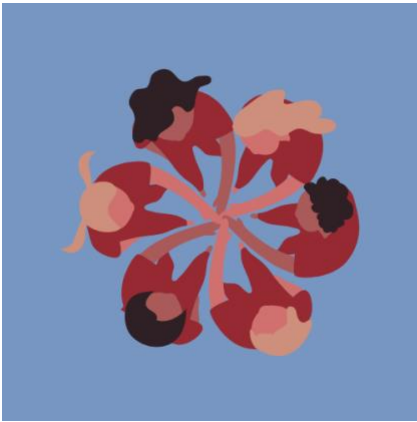


# FINDING BALANCE DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

When news and information are flowing rapidly, worries and fears are normal and understandable, but it is important to understand the risks and threats of the current situation as accurately as possible. Being able to identify and distinguish between real and perceived risks ensures that our worries, anxieties, and behaviors are proportional to what is actually happening. Focusing on the little things that we ARE in control of can be an important tool for self-care during this time.

It may be helpful to remember that we are ALL in this together. The uncertainties, the social isolation, the impact on our daily lives – every single person is being impacted. So, remember to be kind to yourself and others at this time. Try to have patience with yourself, with family members, with faculty trying to figure out how to run their class online, with people in your broader community at home, with politicians – we are all making this up as we go, and there will be bumps, confusion, and missteps along the way. Expect it. Have extra care with yourself and everyone else during this time. We will find our way.

Here are a few other suggestions that may help:



### **Find a Community**

Social distancing, or for those who might have been exposed to the virus, self-isolation, can feel lonely. Staying in touch with friends, family, and other loved ones can make it a little easier. Interacting with those we live with can be a good place to start. The use of email, social media, video conferencing, phones, etc. to interact and stay connected remotely with friends and family can be very helpful.

For people who have a faith practice, using a daily prayer or meditation can help with staying calm and finding strength at this time.



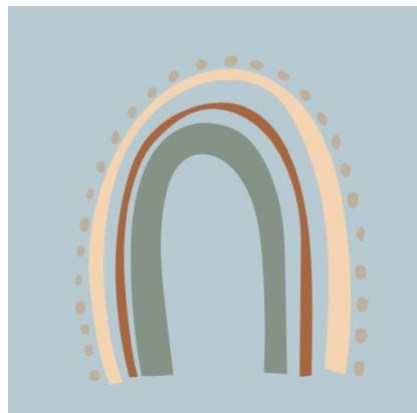
### **Get Outside**

Getting outside for a few deep breaths of fresh air, looking at the clouds in the sky, watching a flowing river, seeing the branches of a tree blow in the wind – all of these small experiences in the natural world can provide a sense of greater peace, of being part of the cycle of life that is greater than we are, and of all things and experiences having meaning. This can feel particularly helpful when things are feeling uncertain and chaotic.



### **Step Away from the News**

Getting information 24/7 can be overwhelming, and cause greater anxiety, even when you do not realize it is happening. During this time it is important to be intentional and discerning about the news and information you are consuming. It can be helpful to focus more on small amounts of factual news rather than large amounts or sensational pieces that spread misinformation and cause greater anxiety.



### **Being Present**

When there is so much going on we can tend to get overly worried about things we cannot control in the future. It can help to bring ourselves back into the present moment with actions that are in our control. One thing we can control is the breath. A helpful way to bring ourselves into the present is to take five to ten deep belly breaths. Another way to get fully into the present is through the five senses. Take a minute to focus on each one – really get into it – and you will find yourself fully in the present moment. It may also help to remind ourselves, “in THIS moment, I am okay,” or “right here, right now, I am ok,” or “all I have to do is take life ONE MINUTE or ONE BREATH at a time.”



### Take Care of Yourself

A good way to handle a lot of the emotions and uncertainties during this time is to allow yourself to feel them by using the acronym R.A.I.N. – **R = recognize** that you are having some feelings, **A = allow** the feelings to flow through you, **I = investigate** or explore what the feelings are telling you about what might be going on or what you might need, and **N = no judgement and next steps** – what do you need to do to take care of yourself? This can be a good time to lean into and express your feelings rather than avoiding or suppressing them. You can do this through writing, painting, dancing, singing or talking—remotely if necessary—to a friend, family member, mentor, or mental health professional. Attending to basic needs such as sleep, diet, exercise, and social connection, while maintaining self-compassion in case not everything can get done – all are important too. Being kinder, gentler, and more patient with ourselves during this time will go a long way toward preserving and enhancing our mental health and well-being.

## SEEK HELP IF NEEDED

If you begin to experience any of the following, please seek professional help:

- persistent sadness, anxiety, anger, irritability, hopelessness, or feelings of being completely overwhelmed
- sustained loss of interest in social or pleasurable activities
- significant impairments or changes in daily functioning, such as sleep, appetite, or hygiene
- thoughts about death, dying, or suicide; and impulsive, reckless
- risky behaviors, such as substance abuse or self-injury

## BERGERON

## COUNSELING

We are here to support you during this time.

Call Heidi during business hours at 802.654.2234 and she will help you make an appointment to talk with a counselor via zoom or phone.

If there is a more urgent need, or it is outside of business hours call Ulifeline at 1.800.273.TALK, call your local crisis services, or call 911.



### **Call-In Tele-Counseling with the Bergeron Counselors**

Walk-ins have become call-ins.

We are here to support you.

Available Monday-Friday from 8:30-4:30

Call: 802-654-2234 // Email: hbrodtman@smcvt.edu



### **Follow us @bergeroncounseling on Instagram**

Resources and tools for stress-reduction, relaxation, & balance.

Live videos from Bergeron Counseling Services.

Check it out!



### **Instagram Live Radical Relaxation**

Take a break from stress and uncertainty to simply be.

Monday 5-5:30 & Thursday 5-5:30

Instagram: @bergeroncounseling