

## Week 10 Lockdown

**'As we are faced with the possibility of many more weeks of lockdown and isolation, whatever situation we find ourselves in, it is vital now, more than ever, that we endeavour to access our resilient self, reach out for support and adjust our sails accordingly'.**

**Anna McQuade 2020**

I stole my own quote from my Week 5 Lockdown Blog to use here, which was written in response to the somewhat more accomplished writer (!) Mary Louise Alcott's quote – 'I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning how to sail my ship'. So, as we near the end of Week 10 of a now slightly more relaxed lockdown and the genteish re-opening of the world as we knew it, I am writing at least for now - my final blog. I have never written a blog. In fact, it has been many years, since I have volunteered to put myself in an arena which may evoke a critical response from the unknown public. On reflection in my maturing years, I have very much remained within my comfort zone. This is me currently 'practising tolerating uncertainty.' (Week 9)

What is within my comfort zone, is my dedication to helping Young People and I am privileged as a Counsellor to be able to not only hear and hold another's pain - but hopefully help them do the hard work to move through whatever their troubles may be. I knew as lockdown forced us to stay safe at home I had to, like the rest of the world, totally rethink about not just what I did but how I could still do it. The blog was a way whilst we were getting online services available and up and running – to maintain that contact. I had not envisaged that 10 weeks later I would still be writing it. But on some level by doing this, I realise I was trying to stay alongside my pre-existing clients during this journey of uncertainty and maybe offer them and hopefully others of you some virtual optimism and hope, when the future seemed bleak.

In writing to you today, I have revisited each week's blog and what **is** obvious is that we just need to keep on keeping on! In Week 2, I spoke of crisis moments presenting opportunity and that we were not stuck at home - we were safe at home. It was that safety that was the biggest armour at our disposal to help get us through. Whilst this has steadily become a backdrop given the new easing of restrictions, it really should be engrained in our way of life for the unforeseeable, to prevent that dreaded second wave. The early days of Week 3 invited hope to stay and impressed just how vital a routine and finding a purpose for your day was **and still is**. For a lot of the young people I see currently there is a general theme of now playing catch up with their school work, from the early weeks when they were blindsided at the immediate shift of normality as they knew it. NO SCHOOL - a dream come true! But on levels they weren't to comprehend until time moved forward - a nightmare reality. 'I really love this independence' says 17-year-old Sally waking up at 2pm, 'but I don't think I'm very good at it!'

Weeks 4 & 5 drew on a comparison of astronaut Helen Sharman. Routine once again and resilience emerged as that week's victors, in finding our way through the unknown landscape of a pandemic, not unfamiliar in some ways to the confinement of being

on the moon. For Sally whose whole-time clock was now more conducive to living in California, we looked at how she needed to become the master and regulator of her own emotions and wellbeing. To be her own internal teacher/time manager/online regulator etc because it was simply an impossible task for parents or care givers to monitor this 24/7. 'I agree,' says Sally... 'but it's sooo hard!'. 'Is it reeeally?!' says me.

We had to roll with the punches, accept adversity, be prepared to adapt so much from life as we knew it and be flexible and creative to find this 'new normal'. A big ask even for older folk like me – but massive for our young people. But they are doing it – they are responding and for some that are leaning in this new (temporary) way of living - they are flourishing in the 'now normal'.

Week 8 emphasised sustainability and of doing everything that we have already been doing as being key to the road ahead. But still reinforcing that our individual survival, which has always been bound up in one another's wellbeing, lies not only globally, but within our communities and our homes. Of still taking care of our nearest and dearest, of still helping our most vulnerable friends and neighbours, of asking what can I do to help? Kindness and awareness of others needs and not just our own, has been demonstrated in abundance and I pray that will be part of the aftermath in the rebuilding of our fractured and delicate world.

Week 9, highlighted dreams dashed. We have all suffered loss, maybe holidays or experiences or weddings or big birthdays or festivals, endings at school, or possibly tragically the loss of a loved one. But these losses we will/have overcome, and they have hopefully added new levels of strength and survival techniques, to our pre-existing toolkits. Whilst our requirement to maintain social distance conflicts with our natural desire to connect with our families and friends, who we are now able at least to see, it remains tough and against our natural instincts of wanting to hug and hold and feel close human contact from our friends and loved ones. We maybe all need to be reminded that this is still contributing to the greater good of endeavouring to distance ourselves from Covid19. We need to continue to take the power of the things we can control, rather than the things we cannot. And so, it is in knowing young people as I think I do - please consider your social actions in your euphoria of a modicum of release, when you then go and visit grandparents or in fact anyone!

And so for the time being I will hang up my writing hat and invite anyone else out there – student, parent, teacher to maybe contribute/write to the continuation of the lockdown weekly blog (subject to censorship of course! Please send to [time2talk@sghs.org.uk](mailto:time2talk@sghs.org.uk)). The whole experience of doing it has in fact helped me on my own pandemic journey, which has definitely not been an easy one and as a consequence, I hope that maybe they have been of some help or guidance during these unprecedented times for you and your families too. SGHS has always prided itself in taking care of the young people's emotional wellbeing - with its awesome student progress/counselling and pastoral team, which has continued to offer support since schools 'closed' and will continue to do so. We do recognise that whilst anxiety is sneaky and contagious, so too is compassion and kindness – let us keep on staying



skipton girls' high school  
  
an engineering academy

safe and reaching out to others and please do ask for support – you don't have to feel alone.

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