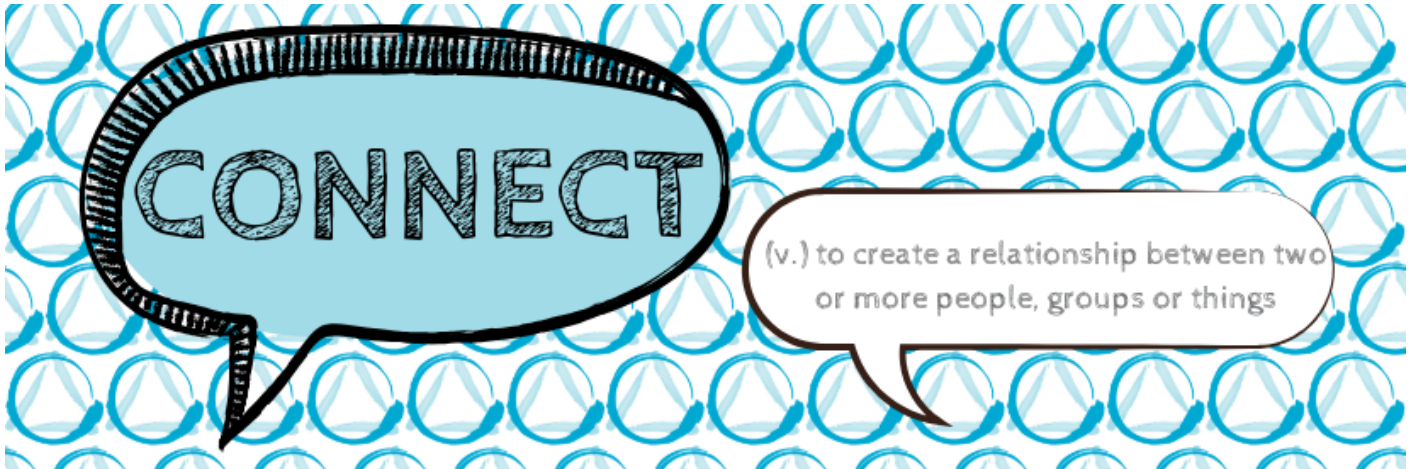

CONNECT - Smith Center Community Newsletter

Smith Center Programs Team <programs@smithcenter.org>
To: Carla Stillwagon <carla@smithcenter.org>

Wed, Apr 15, 2020 at 1:51 PM



Welcome to **CONNECT**, a community-minded newsletter brought to you by Smith Center for Healing and the Arts.

This project is brought to you by the Smith Center Programs Team, in collaboration with our staff, board, facilitators, volunteers and community members - who all want to share with you!



When we are looking at the world around us right now, there is a lot of focus being put on how we are caring for ourselves, as well as, how we are caring for others. Ensuring that both sets of needs are well tended can be incredibly stressful. Now more than ever we need to do what we can to try to find balance and grace.

"If you've been feeling like you're not doing enough while also feeling like you're doing way too much, sit down and figure out what, exactly, "enough" looks like in these new circumstances."

Check out this Vice [article](#) on how to create a care budget.

Erin Price, LICSW

words of wisdom

Kayaking.

by Judith Adams

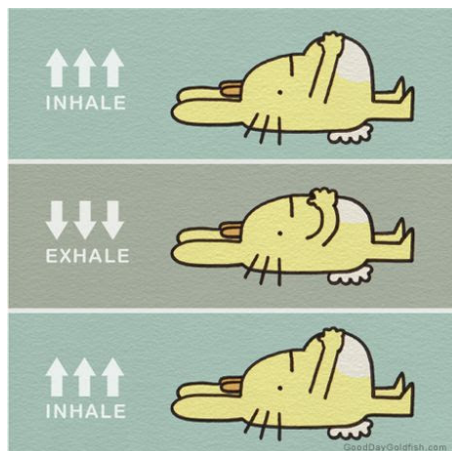
Hauling the boat over rocks
your unshod feet tenderised
by barnacles and embalming sea weed's
oily flowers cushioned in a rusty under green.
Take all of your self, your whole history;
the past hour's neurosis into this small
container and be no more than blue
to where the water is turning silver
at the meeting of currents.
When you are far enough away from
the cabin, the dock, the washing
drying the afternoon,
let the paddles rest and rock
and be taken.

You are more than you ever imagined.
Look at the horizon in the mist below
the mountains, the silent islands
communicating from familiar distance
Can you go on living your life
on the shore as if the kitchen of things mattered?
Drifting in unhitched expanse
you belong elsewhere.
Sooner or later in a random
hour released into unfamiliar territory
with no idea of it's mind blowing contours.
Untangle from the morning's imperative
and paddle out of your mind to an
intimacy beyond yourself.

movement & meditation

Two Breathing Practices to Relieve Anxiety

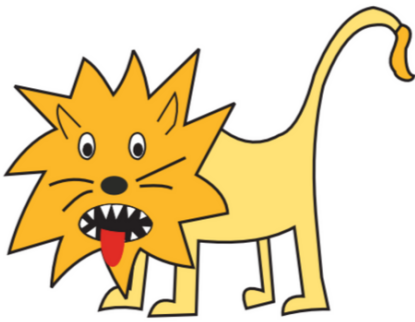
If you are experiencing anxiety, there are breathing techniques you can try to alleviate symptoms. Here are a couple to work with. I recommend that you find a quiet comfortable place and that you practice both of these every day.



Belly Breath

Find a comfortable seat or lie down with one pillow beneath your head and one under your knees. Place one hand on your belly and one by your heart. Take a moment to notice the natural rise and fall of your belly and your chest. Inhale and exhale through your nose, noticing how your belly and chest rise as you breathe. Work to isolate your breath so your belly rises first and then your chest. Then empty your breath from your chest to your belly. It may take some time to initiate and to breathe more deeply from your belly. See if you can count 10 or more full cycles of breath. If you are disrupted by thoughts or outside distractions, begin again.

Lion's Breath



This is a breathing technique that invites you to incorporate releasing sound and a more forceful exhale. Sometimes making sound is intimidating, however if you can get past your hesitation, oh, it feels so good.

To practice lion's breath, get into a comfortable kneeling or sitting position. Bring your hands to your knees stretching out your arms so they are straight. Take a deep breath in through your nose. Breathe out through your mouth with the sound "ha." Here comes the fun part, while you are exhaling open your mouth as wide as you possibly can and stick your tongue out. It helps to focus on your nose while you are exhaling. As you inhale, relax your face. Repeat this six times and notice how you feel.

Reminding yourself to breathe, especially during times of stress, can calm your central nervous system and make a difference!

Kiersten Gallagher



One of my favorite parts of my job at Smith Center is teaching [Outside the Lines](#), a class that offers a space for healing and community. I believe the reason it has been a success is because of four pillars in its structure combined with the power of art in healing and the incredible people who participate.

You can apply the four pillars at home and create a sacred healing space for you and your family. You may also do this on Zoom with friends and family.

1. Start off your creativity session with a short meditation or read a healing poem.
2. Do a short warm-up exercise to get the creative juices flowing.
3. Come up with a theme and selection of your favorite art materials and begin to explore.
4. Leave time to share your artwork and your feelings about the process.

We recently worked on a Quilt of Hope and I would love to see us enlarge our quilt of Hope reaching as many people as possible.

Supplies needed:

- Scratch paper
- One piece of paper that you cut into 8" x 8"
- Pens, markers, or pastels

Optional supplies:

- Any art supplies you have at home that you would like to use

Recommended warm-up:

Spend 3 minutes drawing, doodling, writing - about how you are feeling at the present moment. Feel free to go around and share with your group.



For the collective project:

Ask your friends and family to work on an 8 X 8 piece that expresses HOPE. Think about the colors, symbols, shapes, objects, and people that represent hope for you, and without too much thought play and create your unique piece. Spend some time talking about hope and share your art with one another.

(HOPE Quilt, right)

I think it would be FANTASTIC if you shared your Hope Quilt piece with us! You may submit all of your work at programs@smithcenter.org. Share this with your friends and let's build a gigantic quilt.

Kiersten Gallagher



You have to keep breaking your heart until it opens

- Rumi



Where would I
If all my dream
Deep down I k
I'd have never
This world wol
Darling there's
Which way you

- Mason Jenni

Will this kill me? That was my first question after cancer diagnosis. Yet amidst the fear and uncertainty, the devastating treatments, the misery, the pain, the indignities, and the losses, the question of whether I would die became almost secondary. With all that cancer had taken, with all it had changed, the more pressing question became "how can I live now?"

The Smith Center provided a caring, accepting community and gentle guidance to explore and expand life's possibilities. The compassionate staff nurtures those seeking comfort, inner peace, and a renewed sense of hope and purpose.

It is a sacred privilege to have met so many fellow searchers, and to have held one another's suffering as our own. Those we've lost will live forever in my heart.

- Ayo Griffin





Check out this "Tiny Survival Guide" courtesy of the Trauma Stewardship Institute! The poster is [downloadable and printable](#) and can serve as a great reminder of some "best practices" to think about each day.

At The Trauma Stewardship Institute, we focus on raising awareness of and responding to the cumulative toll on those who are exposed to the suffering, hardship, crisis, or trauma of humans, living beings, or the planet itself.

On Saturday, April 18th at 6:30pm, join Baltimore's [Black Cherry Puppet Theater](#) for their [1st Ever Virtual Puppet Slamwich!](#)

Our Puppet Slamwich Series for grown-ups is going virtual! Check back this Saturday April 18th at 6:30pm for info on how to watch online and a link to donate to the performing artists! BYO Popcorn!



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