It’s more important than ever for all of us to stay healthy in body, mind and spirit. That’s why UC Davis Health Chief Wellness Officer Peter Yellowlees will be sending you his “Good Stuff” e-newsletter twice each week, featuring wellness tips, health resources and kind words from our community about your excellent work.

A message from Dr. Peter Yellowlees, Chief Wellness Officer

How to cherish and nurture your spouse/partner

This is the first of several Good Stuff comments focused on how we can all improve our relationships and communicate better during the current public health emergency. We must be physically distant but it’s important to also aim for increased safe social connecting. This includes communicating in-person when appropriate, and at a distance, with our loved ones such as our spouse/partner and family, patients, colleagues, friends and our leaders, among others. One of the silver linings to this crisis is that many people are spending more time with their families than usual, and are connecting more socially on video, email and text. Hopefully this is a mostly good unintended consequence, despite the inevitable stresses at times of being cooped up together as we shelter in place when not working.

So first let’s examine how to communicate with our spouse or partner. Remember that there is strong evidence that a happy marriage or partnership is protective of our physical and mental health. Consider that in health care we frequently meet our spouses/partners during our training or at work, so that, for instance, 40% of physicians are married either to another physician or health care professional. This in itself brings a range of both psychological and social advantages and disadvantages, from a better understanding of lifestyle needs, to the difficulties of on-call rosters and child care duties.

We all know that loving relationships are complicated and require nurturing, so I have summarized a number of simple techniques known to lead to a long and happy relationship. These can occur both in-person and online, and include:

1. Be nicer than normal, and know that relationships are a two-way street. Have some alone
time – it makes the heart grow fonder.

2. Find more ways to enjoy each other’s company and build a strong foundation of friendship (dust off the board games, packs of cards, etc.).

3. Say “I love you” more often and be thankful for the gift of loved ones.

4. Be honest but gentle. No marriage is perfect. There will be disagreements that you work through, and that is OK. Try not to interrupt when others need to express their views. Express your views but avoid coming across as hostile.

5. Limit outside influences and talk through conflicts between yourselves if possible.

6. Make frequent, small demonstrations and tokens of love. This can be as simple as helping each other with chores or turning off the TV during meals and listening to music you both enjoy.

7. Be realistic – don’t expect to both be right 100% all the time – remember the 80/20 rule and try to anticipate receiving only 80% of your expectations.

8. Cherish each other, and do not take each other for granted.

9. Reach out to mutual loved ones/friends who may be sheltering in place alone. Do this often and on a schedule if possible. People who are secluded at home day after day will welcome a video meetup with you. It is true that a picture is worth a thousand words, so connecting via videoconferencing with others can be highly effective and enrich everyone’s lives.

10. Be your own person – you are separate individuals with your own opinions and tastes.

So in the time of our current COVID-19 pandemic, take advantage of this silver lining and cherish your loved ones even more than usual. Enjoy your time with them whether in person or on video. Communicate with each other regularly, especially when one or the other is at work. Be aware of what makes a successful relationship and value each other. Try not to be afraid of the climate of uncertainty. Remember that this time shall pass.

Finally, do post your stories and experiences for us all to enjoy and share on the social media site set up for any staff member or student who has a ucdavis.edu email. Go to ucdavis.slack.com and post on the “HealthyUCDavis” channel. I will see you there.

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Emergency Pavilion
"Very good experience, I recommend this place for everyone. Everyone is nice and friendly with the best service."
UC Davis Medical Group Rancho Cordova
"I just want to say that I'm very thankful for my doctor and the staff at UC Davis Medical Group Rancho Cordova."

E5 Neurosciences
"Everyone was terrific, couldn't ask for better care of my aunt that passed away. Everyone from ER to ICU & Hospice was great."

T4 ENT / Internal Medicine
"The nurses were great. I could not have felt more secure in their care. They listened to me, never rushed me and when leaving the room, asked me if I needed anything else, with the 'are you sure.' Addressed me with care and respect - every time!"

D14 Orthopedics / Trauma
"All excellent experience. IV nurse did a great job. Hardly felt it and stayed intact the whole time."