



A Message from Dr. Smith

Hello ECHO-LDPP,

I hope you are all healthy and doing well. I miss seeing our ECHO staff and students. I miss walking on campus and interacting with several people a day, and I miss the hustle and bustle of city life. Now, everything is strangely different. Just two months ago, we would have thought this situation was unthinkable in the U.S. However, quarantines and social distancing have now become commonplace around the world as we make concerted efforts to fight this spiraling coronavirus outbreak.

By nature, human beings are social animals. Globally, however, people are encouraged or enforced to stay in their homes. These measures have been deemed necessary by medical experts to reduce the spread of the virus, but the implications for people’s mental wellbeing cannot be overlooked. Nor can we overlook the psychological impact of this pandemic. As we face the prospects of several more weeks of social distancing in Los Angeles, we will need to establish our own ways of preserving our mental health at home.

One of the ways we preserve our mental health is adapting to our new reality. Yesterday morning I attended Easter mass from the comfort of my own home. It was televised live from an empty, 3,000 seat capacity Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. While this was definitely a very strange way to attend mass, it was also comforting to know that I was able to attend and have some sense of normalcy during a not-so-normal time. Yes, it’s a challenge, but I am so impressed by what ECHO has accomplished as a team during this unprecedented time. Kudos to us all.

Dr. Smith



Activities for “Safer at Home”:

As home life is quickly becoming a new reality for many people. I wanted to share 2 activities that could help ease your loneliness, fear, and boredom to make dealing with the COVID-19 virus a little bit less difficult. And I encourage each of us to share a picture of our efforts.



Cook

There has never been a better time to build up your cooking skills, as many health officials are recommending that you eat and cook at home right now to protect your health. Google a simple recipe for whatever meats or vegetables you have at home and try something new. Don’t know how to cook well? YouTube has free tutorials to cook just about everything under the sun, not to mention the endless online recipe sites.



Make art

- Complete a paint-by-number project
- Start a needlework, knitting, or crochet project
- Compile a scrap book that you can share later with others
- Work on an [adult coloring book](#)
- Take up a new hobby like jewelry making
- Take up origami

If you have a recipe or craft project that you would like to share with our ECHO family, please forward to Melissa and we will include in our Wellness Bulletin.



Culturally Informed Practice

The strengths based and culturally informed perspectives that are incorporated in our ECHO-LDPP community based intervention strategies inform how we address oral health disparities. This perspective recognizes that different communities have different practices of caring for one another and supporting the growth and development of families. Generally, these practices include a preference for looking to informal resources to solve problems and consider solutions. Informal support systems are often the first resource that families would consider when managing stressful situations. Within Latinx, and specifically, Mexican communities, the value for *familia* (family) is often a core value. The construct of “familia” includes relationships with “*Comadres & Compadres*” (*Godparents*), who have special roles in the family as a respected authority, advisor, surrogate parent, and resource to the parents, godchildren and the family in general.

In this edition of our ECHO Wellness Briefing, we introduce a new column, **Dear Comadre/Dear Compadre**. This column builds on the informal help seeking and culturally informed practices that are commonly found in the communities that we serve. Please send questions to the Comadre or Compadre to Melissa.



Dear Comadre,

I am grateful to work at home and to still have a job. I have friends and family who have lost their jobs. But, I need some help, because my family is making me crazy. It’s so loud in my house, my Grandma is always watching television, my Mom is stressed, my brothers won’t do their school work, and I can’t concentrate! I’m tired because I have to work at night when the house is quiet and then, my Mom is complaining that I need to sleep at a regular hour! Help!

Thank you,
Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,

These are very real challenges, and it is normal that you feel frustrated. I wouldn’t be surprised if you also felt angry, depressed or overwhelmed, because you

can’t control your family’s behavior. And, it’s great that you are reaching out for support.

My first suggestion is to stop and take a breath and try to step away from the problem. It is overwhelming, and you need positive energy to help you solve it.

Now, consider what can you control, what can you do? Is it possible to create an “office” (a bed, a place at a table/sofa/chair) where you can work? Can you post a sign or designate it as your office during your working hours? It seems like you have the good luck to have time at night when you can concentrate and work. Is it possible to make a schedule to work that includes night hours? Can you schedule a family meeting to ask the family to help you meet your work obligations, to ask for their suggestions, and to share your work schedule with them? Can you adjust your expectations for yourself and accept that “work” is different now?

You will still be a good employee, you are just a little bit different now, because the world is different. This is a real challenge and a real problem. It’s OK to give yourself a minute to step away from it and figure it out. Let me know if these suggestions help. If not, we will try something else. You can do it! Si, se puede!

Your Comadre



ECHO Wellness Activities on ZOOM:

Movement & Exercise: MW@ 9:00 am

Midday Meditation: TTH@ Noon

Meme of the Week:

