



This stained glass display, depicting images of Maine's natural beauty, welcomes visitors to Maine Medical Center's Cairns Memorial Chapel.

Caring for Self and Others in Times of Trouble: Some Spiritual Tools and Tips

1. **Breathe.** Breathe some more. Take time in your day, at any moment, to take ten deep, even breaths. Carve out 5-10 minutes to meditate or practice mindfulness or contemplative prayer. Start here, now, wherever you are.
2. **Ground yourself in the present moment.** Focus your awareness on something real, enduring, or beautiful in your surroundings. Look up often. Discover the wonder and awe that is already here.
3. **Acknowledge your fears, anxieties, and concerns.** Offer them up in prayer, if you pray. Write them in your journal, if you keep one. Share them with others. Feel what you feel, honor it, and know also that it is not the final word on anything that you are experiencing right now.
4. **Remember you are not alone.** Ever. You are surrounded by care and support. Reach out.
5. **Create and sustain community.** Show up for one another. Listen compassionately. Practice empathy. Message the people you care about. Stand with those who are most vulnerable and those who suffer the brunt of prejudice and fear. Check in on folks. Call your mother, father, guardian, mentor, little sibling, long lost friend.
6. **Unplug, judiciously.** While staying aware of developments, do not let chaos govern you. Forgive yourself if and when it does.
7. **Practice kindness.** There is a temptation for some of us, in times of challenge or crisis, to view others as potential threats. Remember, we are all having a human experience together. Smile when you can. Act to increase supplies of good deeds and good energy. Be the change that you would like to see in the world.
8. **Stay healthy through diet, sleep, and exercise as best you are able.** See healing and wellness holistically – body, mind, and spirit.
9. **Make art.** Discover, imagine, engage your hopes and fears with both the beauty and the ugliness of our world. Write, paint, sculpt, sing, dance, soar.
10. **Practice gratitude.** In the face of crisis, make note of the things for which you are grateful: your breath, the particular shade of the sky at dusk – or dawn. The color blue, the wonders of nature, the gifts and strengths you have, other people in your life, the ability to laugh. A pet.
11. **Connect with your spiritual, religious, cultural, humanist or other communities.** Find strength and solace and power in traditions, texts, rituals, practices, holy times and seasons.
12. **Pray as you are able,** silently, through song, in readings, through ancestors. Remember the long view of history, the rhythms and cycles of nature, the invisible threads that connect us all.
13. **Practice hope.** Trust in the future and our power to endure and persist, to live fully into the goodness that we trust awaits us all.

Adapted from Alexander Levering Kern