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Mental Health

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'Yes, Mental Health Matters: Adjusting To The New Normal In This Pandemic'

For many, the 'new normal' contains all sorts of uncertainty about what the future might hold. Under such conditions, countless of us feel stressed and anxious, worried about the path ahead. Even upon adjusting to this 'new normal', expectations from before the pandemic are still held, where we are envisioned to achieve and perform given tasks to the high level they were before. Especially in this ever-increasing competitive society, too much of the time we see individuals overworking and experiencing 'burnout', where they are working beyond their limits, ignoring the deterioration of their mental health. Adjusting to this 'new normal' requires us to change some of our previous expectations and be alright with it.

Adjusting to the 'new normal' is a process that takes time. Although coming out from lockdown is something that happens overnight, changing your entire mindset and adapting to new environments does not. It is important to address that the time taken for people to adjust to these new circumstances differs between person and person. As individuals, we need to embrace the fact that it may take longer than expected to adjust and we need to be patient and kind to ourselves. As society, we need to be respectful and inclusive of people who are struggling to adapt to this 'new normal'.

Upon approaching the 'new normal', many of us have not had the chance to socialise face-to-face with friends and family. We need to be aware that our capacity in our 'social batteries' may have changed. It is okay if our 'social batteries' run out. It is okay to take

a break. After the countless lockdowns, we need to learn that taking some time off for ourselves is important while adjusting to this 'new normal'.

One of the prominent impacts of Covid-19 is the increased usage of technology. The intense reliance and dependence on technology can often be overwhelming for elder people, especially those who have not had a lot of contact with technology before the pandemic. In times like these, it is vital that we collectively help and guide the elder so that they feel included in society. Methods that could strengthen our connection with them could be events such as digital workshops to help those struggling with using technology.

A technique I have started to implement to deal with anxiety and stress from the 'new normal' is through adapting my mindset. When I feel overwhelmed, I think of myself as the main character of a book. In any book, the characters never have a smooth and straight path where nothing ever goes wrong. Instead, they are faced with various kinds of challenges that they eventually overcome. I relate the main character to myself by picturing the current stressful situation I am in as just another boulder that I need to get past and encouraging myself that as long as I commit and persevere I will be able to get over this difficult situation. Thinking of myself in third-person makes me believe that there is always some way I can overcome a challenge. This encourages me to think optimistically and believe that there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

We will face countless difficult situations that make us feel stressed and anxious during this 'new normal', but if we can look on the bright side and focus on the small positive things that make us smile, we will be able to adjust to this 'new normal'. Look for the shining beacon of light that guides us out of the darkness.