

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

A friend called me over the past weekend to share with me that she is not looking forward to the upcoming holiday, and elaborated that this is the first time in her entire life that she will be all alone for a special day. The past weeks have indeed kept us apart from our loved ones. Tomorrow, April 8, 2020 marks the beginning of Passover and the first evening Seder that traditionally includes readings, drinking wine, telling stories and enjoying special foods with family and friends. For many of our Christian colleagues and students, Holy Week traditionally means attending church services, preparing Easter meals and gathering to pray and share special blessings with family and friends. Every year, children are looking forward to seeing Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles and their cousins in order to celebrate the traditional Easter Egg Hunt and share goodies from their Easter Egg Baskets left by the elusive Easter Bunny. Other families gather as a celebration of spring and the beginning of warm weather events.

Sadly, this year will have to be different. We all need to search for new ways to honor old traditions while remaining diligent to the stay-at-home orders that exist in our respective states. Maybe it is finding new ways to connect, more calls to family and friends, and making traditional meals as a family. It is a time for us to focus on each other, remain connected in any way we can, and help those who are indeed alone for the holidays. It may be a time to reach out for help and know that you are really not alone. Please try to remember that you are part of a special community, here at Midwestern University. As a campus community, we have developed friendships, colleagues and a connection to our community that is bonded together by a strong mission of caring for others.

Midwestern University also provides special assistance to those in need. The COVID-19 Response Team met today, Tuesday April 7, 2020 and discussed our special services. I would like to share these with all of you.

Faculty and Staff

- Midwestern University provides all faculty and staff and their dependents (including children up to age 26) with an Employee Assistance Plan (EAP).
- This plan is available 24/7 and provides direct contact to master's degree clinicians via the phone, online, live chat, email and text for a broad array of services from depression and emotional well-being, family relationship issues, addictions, stress and anxiety, financial and legal concerns, and identity theft and fraud resolution.
- The EAP also provides referrals for work/life services, such as finding trusted care givers for children, the elderly and pet services.
- In addition, feel free to contact Blue Cross Blue Shield Group Health Insurance to link to their support and guidance programs.
- To contact the EAP or other services call 888-293-6948 or visit <https://www.midwestern.edu/departments/human-resources/benefits/additional-benefit-plans.xml>

Students

- Midwestern University provides free counseling services by licensed on-campus counselors to help you successfully negotiate life's issues both academically and personally. At this time, all counseling sessions are being offered by WebEx during this national health crisis and telehealth sessions are available to all students.
- Contact the Student Services Counseling Services through the following websites: <http://www.midwestern.edu/academics/student-services/counseling-services-az/meet-our-counselors.xml> or <https://www.midwestern.edu/academics/student-services/counseling-services-il.xml>
- Students also have a 24-hours a day, 7 days a week Student Assistance Program. All students can receive free, confidential help for academic pressure, stress, emotional well-being and life management services. You can call (877) 351-7889 or contact them at www.AetnaSAP.com , you just have to enter your ID as MWUGGROUP.
- These services are provided at no cost to any enrolled student, even if you are not in an Aetna Insurance Plan.

Years ago, a student send me a card that I have kept in my desk for a long time. I find it a good reminder of the importance of being there for someone; it simply reads *"Give me a heart that listens, a mind that pays attention, a soul that waits, ears that hear, and eyes that see."* This special week challenges even the strongest to be alone, let's wish each other comfort and peace.

Be well.

Dr. G.