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Introduction

We're all in this together. Now that COVID-19 has impacted all states in the nation, the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals (NAE4-HYDP) proactively determined a need for Extension professionals to virtually gather weekly. As a result, the NAE4-HYDP Creating a Healthier You Working Group created “Feel Good Fridays,” a webinar series focused on uplifting members by spreading positivity and mindfulness strategies.

On the first NAE4-HYDP “Feel Good Friday” webinar, participants were asked to complete a poll to share three words that described their current feelings as they cope with COVID-19. As you can see from the initial participant poll on March 27, 2020 representing 74 respondents (70% response, n=106), we’re all sharing similar emotions of feeling overwhelmed, stressed, tired, and anxious.
Strategies for Coping

During this time, participants also shared ways they’re coping while working from home and adjusting to their new reality. 71 respondents (70% response, n=106)

The NAE4-HYDP Creating a Healthier You Working Group would like to provide some tips to make this difficult time a little less stressful. While this list is not all-inclusive, it is a compilation of ideas and thoughts from the NAE4-HYDP Creating a Healthier You Working Group and the webinar participants during this first “Feel Good Friday” session.

Set a daily routine.
- Get up and get dressed as normal
- Honor typical meal times
- Establish your workday (start and end at the same time each day, if possible)
- Help kids by honoring a schedule that is similar to their typical “normal school” day
- Set office hours and at the close of the day, close your computer (or pack up your office if it’s on your kitchen table)

Create a workspace that is your own!
- Consider setting up your desk similarly to your desk at the office, if needed.
- Consider the tools that help your success at work. Can you add them to your home office? (i.e. wireless computer keyboard and/or mouse, standing desk, multiple computer monitors, tablets, external drives, etc.)

How are you coping?

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- Consider the tools that help your success at work. Can you add them to your home office? (i.e. wireless computer keyboard and/or mouse, standing desk, multiple computer monitors, tablets, external drives, etc.)
• Ask your administrators if you can relocate office supplies to your home during the pandemic.
• Consider University policies, procedures, and accommodations regarding supplies, check-ins, equipment, telework, etc.

Find ways to prioritize your needs and create your plan accordingly.
• Invest in a notebook to jot down needs, ideas, opportunities, tasks, etc.
• Prioritize importance versus urgency. Take a look at completion time and organize it within your days.
• Find times for reflection (and to remove items from your lists/notebook.)

Connect with others.
• Organize office (and relative) meet-ups via online platforms (such as Zoom, Google Meet, etc.)
• Have “face time” through online sessions.
• Expressing closeness through air hugs and air high-fives
• Reach out to community partners to check-in and offer assistance

Find time to focus on yourself.
• Create a gratitude jar
• Find time for positivity and appreciation!
• Reflect and find time to be grateful.
• Consider baking
• Develop hobbies
• Find peace in your situation

Go outside every day!
• Take a walk after work to decompress and jump-start family time
• Write with chalk on sidewalk or driveway (this will not only bring joy to your personal space, but to your neighbors as well)
• Enjoy a family campfire
• Go for a bike ride, push strollers, etc.
• Start gardening…consider sharing produce with neighbors

Practice patience with each other.
Consider the situation of others. Showing grace and compassion is more important now than typically. Remember that people have various competing priorities from caregiving needs, sickness, first-responding spouses/partners, children at home, etc.

Remember all the things we know about a healthy lifestyle!
• Remember to balance variety in our meals
• Stay hydrated
• Practice positivity
• Stay physically active
Take control of your situation!

- Get essential health documentation together and ask yourself the tough questions: Do you have a living will, health surrogate, etc.?
- Empower yourself to connect with family about their health documentation and plans.

Consider what works for your family:

- Allow your children to sleep in (if it doesn’t interfere with their school day.)
- Work side-by-side with your children or consider adjusting hours to best sync work and school days.
- Solicit help! - find a relative or hire a sitter. Also, consider alternating schedules with your spouse/partner.
- Offer special opportunities for youth learning (i.e. offering physical education - with animals and kids), arts and crafts, experiential learning opportunities, music, play

Continue to participate in Feel Good Fridays from NAE4-HYDP (through May 1 or longer)!

Next Steps

Participants were asked to rank 12 pre-selected topics, based on the order of their needs for future sessions. 62 respondents (58% response rate)
4-H Home-Learning Resources

Resources were shared by session participants for the benefit of the group. The following resources can assist others with engaging youth in 4-H programming at home.

Georgia 4-H educational activities
https://georgia4h.org/about-us/resources/activity-resources/

Iowa 4H at Home
https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/4h-at-home-learning-resources

Nebraska 4-H Boredom Busters and Living Room Learning
https://4h.unl.edu/boredom-buster-challenge
https://4h.unl.edu/living-room-learning

New Jersey 4-H webinar series for remote fun and learning http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/4h-from-home/

South Carolina 4-H @ home
https://4hathome.eventbrite.com

The Creating a Healthier You Working Group members that facilitated the “Feel Good Friday” session included Wanda McLocklin, the University of Georgia; Heather Janney, the University of Florida; Becca Fint-Clark, West Virginia University; Kasey Hall, the University of Georgia; Nicole Crawson, the University of Florida; Tonya Price, Virginia Tech; and Keri Hobbs, the University of Georgia.

Graphics provided by Wanda McLocklin, the University of Georgia – 4-H & Youth

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