VIRTUAL CARE PACKAGE
LGBTQ+
Counseling, Health & Wellness and LGBTQ+ Western welcome you to a fall quarter unlike any other. While these past few months have been filled with uncertainty, grief, tragedy, and challenge, one thing remains certain – we’re here for you! Take a moment to explore this virtual care package as part of caring for your holistic health and well-being. We’ve compiled resources, coping tools, and information to help you prepare for this new academic year. A year in which resilience, self-care, and community connection have never been more important. As part of the Western community, we’re in this together.

Be well,

Counseling, Health & Wellness Services

LGBTQ+ Western
COPING & SELF-CARE

It’s ok to not be ok right now. To expect the same of ourselves during this very abnormal time is unrealistic. Be gracious, compassionate, and tender with yourself. Queer and trans folx may be experiencing particular strain from living in spaces that don’t feel safe, being apart from affirming queer community, and being in a higher risk category for mental health concerns to begin with due to impacts of anti-LGBTQ+ bias in our society. Here are some ways to take care of your wonderful self. You deserve to be safe, cared for, and loved.

TIPS FOR COPING
• Reach out to one another and check-in with your queer fam
• Limit news consumption, and include queer new in what you check out
• Listen to music and check out some LGBTQ+ artists
• Spend time outdoors
• Find outlets for your emotions (e.g. journaling, creating, drawing, playing music, sharing, social support...)
• Engage in distraction (e.g. hobbies, Netflix, cleaning, organizing, podcasts...)
• Practice grounding yourself (e.g. meditation, prayer, mindfulness, being present...)
• Practice self-compassion

CAMPUS RESOURCES
• Counseling Center
• Student Health Center
• Queer Yoga at WWU

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
• 11 Self-Care Tips, According to Expert Queer Healers
• 14 Black LGBTQ+ Folks on How They’re Taking Care of Themselves Right Now
• Journal Prompts for Wellness – Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM)

APPS
• Insight Timer
• Liberate: BIPOC Meditation
• Youper
• Stop, Breathe & Think
• Headspace
• COVID Coach
Living amidst a pandemic, confronting systemic racism, and trying to live your best life is challenging to say the least. Grief is a normal response to these types of stressors and traumatic events. For queer and trans folx, this time might require you to live away from LGBTQ+ community, and possibly with people who don’t support your full self. It can also mean the loss of access to hormones or having to delay a gender affirming surgery. Here are a few things to help maintain perspective and put into context what you may be feeling:

• **We’re in a collective state of grief** over the loss of: normalcy and the familiar, being with people who affirm our identities, access to healthcare, safety, and for some, loved ones.

• **We’re responding to traumatic events and circumstances.** Trauma has a direct impact on the body’s central nervous system, which is known as the fight, flight, or freeze response. Trauma can show up in many ways including: Anxiety, stress, muscle tension, trouble sleeping, irritability, apathy, depression, digestive disturbance, and avoidance to name a few.

• **We’re faced with so many unknowns** and that is hard to accept. With uncertainty we often try to seek control, create structure, and return to what is familiar.

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**MESSAGE FROM DEIDRE EVANS, MSW, Survivor Advocacy Services Coordinator**

Home is not always the safest place for everyone. During this time of remote learning and physical distancing survivors may be experiencing an increase in safety concerns and feelings of isolation. You are not alone and support is available. Everyone deserves to be treated with love, dignity and respect in their relationships. If you or someone you know is experiencing violence and abuse, support is available.
QUARANTINE, PHYSICAL DISTANCING, ISOLATION? IT’S NO WONDER WE’RE ALL FEELING A LITTLE LESS CONNECTED. WHILE WE HAVE TO GET CREATIVE WITH STAYING CONNECTED, THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF WAYS TO BE TOGETHER, APART. EXPLICITLY LGBTQ+ AFFIRMING SOCIAL SUPPORT CAN BE ESPECIALLY NURTURING, EMPOWERING, AND COMFORTING RIGHT NOW.

**Tips for connecting:**

- Mindful social media use
- Call, text, FaceTime, email, or send an actual letter!
- Virtual hangouts (e.g. Houseparty, Netflix Party)
- Spiritual and cultural practices – LGBTQ + Religion

**CONNECTING TO WWU COMMUNITY**

Several LGBTQ+ student clubs are connecting virtually and you can sign-up to receive information about LGBTQ+ events on campus here! You can also follow LGBTQ+ Western on Instagram and Facebook along with Counseling, Health and Wellness. If you’d like to schedule a visit with Langley, the LGBTQ+ Director, you can easily schedule a time to connect during their office hours.
Times like these can test our ability to find meaning and purpose. Connecting with other LGBTQ+ people in the present, and with histories of LGBTQ+ struggle and thriving through adversity, can be grounding. Here are some prompts to help you connect to histories of resilience and feel inspired. Remember, your whole self is real and beautiful. So many people at Western are here for you!

- What do you love about being an LGBTQ+ person?
- What are your queer superpowers?
- How is queerness magic?
- Who are your LGBTQ+ role models or ancestors?
- What makes you uniquely you?
- What skills have helped you overcome adversity?