

March 2024, Issue 36

Dallas YACS-A-LOT Newsletter



by Leticia Hernandez

Photo of the Dallas Arboretum in spring, with pink flowers in bloom.

Sometimes life throws you a curveball, or an anniversary triggers unexpected feelings. This month, we're opening with some tips to handle life changes.

Change is a natural and inevitable part of life. Whether it's a new job, a move to a new city, treatment ending, or any other major life transition, handling change can be difficult and stressful. Here are some tips for navigating change in a healthy way:

Acceptance: Acknowledge that change is a part of life- change can lead to growth and new opportunities. Be open to adapting to new situations and be willing to adjust your plans and expectations as needed.

Take care of yourself: It's important to prioritize self-care during times of change. Make sure you are getting enough sleep, eating well, drinking enough water, moving your body, and taking time for relaxation and/or self-reflection.

Seek support: Don't be afraid to reach out to your support system during times of change. Talking about your feelings and experiences can help you process them and gain new perspective.

Focus on what you can control: While some aspects of change may be out of your hands, focus on the things you can control. Set small, achievable goals for yourself to help you feel more in control of the situation.

Practice mindfulness: Stay present in the moment- mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, or setting intentions for your day can help you stay grounded during times of change.

Remember that change, while challenging, can also be a catalyst for personal growth and transformation. By approaching change with an open mind, seeking support when needed, and taking care of yourself, you can navigate life's transitions with grace and resilience.

Announcements

Be Part of the YACS Directory

This is a completely voluntary survey to gather contact info to share with group members. You do not have to answer all questions, and can quit any time. We'd love to know you better!

<https://forms.gle/RChQQwh6UhwP8kfr7>

Directory: [Dallas YAC Directory](#)

Call For Newsletter Committee Members

We need one to two more members to help put this growing and changing publication together. The committee is still in its infancy and finding its feet. We're looking for members that can stick around long-term. Quite simply, the more people we have, the simpler it becomes to put the newsletter together. Ideally, you'd have one section a month and/or come up with some new ideas.

If interested, email us [here](#).

More than a Game...



photo of YACS members in their YACS long sleeve shirts at the Dallas Mavericks game on February 10th, standing together and smiling at the camera.

Hi everyone, my name is Melissa Irek. My experience as a spouse of a young adult cancer survivor started in March 2022 when my husband Daniel was diagnosed with stage 2A testicular cancer. During his treatment, I knew he was in excellent hands receiving his care from Simmons Cancer Center. However, I struggled with the set of challenges that being a cancer caregiver can bring, especially in my late 20s. None of our other married friends had endured this obstacle, and it was an extremely isolating and challenging time in my life.

I felt like I was floating through this period of my life alone until I reached out to our fantastic leader Alex and joined YACS myself. While the group is tailored to young adult cancer survivors themselves, Alex never made me feel excluded and graciously invited me to events and the support group. As I became more involved, I noticed a gap in programming for spouses which was echoed by others within YACS.

Last spring, we hosted our first couple's mixer which was a craft day at Upstairs Circus. Our ideas to expand spouse/partner support throughout this year include incorporating more partner support and group bonding, whether being a plus-one to an event or establishing avenues just for

spouses and partners to get together themselves.

The recent Mavs game on February 10th was a great example of patients and partners alike coming together. I was able to see some familiar faces and meet new ones, and I hope to be able to meet others throughout the year.

As the wife of TikTok's favorite doctor Dr. Glaucomflecken once said, partners and caregivers of those with medical trauma are "co-survivors" in their own right. We are looking forward to creating ways to support those who championed us during the ups and downs of treatment through survivorship, all with the hope that our co-survivors feel less alone.

<https://panelpicker.sxsw.com/vote/142693>

<https://glaucomflecken.com/10-tips-to-support-co-survivors/>

We hope to see you at our next spouses/partners event at Equest in April!



The Mavs clinched a W on February 10th with YACS in attendance! The final score was 146-111 against Oklahoma City Thunder.



Photo of Angela and her husband Ryan at the Mavs game, wearing their Mavs and YACS gear.



A group photo of the YACS crew in their green and blue for the Mavs game! The outing was a huge hit with YACS members and their loved ones in attendance to watch the Mavs win. YACS had the

privilege of enjoying a suite where snacks and refreshments were available for all to enjoy. Thank you to everyone who came out and cheer the Mavs on to victory!

Meeting Tia!

By Katy Yost



What do you get when you combine a new therapeutic dog + puppy and people treats + a beautiful weather? A “Woof-der-ful” Puppy Party to welcome our new therapy dog Tia! YACs members with their families and furry friends enjoyed a Sunday afternoon, a few weeks ago at Grrrowlers at the Shacks in the Colony. The afternoon was filled with lots of puppy greetings and licks, puppy photos, playing in the dog park, enjoying sweet human and doggy treats, and even enjoying playgrounds 😊 Thank you to everyone for coming and Welcome TIA, we are “PAW”-sitively thrilled you are here!!!



Taylor's Comedic Turf

A German shepherd, a Doberman and a cat die and go to heaven. They are greeted by God, who asks each of them what they believe in. The German shepherd goes first. "Discipline, training and loyalty to my master" he says. "Good", says God. "You may sit on my right. Now, Doberman, what do you believe in?" The Doberman answers, "Love, care and protecting my master". "Excellent" says God. You may sit on my left, Now, cat, it's your turn. What do you believe in?"...

Dallas YACS Calendar

LOTS of Upcoming Events:

Sunday, March 3rd, 5pm - The Outlaws vs the Sidekicks Indoor Soccer Game

Saturday March 16th – Sunday, 17th - Our First YACS Camping Outing. That's right! Join us for a one-night camping trip at Cooper Lake State Park. We will offer a few experiential outdoor activities Saturday followed by cozy dinner around the campfire. Campers will depart Sunday morning after a St. Patty's Day-themed breakfast. A packing list will be sent to those who RSVP. Spots are going quickly, RSVP ASAP!

Tuesday, March 26th, 6pm - YACS Yoga at the Cancer Center

Tuesday, March 26th, 7pm - YACS Support Group Meeting, offered both virtually and in-person

Thursday, April 4th, 6pm - Celebrate AYA Awareness Week with Night at the Arboretum

Sunday, April 14th - Equest Outing!

March Birthdays:
Ramsey, 3/12

Alex's Meditation Moment

If you own or have owned a dog, you know the immense value they bring to our lives, and I can say that is true in the short time I have had Tia. Not only did I get an immediate best friend when she arrived, I have started to notice how the vibrancy and meaning with which Tia greets every day are positively impacting me. While every dog owner will say their pup is unique, I think there are universal lessons dogs teach us if we are willing to observe and receive them.

The present is where peace resides, and where Tia puts her focus. While she is constantly taking in stimuli, responding to stress, and reacting in ways to soothe herself and others, she is doing so in an effort to return to her natural state of being. She is not caught up in what was or what might be, she accepts what is without the desire to change it. Her acceptance extends an embrace to new people, a new environment, a different bed, etc. With an open heart, Tia is intent on carrying out her mission of spreading unconditional love to everyone she meets, and the selflessness is contagious. It is easy to see the joy on her face as we pull into the Cancer Center, and she is ready to be in and of service others. Finally, Tia and I are a pack. Our relationship was built on togetherness, and our connection has deepened as we have come to depend on each other. We both give and receive, knowing that will not always be in equal ratio, but is and will be in harmony.

Tia's core tenants for living her life are based in mindfulness. While innate for her, I must cultivate this mindset, and luckily, she is providing a great example for me. Through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally, I can gain awareness and learn how to reside inside of it to managing my reactions and reduce life's stressors. For this month's practice, let's create more space for awareness with a 3-step breathing exercise. If you have a pet at home, you might want to invite them to join you in your mindful space!

Step 1:

Notice what is going on with you right now,

Whatever thoughts may be around,

Whatever feelings or emotions...any sensations in the body.

Just tuning into the what the weather pattern inside you is right now,

Continue being open to this for a few moments.

PAUSE

As best you can, let go of the tendency that we all have of wanting things to be different than they are right now.

See if you can allow things to be just as they are right now in your mind and in your body.

Step 2:

Gathering your attention on your breath...down in your abdomen as you breathe in and out. Not trying to make the breath do anything special or be different than how you found it...just focusing on the sensations of the inbreath and the outbreath.

And if the mind wanders, gently escorting the attention back to the breath and the sensations of breathing.

PAUSE

Step 3:

Expand attention to the body of the whole...as if the whole body could breathe right now. You could be aware of all the sensations in the body from the top of the head to the toes to the fingertips...to the sensations of the skin...and all the sensations inside your body as well. Aware of the whole landscape of sensations in the body.

PAUSE

Once again, see if you can allow the sensations to be exactly as find them...not trying to change them in any way. A sense of opening to what's here right now.

PAUSE

A sense of coming home to the body and allowing yourself to be exactly as you are...moment by moment...breath by breath.

PAUSE

And then at a certain point, beginning to move fingers and toes...letting your eyes open if they were closed...and resuming the activities of your day. This 3-minute breathing space provides a way to step out of automatic pilot and reconnect with the present moment.



Joke Answer

The cat replies, "I believe you're sitting in my seat."

**Sam's Writing Prompt will
Return Next Month**

If you'd like a past response to be featured in next month's newsletter, simply include it in an email to the group at dallasyacsalot@gmail.com.

Cooking with Chris!



Hi Dallas YACS, fam! This month's recipe is Colcannon. It's Irish mashed potatoes for St.Patty's Day. You can also use this recipe as a side dish for your Easter dinner since it falls on the last day of the month.

Ingredients:

- 4 Russet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 sticks of butter, room temperature
- 3 cups of milk, any kind is ok including lactose free
- 2 Tbsp, minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp, onion powder

1 head of cabbage, finely shredded

Directions :

Bring 5 cups of water to a boil, add your potatoes, and let them cook on medium high heat for 20 mins.

Check with a fork- once they pierce easily, strain your potatoes and add your butter, milk, garlic, and onion.

Add 2 Tsp of salt, and mash together until you get your mashed potatoes. Set aside.

Grab a frying pan, and sautee your shredded cabbage. Add onion and garlic seasoning with a pinch of salt. Set aside and cool. Once cool, combine with mashed potatoes.

Enjoy!



Feedback?

If you have anything you'd like us to know that isn't covered in the newsletter, tell us [here](#).

That's it! You've reached the end of our newsletter. Until next time...





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