A message from Dr. Peter Yellowlees, Chief Wellness Officer

How to HOPE in the time of COVID-19

Thanks indeed to everyone for all your amazing selfless work. So many of you are humble about the great things that you do daily. Some say we signed up to do this work, as health care staff and professionals, which to a certain extent is true, but few of us expected to be forced to stay at home, apart from our family and friends at the same time, afraid that we may become transmission vectors of an unknown virus ourselves. Worrying about the dangers of hugging our children or grandchildren, nephews and nieces. Some living separately from their families. Others separated by distance but in the same house.

It is truly amazing hearing some of the stories of our community, especially those of you who are at first-hand risk of infection at work, and how you have been caring for your families at the same time as your patients and colleagues. You know who you are. Thank you to all of you from the bottom of my heart.

It looks like we are flattening the curve as we all had hoped. Such encouraging news. How impressive our local effort in California has been. How seriously people have taken the requirement to remain physically distant, staying at home and staying safe, for ourselves and for our whole community. And how selfless many individuals have been. This has been a difficult change in how we live and work and how we see our world around us. How many lives have we saved? We will never know.

BUT we have a long way still ahead. We are not yet even at half time in this pandemic. This is not a time to rest or change direction. We have to persist with physical distancing and staying
at home. We have to maintain constant attention to our hygiene. We will likely have to change
our behaviors permanently once we get through this initial phase of the pandemic.

Unfortunately, no one really knows what is going to happen with any certainty, despite the
many educated guesses and predictions we all hang on to. We can take pride in knowing we
can modify our behavior when required. As humans we all need hope. As a species, if we did
not have hope we would probably not have survived so successfully and for so long. So, let’s
think about hope, and how we can constantly focus on our hopes for the future as a way of
thriving in this time.

Can I suggest you all do a short exercise? Think back to when you were about 15 to 25 years
old and try to remember what you hoped you might do with your lives, what your dreams were.
What in your wildest thoughts did you imagine you might achieve? Some ideas will be unlikely,
like becoming an astronaut, a great athlete or an Oscar nominee, but others may be more
doable, like being creative through writing, music or the arts; having a happy home life; giving
back to your community; or even becoming truly successful and happy in your career. Then
write those ideas, those dreams, and hopes down on paper, on your computer or on your
phone. Don’t be embarrassed about them. Put them somewhere that you can look at them
each day.

Then bring them out every day and think about them. Just for a few minutes. Change them.
Modify them. Adjust them. And think about what in your present life you can do to fulfill some
of your prior hopes and dreams, either now, or in the future, in the post-COVID-19 world. Add
some new hopes and dreams if you want. Talk to your loved ones about them if you wish. This
may spark ideas for them. Talk to your friends. Find out about their ideas for the future. Many
people in health care simply wanted to “make the world better,” hence our original choice of
career, but many of us also had other hopes as well. And over the years most of us let go of
these as we moved forward in our lives, with work, families, children and financial pressures
taking first spot.

Well, this is a good time to revisit those hopes and dreams. To take stock of our lives. To
decide if in the “new normal” post-COVID-19 world, we will behave the same as previously.
Use this as an opportunity to reassess your life plans. My bet is that many of us will have been
deeply affected by this experience in some way or another, just as many soldiers who have
been through wartime experiences report. For all of us this is an opportunity to think about
changes or consolidations in directions, attitudes, behaviors, goals and aspirations over the
next months and years.

History teaches us that of one thing we can be certain. There will be good things that come out
of this dreadful time. In the post-pandemic world, there will be a silver lining for many in the
way that we live. It will not necessarily happen immediately, but if we think and plan, hope and
aspire, it is more likely to happen to us, and to our loved ones, to our community.

I am hopeful. I am hopeful for all of us. And I thank you for what you are doing to help us
progress through to the post-pandemic world.

A special THANK YOU to UC Davis Health occupational therapists and occupational therapist
assistants for everything you do for our patients and community! April is designated by the
American Occupational Therapy Association as OT Month.
Acute Care and Rehab Occupational Therapists, properly masked and physically distanced, are united in their mission to improve the quality of life for patients.

E5 Rehabilitation
"UC Davis in Sacramento was the best possible place for our son to be, given he had a severe head trauma. Thank you for the excellent life-saving care!!"

Dermatology Cannery
"Faculty, fellow/residents were very friendly & caring. They made me feel comfortable and at ease. They are professionals & very easy to talk with. Great service!"
Cancer Center Medical Oncology
"Some of the best medical care I have ever received in my 50-year life."

Emergency Pavilion
"The lady who took my blood was AMAZING! Made me super comfy!"

D14 Ortho/Trauma
"Kind, polite, attentive, caring, sense of humor - wonderful nurses!"