



Us Plus

Mental Health and Well-being Bulletin 8

Good morning everyone,

Today's bulletin is quite a long read but gives some really good advice about how we can cope with our feelings about missing important events at this time.

Remember:



I hope the following information is helpful and interesting.

Mrs Taylor.

We may all have been looking forward to all sorts of events this year: birthday parties, celebration assemblies, the Year 11 Ball, finishing GCSEs, sports matches, dance competitions and some of you might have been invited to weddings and other sorts of celebrations. But now, in this highly unusual time of social distancing, those celebrations have been postponed or cancelled for good. There's an understandable sense of grief and disappointment that so many of us are feeling.

Psychologically, all these milestones and rituals are important because they are intrinsically meaningful for human beings. They are communal experiences, many of them once-in-a-lifetime events, which, like weddings and funerals, have had a place in human culture for centuries. And while virtual parties and ceremonies are taking on new meaning, the loss of IRL events can feel devastating. "These celebrations are, on a very primitive level, a celebration that we are alive," Jennifer Ramlo, Ph.D., a Los Angeles based clinical psychologist commented. "When something that we have been looking forward to just disappears, it can bring on feelings of great disappointment and sadness".

If you've had to miss a milestone or anticipated event, here are five ways to ease the pain.

Grieve without guilt

"We tell ourselves things like, I feel sad, but I shouldn't feel that; other people have it worse," writes David Kessler, author of *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief* and founder of Grief.com. "Your work is to feel your sadness and fear and anger whether or not someone else is feeling something" Kessler said. "Fighting it doesn't help because

your body is producing the feeling. If we allow the feelings to happen, they'll happen in an orderly way, and it empowers us." So, it is ok to feel sad about missing these events.

Celebrate twice

We all get stuck on the timing of events but why not take the opportunity to celebrate twice? Once now, at home with close family virtually present, and then together in person, just at a later date. "The fact that you can't do it right now offers us a chance to reflect on the significance of the milestones, these rituals that punctuate our lives, and what they really mean to us" Ramlo says. Rather than worrying that your impromptu celebration is not at like the one you had intended, focus on the fact that your family and friends can be together thanks to technology. Stay present in the beauty of the moment and practice gratitude. Even though you might be celebrating with a very small group, dress up, make the room look lovely, cook fantastic food. A little imagination and ingenuity (plus laughter) can make even a virtual celebration more special than you may have thought.

Talk about your feelings

To fight against the helpless feeling that something has been taken away from us helps us to remember that we are not alone. "We are all losing something during this time. Talk with your friends about it and figure out how to acknowledge your own and each other's successes and resilience." advises Ramlo. You can also talk to your family and there are other contacts like the 'Your Way' live chat mentioned in previous Us Plus Bulletins and on the school website.

Practice acceptance

Acceptance is the final stage of grief, after anger and sadness. It's the feeling of 'This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed'. Acceptance, as you might imagine, is where the power lies. Anytime you become despondent about the milestone that isn't happening the way you had planned and dreamed, remember what's important is the essence and spirit of the day. And that is worth celebrating.

Practice Gratitude

This situation has made many of us live our lives in quite a different way. It is important each day to be consider the good things and feel grateful for them. I have been able to spend far more time with my family over the last few weeks than I had planned – and it has been truly lovely. I've also spent lots of time in my garden watching the birds – I would never usually do this and I am grateful for the opportunity to enjoy the natural world of my garden. The positivity of gratitude has a wonderful impact on our mental health and well-being.

Remember that you can also contact the TIS Team at school if you need to discuss any worries or anxieties you might be feeling at this time. You can do this by emailing me at ktaylor@penrice.org.uk

