Reimagining Your Recharge with Mt. SAC Student Health Services

00:00:00 **Livier**

Let us find ways of how we could live with it; how do we take care of ourselves? How do we still socialize? How do we try to find those times throughout the day to find the time with ourselves and our supportive systems?

00:00:16 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:18 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie podcast.

00:00:22 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:39 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion.

00:00:42 **Speaker 1**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals, and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

00:00:47 **Speaker 2**

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly Pamona! Psychology major, English major ...

00:00:54 **Sun**

From transforming part-time into full- time-

00:00:56 **Speaker 1**

I really liked the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

00:01:03 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:05 **Speaker 1**

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:09 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC. But most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC, alumni, and producer of this podcast.

00:01:20 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

00:01:25 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:27 **Christina**

Ever wonder why you're not feeling rested or how you can get even better sleep? Well, we have some surprising answers for you that Livia Martinez and Tim Leslie from Student Health Services share during this episode, that could change not only how you feel as you go through your day, but also might increase the quality of your productivity. You may want to write this down.

00:01:52 **Christina**

So, get comfy, use this listening time as a moment of self-care and enjoy.

00:02:01 **Sun**

Well, good morning, Livia and Timothy. Welcome to the Magic Mountie Podcast. I'm so excited that you can be here with us today. Maybe I can ask you to go ahead and introduce yourselves.

00:02:11 **Livier**

Sure. Hello, good morning. My name is Dr. Livia Martinez, I'm a licensed clinical social worker, and I have been working at Mt. San Antonio College Student Health Services now for over 13 years. So, thank you for having us here.

00:02:25 **Tim**

I'm Tim Leslie, I'm a licensed marriage and family therapist. I've been working at Mt. San Antonio College for close to three years now. It's been an enjoyable experience so far, and I'm happy to be here as well.

00:02:36 **Sun**

Well, thank you so much for making the time to talk with us today. And I know that you've prepared a very special interview. So, I'll go ahead and hand the conversation over to both of you.

00:02:47 **Livier**

Well, today, we are choosing to talk on a relevant topic. We are recording this during the COVID-19 pandemic. And so, we know that it has really impacted so much of our daily lives; how we take care of ourselves, how we sleep, how we exercise, how we exist really, on a daily basis.

00:03:13 **Livier**

And so, we have seen our students and our staff struggle on how to find balance when our daily lives have pretty much changed. And so, we took this opportunity to share some guidelines and some suggestions on how do we still make time to take care of ourselves, sleep. And most importantly, find these times of our busy schedule and our new ... what I keep saying, it's like our new reality.

00:03:43 **Livier**

So, we're going to tap into Tim Leslie's knowledge and skills. He's our go-to guy when we talk about sleep and when we talk about exercise. He's very, very knowledgeable. Tim is, as he mentioned, he is one of our hourly mental health clinicians, but he is very well-versed on the topic of mental health. He's currently at his tail-end of his doctoral program. And maybe he'll talk a little bit about that as maybe throughout the interview.

00:04:14 **Livier**

But Tim, tell us, how do we know when a person's sleep is off? Like, how do we know, and how can we be alert that it's impacting our overall health?

00:04:30 **Tim**

Part of what Livia was mentioning, I got into sleep, is because a lot of my research and my dissertation is around burnout. So, sleep is a big part of that, which is what fueled my interest in getting involved in these subjects.

00:04:41 **Tim**

But some of the things that really tie into knowing if a person's sleep is off or that they maybe aren't getting enough sleep, some of the more readily recognizable signs where somebody is yawning a lot, or you become really irritable, like can be really difficult for you to concentrate on tasks that normally would be really easy, having some low motivation. Those are things that I think people are pretty familiar with if they haven't really been getting a lot of rest.

00:05:07 **Tim**

I'd also add onto that though, that at the more extreme end, people will engage in microsleeps, meaning that they involuntarily will fall asleep because their body just needs that much rest. And you can imagine that'd be really dangerous if you're doing something like driving or operating heavy machinery or things like that. It can kind of get really difficult or they can also hallucinate.

00:05:25 **Tim**

But you also can add in some other things that people do when they're sleep-deprived, is they start seeking out really sugary foods because our brain is really sensitive to sugar for energy. So, if you start to notice that you're having all these cravings for bread and pizza and ice cream and all these sorts of things, maybe that you wouldn't normally eat, the reason why you might be doing that is because you're sleep-deprived and your body is seeking out energy from foods because it's not getting it from rest.

00:05:48 **Livier**

Interesting. Okay, see, I would have just thought, okay, I just love carbs, but okay. You're also letting me know that it could be my body is kind of alerting me to deficiencies.

00:05:58 **Livier**

And I think we wanted to touch on the sleep because it's definitely anybody that's listening to this and that's working with students, sleep has been an issue, a challenge for so many of our students. Not just our college students, but even if you're a mom and you have children or you're a parent, I should say, and you have children - that is definitely one of the issues and challenges that people are having a hard time with their sleep.

00:06:28 **Livier**

And I think it's just this whole being not being balanced. And our schedules are so different than what it used to be. So, Tim, you mentioned some psychological and some physical reactions to being sleep-deprived. Now, the most important piece, what can we do to improve our sleep?

00:06:49 **Tim**

Yeah, so this is a really big question I get oftentimes from students that are seeing me individually or just people that I talk with that know that I'm a therapist and I talk to people about mental health. The one thing that I say that's really important for a lot of people in this, the one that we probably would struggle with the most, is being able to set a consistent time for when you want to go to bed and when you want to wake up, seven days a week.

00:07:07 **Tim**

A lot of us have the tendency to during a work schedule, whether that's Monday through Friday, or whatever our workdays are, to be really disciplined about making sure we go to bed and get up at a certain time. And then on our off days, it's a free for all, we stay up until three in the morning because we're partying or watching shows or doing whatever you may be doing to entertain yourself.

00:07:24 **Tim**

And it's really difficult because the society kind of has encouraged us to operate that way. And we kind of work really hard, we try to achieve certain things during those five days. But if you can set a really consistent time for yourself, your body starts to learn when it's supposed to be active and when it's supposed to be resting. I mean, that's the benefit that it gives you because you're training yourself to operate on a certain schedule.

00:07:43 **Tim**

I do add to that, that everybody's rhythm is a little bit different. So, there are some of us that are natural morning, early birds. We like to get up really early in the morning and maybe do some exercise, do some kind of activity and go about our day right away.

00:07:56 **Tim**

There's some people that are night owls. I will say that night owls are rare. So, some people think they're night owls and they're not. And they've just kind of forced themselves into that schedule. They will find that they're a lot more mentally active during the evening. So, they may want to adjust their window of sleep to be a little bit later.

00:08:09 **Tim**

But the majority of us are going to kind of be those mid-day people where we find that we're the most mentally alert kind of like mid-morning going into the afternoon. And we maybe get a little bit of a second wind in the later afternoon going into the early evening. So, we need to adjust our sleep schedule accordingly.

00:08:24 **Tim**

So, for most people that means that somewhere between about 10:30 PM to midnight is kind of the ideal time. Even for the night owls, they want to stay up until two or three in the morning. The reality is that you exist in this world, where there's a bunch of people that are going to be operating in the middle of the day. So, you want to kind of adjust your sleep accordingly, not keep yourself up a little bit too late.

00:08:42 **Tim**

I also add to that for improving your sleep, that you want to give yourself about - I tell people about 30 minutes to one hour before you're ready to go to bed, to deescalate and to kind of calm down, to transition, to start to signal to your body that you're preparing to go rest.

00:08:56 **Tim**

You can imagine that if you've been working all day, if you've been doing a lot of stuff at school, if you have kids that you've been taken care of, or you have pets, or you got all these kinds of responsibilities and you've been, go, go, go, go, go - you've been telling your nervous system that it needs to be active and your nervous system needs time to regulate and to get into a space where it can prepare itself for rest. So, that's what that one hour window, it gives you.

00:09:16 **Tim**

Something else I also tell students, as far as helping to improve your sleep, is monitoring your sensitivity to caffeine. So, everybody responds differently to caffeine. There are some people because of their brain chemistry, they're able to drink coffee pretty close to bed and still go to sleep and not have any issues. There are other people that even if they have a cup of coffee in the morning, they're going to be wired throughout the entire day, and they're going to have trouble falling asleep at night.

00:09:37 **Tim**

A lot of that has to do just chemically with how caffeine works. The half-life takes, I believe, somewhere between six to eight hours for half of the substance to be removed from your body. So, you can imagine that if you're really sensitive to caffeine, that for people drinking coffee at about two or three in the afternoon, some of it is still in your body by the time you're going to bed, and so it's going to impact your quality of sleep and how well you're able to adjust to that sleeping cycle that you're trying to establish for yourself.

00:10:01 **Tim**

The other thing I'll talk about as far as improving sleep quality is really the kind of person that tends to wake up throughout the night or something kind of disturbs you, you're a light sleeper, maybe you hear something and you live in a noisy neighborhood - that you want to get in the habit of only trying to fall back asleep within 15 to 20 minutes.

00:10:16 **Tim**

If you don't fall asleep within that window, you need to get up out of bed and do something, maybe stretching, reading a book, some kind of blood activity for about 15 minutes or so, and then try to sleep again. Because if you stay in bed when you're struggling with restlessness, what you're teaching your body is that when I go to bed, it's this anxious experience where I'm not going to get sleep, I'll be tossing and turning all night. So, you don't want to build that association over time if your sleep is getting disrupted.

00:10:38 **Livier**

Wow, thank you for that very detailed process of how we can really help ourselves to build the schedule and to follow what we would call like a sleep hygiene, right? You're setting your schedule, you're training yourself really to sleep. And I did not know, honestly, I did not know about the 15 minutes that if you're restless, to then get up and walk around.

00:11:01 **Livier**

I'm always afraid of getting up because then I feel like I'm going to be more awake and I'm not going to be able to fall back asleep. So, thank you for that. Now, I'm going to change it for my children, because I do have a child who has a lot of hard time at night. And so, it's like, "No, no, no, stay in bed, don't go out, walk around because then you're going to kind of wake yourself up."

00:11:23 **Livier**

But now I'm hearing from you that it's almost like you want to not associate the anxiety, kind of laying in bed and not being able to fall asleep. So, I just learned something new, so thank you for that. That's very helpful.

00:11:37 **Livier**

Tim, I know you gave us some really great feedback and some guidance. What I'm finding out and I'm sure you have too, and I'm sure others can relate right now with COVID. And I hate to just use that as a blanket term (COVID) but it has really changed how we tend to function throughout the day. We're not as active. I mean, that's just the reality. We're not as active throughout the day because so many of us are at home.

00:12:02 **Livier**

Is there something that we can maybe plug into the sleep schedule? How can we improve our sleep schedule when we're not as tired, when we're not as physically active throughout the day?

00:12:16 **Tim**

Yeah, so with the sleep schedule, and kind of trying to do it when you're not active, a lot of it is going to be tied around really building your routine for yourself. That's conducive to you again, just differentiating between what your active window is and what your resting window is going to be.

00:12:31 **Tim**

So, because all of us are at home right now, we're sitting in front of computers a lot, whether it's for school or for work or whatever it is and everything, that active sitting, actually, I think kind of is sending a little bit of a mixed message to our body. Because mentally, we're very active, we're tuned into the material that we're trying to take in, and we're tuned into our work responsibilities, but our body is stagnant the entire time. And our bodies are designed to be in motion.

00:12:50 **Tim**

So, there's kind of this disconnect that happens that your body thinks that it's resting time, but mentally, you get up from the computer and you mentally maybe feeling really exhausted, but your body's like, "Oh, okay, I get to move. I want to do something, I want to have activity." So, I think it's helpful to be mindful of that as much as possible.

00:13:04 **Tim**

Now, in an ideal circumstance, which, again, I say ideal because the world isn't really set up to operate this way. We would be able to get up probably once every 30 minutes to an hour and just move around for a couple of minutes and stretch out a little bit, get the blood flowing and enter into activity. But as you and I know from doing therapy, we can't get up in the middle of a session and start walking around. That'll be really disruptive to the work that we do.

00:13:25 **Tim**

Students that are in classes, especially when we're physically in class, unless you are getting up to go to the bathroom, you wouldn't necessarily get up and walk in front of the professor while they're doing a lecture, because people would think that that was odd behavior. They wouldn't know how to make sense of that.

00:13:37 **Tim**

But that's one advantage that we have being at home, is that if you're in a class, whether it's a synchronous class or an asynchronous class, and you're sitting across from the screen, if you wanted to turn your camera off and mute your mic a little bit after you've been studying for an hour or so and get up, and just kind of stretch your arms a little bit and kind of walk around and do some things. Again, it doesn't take very much, it could be two to five minutes. So, you can still be within an earshot of your computer and still attending to whatever's going on and then return to your work.

00:14:01 **Tim**

Again, what you're doing is signaling to your body that it's still kind of an active time, your body's still moving. If you wanted to do some stretches in your seat, people can really only see you from the shoulders up in your camera. So, if you do wanted to kind of do some mobility stuff, then stretch your legs out a little bit and kind of tense and relax your muscles. Just anything to kind of signal to your body that this is still an active period.

00:14:20 **Tim**

You just want to make sure that your body and your mind are kind of linked. If you're active mentally, you kind of want your body to also be active at the same time. So, that way, when you get to the end of the day, your body doesn't feel like it's just been kind of sitting around. Because again, if you imagine you've been sitting in the seat all day, your body may not want to be lying still on the bed because it feels like it's the same thing.

00:14:36 **Livier**

Yeah, thank you for touching on that. It's like a perfect segue into moving into how do we re-image our recharge, right? Because that's pretty much the topic that we're trying to address; how do we meet the physical needs of our current landscape as so many of us are at home.

00:14:52 **Livier**

So, you mentioned and you tapped into exercise, moving around. And exercise is integral to our physical health. We already know that. It's also very important to our mental health. Can you walk us through some suggestions to move more throughout the day for exactly the same reasons that you just explained?

00:15:16 **Livier**

And again, I understand that not everybody is home, but so many of us are at home. And we do have a lot of students who are at home doing work. But again, somebody mentioned to me that even driving somewhere and parking, and then getting to your destination was moving. But now, you've even taken that option away. The furthest some people walk is from their bedroom to the place that they're going to sit.

00:15:41 **Livier**

So, walk us through some suggestions to move more throughout the day, without necessarily having to take an hour out to exercise. For some people, they don't do that. For some of us, we did do that, but now, we've had to change that. So, give us some suggestions on how to move throughout the day.

00:16:00 **Tim**

Yeah, and I think you do touch on the important point - that our physical and mental health, they're very much linked and they constantly impact one another. I'm sure if anybody listening to this thinks of a time where they were physically sick, mentally, you probably didn't feel the greatest. Just like mentally, if you don't feel like you're a hundred percent, your physical health may start to decline or your body may not necessarily want to get up and kind of move.

00:16:19 **Tim**

So, it is really important to exercise so you can kind of have a framework of why it's really important to do it. On a psychological level, it can help to create a sense of accomplishment because you've set a goal for yourself. You said you wanted to do something, you engaged in the physical activity, you feel accomplished because you met a goal.

00:16:34 **Tim**

Technically, it does also produce endorphins, which help to relieve pain and stress. Dopamine, norepinephrine, serotonin are also some other neurotransmitters that get released when we engage in exercise and they help to really regulate our mood. So, people have an understanding of why it's really important to engage in exercise. I think it's really helpful to understand how it's impacting your body.

00:16:52 **Tim**

Like getting into how to move more or kind of incorporate some more movement into your day. So, for some people, and this'll tie back a little bit to what your routine is, because again, some people are kind of morning people, some people struggle a little bit in the mornings to kind of get up.

00:17:04 **Tim**

What I tell a lot of people is if you live in a neighborhood that's really conducive to do it, maybe first thing in the morning, within 20 to 30 minutes of you getting up, if you just went for a walk outside in your neighborhood for about 15 to 20 minutes to get exposed to the sunlight, that's really helpful.

00:17:19 **Tim**

Again, just to kind of get your body moving because that's better than just what some people may do as they kind of roll out of bed a little bit, turn off their alarm, they grab their phone and kind of scroll through social media or read what's going on in the news. And then they go from that to almost this panic state of, "Oh, I have to get to class or I have to get to work" and just kind of rush into the activity.

00:17:35 **Tim**

But it's a rest, but because you're rushing from your bed to wherever your computer is, it's maybe 10 to 15 steps you took to get there. So, it really isn't a lot of movement, even though mentally you got yourself really worked up; whereas getting up first thing in the morning and doing a really quick walk could be really helpful.

00:17:49 **Tim**

The other thing I tell people is between meetings, appointments, or classes, if you're doing a more synchronous schedule, if you have a little bit of a break, which I know that some schools tend to do, they kind of give maybe a 30-minute or an hour break in between classes in order for students to go to the bathroom and get food and do whatever they need to do between their learning schedule.

00:18:07 **Tim**

Again, that'll be a really good time for you to either walk outside or walk around your apartment. There's a lot of videos that you can look up on YouTube, where you can do like a walk and play type thing, or a really quick home workout that doesn't require equipment. Or you can do some stretches, anything again, just some kind of light activity to increase some movement.

00:18:23 **Tim**

If you have the mindset that you're going to try and squeeze in 5 to 10 minutes of activity maybe every couple of hours, that'll end up adding up to about an hour's worth of activity, if you're really dedicated throughout the day. Because like you mentioned Livia, there's not a lot of time that people have sometimes to be able to carve out an entire hour in one sitting because we have so many responsibilities.

00:18:41 **Tim**

But if you have that idea that I'm just going to accumulate small amounts of activity, small amounts of manageable activity, again, within the 5 to 15-minute window throughout the day, then you're able to add up to an hour and it does make a difference.

00:18:54 **Tim**

I mean, I've tried this with myself. I use myself as an example because my job requires me to sit for an extended period of time between seeing clients and also being a professor at a different school. I have to sit in front of the computer and be actively engaged.

00:19:05 **Tim**

And in between those periods, when I'm not working with a client or when I'm not teaching the class actively, I'm very intentional about getting up, stretching, doing things that seem really simple. Like making sure I stretch and have my arms go over my head because that's not a position I find myself in very often when I'm sitting at a computer. Again, just doing things to help get my body awake and get it kind of really active.

00:19:25 **Tim**

And I've also, again, like I've mentioned a little bit earlier, been very invested in a lot of YouTube because it's free resource and looking at kind of the free workouts on there because there's tons of people on there if you search that have little quick 5 to 10 minute kind of exercises that you can do. And you can either do the 5 or 10 minutes once a day, or you can stack them and do them throughout the day, whatever suits your schedule.

00:19:43 **Tim**

But I think a lot of fitness-oriented people, trainers and athletes and things, are recognizing the challenges that we're in right now because a lot of them have to maintain their physiques while we're kind of dealing with this time as well. So, if they're able to do it for them, I'd say for us everyday people that are sitting around, it's going to have some benefit for us too.

00:20:00 **Livier**

Thank you for that, and thank you for sharing what you do because I think that's always important. What I mention to students that I work with is I always mention, I don't just preach, I actually practice a lot of what I recommend.

00:20:12 **Livier**

And I'll share something very brief. Having just finished a two-year doctoral program, my first year I was trying to stay physically active, like the same way that I used to be, which was regular exercise, three, four times a week for an hour and a half. And I found that I couldn't keep up. And I remember Tim, probably talking to you about that. I physically, I was not feeling well, I started to gain weight and emotionally, I know I was drained.

00:20:40 **Livier**

So, my second year, I said I have to do this differently. So, I reached out to people that I had worked with my trainers and I said, "You need to help me figure out a way to exercise throughout the day, but I cannot go to the gym. I cannot give an hour and a half at a chunk."

00:20:56 **Livier**

And we came up with bursts or my trainer at the time, he would say, "Okay, we're going to do five-minute bursts. Can you find five minutes every two hours, where it's literally going to be five minutes? And if you do five of those a day," he's like, "That's 25 minutes that you exercise."

00:21:15 **Livier**

Now, it's not an hour, it's not an hour and a half. It's not like an intensive bootcamp, but it just gave me ... and we call them bursts because it gave me this burst of energy that I felt much better after those five minutes. And I got to the point where I increased them to like six minutes, seven minutes, because I did feel so much more energized.

00:21:35 **Livier**

And I know people are like, "Oh, five minutes is not a lot." And I said, "Well, hold the plank for two minutes and tell me if that's not a lot. Do squats for two minutes and tell me that's not a lot."

00:21:46 **Livier**

So, it's definitely, I can honestly say that I've done it just like what you mentioned, Tim, I've done it myself. And it does definitely kick those endorphins and you get that burst. So, thank you for sharing that. And I can honestly say I have done it, I still do it now when I cannot dedicate 45 minutes or an hour of a workout, I will say, "You know what? I'll just do five or six bursts throughout the day and that's my workout." So, it works, it works.

00:22:16 **Livier**

Moving on, the last piece we want to touch in is how do we take care of our inner self? Again, our landscape right now, looks a little different. So, how do you see the current landscape affecting our inner self right now? What do you hear students saying of how this new landscape is affecting their inner self?

00:22:41 **Tim**

I think some of the bigger things that I notice kind of fall into two kind of larger categories. One of them is kind of this emotional upheaval and kind of increased sense of stress. That's a really big thing that I hear from people across the board. And I also hear a lot of confusion and people kind of looking for direction, trying to figure out how to make sense of things.

00:22:58 **Tim**

So, along the emotional upheaval line, I hear a lot of people kind of expressing a lot of anger because maybe they feel really angry about how things are being handled, how the quarantine kind of proceeded, disagreeing about what's the best route to go about dealing with things. So, a lot of anger kind of comes up around that.

00:23:15 **Tim**

And I think tied to that as well, is that there's a lot of grief that I hear alongside the anger. There's grief a lot of losses. People maybe had milestone birthdays, they had graduations, people were supposed to graduate high school or graduate college. And they have this whole idea because a lot of our traditions are sensitive around doing things a certain way with these milestones, and we can't do them in that way because of what's going on with COVID.

00:23:36 **Tim**

There's a lot of people that have a lot of feelings around missing opportunities to see family and friends, because we're kind of a global world now, and people live in different States and sometimes in different countries, and travel is a lot more difficult to do now than it was previously because you don't know if you may pick something up along the way. There's people that maybe are a little bit more sensitive to getting exposed to COVID.

00:23:56 **Tim**

So, people want to be able to spend that time, especially getting close to this time of year when the holidays are coming up, and are thinking about wanting to spend time with family, possibly. There's a lot of routines that are probably going to get disrupted or have to be re- imagined. People have a lot of emotions around that; what that's going to look like and how to actually still achieve those things.

00:24:11 **Tim**

And there's also, I think a lot of emotional upheaval around this uncertainty of educational and employment goals as well. People had a certain idea of what it was going to be like to continue their education or to apply for certain jobs. A lot of companies are still trying to figure out how to maintain their business and how to keep moving forward while still ensuring social distancing and all these other things that we have to keep in place right now because of the government's orders.

00:24:35 **Tim**

Along the lines of the confusion and looking for direction, a lot of people, what I find, is that people have systems of coping or different coping skills that were really built around the ability to commune with large numbers of people occupying the same space - being able to go to the movies, going to parties with your friends, going out to clubs, going to different festivals, whether it's a cultural festival or a food festival or whatever it is, especially with Los Angeles because there's so many people that live here.

00:25:00 **Tim**

A lot of people have similar interests, so they gravitate towards these different events and you can get hundreds of thousands of people in the same space, and we can't do that anymore. Abruptly, that was taken away from people and there wasn't any real, I guess, conversation or kind of thought about what's going to replace it. Because that's the big idea that you and I both talk about in therapy, is that if you take one person's coping skill away, you have to replace it with something else so that they can continue to cope.

00:25:21 **Tim**

And people didn't really get afforded that opportunity. It was very quickly, "You can't do these things anymore and we'll figure it out from here." So a lot of people are understandably kind of confused. It's like, "Well, this is my way of coping, what else am I supposed to do?"

00:25:32 **Tim**

So, I think people are kind of coming up with a lot of questions and they're really kind of upset because you were kind of given this idea that you have to do things differently, but weren't really told how to do it differently.

00:25:42 **Livier**

That's a great point, Tim. And it's so true, I think you hit it right on the head. And I like that you mentioned that the way that we have been accustomed to practicing so many of our coping and how we celebrate. And you bring up a great point. Like yeah, like for so many of us, the holidays are coming up and how we tend to celebrate and spend time with each other has changed.

00:26:07 **Livier**

So, we have to be prepared to constantly be changing, to be flexible, and to try new things. Because I mean, that's the only constant I think right now. So, what would be some suggestions and tips that we can offer (not just our students, but anybody that's listening) on how to engage and care for our emotional self, and continue to grow and continue to still find those spaces for us to celebrate and for us to spend time with our loved ones, our friends? So, what are some things that we can have our listeners try to do differently?

00:26:46 **Tim**

So, the one thing I'll start with, I'll start with the difficult one first - because this is one that I talk wi t h a lot of my students and clients about first; is that there's this idea of a dialectic. Again, we talked about that there's two things that may seem like they're in opposition to one another, but they can actually both exist at the same time.

00:27:00 **Tim**

And the difficult truth that I tell a lot of people right now is that you have to be able to balance accepting what is, while working towards what you want to change. There are certain things that you can change and there's things that you can do that are within your control. But the reality is no one of us as individuals can magically wave a wand and make COVID go away, and just kind of make everything go back to normal.

00:27:18 **Tim**

And I think that acceptance part is really difficult because we know we do have a lot of agency, we pride ourselves in being able to work towards a goal and achieve certain outcomes, but there's also a limit to how much we're able to do.

00:27:29 **Tim**

We have to accept where our limitations are and still find those avenues and things that we can pursue that allow us to change and definitely put your energy towards those, and changing things and kind of making things different and trying to move towards life that you feel like is worth living. So, that's the one thing I'll start with that's the difficult one.

00:27:44 **Tim**

Some of the easier ones that I tell people to really focus on, I would say this is more important now, but it was also important before COVID happened; is finding time to have quiet and stillness. Everybody doesn't necessarily have an oasis at home that I'm sure is a reality, again, if you live with kids, you have pets, they're going to constantly have needs and they make noise and they do things when you're living with multiple people. Even if you do live alone ... I can share that I live alone but my upstairs neighbors were stomping around for 10 to 12 hours a day when COVID first started. So, even though I live by myself, I had to contend with noise.

00:28:14 **Tim**

But if finding stillness for you means that you're going to go walk outside first thing in the morning or walk outside at night, again, for 5 or 10 minutes and just not have your phone with you and not listen to music, just kind of being with yourself, being in your body, being in your five senses as much as possible. That can be really helpful.

00:28:28 **Tim**

If you're somebody that meditates, and again, if you just kind of sit and meditate, or if you have a prayer practice, if you're more spiritual, religious - again, just finding time to do that for 5 to 10 minutes a day and being unplugged from everything - I think it's really important right now because we were already really plugged in before COVID because if you have essentially a computer in your pocket with your phone, you can access all sorts of different things.

00:28:47 **Tim**

But even more so, now, you're kind of forced to have to engage with those different things. So, I think affording yourself that level of stillness is really helpful. I will say that if you go the route of meditation or kind of doing stillness and being alone with your own thoughts, those of you that maybe grew up and you had access to technology all the time, it will feel really chaotic at first because you're starting to become aware of a lot of thoughts and emotions that you probably normally don't pay attention to. But if you're consistent with it, you will start to notice a change.

00:29:13 **Tim**

Livia and I are from older generations where we didn't grow up with those things. So, we know that you can be alone with your thoughts and you'll be okay, we're both still here. It's okay. You can work through it and you'll be all right. Your imagination is great.

00:29:23 **Tim**

The other thing that I have for people is to make sure that you go outside at some point during the week. Again, if that means that you're using it as part of your physical activity and you're doing it for exercise, or if you're just kind of taking a trip somewhere. I think it's beneficial for everybody to do that because it helps to break up the routine a little bit. And it helps to make you feel like you're just not stuck doing the same thing over and over again. So, people have different ways to put this into practice, depending on their comfort level.

00:29:43 **Tim**

If you want to do a social visit and hang out with your friends at the park or beach, you can do that. I did that with my friends myself this week. I have one set of friends t hat's on Saturday at the beach. We had our little blankets out, we had our masks. Like one of them ordered food and we ate apart from one another, but we were still able to talk. And I did the same thing at a park the next day with some friends.

00:30:00 **Tim**

Again, we had some blankets, we spread out, we each contributed something and were able to talk to one another and still maintain some space and get some human connection. And it was really great to just be outside. And you feel the sand, you feel the breeze, and to also connect with friends not through a computer screen, because I also do some Zoom hangouts and they're fine, but because I spend so much time looking at the computer screen, I kind of get sick of doing it. So, it was nice to see people face to face.

00:30:19 **Tim**

If you're not comfortable physically being around people, you could still make a meal for yourself and again, go out to a park somewhere and kind of sit where it's really isolated. Maybe you could be on the phone while you're eating with a friend or doing a video call with a friend. And I will call caution you that video calls can get tricky if you're using your phone's data as opposed to Wi-Fi, so keep that in mind if you're going to be outside.

00:30:35 **Tim**

But again, just kind of doing something where you're getting outside, and you're away from other people. If even that seems like it's too difficult for you, like I don't want to be on this bench because maybe somebody else sat there and they were sick, or you're worried about people coming past you or crowding, even just kind of getting in your car and driving through the city.

00:30:50 **Tim**

I've had somebody that I've worked with that really she used to love being on the beach all the time. That was her prime self -care thing, was to go out to the beach and walk along the water and do everything. But when COVID happened, she got a little bit skittish about it because beaches were really overpopulated. People were going there a lot.

00:31:03 **Tim**

So, what she ended up doing was she got in her car, she would go out to the beach towards the end of her workday and she just watched the sunset over the water. She spent about 30 minutes inside of her car, watching the sunset just so she can get something different out of her routine. And that really did wonders for her and kind of helping to manage some of her anxiety. So, you kind of get to see something different and experience something else.

00:31:22 **Tim**

The final thing that I would add is taking a few minutes at the end of your day and just noting what you've accomplished that day. So, you've probably done some schoolwork, maybe you went to your job, you got out of bed on time, you fed yourself throughout the day, whatever it is; make sure you take at least like 5 to 10 minutes at the end of the day to acknowledge that you actually did something that you accomplished, something that's in alignment with your goals.

00:31:41 **Tim**

And what I really add to this, is just because something's an obligation, doesn't mean that it's not an accomplishment, because I do get that push back sometimes: "Oh, well, I'm supposed to go to work, I'm supposed to go to school, I'm supposed to beat myself and do these things."

00:31:52 **Tim**

It's like, well, yes, you are supposed to do those things, but you could have chosen to do something else and you didn't. You chose to do those things. You could have easily chosen to stay in bed all day and not go to school, or you could have chosen not to eat anything. You'd have chosen not to exercise, or just all these choices you're presented with, and I think we shortchange ourselves by thinking because it's an obligation, that that means that it's not an accomplishment.

00:32:09 **Tim**

And I think it's really important even more so now to recognize what our achievements are, because we spend so much time in the same space and things in our mind kind of start to blend together because we're not changing contexts the way we were before.

00:32:21 **Livier**

Yeah, thank you for that. I like the way that you mentioned that your obligation is still - even though it's something that you're supposed to do, but doing it is still an accomplishment and really recognizing and honoring yourself for that.

00:32:36 **Livier**

Like I tell my students, I'm like, "Pat, on the back, like this is good." So, I really like that. And I thank you for also sharing the different ways that you can still socialize and practice; the safer context of being around others, but still being careful.

00:32:55 **Livier**

And again, not just preaching, I actually do have a child who is having a much harder time with being separated. And so, we did develop ways to spend time with her friends physically, but still ... and it's actually been at a park. Just Tim, just exactly what you mentioned. So, it's doable.

00:33:14 **Livier**

And one of the things that I have been trying to really, when I work with students - and not just, again, not just saying these words to students, but even with my own family, and even with my own friends. I was like, "We have to learn to live with this. How do we live with these limitations and these restrictions?" Not like, "When will it get back to normal?"

00:33:37 **Livier**

I'm like I don't want to be sitting around waiting to see when are things going to come back to normal? It's like, no, let's find ways of how we could live with it. How do we take care of ourselves? How do we still socialize? How do we try to find those times throughout the day to find the time with ourselves?

00:33:55 **Livier**

I'm a big one on disconnecting from social media or disconnecting from the phones because I think sometimes when you spend more time reading and spend more time on it, I think especially if you are already highly anxious or worrisome, my goodness gracious, I think that is just like a recipe for disaster because you're thinking and you're thinking, and you're reading more. And I think, no, we need to find more of that space away from it, and spend more time with ourselves and our supportive systems.

00:34:23 **Livier**

So, thank you for sharing that. I hope that as listeners, that you were able to walk away with some new tips, some new information that you can embed throughout your day to feel better. Tim, anything that you would like to add?

00:34:38 **Tim**

Yeah. One closing thing I think I'll add is just that because things are really difficult right now - and again, like I've mentioned throughout this talk today, that we have different ways of engaging and kind of doing different things, is not to shortchange yourself as far as your ability to be creative and to adapt.

00:34:51 **Tim**

I know we have a wide age range of people that attend Mt. SAC. But when you reach young adulthood, cognitively, you really have this incredible capacity that starts to develop. Being able to kind of see nunaces, to think creatively, and t o start to adapt. You start to move into a place of more expertise, which is part of why you're even here in school to begin with.

00:35:07 **Tim**

And that capacity for creativity, doesn't just apply to your studies, it applies to everyday life. So, you have the ability to think differently and to do things differently. You don't have to shortchange yourself.

00:35:18 **Livier**

I like that. That's a nice way of putting it; being creative and really, your creativity to say, "Well, this is the way it was before, but now I can change it and I can still have a good outcome."

00:35:29 **Livier**

One of the things that I also mentioned to my students is you're trying your best. We didn't have a handbook. We weren't handed a handbook on how do we do this? And I'm like, if you're trying your best and you are still getting up in the morning and you're still showing to class, you're still showing up to work, and you're still spending time, like you are doing your best and it's still good.

00:35:51 **Livier**

So, thank you. Hopefully this has been helpful.

00:35:54 **Sun**

Well, thank you both so much. It was such a pleasure to get to listen in on your conversation. And I feel like I learned a lot, like you were saying with the, "Oh, wait, I should get up if I'm just lying there in bed, thinking about things."

00:36:06 **Sun**

And I love how you made everything seem so achievable. So, there's no way I could possibly do that, but okay, maybe five minutes of walking outside. So, I really appreciate the way that you were able to offer like a range of possibilities.

00:36:20 **Sun**

I was wondering, if anyone feels like they want to reach out and connect with you or get some support at the health center, how do you recommend that they do that?

00:36:30 **Livier**

We actually do have staff that is actually picking up the phones. Our Student Health Services is really great about having staff available. The number that you can call is (909) 274-4400 Monday through Friday, during regular business hours; to help you connect with a medical provider or a mental health provider to make an appointment.

00:36:55 **Livier**

You can also visit our website for a variety, and I mean a variety of resources on-campus, off-campus. We have ongoing mindfulness workshops for students and staff. We have workshops on taking care of yourself, on sleep, on studying. I mean, we have ongoing events and ongoing supportive resources.

00:37:22 **Sun**

Well, thank you both so much. I really appreciate your time and your expertise and how thoughtfully you shared that you're doing these things too, it's not just telling other people to do something that we don't do ourselves. I so appreciate that.

00:37:37 **Livier**

You're welcome. Thank you.

00:37:38 **Sun**

And hopefully, you have at least nine minutes before your next obligation and you can go stand in the sunshine for a few minutes.

00:37:44 **Christina**

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00:38:01 **Christina**

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