

COPING WITH THE LOSS OF THE LIFE WE ONCE LIVED

A year ago, we started two weeks of self-imposed lockdown not knowing what it would look like. At that time, we did not know it would turn into a year of loss; grief; transition; job losses; uncertainty; and an ever-moving goal line that has evolved from a two-week lockdown to our current situation.

This constant barrage of mandates and imposed restrictions puts our natural selves into a rotating state of fight, flight, or freeze responses to the events taking place around us. Our brains cannot catch up. Fight can look like less patience: more yelling, intolerance of other's actions and choices; snapping at loved ones; a little more road rage; being easily annoyed. Flight can look like avoidance: dodging responsibilities; wanting to quit your job; wanting to move away; wanting to go on a long vacation to put everything behind you. Freeze can look like shutting down: five hours of binge watching; loss of energy to do daily tasks; sitting and eating junk food; a general disinterest in doing anything.

This is grief. Grief for the loss of the life we once freely lived. This past year much has changed and with it the realization that many things will never truly go back to the way it used to be. Now, more than ever, we need to be invested in self care. We may want this to just be over, as much as anyone who is grieving would want that; but, it is not and no amount of wishing or willing it to be so is going to change it. So, what to do?

Here are some self care coping mechanisms that are not going to alarm our brain and body more than is necessary, as already discussed we're already maxed out in that department.

So, try the following (Use YouTube or google to find what you need!):

- 1) Talk with safe people who are comforting. If your family and friends frustrate you a counsellor works!
- 2) Limit your news exposure. The news is full of alarming headlines all vying for your attention and viewership. These are all designed to appeal to your fight, flight, or freeze responses because that drives people to read the articles or watch the clips. It will only add to your stress responses.
- 3) Start/continue mindful practice. There are apps for this! Search them
- 4) Set and track daily goals. Start simple and build them up slowly. You could add an extra glass of water to your daily intake; add another serving of vegetables to your daily meals; take a fifteen-minute walk. Start making healthy moments a part of your everyday routine.
- 5) Practice controlled deep breathing. Breath in for count of 4, hold for 4, breath out for 4 and hold for four (do this 3 times)
- 6) Try progressive muscle relaxation. This will help release the tension in your body
- 7) Limit your worry time. Set a timer and keep it to a confined period during the day.
- 8) Use some creative art to express your grief.
- 9) Use a journal or feeling tracker app.

FCSS offers workshops as well as individual counselling to help you learn more.

For more information call 587-370-3728

or email counsellingservices@fcss.ca.

Visit www.fcss.ca for more information.

Submitted by:
Tanie Reid-Walker
FCSS Counsellor



SERVING:

Barnwell | Barons | Coaldale | Coalhurst | Lethbridge County | County of Warner | Coutts | Milk River
M.D. of Taber | Nobleford | Picture Butte | Raymond | Stirling | Taber | Vauxhall | Warner