Creating New Realities
As we enter the fourth month of coronavirus effects on our lives, we are realizing that we face not a pause in our realities to which we will soon spring back but a new reality entirely. We held our breath, put our collective and individual heads down, and gutted it out so far. Now, we face the marathon, not a sprint, of placing ourselves, our children and families, our work selves -- everything -- into this new normal. In these changes, we owe ourselves and those around us opportunities to note and to grieve the losses, big and small, and we also owe it to ourselves and others opportunities to see and seize and solidify the gains. Some of these changes have been good! We've (re)discovered simple pleasures like baking, walks, family meals, reading, laughing together. Some of the changes have been among the hardest we've faced. We're in need of new and better coping skills, and, with tensions running high, we need new and better conflict resolution strategies, too. Even simple interactions aren't simple these days! With informed reflection and action throughout this time, we can all improve our Wellbeing at School and at Home in New Mexico.

We would like to offer to all New Mexicans thoughts, ideas, and resources from ourselves and our areas of study and work -- counseling, educational psychology, family & child studies, and nutrition -- to enlighten, soften, and aid these transitions. We intend to make this offering bi-weekly, each with a theme relevant to our times.

Home-summering
Home-summering is the theme of this inaugural issue. We’ve worked through home-schooling and are turning the corner to home-summering. Our children are still at home, now without formal schooling, and without access to the usual summer camps, parks, extended families,
friends, food sources, community programs, and facilities which have structured their summers before. How do we, our children, and all whom we care about improve and maintain our wellbeing during Home-summering? Here are some ideas, from us to you.

**Simple Pleasures:**
Play and learn with Everyday J.U.N.K.! The Family Development Program at the University of New Mexico has developed a “special cookbook of fun, learning activities for families”. Explore the Joy of Uncovering New Knowledge with your kids. [https://fdp.unm.edu/everyday-junk-recipes.html](https://fdp.unm.edu/everyday-junk-recipes.html).

Rachel Fairbank describes some of the benefits of taking time for a daily walk. She notes that walking has health benefits, can improve our state of mind, and is a way to foster mindfulness. An IFCE note: research supports the idea that even five minutes spent in green settings can improve mood and restore one’s energy and focus. Kelly McGonigal, in her book *The willpower instinct: How self-control works, why it matters, and what you can do to get more of it*, calls this practice a "Green Willpower Fill-up." [https://vitals.lifehacker.com/you-need-to-walk-outside-every-day-1843260445](https://vitals.lifehacker.com/you-need-to-walk-outside-every-day-1843260445)

Here is a list of 100 things you can do during stay-at-home, many of which require few resources and preparation (family dance party!!). Inside, outside, simple, involved, adults, kids. This is a great springboard to brainstorm fresh activities. [https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/22/health/100-things-to-do-this-summer-wellness-trnd/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/22/health/100-things-to-do-this-summer-wellness-trnd/index.html)

**It’s a Marathon not a Sprint:**
The New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network has many resources about childcare, food, and other child-related needs at this time. [https://nmost.org/](https://nmost.org/)

National Public Radio and our Sesame Street friends have advice for parents and children about dealing with the swirl of emotions we’re all experiencing, including “When will this be over?”
For Parents: [https://www.npr.org/2020/05/08/853142325/when-will-this-be-over-sesame-workshops-tips-for-parenting-during-a-pandemic](https://www.npr.org/2020/05/08/853142325/when-will-this-be-over-sesame-workshops-tips-for-parenting-during-a-pandemic)
For Kids: [https://www.npr.org/2020/05/08/852941811/sesame-streets-grover-on-coping-during-coronavirus-just-for-kids](https://www.npr.org/2020/05/08/852941811/sesame-streets-grover-on-coping-during-coronavirus-just-for-kids)

The simple fact that we’re not sure when this will end is, itself, stressful. [https://slate.com/technology/2020/05/coronavirus-end-date-stress.html](https://slate.com/technology/2020/05/coronavirus-end-date-stress.html)

Here is a succinct list of tips for talking with our children about this unique time in our world history from PBS’s NewsHour. Screen time and routines can be flexible, but modeling prosocial
behaviors and patience are noteworthy. [https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/10-tips-for-talking-about-covid-19-with-your-kids]

National Public Radio provides some guidance for balancing childcare and return-to-work decisions at [https://www.npr.org/2020/05/19/855936820/scared-to-return-to-work-or-cant-with-kids-at-home-here-s-what-you-need-to-know].

Gains and Losses:

One of the gains of stay-at-home is more time to help others.

- Become an Emergency Childcare Provider in New Mexico for your family, friends and neighbors. Details are at [https://www.newmexicokids.org/coronavirus/hs0.php].
- Here’s a way to help New Mexican Health Care Workers have more access to Personal Protective Equipment: [https://www.protectnm.com/]
- Here’s a list of New Mexico food banks from the New Mexico Association of Food Banks [http://www.nmfoodbanks.org/]. They could all use donations and volunteers.
- Sign up through the state of New Mexico to volunteer for a wide range of needs. See [https://www.newmexico.gov/2020/03/17/heres-how-you-can-help-during-covid-19/].

Staying at home means eating at home, and eating at home is a chance to cook at home. Kids (and grown-ups!) can hone their kitchen skills as well as enjoy the time together. New Mexico is rich in kids in the kitchen resources. Albuquerque is the home to Kids Cook! ([http://www.kidscook.us/]), and Cooking with Kids ([http://www.kidscook.us/]) is based in Santa Fe.

If you need food, there are many resources for you. Here are some lists of New Mexico options:

- Here’s a list of New Mexico food banks from the New Mexico Association of Food Banks [http://www.nmfoodbanks.org/].
- Here’s a state-wide list of school-based meal sites for children: [https://www.newmexico.gov/education/meal-sites-for-children/]
- Here’s a state-wide list of school and non-school based meal sites [https://nmost.org/fighting-hunger-through-ost]
- Call the Roadrunner Food Bank of New Mexico’s Food Assistance Line at 505-349-5340 or 575-523-4390 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Grief can be felt when you have lost something important to you. Right now, we are all going through a grieving process prompted by a variety of losses, many individualized to each of us, such as routines and people that we are missing. Children are being confronted with many losses that we as adults may not understand or even realize. Children have shifted from being at school with their teachers and friends to being at home, never being able to say goodbye to those they care deeply about. Depending on how much news we are watching and the conversations we are having, children may also be hearing about a death toll constantly: state,
country, and world. All of this takes a toll on children and their emotions and feelings, oftentimes manifesting as unrealized grief. Your child may be showing you they are grieving through questions about death and dying, or through their behaviors. Grieving children may show more anger or sadness, they may be clinger and share worry about being left alone, they may show developmental regression, or changes in their overall behavior. Our NM WASH team reached out to Kelly Geib-Eckenroth, the program director for the Children's Grief Center in Albuquerque, about thoughts and considerations for being with children in their grief.

Kelly shared that grief is isolating and that, with our having to “stay home”, children and families may feel even more isolated. Unfortunately, during this time extended family and friends are not available as they once were for support because of the social-distancing needs and due to personal worries and concerns. With this COVID-19 situation bringing so many new transitions, situations, and worries, grief can take a backseat to concerns that are more pressing (food, work, managing kids). Kelly recommended resources from the Dougy Center, the National Center for Grieving Children and Families (https://www.dougy.org/), especially supporting children & teens when a family member is dying in a hospital or care facility (https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/tip-sheets/supporting-children-teens-when-a-family-member-is-dying-in-a-hospital-or-care/2163/) and when your world is already upside down: supporting grieving children and teens during covid-19 (https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/tip-sheets/when-your-world-is-already-upside-down-supporting-children-teens-during-covid-19/).

Kelly provided several thoughts and tips to consider for families navigating grief with their children:

1. Grieving children worry about other people they love dying. With a pandemic it is not easy to allay those fears. Adults might even share those fears.

2. Routine and boundaries are important for children to feel safe. When everything around you is unpredictable and beyond your control, controlling those things you are able to control can give you a sense of control and normalcy.

3. Grief impacts our ability to focus and concentrate, so online school or even daily tasks might be challenging. Don't be too hard on children.

4. Be honest - Keep your child informed with clear simple language. When children lack important information, they tend to make their own conclusions which are often wrong and can cause more anxiety.

5. Teens need "down time" and often crave more privacy.

6. Make sure teens have time with friends "virtually" or with appropriate social distancing. Teens value their social relationships.
7. Teens might not be taking social distancing seriously. The frontal lobe of the brain that controls impulse control and delayed gratification isn't fully developed, so they don't always realize the consequences of their actions.

8. Make time for grief.

9. Recognize your supports and stay connected.

10. Schedule in fun time and physical exercise.

11. Name your fears and also name the strengths you have as a family to face those fears.

12. Be kind to yourself - everyone is doing the best they can.

Children’s Grief Center: https://childrensgrief.org/

Grief Expert David Kessler has been offering guidance for how to grieve during these times. He talks with Brené Brown on her podcast, Unlocking Us, about grief and finding meaning. Have a listen at https://brenebrown.com/podcast/david-kessler-and-brene-on-grief-and-finding-meaning/. He also spoke with Harvard Business Review at https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief.

**Coping Skills:**

There is power in our words—to label and name experiences and situations; to explore emotions, feelings, and our senses; to share all of this with others if we choose; and to heal through processing and reading our own experiences both present and past. Journaling can be a brief sentence or stream of bulleted words and phrases about a momentary experience, or can be an elaborate detailing of a situation or event that we want remembered or to process. We invite you to journal through your experiences right now and even to invite your children to write or draw about theirs. Rachel Fairbanks describes the benefits of writing a journal to capture details of the pandemic experience that might otherwise be lost. She notes that this is a way to preserve valuable information for posterity, offering tips on how to get started with the process: make it easy to journal, pay attention to small details of experience and engage all of the senses. As the aim is to preserve one’s observations and experiences for the future, journal writers should develop strategies for “long-term storage.” There are other documented benefits of journal writing that go beyond those Fairbanks describes in her essay. Some of these are described in an article by WASH NM team member, Dr. Ashley Martin-Cuellar. As a team of colleagues and collaborators we hope to share some of our journaling process with you as we navigate experiences in this COVID-19 journey. https://vitals.lifehacker.com/why-you-should-keep-a-pandemic-journal-1842574149

Get some exercise! Physical activity always provides physical and mental benefits. This research article focuses specifically on its benefits for older people during the mental and
physical stresses of the stay-at-home order. 
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7118448/

Sesame Street has been releasing videos for parents and for kids related to COVID-19 on its YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/user/SesameStreet/videos). Cookie Monster talks about snacks, including hummus!; Rosita practices belly breathing; and Alan talks with parents. Look for the hashtag #CareForEachOther.

Here is a guide for adults about how to assist children in coping with COVID-19 related issues. It’s from the National Association of School Psychologists: 

Establish some rituals. These usually small yet meaningful routines provide stability and a way to work through all the thoughts and feelings we have. Read much more about how to use rituals to help and how to create rituals at https://hbr.org/2020/04/the-restorative-power-of-ritual.

Conflict Resolution:
There is a new reality for siblings of all ages during this current stay at home situation. This reality can bring siblings closer together and for some sibling relationships, staying home 24/7 can increase conflict at home without having school/peer outlets throughout the weeks. This article shares how a few families and specifically siblings are navigating staying at home together. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/17/us/virus-siblings-stay-at-home.html

The New Mexico 19:
Can’t get out and about in-person? Here are 19 New Mexican online cultural experiences:

1. Tewa Women United have a variety of virtual offerings. 
http://tewawomenunited.org/twu-virtual-offerings/

2. "Our Fair New Mexico," is a virtual concert series from the NM Department of Cultural Affairs, featuring musicians living in New Mexico. 
http://www.newmexicoculture.org/virtualconcerts

3. The Georgia O'Keefe Museum in Santa Fe. 
https://www.okeeffemuseum.org/okeeffe-from-anywhere/


5. The Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe. 
http://www.indianartsandculture.org/

7. The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces. [https://www.nmfarmandranchmuseum.org/](https://www.nmfarmandranchmuseum.org/)

8. 2020 Silver City Blues Festival Online -- standard definition. [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwvkhTtG6QkBmxJR61ex-iPMW1RSvchPt](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwvkhTtG6QkBmxJR61ex-iPMW1RSvchPt)


10. New Mexico Historic Sites YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC429pBOpR5kE6feg38WBEzA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC429pBOpR5kE6feg38WBEzA)


12. New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamagordo [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2SirhgX3NsxcREfOVLjHeA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2SirhgX3NsxcREfOVLjHeA)

13. See lots of New Mexico, virtually -- [https://www.newmexico.org/virtual-tours/](https://www.newmexico.org/virtual-tours/)

14. El Rancho de las Golondrinas in Santa Fe has activities, games, recipes, and more. [https://golondrinas.org/](https://golondrinas.org/)


18. There’re lots of sculptures to see at the Prescott Studio. [http://www.prescottstudio.com/](http://www.prescottstudio.com/)


For Those in the Helping Professions:

An interview with Dr. Deborah Bergeron, Office of Headstart, about the importance of staying connected with families at this time: [https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/blog/stay-connected-decrease-family-stress-difficult-times](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/blog/stay-connected-decrease-family-stress-difficult-times)
The Bookshelf -- References and Other Resources


Coming up Next:
Celebrations! June 17th -- We've reinvented graduations for our time. This summer we will likely also be redesigning weddings, family reunions, school reunions, birthday parties, Quinceañeras, bat mitzvahs and bar mitzvahs, Independence Day, and lots of other events.

About WASH NM:
The faculty and students of the Department of Individual, Family and Community Education in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of New Mexico would like to offer to all New Mexicans thoughts, ideas, and resources from ourselves and our areas of study and work -- counseling, educational psychology, family & child studies, and nutrition -- to enlighten, soften, and aid the COVID-19-related transitions. We intend to make this offering bi-weekly, each with a theme relevant to our times.

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About the
Department of Individual, Family and Community Education:
The department houses four diverse, but interconnected, programs that prepare students to address the myriad issues faced by the State of New Mexico. Our faculty members are leaders in their disciplines of Counselor Education, Educational Psychology, Family and Child Studies, and Nutrition; although each of these programs reflect different professional fields and identities, we all have shared values of human development, diversity, and excellence in scholarship and teaching. We offer various Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral Degrees and a number of programs have achieved national accreditations in their fields, a true marker of success and innovation.

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