



Florida Association For Multi-Cultural Counseling and Development (FAMCD)

A Division of Florida Counselors Association

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FAMCD NEWSLETTER

Letter From the President

Happy Holidays everyone!

Are you as excited as I am to see 2020 kick rocks? What a year! Nevertheless, despite its challenges, this year brought plenty of opportunities. One of the many positive experiences I had was to deliver my first keynote address at the FCA Convention. Were you there? I'm told it was the highlight of the event. I hope it blessed you, and I hope this newsletter helps you focus on the positives that 2020 brought to you. I asked my students to reflect on 2020 by answering three prompts: 20 Things I Learned about Myself, Things I Saw Clearly in 2020, and Ways to Handle Post-Election Anxiety. Inside, you will find their experiences.

Join us for our 2nd Annual Virtual Holiday Party on Tuesday, Dec. 8 from 6-7 pm. Don't forget to wear your ugly holiday sweater and bring your favorite holiday beverage. Come for community and celebration at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83270943568>

Happy Holidays!

LaTonya M. Summers, PhD LCMHC-S
FAMCD President



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Welcome to FAMCD

FAMCD, please welcome Dr. Shedric Staley as our new Treasurer. Welcome to an amazing organization. We look forward to serving alongside you.



DR. SHEDRIC STALEY
Treasurer



FAMCD Newsletter Chairperson

Solicit, collect, and publish quarterly newsletter content. Send letter of interest to lsummer@ju.edu.



Come to the 2nd Annual Virtual Holiday
Party

Tuesday, December 8

6-7 p.m. Eastern Time

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83270943568>



PRESENT FOR US.

FAMCD is seeking webinar presenters for our 2021 Webinar series. Send us an abstract of your proposed webinar, three learning goals for participants, a brief bio of the presenter(s), a headshot, a copy of your CV, and tentative Wednesdays from 12-1 pm for January-December for your 1 hr. presentation. Send inquiries or materials to lsummer@ju.edu

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE!



20 Things I Learned about Myself in 2020...

Every month in 2020 has gone by quickly, but the year itself is meandering. No one could have predicted the series of events we've gone through this year—it feels as though scenarios were pulled from a hat, one for each month. While 2020 has certainly been bizarre, strange times are often the best for clarity. Here are twenty things I've learned about myself in the year 2020:

1. I am resilient.
2. I have terrible time management.
3. I push my limits.
4. I can make friends as an adult.
5. Sometimes I am the expert.
6. My friendships are a source of motivation.
7. I am proud of myself.
8. I need to work on self care.
9. I need a consistent sleep schedule.
10. I am still exploring who I am as a person.
11. I need to take more responsibility.
12. I need to learn better communication skills.
13. I like running errands.
14. I need to trust myself more.
15. I work hard.
16. My stubbornness is helpful at times.
17. I'm not sure where I want to be in five years.
18. I love my family but also feel limited by them sometimes.
19. I need to focus on less things at once.
20. I am valued and I have value.

by Madison Harvey

2020 has been a crazy and out of control year. One thing that I am grateful for about 2020 is that I learned a lot about myself. I think it is helpful to focus on what I have learned and what can be learned from 2020 when thinking about this year because it would be very easy to be super negative. Here are some things that I have learned about myself in 2020:

1. I am an introverted extrovert. In other words, I am definitely a mix between introvert and extrovert
2. I need to go out and see other people
3. Facetiming and texting friends makes me feel better
4. I am allergic to dogs :(
5. I no longer have a dairy allergy :)
6. I like podcasts
7. I need to work on setting boundaries
8. I am not a cat person
9. I like baking
10. I do not like cooking
11. I have lost my tennis skills
12. Weight gain doesn't have to mean being unhappy
13. I do not like flavored seltzer water
14. I can get satisfaction out of putting stuff in an online cart, but don't actually have to buy stuff
15. I am totally okay with living in my pjs and no makeup
16. I need to do and learn more to become more multiculturally competent
17. I could watch "90 Day Fiance" all day long
18. "Love on the Spectrum" is a new favorite show of mine to add to my lengthy list
19. I have gotten better at handling things that are out of my control
20. I can make new friends.

by Bari Frohman

1. I am becoming more kinder towards myself and towards others
2. I tend to overwork myself and I learned to take time out for myself and do something just for me once in a while
3. I learned that I am someone who loves nature and outdoor stuff
4. I tend to be a people pleaser and I am working on my boundaries with others
5. I overthink the little things and need to let myself be in the moment and not dwell on the past or try to imagine the future
6. With confidence, I am able to do things I never thought I could do
7. I am a person that always wants the best for others
8. I love to learn new things and I am always searching for things to learn more about
9. I love hearing others share their story more than I like to share my own
10. I enjoy my alone time but I also enjoy others' company and enjoy a good time
11. I love debates of any sort and I am the type to watch a debate before bed
12. I am becoming more spiritual and religious and it has helped me view the world a little differently
13. I like to plan things but I also like spontaneous adventures
14. Self-discovery is a long journey and not to rush it
15. I enjoy giving more than receiving
16. I tend to internalize others' perceptions of me and I am learning to not let others view of me affect my self worth
17. I am becoming more confident and assertive
18. My job is not to please everyone, I just hope I can have some type of impact on others
19. I enjoy working out and being active more than I thought I would
20. When I am determined to do something I also go after it and do it.

2020 was a year of uncertainties but it was also a year that helped me discover myself in so many ways. I learned so much about myself more than any other year. I learned that the most important relationship to have is the one with yourself. I learned that with self-love comes many great things. I finally stopped apologizing for my existence. I wanted others to see just how great and incredible I can be. I had to learn to love myself in the most gentlest and nicest way. I learned to forgive myself for my mistakes and view those mistakes as a learning opportunity. Being in quarantine for couple of months forced me to self reflect and look at the ways I have grown over the years. It helped me see things in a different light and I soon began to be grateful for the things that I do have. 2020 was a year of self-love even in all of the uncertainties. I knew I could always count on myself and I think that's the most beautiful thing about self-love.

by Tamima Aman

1. We are Meant to Stand Together
No matter our differences, mankind was not meant to be alone. We are meant to connect and care for each other.
2. Being Alone and Loneliness are Very Different
It is healthy to spend time alone. Sitting with yourself and treating yourself to a recharge in energy is necessary for you to be the best you can be. To be alone does not mean that you are lonely. Loneliness occurs when connections to others are seemingly cut off.
3. Adaption is Necessary
We are not always going to know what will happen next, and that is okay. If we can adapt, we can get through anything. After all, mankind would not be here today if we had not adapted more than a few times.
4. I May be Independent, but I am Still Dependent
We can take be strong and brave and tough out the storms by ourselves. We can. Although, I have learned I do not want to anymore. Sometimes depending on others is what gets us through our toughest times. Being completely independent can make you lonely. Having a pack that you can support as well as depend on is much more valuable and reliable than being a lone wolf.
5. Normalcy is Comfortable, but You Cannot Grow if You Are Comfortable
The unknown can be seen as scary and uncomfortable, or it can be seen as exciting and adventurous. Your perspective can change how you feel about a situation, it is your choice to sit and watch the world or get up and thrive as the world goes on. Is it uncomfortable? Yes. Is it scary? Yes. Impossible? Hardly. This was supposed to be a list of 20 things I have learned in 2020. As you have probably noticed I have only listed five. Not very comfortable for those who like things in order. Not very normal for an essay not to match the title, yet here we are. But you know what? It's okay. We are okay. And that is what I have learned in 2020.

by Taylor Mcarthy





Twenty Things I learned about Myself in 2020
A poem

I think I'm human

"I'm a recovering undercover over lover" –Erykah Badu
The trick is that it always works out
The magic is in the turn, not the prestige
Trust the pain over the process
The process can change you
but
only you can change the pain
When I finally listened to my inner child it had nothing to say
That's the loudest I've heard anyone speak...Yikes
I adopted a new mantra: Maybe that's the point
An example

Heavy is the head of the traveler through the narrow gate
along the narrow road
"Maybe that's the point"
I owe myself a lot more (gratitude) than I think
I wanted to do this years ago...glad it didn't work out then
This is actually my second pandemic - I've worn a mask before
Went to war with myself this summer and I won
The curse is just the gift wrapped poorly
Righteousness is undefeated in joy
Only God knows the measurement of forgiveness
On judging others, the Apostle Paul once said,
"I don't even judge myself"
You will always have three reasons to live and die for
Through her...by Him...to whom I owe...everything

The spectrum of chaos in 2020 has been a canvas painted
with broad strokes of extremism on each end. I once
exhausted myself tracing ideas. Nowadays, I would rather not
trace; let me first see. For if I am allowed to see, I am allowed
to learn. Let me learn from my mistakes and teach from my
failures. May I embody strength and weakness, grace and
mercy, humanity and divinity.

by Michael Robinson

1. Remember to breathe.
2. Get a dog. Petting your pooch reduces blood pressure and relieves stress. Just don't call your furry friend Champ or Major if you voted for the reds.
3. Go old school and phone a friend rather than text, snap or email them. Having a personal connection with another human voice is an instant mood boost.
4. Volunteer. Volunteering decreases the likelihood of developing depression due to social interaction and working alongside people who share a common purpose.
5. Laugh. Yes, laughter is the best medicine. Watch a good comedy show and feel the anxiety dissipate.
6. Keep a gratitude journal. It will help you keep a sense of perspective and focus on what is most meaningful to you.
7. Get some shut-eye. Sleep has all kinds of health benefits, but when we sleep good, we feel good.
8. Move more! Exercise boosts mood and improves self-esteem. If you join an exercise class, you'll have the added benefit of social interaction. Run fast, and you'll be so breathless you won't be able to think about anything but how fast your heart is beating! If you don't like exercise, hula-hoop instead. You'll feel like a kid again.
9. Learn a language. It will distract you from thinking about the election results.
10. Plan a mini-break. A change of scenery is a great way to recharge, try new experiences, and take your mind off things.
11. Eat chocolate. Sugar releases dopamine, the feel-good chemical.
12. Dance. You don't have to be Jennifer Lopez to get a mood boost.
13. Sing in the car or the shower. It's a natural anti-depressant, even if your singing could shatter windows.
14. Create a Tik-Tok. You may feel slightly stupid, but you can give yourself a good laugh!
15. Get lost in a good book.
16. Color yourself calm. Art releases mood-boosting chemicals in the brain, and you'll feel accomplished.
17. Focus on what you can control.
18. Swim. Water has calming properties. Drink water instead of caffeinated drinks that jangle our nerves.
19. Pray.
20. Look at the stars. You'll be reminded about the vastness of the universe, how we're part of something bigger, and the natural beauty that will inspire positivity.

by Claire Watson-Irving

2020 has been a rollercoaster of a year and it is not finished yet. COVID-19 happened, I moved, I started graduate school, and I started a new job. I went through major changes in such a short time span that now looking back after being settled into my new life for a few months I realized I learned somethings about myself. I am not so easily stressed like I once was. Everyone around me is terrified of deadlines and what is going to happen next that made me realize I never truly felt worry. I mean do not get me wrong, I still get stressed but not like I once did. I am more secure in my relationships. My boyfriend and I have been doing long distance since I moved away and I am not worried about our relationship, probably because I know we have an end goal and I know what it looks like. I learned that my body is definitely capable of doing an intense hot yoga session and then turn around and pull a physically demanding 8-hour shift at work, even though I was tired I knew I could still push my body further. I learned I had more imaginative stories in me which has caused me to do more writing than I have in awhile. I learned I actually love romance movies as long as it is based off of a Jane Austen novel. I learned that my favorite color is a dark green and not actually a dark red, even though I still love a deep red. I learned I am more like my mother than I would have initially thought. She is a dynamic person with many interests and loves to explore each and every one of them, so it is nice to know that she and I are similar. I learned I still love literature the most out of all the subjects and majors I have had the pleasure of taking, yet I do not think I am in the wrong field. I learned I prefer walking over running. I learned how much a bath actually means to me. Since I have moved I have not been able to take one and it is truly a disservice to my body. I learned how much I valued those friendships I left behind and how much they valued me. My sister still calls or messages me to keep me a part of the group (we are doing secret santa this year). I learned how important a big backyard is, especially for a dog. I learned I have too many books and not enough space. This year I learned the hard way that I will not have one of my grandmothers at my future wedding, and that I have to be okay with that (this was the hardest lesson). I learned through all the uncertainties of this year that nothing is set in stone but, I have control over how I view them. Even though this was definitely not 20 these are the most important things I learned about myself. Some are mundane, others not. However, 2020 is not over yet and I still have 7 more things to learn about myself.

by Eraina Smith

Twenty Things I Learned about Myself in 2020..

1. I am a stress eater
2. Im a chronic googler.
3. I worry about things that are out of my control.
4. I am skeptical of our government.
5. I am the favorite child.
6. I love to roller skate
7. I have poor cooking skills.
8. I adore makeup.
9. Loyalty is important to me.
10. I dont reach out to relatives enough
11. Oatmilk is my preferred dairy substitute.
12. I make excuses for people.
13. I feel connected to nature.
14. I need to budget better.
15. I fear death.
16. I shop for fun.
17. I'd love to travel given the opportunity
18. Closure is important for me.
19. Vodka is my preferRed liquor.
20. I've taken life for granted.

2020 has been a rollercoaster year. An emotional, unpredictable learning experience for myself and others. Although things did not reflect my hopes and expectations, I remain grateful for the lessons learned. Im typically an optimistic person therefore I'm chosing to acknowledge my strength and perserverance during this time. I am proud yet humbled by my accomplishments despite inhibiting obstacles. I absolve myself of any regrets and approach the new year with a flexible attitude.

by Breanna McMillan

The year 2020 has been rough to so many people, myself included. I don't think anyone can even say they had a GOOD 2020. Is that even possible? I can firmly say that 2020 has been one of the worst years of my life. When I think of 2020, the words that come to mind are: lost friendships, lost love, self harm, Baker Act, Dissociate Identity Disorder, sexual assault, eating disorders, toxic relationships, and doctors, doctors, doctors. Needless to say, 2020 has not been perfect. Despite the challenges I have faced, I have actually learned a few things about myself.

The twenty things I have learned about myself in 2020 are:

1. I can be brave
2. I don't have to be perfect
3. Being different is okay
4. Not everything is my fault
5. It's okay if I can't help someone
6. I don't have to be a doormat for people to like me
7. I deserve true friendships
8. I deserve true love
9. I am passionate
10. I am smart
11. I deserve a quality education
12. I can learn to help others
13. I want to do something worthwhile
14. I want to help people
15. My family may not understand me, but I still love them
16. Disagreeing is okay
17. I can be independent
18. I have many interests and hobbies
19. It is okay to see a therapist
20. And Finally, I deserve happiness

I have learned so many things about myself in 2020, but I think the most important things to take away are to be myself and to stop putting so much pressure on myself to be perfect. All I can do is try my best and be proud of the efforts I have made. 2020 has been rough, but I have made it this far already. I'm ready to face what's next to come.

by Finn Sienkiewich

2020 was a banner year, meaning that is one of those years that's made a significant mark in your life. There were positives and there were also not so positives, but all together 2020 was a year of learning about myself and what I am capable of. Although 2020 is not over yet, here are a couple of things I've learned about myself so far

1. I'm a lot more intelligent than I give myself credit for.
2. I am lovable and deserve to be loved.
3. If I believe in the impossible, I can make it possible.
4. My family is important.
5. My health is a gift and should not be taken for granted.
6. My response to stress needs to be worked on.
7. I really enjoying going to the gym at 4:00am in the morning.
8. I can sometimes be too tough on myself.
9. Bad things happen, but it is up to me to make the best of it.
10. I am not defined by where I am in life, I have our own timeline.
11. I don't have a lot of things figured out, and that's okay.
12. When I retired I want to move up north because it's too dang hot in the south.
13. I regret nothing in my past because everything that has happened has happened for a reason.
14. I like to cook.
15. I want to learn as much as possible.
16. I am able to ask for help when I need it.
17. I need to start to forgive myself.
18. I'm a pretty funny person.
19. Baked goods are my weakness.
20. I need to stop smoking.

by Willow Clem

2020 has been a year of changes. Filled with a lot of uncertainty, tears, anxiety, and joy. For some, it has been a period of self-discovery and reflection. For others it has been the same routine as pre-quarantine. Myself personally, it has been all that wrapped into a nice dysfunctional bow.

20 Things I Have Learned About Myself in 2020

- My coping skills include crying
- What I thought I have healed from, I haven't
- I really enjoy the little time I have to myself
- I enjoy body scrubs
- I love in-shower lotion and body conditioners
- Emotional support from my church family is important to me
- Patience is a prerequisite to gaining entrance into my life
- Emotional support goes a long way with me
- I have good time management skills
- I actually like Bacardi
- I am hardworking
- I am determined to get the job done
- I might have a little bit of OCD
- I need to make time for myself frequently
- I love picking out hand soaps for my bathroom
- Social supports are essential to my mental health
- I am an introverted extrovert (if that even makes sense)
- I am a bit of a germophobe
- I need to develop some more coping strategies
- I need to stop biting off more than can chew

I look forward to 2021! Hopefully, it will be a time of more love, positivity, and growth!.

by Davida Lewis

Well, where do I begin? 2020 has been a long, challenging year to say the least but it has also been an eye opening one for me. This year has given me the chance to do a lot of self-reflecting which has led to learning a lot about myself. While this year has been extremely eventful and a lot of bad things have happened, I have tried to look at all of the good things that I have gained from it. Luckily I can say that I have made many positive changes in my life this year.

20 things I have learned about myself in 2020:

1. I can do anything that I put my mind to.
2. I am much stronger than I thought both physically and mentally.
3. I can overcome statistics.
4. I belong right where I am.
5. I am headed on the path to success.
6. I have true friends.
7. I am extremely impatient.
8. I love myself, even though I am not perfect.
9. I still have a lot of growing to do.
10. I overthink too much.
11. I like to cook, mostly because I like to eat.
12. I am really scared to die.
13. It is okay to put myself first.
14. I don't need makeup to feel beautiful.
15. Exercise makes me feel good.
16. I am smart enough.
17. Sometimes I enjoy being alone.
18. I have to take better care of my body and my mind.
19. I need to let go of my past.
20. I really like to prove people wrong when they tell me I can't do something.

by Isabell Hall

1. Patience is important.
2. I do not have as much patience as I thought.
3. I am not skilled in baking bread.
4. Despite being at home, I still cannot keep plants alive.
5. I will watch Queen's Gambit on Netflix and seriously consider playing professional chess (for two days).
6. I am resilient.
7. Even if I am not where I thought I would be, progress is being made toward my goals and future.
8. I do not enjoy reality television.
9. I underestimated how much I would miss going to concerts.
10. I can never have too many animals.
11. I have a bigger support system than I thought I did.
12. People care about me.
13. I cannot save everyone, no matter how much I want to.
14. I can have an impact on those around me.
15. It is up to me if that impact is positive or negative.
16. My mind can change, and that's okay.
17. Growth can show itself in various ways.
18. I like lots of Moscato.
19. I have what it takes to succeed.
20. If I can get through 2020, I can get through anything.

I found so much untapped strength throughout this year. It typically came following immense grief or sadness, but it showed that I can continue to move forward. Many things and people have impacted my life this year that will never be forgotten. There are people I've met who though known for a short time, will stay with me until the end. I am strong. I am resilient. I will get through this dumpster fire of a year and be better for it. If I can do it, so can you.

by Kayleigh Aubin



**Tell us what you learned
about yourself at
lsummer@ju.edu**

African Americans & COVID-19:

Where Racial Injustice, Economic Instability and Mental Health Convene

By Maya Angela Nelson

The history of African Americans and the healthcare system is fraught with scientific racism and cultural misinterpretations. The Tuskegee Syphilis Study is a timeless example of malpractice against Black males. In 1942, some 400 African American men in Tuskegee were recruited for a study on “bad blood.” Forty years later, it was revealed that the participants were positive for Syphilis and none of the medical staff notified them. This event along with countless others—including Serena Williams’ near-fatal pregnancy because of medical implicit biases—further discourages African Americans from trusting medical institutions (Kennedy, Mathis, & Woods, 2007; Wyatt, 2009). Counselors, therapists and other helping professionals are often viewed similarly to medical professionals. This further exacerbates the disparity between the community and mental health care. Lack of resources to receive telehealth services during COVID-19, inconsistent internet access, concerns about confidentiality and privacy, and the general stigmatization of mental health services widens the divide between counselor and client. Black Americans who are underinsured or uninsured are systematically marginalized from receiving proper mental health care and the list of barriers continues (Boscarino, Adams, Stuber, & Galea, 2005).

COVID-19 Stressors

Black Americans have the highest COVID-19 mortality rate in the U.S., with data reporting that African Americans comprise 33% of all deaths (and only 13% of the population); (Stafford & Wolf, 2020). Those who test positive for COVID-19 experience isolation and shame for potentially infecting trepidatious and grief-stricken family members and friends. Mental health professionals have expressed concern that prolonged social distancing and self-imposed quarantine may result in increased incidence of depression, anxiety, alcohol abuse, and domestic violence; outcomes likely to result in trauma that persists beyond the outbreak of the virus itself (SAMSHA, 2020).

The economic consequences of the pandemic has spiked the unemployment rate of Black women from 5.2% to 16.4% and Black men from 7% to 16.1% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). African Americans hold 17% of the essential jobs that disproportionately expose them to the risk of COVID-19 infection (NC DHHS, U.S. Census, 2020). Media has continuously reported the disparities of treatment between African Americans and institutionalized police officers. The result of viewing these atrocities—if not having been a prior victim—increases levels of anxiety as viewed, regardless of race (Klaz, 2018). Further research has suggested that police killings, as well as, viewing distressing news directed at members of one’s own racial-ethnic groups are related to poor mental health outcomes (Tynes, Willis, & Stewart, 2019). These concerns coalesce with scathing hate speech rallied by powerful politicians.

Strategies of Hope & Resistance

A culturally competent counselor approaches race and ethnicity with humility. Understanding an African American client through mediums such as traditions, values, cultural norms and nuances, and stories, can “validate the client’s experience of marginalization, celebrate resilience, and encourage agency”(Wadsworth, Ahlkvist, McDonald, & Tilghman-Osborne, 2018).

Approaching African American clients and patients with trauma-focused and culturally-informed techniques can help as well (SAMSHA, 2014a). Providing telehealth services on several platforms and implementing sliding scales payments can further support the community. Africultural coping tenets, and spiritual and collective coping (i.e., group-focused activities used to manage stress), predict quality of life in Black Americans from high-risk urban communities above traditional indicators of coping (Utsey, Bolden, Lanier, &

Williams, 2007). There are an abundance of tools available for clients from podcasts and books to movies that aid in racial socialization and support (i. e., Black Panther, The Read, and Therapy for Black Girls).

Few political states have found success against COVID-19. Yet, Haiti has thrived. The use of traditional medicine, hymns of resistance, and communal support has reinforced Haiti's resistance against the virus (Lalime, 2020). Thus, mental health disturbances from the pandemic have been minimal and reflect the significance of spirituality in Haiti and across the African diaspora.

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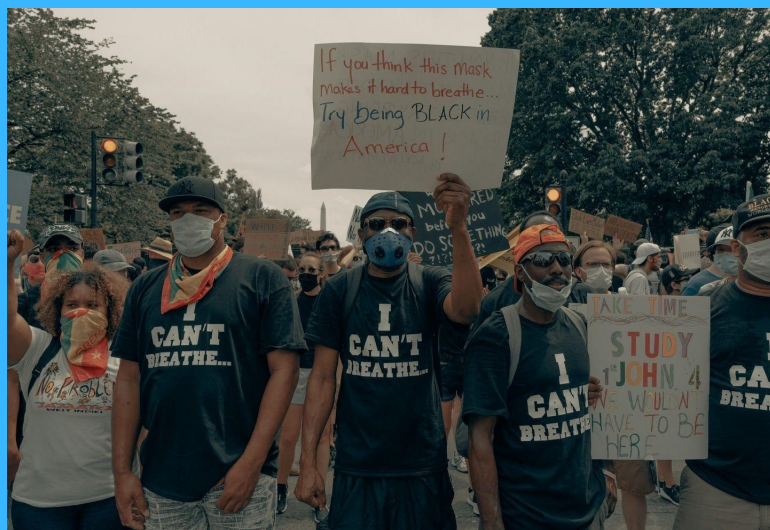
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"20/20: Perfect Vision, Things I Saw Clearly in 2020"

What a year it has been. While stress and uncertainty have been at all-time highs, and it seems as though we have all been continuously stalked by giant question-marks and exclamation points, I would like to look at 2020 through a different lens. I view 2020 as a year of clarity, growth, and resilience, individually and collectively. Despite the stress and frustration associated with a global pandemic, social unrest, and political elections, all while experiencing significant changes in my personal and professional life, it's as if the fog on my glasses suddenly dissipated. In hindsight, life came into focus for one of the first times in my life.

Before the world and life as we knew it came to a halt, I was the happiest I have ever been. I was living in a vibrant city, I had a job I was passionate about while also pursuing graduate school for a career I had only ever dreamed of, I was financially stable, and I had strong relationships with family and friends. Cue 2020. Due to the pandemic I was forced to relocate prematurely from that city I loved, I was unable to say goodbye to a job and community I cherished, and unemployment was knocking at my door. To add insult to injury, my family was crumbling around me. I didn't know it at the time, but these trials enabled me to gain the clarity I have today.

Today, I have clarity on my career path. I have always wanted to help others in need and am fortunate to be pursuing a master's in mental health counseling; an opportunity I am grateful for and do not take lightly. And as a first-time voter, this year I realized the importance of being engaged in the political process, having a voice, and exercising my right to vote. While I continue to struggle with personal matters (as everyone does), I am inspired by the strength and perseverance people have demonstrated all over the world. 2020 has shown me that kindness and compassion are necessary to bring people together and overcome hard times, and that true growth comes when we step outside of our comfort zones. There is often more in the works than meets the eye, and if we choose to reframe our perspective, unrest and uncertainty can lead to great opportunity.

by Sierra Felthousen

When I think back on the year 2020, there were actually good things that came out of this challenging year. 2020 was definitely an unprecedented year that offered me an opportunity to view things more clearly. One of those main things 2020 help me see more clearly was myself. It showed me I am much more capable of handling challenging situations than I thought. I learned to stop doubting myself and who I am becoming. During all of the craziness of 2020, I also stopped waiting for change to just happen to me, and I began to take advantage of the time I have. I realize now that this is my time. 2020 also helped to clarify how important banding together with others is. Life is not meant to be lived alone but to be lived in communion with others. It is crucial to find a community of people who share common interests and beliefs. Through every twist and turn that 2020 contained, the community of people I surrounded myself with helped keep me grounded. Mostly when decisions were hanging in the balance, and I did not know which way my life was going to take, friends kept me encouraged. Lastly, 2020 made me see how important self-care is, and it gave me chances to share this knowledge with friends. Self-care has always been on the back burner for me. I never saw the need to take time for myself. This year forced self-care to take a front seat. I learned different types of self-care, which will come in handy for me in the future when I work more closely with clients. Overall, I am grateful for the way 2020 taught me more about myself. I could say I wish this year had not been so difficult, but I am glad for the challenge because it helped me grow.

by Heather Johnson

We want to hear from YOU

We are committed to growing & expanding our reach. Please consider taking this survey to let us know what works, what we need to work on and what you hope to see in the future of FAMCD.

20/20 Perfect Vision: Things I Saw Clearly in 2020

Entering this new decade, many people had high aspirations, positive outlooks, and their eyes set on glass ceilings to shatter. But, almost immediately, 2020 started popping off. Now, eleven months into this chaotic year, I am almost certain that all will shudder in the future when someone mentions the seemingly cursed year of "2020." Countless iconic figures have died, from Kobe to Chadwick Boseman to Alex Trebek. A pandemic is ravaging this world, particularly this country, with citizens split on virus management. Social injustice plagues our streets, leaving minorities fearing for their safety, praying for tolerance. Candidly speaking, this year has been a big dumpster fire. Yet, despite total confusion and pandemonium, 2020 has provided clarity.

The first thing that popped up when thinking about this title was the need for access to mental healthcare. This need has been there and has grown increasingly apparent in recent years. But this year is a whole different ballgame. 2020 has packed some serious punches with everyone feeling the impacts somehow. Astronomical amounts of people have flocked to mental health services, resulting from the hodgepodge of events around us. What has become evident is the gross lack of access to mental healthcare. While, the mental health field made enormous strides to suddenly adapt to COVID-living, such as offering more telehealth services; there still is a clear lack of pure manpower to effectively handle everyone's concerns. These concerns are augmented by pandemic/quarantine life. The statistics are startling. Suicidality, overdoses, and mental health concerns have skyrocketed in 2020. In Jacksonville, as of May, opioid overdoses were up 20% since COVID-19 struck Florida in early March. From what I have observed, there is more demand for counseling professionals than there is enough supply of them to adequately care for the public. People are unacceptably left waiting months before getting an initial appointment. Some cannot wait more than a few hours before doing something potentially harmful. 2020 has shone a bright light on the lack of widespread access to resources and demonstrated our dire need for better access.

Next, my need to be kinder to myself became crystal clear. I started this year caring full-time for my sick Papa, doing everything. In April, I watched his condition worsen and unfortunately lay by his side as he uttered his last breath. Due to COVID, we could not have a service, so I mourned his life for months without celebrating him properly. He was my bestfriend in this world and was essentially my father. Grieving my hardest loss during the isolation caused by coronavirus has been immeasurably hard, combined with other unnamed hardships in my life. I beat myself up a lot this year. But I also got into my dream graduate program at a fantastic university. So, what became clear? I need to give myself more grace, compassion, and understanding. Inward kindness does wonders for the soul and my mental health. 2020 clarified more than ever, that I need to nurture myself, not be my own worst enemy.

by Carly Cisson

2020 has been a year of anxiety, uncertainty, resiliency, patience, and possibilities!

Some things that immediately came to mind when I read this prompt was the importance of mental health support. With the devastation of families losing loved ones, their jobs, and their homes having a support system seems more like a necessity than an option. 2020 was a year of reflection and encouragement for myself. I was blessed enough to medically retire from the military, buy a brand new home, start a new career, save \$10,000, start graduate school in a profession that I absolutely love, and now I am expecting a baby next summer! Needless to say, God has covered me through a time that was challenging for most. Although this year has been filled with blessings, I have also experienced some turmoil. I have lost several friends throughout the year because our goals and views no longer aligned. Some people will call this "outgrowing" those relationships and that is ok. Without those relationships, I was able to reflect on the things that mattered the most to me.

Other things that I see clearly in 2020 is that this country is extremely divided. I guess we have technology to thank for making this vision so clear. We as a country have witnessed politicians, family members, friends, and even coworkers betray us, and be disloyal and dishonest. We as a country have seen how people can still not be held accountable for their actions even with evidence planted right in their faces. My hopes for the remainder of 2020 is that we learn to come together as a country and start to work on the social injustice, racism, and discrimination that is way past due and that have divided our country for far too long!

by Aiteria Green

To say that 2020 has been one of the most uncertain times of my life would be an understatement. I had so many goals and plans that would ultimately not be seen to completion. I had expectations that would sadly go unfulfilled. Despite these dispiriting setbacks, I remained tenacious, pushing ever forward, and I can see at the end of 2020 just how far I have come, and I have a clear vision of just how far I can go.

My hope for 2020 was to get accepted into my Master's program to pursue my goal of becoming a certified, license Mental Health counselor. I studied for four years over the course of my hiatus from school to take the GRE. After taking the GRE three times and still not attaining the score required for admittance, I was encouraged to submit an application which I did. I gathered my references and submitted my prior transcripts as required, then I got the invitation to interview. Excitement even began to describe the countenance on my face as I read my invitation! Interview day would eventually come, and the first thing I noticed was the overwhelming lack of racial and cultural diversity among my fellow interviewees. I was the only Black candidate. I maintained optimism as I began my interview. I spoke eloquently, I referenced my prior research, I spoke of my high work ethic and drive to succeed. We ran out of time, and before I knew it, our session had ended. I received another email the following day. "Thank you for interviewing for our program.....we have decided to proceed with more qualified candidates." I was crushed. All of that effort I put in for four years was now meaningless. I was essentially judged to be inept.

In 2020 I found that I am amazing! I am capable, and I will never stop reaching for my greatest potential. Despite this roadblock, I would go on to be allowed to interview at a private institution for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. They allowed me to interview after the deadline had already closed after I had explained my previous attempt at the prior institution. I was offered a seat in the cohort, and now I am about to finish my first semester of Grad School! I don't want to stop. I don't want to rest. I want to learn as much as I can. I want to become a capable and competent professional. I want to help people. I want to change the whole world! I have such a high vision for my career and my success and my future, that I will never let the negativity that 2020 has cast upon us deter me! Victory will be mine! #blm

by Devin Lephère

20/20 Perfect Vision: Things I saw clearly in 2020

Our perceptions of ourselves are our reality. I'm a mom that needs friends, a nice stream of other grown ups in my week to keep my sanity. My children need socialization. That is what we are told. They need art lessons, horse riding lessons, classes where they see their friends and sit next to them during lunch. I also feel like my husband needs quiet time. He needs a few days a month where he can come home and unwind without us. I mean, there is the reality of TOO much time together. And we spend a whole lot of time together as a family.

Then COVID-19 happened. We have a few people in our house that are high risk. So in the beginning of COVID we were unsure of what it meant for us and how to handle ourselves in a pandemic. We made the hard decision not to sign back up for the classes that weren't following social distancing rules or wearing masks. It was a difficult decision because we had made friends, real connections, and were learning so much. We also decided to take a break from grandparents' house and theme parks to keep everyone in our home safe.

I have to tell you I was concerned. Very concerned. Because I heard stories of people in other countries divorcing their spouses and dealing with discord in their family after feeling the pinch of a long isolation. My plan to be out of the house a few days every month and have a weekly schedule of classes was working. Now we had to start over, trying to gauge how everyone would handle being housebound. I thought through possibilities and ran scenarios through my head so I knew I could react in the best way possible to keep up our mental health and help where needed to be. Not even remotely. I know we will have to reenter the world at some point. But this time it will be different with more consideration and less, just less.

by Melissa Milburn

20/20 Perfect Vision: Things I Saw Clearly in 2020

When I graduated with my bachelor's degree at the end of 2019, I was unsure of what my future held. I knew I wanted to pursue my education further and to ultimately have a career in the mental health field, but everything else was uncertain. On one hand, I felt that I should be applying for a doctoral program and trying to pursue the highest level of education I could as soon as possible, but on the other hand the thought of even applying to graduate programs was scary, let alone actually living as a graduate student and handling the responsibilities that this entails. The beginning of 2020 was when I finally decided to pursue a master's degree, and by the spring, I had committed to Jacksonville University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program starting in the fall. With the COVID-19 pandemic, all of our initial interactions with the program were virtual, and much of our time together remained this way for the entirety of our first semester. From our very first meeting as a cohort, I was nervous because I didn't know whether I would be able to hold myself to the standard I had previously set for myself. This was graduate school, after all; surely a great deal would be expected of me. While this was true, it also became clear to me that I wasn't the only one struggling. My cohort contained people from all backgrounds: some parents, others not; some fresh out of undergrad, others 10+ years removed; some who had extensive backgrounds in the field of mental health, others starting out in an entirely new endeavor; but what we all shared was the experience of not only coping with a pandemic, but also starting out as new Masters students, which on its own is stressful enough. We all worried what this experience would look like and whether or not we would even be able to manage our new responsibilities, and we realized that we weren't alone. What's more is that we even saw our professors, professionals who had years of experience, expressing the same concerns we felt. The clarity that I have experienced is this: we are all human. There are times when responsibilities bleed into each other, when we will let it slip that we aren't always composed professionals, and that imperfections exist within all of us. I've learned not only to be kinder to others, but to myself as well. I give myself the graces that I try to give to others, and I remind myself while I am trying to better myself and that's a wonderful thing, I am already enough.



by Alexandra Heap



20/20 Perfect Vision: Things I Saw Clearly in 2020

2020 has been quite the year. I don't even know where to begin. At the beginning of 2020, I remember hearing about terrible wildfires in Australia and paying particular attention to them as my sister was to set off to Sydney in mid January. Luckily Remy made it to Australia, but little did we know just what more 2020 had in store for us. Next, I remember Kobe Bryant along with his daughter and several others dying in a helicopter crash. Then, Ahmaud Arbery is shot and killed in Georgia while jogging. After that, the coronavirus outbreak was declared a pandemic, which would bring about the start of many corona virus related deaths. Following the pandemic outbreak, my sister Remy would be sent home from Australia before the borders close. While I tried to be positive that I would now get to spend time with my sister in Jacksonville, 2020 had other plans to keep on going down a road of destruction. Shortly after this, Breonna Taylor was shot and killed by police. A few months later, George Floyd was killed by a police officer. Weeks after that, Rayshard Brooks is shot and killed by the police. Next, Jacob Blake is shot by police. While all these horrific things were happening, the presidential election campaigns continued to split the nation and bring about hatred and anger. In addition to all those who died from corona virus and various other means we lost many celebrities such as, Alex Trebek, Sean Connery, Naya Rivera, and many more. Although, as of last week, we will soon have a new president, we continue to face corona virus and many social and racial injustices. So going back to the question of things I saw clearly in 2020, I would have to say first and foremost that life is so precious and it is never guaranteed. 2020 time and time again reminded me of death and I now look at life with more gratitude than ever before. I also saw that there really are things that cannot be planned for and are out of our control (yes...I'm talking about you corona). Additionally, my heart was shattered as I saw the losses of innocent Black lives. My eyes were completely opened to the social and racial injustices that still exist. I gained a lot of awareness as to my privilege and this drives me even more to want to make a difference. Overall, I have to say the biggest thing about 2020 that I have decided is that I will not let it get me down. Instead, I will use these hard times as motivation to go out and make changes in society and help others. I want to focus on what can be learned from 2020 and how we can use it to better our nation. Last but not least, 2020 has shown me just how huge the need is for mental health counselors!

by Bari Frohman

I'm a religious person. Since childhood a quote by David O. McKay was oft spoken at church, "No other success can compensate for failure in the home." It has been something that rattled around in my brain for years, but 2020 has brought it to the surface with roaring ferocity.

I am an overachieving over scheduler. This year, I graduated with my bachelor's degree, started graduate school, was the PTA president at my daughter's school, am a Sunday School teacher, the book fair chairperson at another school, and mother of four and wife of one. Typically, I know two speeds, go and sleep.

But, 2020 had a big lesson to teach me about priorities.

It wasn't long after I started my graduate program that my sixteen-year old daughter told me she was depressed, wanted to go to therapy, and needed to go on medication. This was not our first rodeo in this department, so we put the old patterns back in place but 2020 exacerbated her "normal" depressive patterns. Then, the last week in October she told me and my husband that she was a danger to herself and needed to go to the hospital. In that moment nothing else mattered; not school, not work, not even food.

That was twenty days ago.

I stayed in the hospital with her for five days, I had to find ways to care for my other three children. Luckily, I am blessed with a social support network that was able to step in quickly and efficiently. After those initial five days, she was admitted into the behavioral health wing of the hospital, which meant I could go home and focus on the other three children. Each one of them displayed behaviors related to stress and anxiety that required attention, warmth and care.

Prior to our daughter coming home we had to make the house safe for her. That meant putting all the medicines in a safe, hiding the knives, scissors, and blades of any kind, and replacing all the cleaning supplies with non-toxic ones. It also meant cleaning her room and removing anything that she could harm herself with like the lighter she likes to light her candles with or the safety pins she liked to create art with.

Today, she is home. The antidepressant medication is doing its job. We are getting used to the new normal and the overall family stress level is reducing a bit.

"No other success can compensate for failure in the home" still rattles in my brain, but now it has much more meaning. This overachieving mama has let go of a lot of things to focus on the things that really matter: home, husband, kids, and honestly, self-care. If I don't take care of myself, I cannot possibly take care of those who need me most.

So, 2020, I hope I've learned my lesson, because I really never want to have to do this again!

by Margaret Goode





MS. DUGGAN'S ADULT DAILY LIVING SKILLS

ALEXIS DUGGAN, M.S., CRC, FAMCD LEGISLATIVE CHAIR

Adult Daily Living Skills or Activities of Daily Learning (ADLs) are activities that are performed on a daily basis that are necessary to live independently. These activities often include organization, personal hygiene, and money management. Many individuals within the disability community can benefit from hands-on instruction on how to complete these ADLs. However, due to COVID many day treatment programs are closed or not operating at full capacity. This creates another barrier for the disability community to access needed resources. To combat this barrier I have decided to create a YouTube channel that will serve students and adults with disabilities. My YouTube channel will feature weekly videos that center on organization skills, educational resources, and Adult Daily Living demonstrations. If you would like to request a video to be made that centers on one of these topics please email me at duggan138@gmail.com. I look forward to serving you!



How are you
handling post-
election anxiety?

Keep reading to
learn tips.

Tips for Handling Post-Election Anxiety

Elections expose nations to divisions with millions of people supporting different candidates. Accordingly, the post-election period is marked with division between the losing and winning camp and unpredictability concerning the leadership of the candidate entering the Oval Office in 2021. The result of a national election can result in the increase of anxiety for individuals. Presently, the the entire world is watching the daily saga unfold in the United States with the sitting president refusing to concede defeat. As a result of the rocky transition of power, many people are likely to become anxious about the uncertainty of the political landscape and its implication to the state of the nation. Nevertheless, individuals who experience post-election anxiety can handle it using the following tips:

1) Keep up with normal routines, social plans, hobbies, and daily activities

Post-election anxiety and the associated uncertainty can result in avoidance and withdrawals as a coping mechanisms. For instance, some might cope by avoiding friends and family whom supported a different political party or candidate. To address the anxiety, the affected individual should ensure as much as possible to maintain their daily routines, social interactions, hobbies and activities. The idea is to have a sense of normalcy to reinforce personal sense of security and certainty.

2) Be aware of the social medial and other triggers

Following elections, politicians and their supporters are likely to share their highly political and possibly divisive messages through social media. For example, following the announcement that Joe Biden had won in the US 2020 elections, both Trump and his supporters used social media to advocate for their cause, further worsening the tension

between the two candidates and their supporters. To handle the anxiety, individuals should limit reacting impulsively to social media postings that contradict their views or sharing divisive messages that could attract backlash from other users.

3) Create Self-Care Habits

Elections and post-elections are bound to cause divisions due to their competitive nature. Accordingly, avoidance of anxiety might not be possible, especially immediately following the announcement of winners and losers. Subsequently, self-care habits such as exercise, having enough sleep, meditation, or reading a book are essential. They are helpful in ensuring that despite the risk of anxiety, individuals can relax, feel positive, and optimistic .

4) Gather Facts

For instance, if the source of the anxiety is the fear that the candidate elected or the runner-up will cause trouble, individuals can find assurance in the systems of government established to check the conduct of politicians. For example, courts can convict politicians who incite violence. Moreover, even where uncertainty looms, such as when a losing candidate refuses to concede, certain mechanisms exist to ensure transition of power within a specific framework. Lastly, if the cause of the anxiety is the unpredictable reaction of the public to the outcome of the elections, findings facts including where to seek safety, areas likely to have turmoil, and who to trust to provide accurate information can help in being prepared, which lessens the anxiety.

by Allison Korman Shelton

Tips for Handling Post-Election Anxiety

The election is over. Time to move on, get back to normal, forget about politics, stop stressing...right? If only that were the case. Although November 3rd...and 4th...and 5th... and 6th...and 7th...and finally 8th have come and gone, many of us are still feeling anxious. Maybe your candidate won, but you see others not accepting it. Maybe your candidate lost and it doesn't feel fair. Either way, here are some things we can do to practice self-care and manage anxiety right now.

- 1. Turn off social media and the news.** I feel great until I open Facebook and see people spreading misinformation. I want to fact-check them all and that's not healthy for me. Although we certainly want to be informed, sometimes it is ok to take a break from social media and the news. It may even be helpful to deactivate social media for a time.
- 2. Get involved.** While this seems counter to number one, it may help you feel more control if you get involved. Donate to organizations you believe in or join local politics.
- 3. CBD and meditation.** CBD gummies and oils do not have any THC in them, so they do not alter your mindset or make you high- they just slightly calm you. Take a CBD gummy, practice some deep breathing, and meditate, focusing on your breath and all things you are grateful for. If you are so inclined, use this time to pray.
- 4. Exercise.** It is hard to think about other things when you're sweating it out in the gym. Focus on your body and all it can do instead of the swirling going on in your mind.
- 5. Read a book or watch a movie.** Similar to exercise, if your brain is focused on a great story, it can't also be focused on your anxiety.
- 6. Hug your people.** I know, I know, COVID. But, hug those in your home or those you have kept in your "quarantine bubble." That touch may ground you and help you to feel more calm.
- 7. Therapy.** If you're not currently seeing a counselor, now may be a good time to seek one out! A counselor can help you figure out tools that will best help you manage your anxiety. Ask friends for recommendations. More and more people are open to talking about their mental health and it may be helpful to admit your struggles to a friend who may be feeling the same way. You can also search for a therapist online.

This is what works for me. I would encourage you to try the above tips, but also to find what works for you. It may be something different. When you find what works, share it with others! Lastly, remember that we don't have control over what happens all the time, but we do have control over how we treat ourselves and others. Let's choose love and kindness.

by Tara Sikes



Stay tuned! In Spring 2021, FAMCD will open elections for soon-coming vacant Board seats.