna Kraft**, MA, LCSW at 312.698.6933 or jkraft@jpachicago.org.





- Visit **JPA's Resource Page at jpachicago.org** for resources:
 - Today's Powerpoint Slides
 - Teacher Well-Being During School Closure: A Self-Reflection and Discussion Guide
 - Maintaining Relationships During School Closures: Suggested Strategies
 - Trauma-Informed Teaching During School Closures

For more information about
Connect 2 Kids Professional Development Trainings & Consultation contact:

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