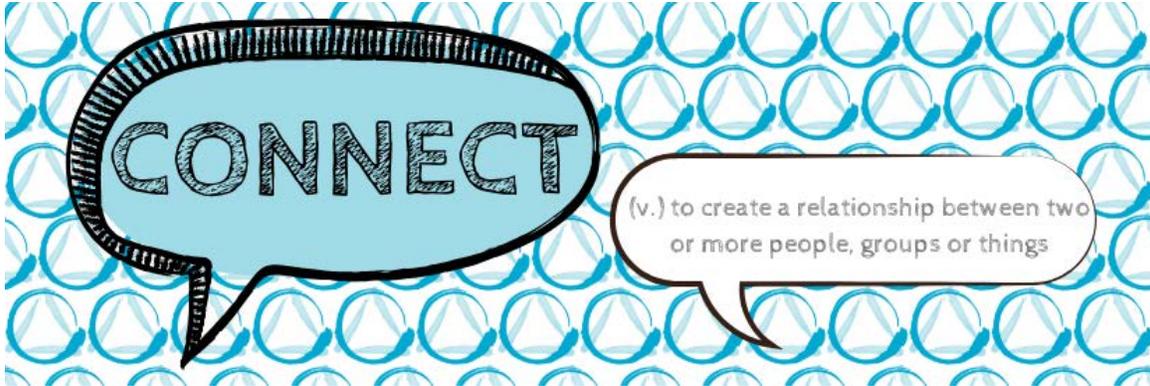


CONNECT - Smith Center Community Newsletter

1 message

Smith Center Programs Team <smithcenterforhealingthearts@mailman.bloomerang-mail.com>
Reply-To: programs@smithcenter.org
To: Carla Stillwagon <carla@smithcenter.org>

Tue, Jul 13, 2021 at 10:53 AM



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!

[Read previous CONNECT newsletters](#)

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Make sure to click "View Entire Message" at the bottom of your email to see all our content!



THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to CONNECTed Reflections question of the month!
We are so grateful for you and your engagement with our community.

Check out June's question & responses below:

[Has creativity played a part in your healing?](#)

When I was young I spent hours coloring in design books, now referred to as Adult Coloring Books. When I was diagnosed with a chronic and debilitating illness, I came home from the hospital, and out of nowhere began to paint. When I am working through something, I write and I paint. When I am facilitating art classes, we all heal in our beautiful community. Thank you to my Outside the Lines group. We are all so fortunate to know that art heals.

I find the connected reflections -- provides me the opportunity to reflect on the message, quote, mindfulness in practice if for only those few minutes. THANK YOU for all you do to help us individually heal within!!!!!! With immense gratitude

Creating art helps express the feelings that are beyond words. The best healing happens when I view my own creation without judgment!

Yes, art has been incredibly helpful... here's a haiku:

to see
the light of the last star
at the end

Yes, in so many ways! During some of my hardest, loneliest times, writing was always there for me. When I feel myself spiraling into an overwhelmed state, I always have a few art projects on standby, including origami, linocutting, and painting. More recently, I'm discovering endless ways that creative expression connects us to nature, and to each other, which has been deeply supportive during the pandemic.

From the time I was a little kid, music has been balm to my soul. For me, there is nothing better than singing along to my favorite artists or discovering new music that makes my heart sing. Music takes me to a different place. There is something so powerful in the music that transforms the way I see and feel in different situations. In the beginning of the shutdown and working from home, I had a playlist of music that I listened to every day. That daily infusion of music sustained me and helped manage my moods and my thinking. At one point during the Covid shutdown, I began having a hard time. I was anxious and feeling very depressed. One day, I joined a music event on Zoom with two singers that I really enjoy. Those ninety minutes lifted my spirits so much and left me feeling hopeful and less anxious. After the event, I realized that I had stopped listening to my playlist every day. For me, it was a powerful reminder that music (listening and singing) must always be part of my healing toolkit.

X



The coronavirus is keeping us from experiencing some of the deepest and most meaningful rituals of our lives.

What is this doing to us psychologically? How important are rituals to our mental health and wellbeing? What new rituals might we be creating?

Harvard professor Michael Norton, PhD, studies rituals and their impacts on our psychology. In the [APA's Speaking of Psychology podcast, Episode 106](#), he says:

What we find in our research, and this is the good news, is that even those private ones (rituals) that we make up ourselves, those are associated with less grief and better coping... We need all kinds of things to get through grief. That's the bad news, that losing those really does have an impact. The good news is we can have a little bit of flexibility of creating our own, and those can help too.

Ritualist provides us with a concise guide to building communal ritual around the losses & learnings we've experienced during the pandemic. Additionally, check out the [Insights](#) section of their website for a host of other ritual best practices to consider.

[Click here to download a ritual for what we've learned & lost in covid from Ritualist.](#)



Asking for help takes courage. It is not, as some worry, a sign of weakness. Rather, seeking therapy often reflects an important need to re-establish a sense of balance and control in what can be an upsetting experience.

Our own Julia Rowland, PhD, FAPOS, shared some important considerations on "Choosing a Therapist after Cancer" for the [Society of Behavioral Medicine](#).

[Click here to read "Choosing a Therapist after Cancer" by Julia Rowland, PhD, FAPOS](#)



All you need is about five to 10 minutes, says psychologist [Belinda Campos](#) at the University of California, Irvine. "Hopefully it wouldn't take people as much effort as it does to eat healthier or to exercise," she says. "Positive emotions feel good. I think people will find them rewarding enough to return to them and keep doing them."

Back in May, we shared an article on languishing, and how most of us are likely dealing with at least a little sense of this "stuck" feeling after so many months of social isolation. This time around, Michaelleen Doucleff from NPR shares some simple, and quick, emotional salves to help us heal through this shared struggle.

[Click here to read *Stuck In A Rut? Sometimes Joy Takes A Little Practice* from NPR.](#)



PC: Meredith Rizzo/NPR



Our new monthly writing program, **Radical Writing Space**, was launched this month and it was a great success!

Clinical studies have documented the healing psychological and psychical impacts of writing within a safe and sacred space. On the second Friday of each month, drop in for one hour for Radical Writing Space and join us for inspiring writing prompts, time to write, and time to share with one another about your experience of putting your most radical emotions, feelings, and experiences on paper.

Last Friday, Mindy and Kiersten joined several program participants in our first gathering of Radical Writing Space.

This month's theme was LOVE. Each participant wrote from their heart in a safe space with no writing rules, 20 minutes to independently write, and an invitation to share how it felt to take time for themselves to write about love.

We shared two prompts that inspired some of the writers. We invite you to read the prompts below, set yourself a timer, and to write for 20 minutes. See what comes up for you when you think of love. This writing is for you and it's up to you whether you share it with anyone or you keep it to yourself.

A Fragile Bend of the Heart

let us meet there
at a fragile bend of the heart
at a threshold of acceptance
where compassion and tenderness
utterly shift the world
utterly lift the world
from confusion to clarity
from darkness to light
from them to us
from us to everyone
let us meet there
at a fragile bend of the heart
where we are limited in all things
but our capacity to love
the weakness that will save us
utterly fragile love
utterly agile love
all our human vulnerabilities
merging there, invincible
at a fragile bend of the heart

- Shelley Blooms, 2019

“I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where. I love you simply, without problems or pride: I love you in this way because I do not know any other way of loving but this, in which there is no I or you, so intimate that your hand upon my chest is my hand, so intimate that when I fall asleep your eyes close.”

- Pablo Neruda



Welcome to [Nurturing Resilience!](#) Here, you'll find short somatic practices to help you return to an embodied sense of resilience, a mindset and physical state where you feel connected to your own essence, to loved ones, to nature -- and where hope, creativity, and transformative action with the world around you becomes possible, even during moments of transition and uncertainty. Facilitated by Yael Flusberg, a yoga therapist and coach, who teaches a weekly gentle yoga class for Smith Center.

Reinforce Your Core

Better to strengthen your back than lighten your load, advises a Turkish adage. In yoga, the core is associated with the element of fire. In this 23-minute practice, we'll hang out on the ground the entire time, exploring our breath and moving with ease and playfulness in order to touch into the abdominals, low-back muscles, intercostals, and obliques and find length and grace for the journey ahead.

community stories

Award-winning poet inspires DC students to use their words to change the world

Award-winning poet Gayle Danley encourages students to express themselves through poetry.

We are so proud to work with *International Poetry Slam Champion* [Gayle Danley!](#) Here is a sweet story about how she shared the art of poetry with children. All of our voices matter!

Stay tuned for Gayle's next Smith Center program.

[Click here to watch or read *Award-winning poet inspires DC students to use their words to change the world.*](#)



tasty & healthy

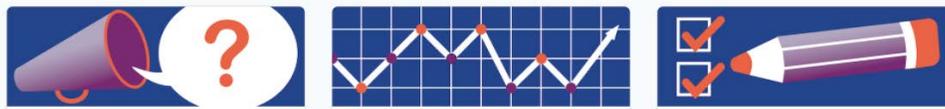
Today's recipe for **Quinoa Tabouli** is brought to us by Chefnurcian Laura Pole.

A few of us had the pleasure of watching Laura make this dish in her recent virtual cooking class, Sensational Savory Summer Salads and Sumptuous Treats! There is lots of room for interpretation here: you can add any additional veggies you have on hand, and choose to serve it hot or chilled.



[Click here to download the recipe for Quinoa Tabouli.](#)

shared ideas



Smith Center is pleased to circulate information about federally funded studies that are open to cancer survivors nationally and might be of interest to our program participants. Some of you may recall that we invited Dr. Wendy Demark-Wahnefried, from the University of Alabama Birmingham, to be a speaker in our Did You Know? series in January. She talked about Eating Well after cancer. At the time we asked if she had any trials of lifestyle modification currently open. Her answer now is yes!

In response to COVID, her research team has converted their AMPLIFY study to an online format. This study is designed to help cancer survivors eat better, become more active and lose weight. It is open to individuals who are:

- age 50 or older
- had breast, prostate, renal, colorectal, ovarian or endometrial cancer, or multiple myeloma
- were treated at least one year ago
- and are obese or overweight

For more information about this study and if it might be right for you, visit AMPLIFY at:

<https://amplifymyhealth.org/info>,

On [Facebook](#),

or call their toll-free number: (833) 535-7934

The [Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's \(LLS\)](#) Patient Financial Assistance team is dedicated to removing barriers to care by providing financial support to blood

[Click the video below to watch a](#)

cancer patients. Our Co-Pay Assistance Program assists with out-of-pocket expenses up to \$11,000, depending on disease fund.

quick, 3-minute explainer on Navigating the LLS Co-Pay Assistance Program.

Covered Expenses Include:

- **NEW!** Treatment-related scans, labs & tests
- Private & public medical insurance premiums
- Treatment-related co-pays, deductibles, co-insurance & Medicaid spend-down
- Treatment-related drugs, chemotherapy & supportive medications



For a complete list of available funding and covered expenses, please visit our website at www.LLS.org/copay.



Balancing Work and Cancer Webinar Series

Has your cancer experience caused you to dream about a completely new career? Learn about the process for changing careers, including assessing yourself, identifying obstacles and opportunities, creating an action plan, and more.

[Click here to register for Balancing Work & Cancer: Career Change on August 4th at 1pm ET.](#)

[And, click here to watch previously hosted webinars in the series.](#)

If you enjoy our programs, please consider paying it forward by making a monthly donation to Smith Center. A gift of \$25, \$15, or even \$10 a month helps to sustain us and provide more free and low-cost resources to our community. smithcenter.org/give



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