

I am a Nurse. More specifically, I am a Mental Health Nurse. What's ironic is that being one doesn't exempt you from mental issues. To be more and more specific, I am a Mental Health Nurse with Depression.

Ang weird ano? But I am who I am. There is no denying it.

The lockdown has given me so many ups and downs in my life: One moment I feel okay, the next moment I am crying. You see before the lockdown, I had just passed the German Language Proficiency Exam. Papunta na kasi ako ng Germany for work so I had to take an exam which made me stop work and be a full-time student since July 2019.

So when I was searching for work, the lockdown came. BOOM! Companies stopped hiring. Companies retrenched people. Companies needed to mobilize their retained employees. They have to retain their best people in order for them to maintain their financial margins.

That left me jobless since March. It was a very difficult 4 months for me. I was sending thru different HRs my updated Curriculum Vitae from Jobstreet to LinkedIn to Kalibrr. More than the work, really, it's about keeping myself productive. That's the root of it all, being productive and thinking to yourself: "How do I make myself productive today?" Sobrang hirap. But really, there will always be pros and cons with these types of situations. And that's where your mental strength and resilience will test you.

How'd I survive, you ask?

Here are a few tips I inculcated in my daily life during lockdown:

- 1) Create a daily routine - you can do a schedule of your time waking up until the time you go to bed.
- 2) Connect with people - either LinkedIn and Facebook. Connecting with people avoids you from being socially isolated and in this time of pandemic, your mental health may suffer. LinkedIn to connect with other professionals for job search. Facebook to connect with friends and acquaintances you have long not talked with. I was actually able to land a job because of LinkedIn connections, Yehey for me! :)
- 3) Connect with your family - now is the best time to talk with your family. This ECQ have left us with our families to deal with. Spend dinner with them. Laugh with them. Play ML with your siblings. Talk about some family issues that need resolution. Talk about your plans in life. Just talk with them. Walang mawawala sa iyo.
- 4) Connect with your pets - I also allotted time for my pets and making sure they are okay. You may not feel it but pets can be great companions. Actually kung mapapansin niyo may Pet Therapy sa ibang bansa. I found comfort talking to my pets and making sure they are well-nourished. Niloloko ko pa yung aso namin ng "Taba!" because she got big during this lockdown.
- 5) Engage in webinars - since I was unemployed, I registered through various webinars. Take advantage of them! They're free and they won't take much of your time.
- 6) Learn a new skill and/or hobby. Best time to try cooking or gardening or perhaps helping out the family business.
- 7) Connect with mental health advocates - please, don't keep this to yourself. If you're feeling very worried, uncertain, anxious, overwhelmingly sad, and depressed - there are hotlines you can call and these people can help you manage your state. Talk to them. Don't be afraid. They can help you.
- 8) Connect with yourself - I cannot emphasize this enough, give time to yourself. Don't be too hard to yourself. Magtiwala ka sa sarili mo. You know that you are doing everything that you can to land a job and this pandemic is out of your control.
- 9) Connect with God - we are facing challenges and struggles daily and praying to Him for help and guidance can ease the anxiety and worry. Magtiwala ka sa Kanya.

Masasabi kong I survived the pandemic hindi dahil nagkaroon ako ng COVID but my mental health really took a huge toll on me that time. Now that it is easing up and I am starting a new job, I can truly say that I am a survivor, too.

So to people who are experiencing frustration, distress, uncertainty and worry. It's totally normal. We are humans, after all.

There are things we can control and we cannot control. It is part of life. We cannot control the situation but we can control how we react to the situation.

But we'll get through this. We always do.

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