

# Cultivating Relationships in times of social distancing



FALL WORKSHOP  
VIA ZOOM



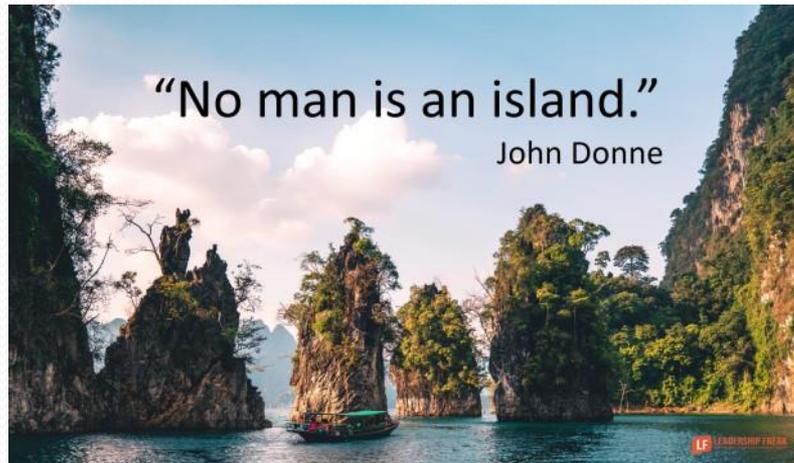
with  
Dr. Kathryn Koo Ph.D.

# About me



- Licensed Psychologist
- Health and Wellness Center at SAC
- Provide Psychological Counseling
- Workshops and Invited Lectures
- Clinical Supervisor at the Family Assessment Counseling Education Services.
- Private Practice

# Introduction



Human relationships represent one of the most vital aspects of human experience. We will need to still maintain relationships while distancing from each other physically.

This workshop will show you how to enhance and build relationships in your life.

# Learning objectives

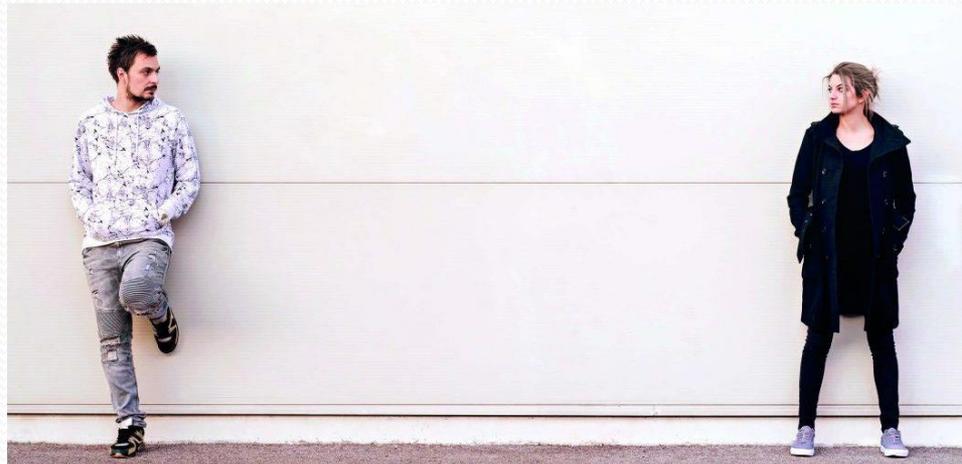
1. Consequences of prolonged Social Distancing and social isolation
2. How to cultivate :
  - a. Relationship with your self
  - b. Relationship with your significant other
  - c. Friendship
  - d. Dating Relationship
  - e. Relationship with your Family
3. Five Strategies to maintain quality relationship

# Consequences of Social Distancing



# Prolonged Social Distancing Leads to

- Increase a need for connection.
- More couples filing for divorce.
- React to others in a negative way.
- Can lead to **Social Isolation**.



# What is social isolation?

Defined as :

- living alone
- having small social network
- infrequent participation in social activities
- feelings of loneliness.



# When social isolation prolongs

- Damaging to mental and physical health.
- More likely to feel depressed and lonely.
- Less able to deal with stressful situations.
- May have problems processing information (cognitive decline).
- More susceptible to illness.
- Tend to suffer higher rates of mortality.



The movie castaway with Tom Hanks.

# Why we need relationship

- Our brain needs stimulation. Social isolation leads to lack of stimulation and then affects our brain adversely.
- Because humans are social creatures. Without this engagement and connections, we miss out on important social supports which contribute to feeling valued, cared for, and part of a mutual system of caring for others.

# The vulnerables are:

- The Elderly
- Those with special need
- Children: **brain** development.
- Those who already experiencing loneliness.

# Domestic abuse during pandemic

- Domestic abuse are likely to escalate and get worse under these conditions as abusers get frustrated and take it out on their usual targets.
- [Domestic violence](#) programs may be more limited than usual.
- 800-799-7233 or [thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org).

# If you are feeling lonely



Connect to statement that can be true:

- “I can do this, I’ve gotten through uncertainty before.”
- “I’m doing the best I can”
- Ask: “What resources do I need to cope better? – What’s missing for me right now?”
- **Bring up comfort or memories that bring peace**

# To Cultivate Relationship

- The best way: “cultivate” put time and energy into building your relationship.

## ALTERNATIVES TO HANDSHAKES, HUGS, HIGH FIVES AND HONGI



THE WAVE



THE HAND ON HEART



NAMASTE



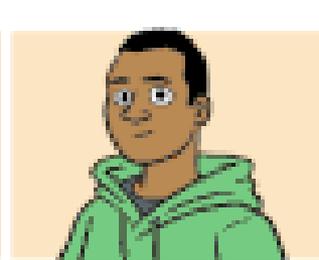
NZSL: HOW ARE YOU?



THE 'HI-BROWS'



THE 'ALL GOOD' NOD



THE 'EAST COAST WAVE'



THE 'WHAT A WORLD EH?'



# Cultivate Relationship with Yourself



**Take care of yourself first.** Refer to Self care from last workshop. “You can’t take care of other people unless you first take care of yourself. Keep routines. Find meaningful activities ex) creating something, writing a journal, meditating.

# Cultivate Your Significant Relationship



- **Use this time to improve your relationship.**
  - Ask yourself, “How do I want my relationship to change after this pandemic?”
- **Increase positivity.**
- **Respect each other’s time and space.**
- **Make a plan(or schedule) for your household.**
  - Clean out things in the house, or find a new activity you can enjoy doing together.

# Cultivate Your Friendship

- 30% of millennials surveyed --always or often felt lonely,
- 15% of baby boomers and 20 % of Gen X.
  - 1/4 -- have no acquaintances.
  - 22 % -- have no close friends
  - 30 % -- have no best friends.
  - 27% -- don't need friends

# why friendship?



- Friendships are a key component of a long and happy life.
- 17000 people survey found those with very few social contacts were 50% more likely to die from cardiovascular disease.
- Spend 50 hours together to consider acquaintance and 90 hours together to consider them a good friend

# One Question

- Is there someone in your life whom you would feel comfortable phoning at 4 am in the morning to tell your trouble to?

# Why difficult to make friends

- 1) Shyness
- 2) Lack of hobbies and interests that can facilitate friendships.
- 3) You are afraid to reveal yourself
- 4) Friendship takes time, energy, cultivation.  
(50 hr for acq, 70 hr for friendship)

## When you are Introvert



- Struggle of being in busy social situations.
- More comfortable to be alone, take solitary walk, sit back in social situation.
- May have social anxiety and shy.
- Maybe doing better during the quarantine.
- However, can isolate self too much.
- Use this time to venture out and connect with people. Using social medium maybe less threatening.

# Cultivate friendship

- The basis of making friend is a shared experience.

We need to seek out these experiences.

1) Volunteer

2) Meet-ups

3) Clubs and groups on campus/ interest community.

4) Hobby clubs, book clubs, yoga, baking.

- Remember, when you get over the initial awkwardness, then it takes time to move someone from an acquaintance to a friend. Nurturing friendship takes “EFFORT.” BUT PAYS OFF.

# Cultivate Dating Relationship



- No longer dinner at a restaurant, movies or coming over for a drink.
- For many, video-chatting on either side of the screen, sit-down dinners, movie marathons and cocktails.
- Slowing down at the beginning of a relationship and delaying physical intimacy has been conducive to effective relationship.

# Top tips for dating during a pandemic



- The basic rules still apply. Be clear of your expectations.
- Beware of text or chat disclosure.
- Give your virtual date nights a theme.
- Go on a socially distanced date.
- Write a love letter by hand.
- Get active with low-contact sports.
- Take this time to really get to know the person.

# Your Family

- Society is built upon strong families.
- Family: teaches us how to function in the world.  
: s/d provide love and support you need in the world.



How to build strong family relationship:

1. Be a good listener. Strong families have good communication.
  - Where all family members feel heard and respected.
  - Give the person your full attention, turn off the TV/media.
  - Listen for how the other person is feeling and relay back.

# Family relationship continues

2. Encourage all family members to share their thoughts and feelings.
  - Strong families allow all family members -- no matter how young or small
  - Everyone should be expected to express themselves in appropriate ways -- such as with — "I" messages. When people feel heard and respected, they feel better about themselves, are more open to solving problems, and are more likely to allow others to express themselves.
3. Strong families spend time together.
  - All relationships need attention -- includes the family as a whole.
  - Family rituals can offer a set time for families to get together.  
Set aside a time on a regular basis for a family to get together.  
(dinner together, celebrating a holiday, church, or a walk together. The family ritual should be predictable and preserved.

# A dysfunctional family?

- 1. Start with forgiveness. Forgiveness is the decision to let go of resentment and vengeful thinking. It doesn't minimize or justify the wrong.
- 2. Look for the good in the person. When you are upset with someone, it's hard to see that person in a positive light. Ex) your brother is a really good father to his son. Maybe your sister takes great care of sick mother.



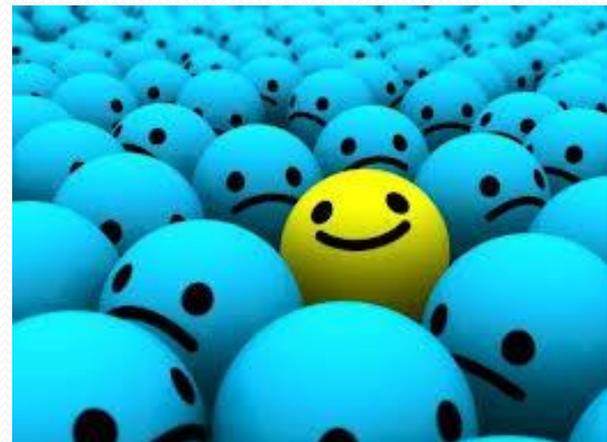
3. Identify the real issue. Ask questions, verify or clarify all assumptions.

4. Practice boundary setting.

# 5 steps to cultivate all relationship

- **Positivity:**

Having cheerful and uplifting interactions with others. Finding ways to be positive with those we love and care about can bring joy into someone's otherwise stressful day.



- **Openness:**

Being open with others, discussing the relationship, sharing, and self-disclosing. Active listening, shown through eye contact, nodding, and verbal encouragement.



- **Share Tasks**

People who share the work of maintaining their relationship report higher satisfaction than those who under or over benefitted.



- **Networks:**

Maintain a shared network of people you both know, including family relationships. Shared contacts give you something to talk about.

Friends can be introduced to one another to strengthen your shared network.



# Questions?





*The End*