

SUMMER 2017

Mind & Matter



A publication of the University of Miami Faculty and Staff Assistance Program

FACULTY AND STAFF ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Caliope Bootle
Secretary

Orlando Gonzalez
*MSEd, LMHC, CEAP
Director*

Pilar Tamburrino
*MS, LMHC, CEAP
Assistant Director*

Rosario Zavala
*MSW, LCSW
Consultant*

Contact us

 305-284-6604  miami.edu/fsap



IN THIS EDITION

THIS SUMMER LEARN TO SURF

*by Rosario Zavala, MSW, LCSW
in Featured Article*

CREATING A SENSORY CALMING KIT

in Mental Health Corner

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS UPDATE

in Featured Seminar

THIS SUMMER LEARN TO SURF

by Rosario Zavala, MSW, LCSW

As many of us are prepare to pack our bags to go on far off excursions, remember to pack a good read, realistic expectations and a good sense of humor. We will need the latter two to really appreciate and remember the times spent with our partners/spouses and families. We may snicker as we read this, but deep down know this to be true. More time spent with loved ones may be something we strive for all year long and while it may be wonderful and fun, it can also be taxing and stressful. So, it may be wise to keep our expectations in check. Rather than have the mindset that the summer will be easy and stress-free, we may want to re-frame this in more realistic terms and think about the summer vacation as a time to catch up with one another and make new memories.

Perhaps the media is to blame for our unrealistic expectations. We have all seen the television commercials and magazine ads with exceptionally happy families playing on the beach. These images serve to skew our view of how vacations actually work out in the real world. Cancellations/ changes of flights, lost baggage, unexpected illness and poor weather conditions, not to mention the many moods and preferences of our loved ones, are a few of the things that are out of our control. We can become annoyed and disappointed and allow these feelings to ruin our day, or we can choose a healthier and more balanced approach. I find Jon Kabat-Zinn's quote, "You can't stop the waves but you can learn how to surf," to be both calming and reassuring in these situations as it helps us to gain perspective and manage our frustration level. Author and Buddhist mindfulness teacher Jack Kornfield, discusses this mindset in an interview with InsightLA. Mindfulness is about being present in the moment, with intention and non-judgement. He states that while we may not be able to stop the waves of thoughts and feelings of praise and blame, gain and loss, or pleasure and sorrow, we can search within ourselves to find the graciousness and balance to be with our thoughts and feelings. And, to let them be, without judgement. We can better achieve this if we listen with an open heart and a wise perspective. This outlook is one we can strive for, not only during the summer but all year long. And, as with surfing, this takes practice.

REMAIN GROUNDED AND PRESENT IN THE MOMENT DURING YOUR VACATION WITH THESE SIMPLE SUGGESTIONS:

TAKE A MINDFUL WALK IN SILENCE.

DRIVE RIGHT BELOW THE SPEED LIMIT.

AS YOU GO THROUGH YOUR DAY, WISH OTHERS WELL.

ENGAGE IN DEEP BREATHING EXERCISES OUTDOORS AND TEACH YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS TO DO THIS.

TAKE A BREAK FROM TECHNOLOGY BY NOT USING ANY DEVICES FOR AT LEAST A DAY.

FIND A MINDFULNESS COLORING BOOK AND SPEND A MORNING COLORING.

HAVE A MINDFUL CONVERSATION WITH YOUR CHILD OR PARTNER.

EAT A MEAL ALONE.

WATCH A SUNSET.

LET IT BE EASY.

LAUGH.



MENTAL HEALTH

CREATING A SENSORY CALMING KIT

Our senses can be powerful emotional triggers. A particular smell can quickly fill us with memories and their accompanying feelings, the right music can fill us with joy or move us to tears. Creating a kit to harness the power of our senses can help to soothe and calm ourselves when distressed. Mindfulness is an important component of sensory soothing. Focus your attention on the activity and the sensory experience. When troubling thoughts come back up, let them be and refocus on your senses and the present moment.

Creating a kit simply requires collecting soothing items – making sure to include something that engages each of the five senses and placing them in a box. Add some creativity by decorating your box. Add colors, images and words/phrases that remind you to feel safe and calm.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS

VISION postcards of happy places, photos of favorite people, affirmation cards/quotes

TOUCH stress ball, lotion, stone, playdough

SOUND create a playlist of favorite music, nature sounds app on phone, chimes

TASTE chocolate, gum, tea, sour candy

SMELL aromatherapy oils, scented lotion, incense sticks

The value of having a “kit” is that everything is already together in one place. Tangible objects are especially helpful in times of emotional upset to give immediate comfort and can serve as a distraction, as well as offering alternative activities.

creativityintherapy.com

“THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE INGREDIENT IN THE FORMULA OF SUCCESS IS KNOWING HOW TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE.”

– THEODORE ROOSEVELT



DID YOU KNOW?

Successful leaders lead with their heads and their hearts.

FEATURED SEMINAR

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS UPDATE

This lunchtime seminar will provide participants with valuable updated information regarding Social Security benefits. Our presenter, Maria Diaz, Public Affairs Specialist with Miami-Dade Social Security Administration Office, will help participants understand who is eligible to receive benefits, when a person qualifies, and the steps eligible participants need to take to apply for Social Security benefits. A UM Benefits Administration representative will be in attendance to answer UM benefits related questions. FSAP Health and Wellness seminars are offered as part of the University of Miami's Well 'Canes Program.

Coral Gables: Tuesday, July 11th, 12-1 p.m., McKnight Building, Room 201AB

RSMAS: Wednesday, July 12th, 12-1 p.m., Library, Media Room

Miller School: Thursday, July 13th, 12-1 p.m., Clinical Research Building, Room 692

Additional Summer seminars: Relax and Renew for the Summer, Mindful Living (monthly), Chair Yoga for Stress Relief, Approaching Procrastination with Self-Compassion

SUBSCRIBE

Mind and Matter is a quarterly publication from the UM Faculty and Staff Assistance Program that provides helpful tips and articles regarding work-life balance, health and well-being.

If you would like to receive this newsletter directly in your inbox each quarter, as well as announcements about upcoming FSAP seminars, please send an email to cbootle@miami.edu.