

July/August 2022

THE GRAPEVINE

North Shore Caregivers Newsletter



'I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD': SOLITUDE AS SANCTUARY IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Written by Catherine Bryson

'I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud' by William Wordsworth

'I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host, of golden daffodils...'

'I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud...' cont.

When Wordsworth penned this poem, he was speaking not of desolate loneliness but of blissful solitude. I therefore suggest that in the stressful age of COVID-19, with all the uncertainty that surrounds us like ominous clouds, we as individuals can find sanctuary for ourselves in our solitude—as positive retreat, rather than bleak loneliness.

Celebrate solitude then, nurture it, protect it, as one would a child, and most of all, enjoy it for that is its purpose: to bathe in solitude and be refreshed by it, rejuvenated by it, as one would from the waters of a pure, clear mountain stream.

Turn off the TV news, the social media feeds, close the curtains and pick up a book, a pen, or some drawing pencils, to while away the hours, with no one watching, no camera poised. Just you, blissfully alone, blissfully free to explore the byways and highways of your mind.

That said, a solemn duty calls me to present the case for the seriousness of loneliness among our cherished elders. For it is real and pressing. Here are some stats to illustrate the situation:

- Close to 30% of older adults (in the U.S.) reported loneliness as an impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of an aging population
- The mental health impacts of those living in long-term care - especially for those with dementia - are palpable. 60% of those patients exhibited cognitive decline due to social isolation
- Half of the older adult population will experience periods of loneliness later in life, and close to 5% will report chronic loneliness

Send a letter to a lonely senior!

You will note, however, that while, "loneliness has been associated with greater anxiety, depression and increases in cognitive decline... interventions that incentivize older adults to pursue activities that keep them engaged can significantly help reduce loneliness, isolation, cognitive decline, depression and anxiety."

'Mental Health Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic'. By Katherine Ramos, Generations, April 27, 2022.

You will also note that Charlotte Roddick, a PhD student in psychology who studies the link between loneliness and health, affirms that loneliness 'is a risk equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.'

'Alone in a Crowded City', by Madeleine DeTranqualye, Trek Spring/Summer 2022.

So this does paint a somewhat dire situation, for which I offer the following 'prescription', as presented to me from various sources here below.

'Wellness Guide to Overcoming Isolation During COVID-19' Advocates for Human Potential, 2020.

- Being alone can be a time I spend re-connecting with myself, or it can be lonely. It depends.
 - Every morning ask yourself: 'What does connection look like for me today? What can I do to reach out?'
 - Write out your Daily Routine (You might be interested in looking up WRAP Recovery Online, as a potential resource)
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'I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud...' cont.

Wellness Recovery Plan

'How to Heal from the Effects COVID-19 Had On Your Mental Health', by Danielle Canpoamor, Zee Krstic, and Jake Smith. Prevention Guide, 'Dealing With Depression', May 2022.

- Rest assured, there is an answer to the perplexing question of very human loneliness, the 'player' of the 21st century, I venture to say.
- Though your day-to-day schedule may feel a lot different than before, your first priority should always be making sure you're meeting your own basic needs. "Get enough sleep, exercise, eat well", says psychiatrist Beth Solcedo. "Do everything you can to take care of your physical health, which is helpful to your mental health. "Staying active, doing hobbies you enjoy, listening to music, and calling loved ones may all help."

My contribution: School for Lonely Hearts

Lesson 1: Learn to Be By Yourself

- Draw hearts.
- Sit quietly
- Read something.
- Don't take a pill to chase your fears away, 'cause they'll come back, the very next day!

In conclusion, I've been studying the whole COVID-19 saga from afar since it began, and this article is the distillation of how this phenomenon fits into the theme of loneliness. How it all plays out I cannot say just yet, but armed with the tools discussed herein I think we stand a fighting chance of beating the loneliness demon. Solitude can be a self-affirming pursuit for the denizens of this (somewhat) Strange New World we find ourselves in, so long as we stay self-aware and take the necessary steps to combat the negative impact of loneliness. Or as the poet John Milton said:

'The mind is its own place,
And in itself,
Can make a Heav'n of Hell,
A Hell of Heav'n.'

Some Useful Contacts:

Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789

BC Suicide Hotline (anywhere in BC): 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

Seniors Distress Line: 604-872-1234

Vancouver Coastal Regional Distress Line: 604-872-3311



PERSIAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Persian community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, learning, and connecting for our Persian community.

Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Farsi, with guest speakers, group interaction, and music.

Monthly Meetings

For now, we are meeting on Zoom (but we hope to be back meeting in person soon in our NSCR Community Room).

Our meetings run on the third Monday of each month, from 6:00-8:00PM.



For more information and details, contact:

Noushin Beheshtipoor (Group Leader) ~ noushinbeheshtipoor@gmail.com

Vic Gailiunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~

Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

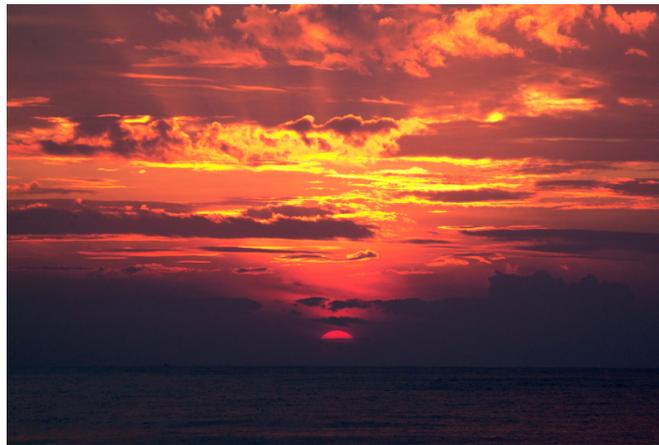


Caregiver Bereavement Support Group

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) is offering a support group specifically for caregivers experiencing grief/bereavement in the loss of their loved one. The group is designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting with others with similar experiences.

Monday, July 25, 2022

In-Person at our Community Room from 6:00PM to 8:00PM



As we head into Summer, the sunshine and beauty of the North Shore offers hope to us all. It is a perfect time to consider our well-being, new ways to revive our spirits and how to find meaning on the difficult path of loss.

For more information, to register, and for details, please contact:

Vic Gailiunas

Caregiver Support Program Coordinator 604.982.3320 vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca

July Events

July 5th

Caregiver Support
Group Meeting
(Zoom)
6:30-8:30PM

July 7th

Men's Support
Group Meeting
(In-Person)
10:30-12:30PM

July 18th

Persian Group
Meeting
(Zoom)
6:00-8:00PM

July 25th

Bereavement
Support Group
Meeting
(In-Person)
6:00-8:00PM

August Events

August 4th

Men's Support
Group Meeting
(In-Person)
10:30AM-12:00PM

*August 9th

Caregiver Support
Group Meeting
(Zoom)
10:30-12:30PM

August 21st

Persian Group
Meeting
(Zoom)
6:00-8:00PM

*Please note this meeting will be on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, not the first.

Contact Vic to register:

604-982-3320 or vic.galliunas@nscr.ca



Men's Caregiver Support Group

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for male caregivers who support their spouses or partners – either living together or apart.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for men with the unique experience of caregiving for their partners.

Program participants are welcome to encourage other men they feel might benefit from joining the group.

Monthly Meetings

For now, we are back meeting in-person. In the COVID-19 context, mask protocols are still in place for any in-person meetings at the NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the first Thursday of each month, from 10:30am-12:30pm. Next 2 meetings: July 7 and August 4.



As we head into Summer, the sunshine and beauty of the North Shore offers hope to us all. It is a perfect time to consider our well-being, new ways to revive our spirits and how to find meaning on the difficult path of loss.

For more information, to register, and for details, please contact:
Vic Gailiunas at 604.982.3320/vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca or Pat Dean (Group Leader) at pdean@telus.net

Interview with our Persian Group Leader: Noushin Beheshtipoor

You are in charge of running the NSCR Persian Group and their monthly meetings. Please tell us about your personal journey. How did you come to be in charge of this group?

My name is Noushin Beheshtipoor, I worked as an Academic Pediatric Nurse at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences for 29 years before I moved to Canada. Mahtab Manouchehri (previously in charge of this group) invited me to present a medical topic for the Persian Caregiver group in September, 2019. After she had to go to Iran, this responsibility was given to me in consultation with NSCR.



Tell us about your specific group. You have many guest speakers. What kinds of things do they (and you) present to the group?

The Persian Caregiver group started with a few (7-8) people aged between 40 to 80 at first, and now, it has about 15-25 participants each meeting. At times, I try to invite the youth to the meetings by encouraging them to speak about their interests such as: beauty, make up safety, music, sport, environmental health. In this manner, the meetings become more diverse and engaging. We have formed a telegram group chat with 108 members! In this group, we have a monthly educational program selected based on members opinion polls and availability of speakers. Some topics discussed are self-care, yoga, exercise, Persian poetry, arts, and so on!

My husband Ali and I prepare a lecture every month so that if someone had a problem or cannot join last minute and cancels, then we have something ready to present.

My presentation topics vary from Canadian/Iranian history like Family Day, Canada Day, our occasions like Festival of Fire, Nowruz, to everyday concepts like crisis, communication, skin care, changes after middle-age years, coping with death, self-care for caregivers, prevention of disease like osteoporosis, etc.

What made you want to be a group facilitator?

I enjoy helping my community! More so, through these events I have found new connections and have been able to offer others the same. I love teaching and learning.

What do you feel are some of the benefits of attending your group?

One can learn topics via simple vocabulary and through interesting lectures! Topics might be: hope in difficult times, taking care of one's mental health, entertaining activities, communication differences, finding new friends, and exercising.

What do you do for your own self-care?

I try to cook for my family and eat healthy, drink water, spend time with my family & friends, meditate regularly, and maintain a positive attitude.





Caregiver Support Group

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a monthly support group specifically for family caregivers who support their loved ones – either living together or apart.

The group's goal is to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for anyone with the unique experience of caregiving for family members.

Program participants are welcome to encourage and invite others they feel might benefit from joining the group.

Monthly Meetings

Next 2 meetings: Tuesday, July 5 and August 9 (Zoom).

Meetings are currently on the first Tuesday evening of each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm (except this August, when we will be on the 2nd Tuesday).

For the near future, NSCR will be meeting on Zoom. We hope to be back in-person soon. For the Zoom link, please contact NSCR directly.



Contact

For more information, details, or to find out more about NSCR's caregiver support programs, please contact: Vic Gailiunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

Or Phone: 604-982-3320

Extreme Heat

Who is at a higher risk of heat-related illness?

- Older adults may not physiologically compensate for heat stress efficiently, and are therefore less likely to sense and respond to high temperatures.
- People who have underlying health concerns such as heart disease, uncontrolled diabetes, emphysema, kidney failure, colitis, or mental health illness.
- Seniors who live alone and experience social isolation, have limited mobility or access to resources.

The most important thing is to keep cool and hydrated

- Spend time in cool places like shaded areas or air conditioned locations such as public libraries, community centres, or shopping malls
- Drink plenty of cool fluids, especially water
- Circulate air by strategically opening windows/doors and introducing electric fans or portable air-conditioning units
- Cover your home's windows with drapes or shades
- Take cool baths or showers regularly
- Check on vulnerable family members and neighbours



Of concern, requiring immediate cooling. Call 8-1-1 or your health care provider for guidance if you experience any of the following:

- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Increased heart rate
- Dizziness and/or faintness
- Heavy sweating and/or skin rash
- Headache and/or nausea
- Muscle cramps and/or swelling of hands and feet
- Fatigue and/or weakness

Severe, requiring immediate medical intervention. Call 9-1-1 if you experience or witness any of the following:

- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- High body temperature (40°C or higher)
- Confusion and/or decreased mental alertness
- Vomiting, hallucinations, and/or seizures
- Loss of consciousness

Visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/heat-related-illness for more information.



NSCR Caregiver Support Program

201-935 Marine Drive, N. Vancouver BC V7P 1S3

We publish this bi-monthly newsletter on topics related to self-care and the caregiving role.

If you would like to learn more about NSCR's Caregiver Support Program, please contact Vic Gailunas: vic.gailunas@nscr.ca or 604-982-3320.