Before Covid19 Mental Health Trends

- Depression increased 52% 2009 – 2017 among teenagers
- 9% of US Adults suffer from anxiety
- ED visits for mental health issues in kids 5 – 17 rose 60% from 2007 - 2016
- Death by suicide for kids aged 10-14 has increased 86% between 2000 – 2017
- 9% of US Adults suffer from anxiety
- 54% of Americans report feeling as though no one understands them well enough

Maslow’s Motivation and Hierarchy of Needs

- Physiological Needs (food, water, warmth, rest)
- Safety Needs (security, safety)
- Belongingness and Interpersonal Needs (friendship, trust, acceptance, affiliating, being part of a group, social connection)
- Esteem Needs (prestige and feeling of accomplishment)
- Self Actualization Needs (achieve full potential)

Today many are focused here

Comfort Is the bridge
Need to do better

Covid19 Increases Mental Health Concerns Due to Anxiety and Stress from:

- Fear of Getting Sick
- Feeling Unsafe
- Loneliness/Social Isolation
- Uncertainty
- Financial Concerns

Why Comfort?

It satisfies the core human values and basic needs we crave
We Are All Experiencing Grief

• Grief is the normal and natural reaction to the loss of any kind
  (loss of trust, loss of safety, loss of control, school, swim practice, graduations,
  traditions, freedoms, death)

• Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by then end of a change in a familiar
  pattern of behavior
  (masks, 6 feet apart, online school and work, can’t see relatives)

• Grief is the loss of hopes, dreams and expectations
  (championship meets, seasons, awards, new jobs)

Everyone’s Grief Is Unique And Can’t Be Compared

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Definition from The Grief Recovery Institute
In Order To Move Forward We Have to Lead With Comfort

- Comfort is a human care skill
- Comfort is intentional
- Comfort is an action
- Comfort comes from the heart
- Comfort carries empathy and compassion
- Comfort requires and promotes social connection
- Comfort satisfies the core human values and basic needs we are craving
- Comfort provides emotional safety

Comfort is the emotional cure to our current situation

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Dogs Instinctively Know How to Lead with Comfort
#1 We Put Others First

“To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart.” ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brain</th>
<th>Heart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Used for learning</td>
<td>- Used for Caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fix it mode</td>
<td>- Understanding mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wants all the details</td>
<td>- Wants to know where it hurts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Operates in me mode</td>
<td>- Operates in you mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Compare and advice</td>
<td>- Listen and help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Curiosity</td>
<td>- Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Book Smart</td>
<td>- People Smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rules the busy world</td>
<td>- Works in pause and stillness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Seeks the Why</td>
<td>- Seeks the how</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By putting others first you will help build confidence, courage and motivation
#2 We Are Not Awkward

“I see people as they approach me, trying to make up their minds whether they’ll say something about it or not.” ~ C. S. Lewis

**Human Awkward Zone Barriers**
- Self Absorption
- Waiting for perfect moment
- Fear
- Lack of awareness
- Takes effort
- Avoidance & Apathy
- Passivity
- Overwhelmed

To reach those struggling you need to move through the barriers by pausing, thinking about how you can help. Then act by acknowledging and validating. **Doing nothing or something simple doesn’t create connections.** Removing the awkward creates stronger connections and a sense of belonging.
#3 We Recognize When Others Are Hurting And Change our Perspective

“Everyone you know has a problem you don’t know about.” ~ Inspiring Comfort

**Don’t Assume … Change Your Perspective**
- People are over it – it’s always with them.
- People have moved on – it’s always with them.
- You know how others feel – you can’t compare experiences.
- We can get back to normal – we have a new normal.
- People are exaggerating – their struggle is real.
- There is a set timeframe for healing – there is none.
- Asking if someone is okay is enough…it doesn’t satisfy our needs.

The map has changed, people’s journeys have changed. Once you understand this you can more easily work with the new person and this builds trust.
#4 We Listen

“The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.” ~ Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen

### 5 Guidelines to Listening

- Hear to Understand
- Allow for Silence
- Stay focused
- Don’t be emotional
- Listen to comfort

Without good listening skills we only spend 45% of our time listening and can only recall 50% of what we just heard. With good skills people feel acknowledged, understood and heard.
#5 We Don’t Need Words

“A person who truly cares is the one who sees the pain in your eyes while everyone else believes the smile on your face.”

**Elements of Personal Communication**
- 7% of spoken words
- 38% tone of voice
- 55% body language

Gauge those around you by the following
- In conversation look for eye talk ~ gestures, posture, facial expression, eye contact, tears, distraction
- Out of Conversation ~ are they less engaged with friends, withdrawn

Your team will take cues from how you are responding. They are looking for safety and trust from what you do. Be careful of what you are saying with your non words.

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#6 We Don’t Judge

“Watch carefully, the magic that occurs, when you give a person just enough comfort, to be themselves.”
~ Atticus

Use the Pause Filter

P - Patience – is this right time to say these words?
A - Advice – did someone even ask for a solution?
U - Unloading – unloading thoughts versus listening?
S - Stay - staying with mood or trying to change it?
E - Emphasis – focus about you or them?

You can’t know where someone’s head is right now, so don’t judge. Without judgement we can offer emotional safety.
#7 We Are Wired For Comfort and Do It Every Day

“The mental health community and our dear pets can’t do it alone. The world needs all of us to know how to connect with those who are struggling too.” Dr. John Draper

**Research Shows:**
- Humans need social connection to thrive
- Not having social connection causes physical pain
- People’s beliefs about how they treat others doesn’t always match their actions.
- Enhancing others is a down payment on our well being.
- Trust and motivation are built when people feel belonging and connection through actions of comfort.
- Small actions everyday of extending comfort will be repaid in greater amounts over time.
- Being willing to accept comfort is as important as being willing to give comfort.

Leading with comfort requires courage, but when you open your eyes and use your ears you can bring hope by creating a culture of comfort. Then comfort will come back to you.
You Have the Opportunity To Lead With Comfort And Create A Culture of Comfort To Help Mend our Hurting and Disconnected World. THE POWER OF CONNECTION WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU CAN HAVE LIFE LONG IMPACT!

- Put Others First
- Break Through The Awkward
- Recognize When Others Are Hurting
- Listen To Comfort
- You Don’t Always Need Words – watch your nonword actions.
- Don’t Judge Others
- You Are Wired For This. Practice It Every Day
- It will come back to you in the Circle of Comfort

Materials are based off Inspiring Comfort’s book – Paws To Comfort
Visit Inspiringcomfort.com or Pawstocomfort.com to learn more, sign up for our newsletter or get a copy.
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