Finding ways to be together in different spaces

Amanda Eskola, LCSW, LICSW, is a behavioral health specialist at Swedish. She’s working on the front lines and she says that, as the months go on, she sees the pressures of the pandemic taking a predictable toll. (See sidebar on page 2.)

But humans are resilient, and there are ways to make the most out of the circumstances we’re in.

Making the best of tough times

As we start a new year with hope of an end to the pandemic, Amanda suggests trying different things and creating new rituals to sustain a good quality of life while we navigate 2021. “I’m not the first to say it, but this is a great time to start new hobbies,” she says. “We need to get creative and identify new outlets since individuals’ usual activities have been limited due to COVID-19.”

Also, now that most of us are getting comfortable using platforms like Zoom, Teams and FaceTime to “meet up” socially, why not take it a step further and embrace technology to connect on-screen and make meals, create art, host a virtual book club or trivia party, or play 20 questions with your friends. Do a search online for inspiration to figure out how to adapt things you or your kids enjoyed pre-COVID-19 to the screen.

We’re in it together

And remember, as the phrase goes, “We are all weathering the same storm, just in different boats.” “We’re all experiencing the world impact in different ways, and this

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continued on the next page...
Swedish Neuroscience Institute brings new, needed services to Edmonds & Eastside

Welcome Peter C. Nora, M.D., Movement Disorders Neurology, Neurosurgery, Spine Surgery

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For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit www.swedish.org/SNIHealthwatch

For more information, please visit: www.samhsa.gov/drugtreatment/disaster/

2020: The year of little sleep (continued from page 1)

What to do instead?
Dr. Zaroury counsels his patients to use these techniques to help improve bad sleep patterns.

INSTEAD OF THIS: Try to change everything at once. “It’s like losing weight. If you need to lose 25 pounds, adopting a vegan diet and exercising six hours a day will do it, but you really have the capacity to implement that?” Be realistic.

DO THIS: Add sleep time in small increments. Add 15 minutes to your bedtime or wake time for a few weeks, then add 15 more after another few weeks. This should help you start to feel better.

Pick up your phone. Listen to quiet, relaxing audio stimulation, such as nature sounds or calming music. Use earbuds if you’re sharing a bed. Dr. Zaroury has a set of headphones that charge during each day and never leave his bedside, along with queued up listening material. “This may not work immediately, but give it time. You’re developing a healthy habit,” he says. Added bonus: The soothing sounds occupy your mind and make it harder to think about what’s stressing you.

Rely on over-the-counter sleep medications or alcohol. Try herbal alternatives such as melatonin, valerian root or hops, which may be helpful.

Think about (and try to solve) the world’s problems at 11 p.m. Let the world take care of itself until morning “And my best advice for all of my clients: Try to stay in the present, don’t look too far ahead, and focus on taking care of yourself here and now.”

Finding ways to be together in different spaces

(continued from page 1)

time is harder for some than others,” Amanda says. “This is not to minimize what each person is feeling — regardless of your experience, it is very true to you. Ask for help if you need it.”

“...And my best advice for all of my clients: Try to stay in the present, don’t look too far ahead, and focus on taking care of yourself here and now.”

Getting through the stages

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, offers a “Phases of Disaster” framework that shows how people tend to respond physically and emotionally under stress from natural and human-caused disasters.

Amanda believes our collective neighborhood community has reached the “disillusionment” phase. “This excerpt from the SAMSHA’s description may sound familiar: ‘As optimism turns to discouragement and stress continues to take a toll, negative reactions, such as physical exhaustion or substance use, may begin to surface. The increasing gap between need and assistance leads to feelings of abandonment. Especially as the larger community returns to business as usual, there may be an increased demand for services, as individuals and communities become ready to accept support.”

Phases of Disaster


For more information, please visit: www.samhsa.gov/disaster/

Center for Health Aging: Lunchtime Webinar Series

As part of her lunchtime webinar series, Dr. Isenberg is hosting a Zoom event focused on caring for a loved one with dementia. Find recordings of past sessions and register for the Jan. 13 session at www.swedish.org/lunchandlearn.

Nancy B. Isenberg, M.D., MPH, FAAN, DipABM, Neurology: Dr. Isenberg is the medical director of the Center for Healthy Aging at SNI and Providence Health & Services and co-leads Project ECHO Dementia. She is a subspecialty-trained behavioral neurologist and neuropsychiatrist with expertise in implementation science, clinical neurodegenerative disease and functional brain imaging.

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CHILDREDOEDUCATION

Grandparents: Birth to Three Months

There have been many changes in the role of grandparents over the last several generations. This class describes ways grandparents can offer support and assistance to a new family, while discerning current trends in birth practices and infant care. Grandparents will appreciate information provided on newborn capabilities and providing a safe, nurturing environment for infants. Fee: $250 for two participants.

Cancer Family Gathering

This class is for expectant and new dads or their male partners. The course explores fathers' experiences with them and their fathers. This course offers new fathers practical, hands-on skills that they can immediately use to help bond and care for their new baby. Some topics include meeting baby's five basic needs, supporting your partner and defining what kind of father you want to be. Class meets at any time, but is recommended one to four months before baby arrives. Fee: $450/one participant.

Newborn and Me: Birth to Three Months Group

Having a baby is amazing – and at times, amazingly difficult. It helps to have people to share the highs and lows, especially those who can identify with what you're going through. The Newborn and Me Group is an informal group that meets online weekly for six 90-minute sessions led by an experienced facilitator. New moms can share questions, concerns and experiences with other new moms while practicing safe social distancing. Fee: $60/one participant.

Baby and Me: 3-6 Months Group

Having a baby is amazing – and at times, amazingly difficult. It helps to have people to share the highs and lows, especially those who can identify with what you're going through. The Baby and Me Group is an informal group that meets online weekly for six 90-minute sessions. Led by an experienced facilitator, new moms can share questions, concerns and experiences with other new moms while practicing safe social distancing. Fee: $60/one participant.

Infant Safety

In this class, your CPR certified instructor will help you learn common choking hazards and demonstrate how to manage choking. Participants will be taught ways to baby-proof in order to increase household safety and methods for decreasing the risk of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death for your new baby. This class is recommended for parents, grandparents, and anyone caring for a newborn or infant up to 1 year of age. CPR is discussed in this online course, but due to limitations of online teaching, it is not taught. Fee: $330/pair.

Childbirth Preparation Classes

While no one can tell you what your birth experience will be like, learning about the process can help you feel prepared, confident, and ready for the birth of your baby. This class provides 1 day or 2-week course will provide you with information on the labor process and possible variations, coping skills, and postpartum adjustment. Partners will walk you through the experience of labor. Fee: $450-580/pair.

CANCER EDUCATION

The Swedish Cancer Institute (SCI) offers free programs to assist patients, family, friends, caregivers and the community to help understand cancer care and its impact on the body and spirit. Please contact the Cancer Education Center at 206-386-3200 or SCI.Education@Swedish.org.

Patients in active cancer treatment have a weakened immune system. If you have any cold or flu-like symptoms, please do not attend the program until all symptoms are gone. For more information and programs, visit: www.swedish.org/classes

Active Women, Healthy Women

Women of all fitness levels are encouraged to join these certified instructor led classes exclusively for cancer patients and survivors. Co-sponsored by Team Survivor Northwest. To register, visit teamauroravv.org/programs

Virtual Class (Periodically held at Swedish Issaquah): Mondays, 9-10 a.m.

Virtual Class (Periodically held at Swedish Edmonds): Mondays, 7-8 p.m.

Art and Wellness Group

Online: Email Bonnie.Walsh@swedish.org for Zoom meeting invitation.

Music Therapy

Amidst the ever changing rhythms of life, experience how music can offer support and healing in our weekly music therapy group. Experience or confidence in music is not required. For more information or for Zoom login information, contact Betsy.Hartman@Swedish.org.

Individual Sessions (Virtual): Available Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays by appointment.

Ukulele Group: Wednesdays 2-3 p.m. | Virtual

Music and Wellness Group: Thursdays 10:30-11:30 a.m. | Virtual

Get Fit! Staying Active During & After Treatment

Exercise class and fitness consults for women who have finished cancer treatment. Co-sponsored by Team Survivor Northwest. To register, visit teamauroravv.org/programs

Virtual Class (Periodically held at Swedish Cherry Hill): Saturdays, 10-11 a.m.

Gentle Yoga for Navigating the Cancer Journey

Breast and yoga class for cancer patients. Utilize the mind-body tools of yoga to reduce stress, ease side effects, and increase physical and mental resilience with gentle movement, breath, meditation, and relaxation. All are welcome, from diagnosis through recovery. No experience is necessary. Chair yoga options are offered throughout the practice. Email SCI.Education@Swedish.org to register.

Hawaiian Hula

Learn the basics of hula dancing and storytelling (standing or seated) while working your core, arms and legs. No experience required. To register, email SCI.Education@Swedish.org.

SCI Edmonds: Thursdays, noon to 1 p.m.

SCI First Hill: Mondays, 1-2 p.m.

SCI Edmonds – Medical Oncology: Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to noon.

SUPPORT GROUPS

After Breast Cancer, What's Next?

Make peace with impacts of breast cancer treatment, reduce the stress cancer places on relationships, overcome fear of recurrence, renew hope and increase resilience. This series is for women who have already both completed treatment or are in active treatment. To register, email SCI.Education@Swedish.org.

Webinar Series: January 11, 18

Webinar Series: February 22, March 1, 8, 15

Tools for Healing

This class offers a holistic perspective on healing that includes body, mind and spirit regardless of the treatment phase or stage of cancer. We offer methods and tools to help reduce fear and anxiety for better well-being and a life longer. To register, email SCI.Education@Swedish.org. For more information about the class, contact Paria Reek, facilitator for Tools for Healing at 206-215-6558.

Lifestyle with Cancer Support Group

Virtual support group for those living with cancer.

Swedish First Hill: Thursdays 1:30-2:30

Swedish Edmonds: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

This group is open for patients and caregivers. Contact Danielle.Mclaughlin@swedish.org to register.

Caregiver Support Group

Virtual support group for those caring for someone with cancer.

Swedish First Hill Group: Thursdays, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Swedish Edmonds: 3rd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

This group is open for patients and caregivers. Contact Tanya.Tennysen-Ray@swedish.org to register.

Brain Tumor Support Group

Virtual support group held via Zoom for patients with brain tumors and their caregivers.

1st Wednesday of the month, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

2nd or 4th Wednesday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m.

Contact group facilitator, Brenda Autoboe-Bigak u Brenda.Autoboe-Bigak@swedish.org to register.

Gynecological Cancers Group

Virtual support group for women with gynecological cancers.

Last Wednesday of the month, 10:30-11:00 a.m.

Contact group facilitator, Carolyn Manet at Carolyn.Manet@swedish.org or 206-215-6195 to register.

Head & Neck Cancers Group

Virtual support group for those living with head and neck cancer.

First Wednesday of the month, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Contact group facilitator, Mark Fiber at Mark.Fiber@swedish.org or 206-215-2287 to register.

Smart Program

With 8-week virtual program, led by Swedish Cancer Institute's SMART-Trained Oncology Social Workers, will help you develop self-care tools to manage your stress, reduce cancer treatment symptoms and side effects, and enhance your quality of life. For more information or to register, contact the Oncology Social Work referral line at 206-386-3228.

COVID-19 has upended our world. At Swedish, we’re fighting it with everything we’ve got. But we need your help. As a not-for-profit health care provider, we rely on your generosity to advance research and keep our community safe. Give hope and health today at www.swedishfoundation.org/fightcovid.
Planning for surgery at Swedish? Here’s what to expect

Author’s note: This article was printed in December 2020. To find the latest information about surgeries at Swedish, visit swedish.org/covid-19

A rooj Simmonds, M.D., anesthesiologist and Swedish executive medical director of Surgical Services, Anesthesia, says she and a team of clinicians set to design safety protocols to minimize the potential for COVID-19 exposures. These protocols are still in effect today.

The pillars of safety

“Since restarting elective procedures in May, not a lot has changed,” Dr. Simmonds says. She points to the “pillars of safety” that protect patients and caregivers at Swedish facilities (see sidebar below).

As a physician whose practice takes place mostly in the operating room, she has special insight into the surgical side of healthcare. “To be honest, we didn’t have to change much inside the OR. We do sterile procedures and always have, so we are maintaining the same level of sanitizing during this pandemic as we have for years.”

From a patient’s perspective

Dr. Simmonds says the first step in surgery preparation for patients is a phone call to set up an appointment for a COVID-19 test two or three days prior to surgery at any of five testing locations spread among Swedish campuses.

The pillars of safety

• Patient testing and screening
• Isolation for patients with symptoms
• Personal protective equipment
• Facility sanitizer and cleaning
• Limitation of non-essential personnel
• Teams of clinical experts overseeing safety
• Infection Prevention Task Force and Perioperative Clinic

Focus Group

One patient’s experience

Rachel Hoffer, a 46-year-old mom of two young kids, learned in August that she had breast cancer for the second time. Her surgeon, Christine Anne Lee, M.D., practices at Swedish Issaquah, so that’s where Rachel chose to have her surgery. It would be a double mastectomy.

“It’s a big surgery and I had quite a bit of anxiety,” Rachel says. “I’d had surgery to treat my first bout of breast cancer, but that was before COVID-19. This time, my husband wouldn’t be with me, he couldn’t even stay in the hospital during my surgery because of safety precautions. I was very worried about being there on my own.”

Rachel says her surgery day started out well. “Starting at the beginning, the person who checked me in talked to me at length and answered all of my questions, even getting up to find answers about things when she wasn’t sure. I really appreciated that.”

“My pre-op nurse, Romela Wong – she was, hands down, the best. She took her time. I never felt like the process was rushed. Every protocol was checked and double checked.” Rachel also praises her post-op nurse, also have a strict visitor policy to limit the number of people in the building and accommodate proper distancing.”

As the pandemic stretches on, Dr. Simmonds recommends that patients schedule surgeries when their physicians advise it. “We have surgery for a reason, and waiting too long for a necessary surgery can cause additional health problems,” she says. “Let your provider help you decide when is the appropriate time.”

For more information about patient safety and getting care, visit www.swedish.org/covid-19

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“At the testing sites, we are taking strict safety precautions. Only patients who have no symptoms are allowed to be tested at these clinics. All who arrive are screened for fever and other symptoms and required to mask before entering. The nurse taking your sample will be wearing a mask and eye protection, and everyone in the area will observe physical distance. Patients receive test results in 24 hours, and surgery is postponed for any patients who test positive.”

On the day of surgery, you’ll stop at a hospital entry-control point for another temperature check and symptom screening, ensure your mask is on properly, and proceed to check-in. “All doors except for our established entry-control points are locked; no one enters the hospital without passing screening,” Dr. Simmonds says. “That includes nurses, doctors, technicians, front-desk staff – everyone in the hospital. We

Allison Archbald, and Drs. Lee, Crooks and Miranda, for their exceptional care and compassion.

“There was such a personal touch, from check-in to the time I could leave, 10 hours later. Sometimes surgery can feel like an assembly line, but it’s not like that here. Every person went out of their way, asking if I was OK or if I needed anything. And I saw them treating other patients just as well as they were treating me.”

Now a month post-surgery, Rachel is back to work and says she’s getting her energy and mobility back. In hindsight, she says her surgical experience at Swedish was “textbook smooth.”

“In fact, my experience with Swedish in general – surgery, oncology, all the care – has been really great. It was a positive experience for a horrible reason.”

Swedish Surgical Specialists - Issaquah
751 N.E. Blakely Drive, Issaquah, WA 98029
www.swedish.org/issaquah

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