

ALUMNI VOICES

**May Your Days Be Filled with Peace & Mirth,
As You Relax & Unwind on Sweet Mother Earth!**

April Issue | 2022



"In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful." – Alice Walker

UPCOMING EVENTS

YAB Peer Mentoring Program

Spring Training Cohort 2022!

Its official! We have our first cohort for the Peer Mentoring Training! The aspiring mentors will come together to extend their knowledge on crucial information that they can share with their mentees!!

**The training will occur on the following dates:
April 18, 19, 20 and 21!!**

2022 Youth Advisory Board

Have you met our new YAB Leadership Team?

Last month, in honor of Women's History Month, our YAB Team hosted a workshop called "Women's Care 101."

YAB discussed feminine hygiene and so much more!

Look out for what they have in store for the end of April by checking your email or visiting the YAB Instagram Page!

ADVICE COLUMN

(Quick Author's Note: Hey y'all, I am no longer going by the pseudonym Rayven Jae, but with my real name Raya Heaven.)

Moving on... Wanting to shut your mind off is a common desire. Here is my advice on how to calm or slow down racing thoughts:

Focus On The Present

Intrusive thoughts can be thoughts of things that have happened in the past, or worries about the future. Grounding yourself in the present can help regulate and slow them down. What can you see, smell, hear, touch, or taste in the present? What are you doing at that present moment? Reminding yourself, "I'm only going to focus on the things that I can control," can help calm fears of the future or thoughts of the past.

Take Deep Breaths

Sometimes, racing thoughts can initiate a panic response, leading to things like increased heart rate, shallow breathing, & increased adrenaline. If you find yourself experiencing these symptoms, one of the ways to combat the body's panic response is to take deep, slow breaths. Studies suggest that deep breathing can calm down a stress or panic response by getting oxygen through your body and to your brain, signaling to your nervous system that you are safe, thus calming you down and slowing racing thoughts. I like the box rule: inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, and exhale for 4 seconds.

Move Your Body

Sometimes, you are too worked up to slow down and breathe deeply. In those instances, doing something like jumping jacks, pushups, going for a walk, etc., can help release the pent-up stress, which can aid in slowing down intrusive thoughts.

Distract Yourself

Racing thoughts happen more often when we are not preoccupied with anything because our minds have more time to wonder. When your thoughts are racing, try to distract yourself with something you enjoy. Listen to music & dance or sing along. Go for a walk if the weather is right. Put on your favorite movie or tv show. If your racing thoughts are happening at night, particularly when you are trying to sleep, distraction may look like reading a good book, doing puzzles like crosswords or word searches, taking a warm shower, or meditating.

Meditating/Mindfulness Practices

Initially, these can be challenging if you deal with racing thoughts since the important thing is to focus. But over time, they help increase physical/mental peace and calm. It also strengthens the prefrontal cortex which is responsible for focus and impulse control.

Get into therapy

I know I said this last time, but this is a crucial step if your racing/intrusive thoughts result from anxiety, depression, ADD/ADHD, PTSD, or past trauma(s). If nothing is working to help you calm your mind, it could be beneficial to work with a licensed professional to help find the cause and learn to cope. Medication is a last resort but could be helpful for some people.

Much Love! - Raya

RESOURCE CENTER

Are you looking to make money this summer?

The Emerging Leaders are opening an SYEP application where you can be guaranteed a spot!

If you are between the ages of 14-24, apply ASAP using the information below in the flyer! Be sure to use the PIN below in your application!



Emerging Leaders SYEP Application Out NOW!

The Emerging Leaders SYEP program focuses creating pathways for youth experiencing particular barriers such as being Homeless & Runaway (Residing in Shelters), Justice/Court Involved, Foster Care, or Receiving Preventive Services through ACS.

You must be referred by Employment Specialist, Caseworker or other staff at your Foster care agency, Preventive Services, ACS, HRS, DOE, DH Funded shelter, JDFY, DOP Officer or NYPD Youth Community Officer or Justice Involved Agency

<https://syepappinitatives.yepsonline.org/VY.asp>

PIN #: VY-91023

To find out more information to see if you qualify, please email Michell Marin syepemergingleaders@commonpointqueens.org

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