



# CommunicAbility

A Quarterly Newsletter For Our Community Members with Disabilities

**Spring 2021**  
Vol. 21, Ed. 1

### Articles

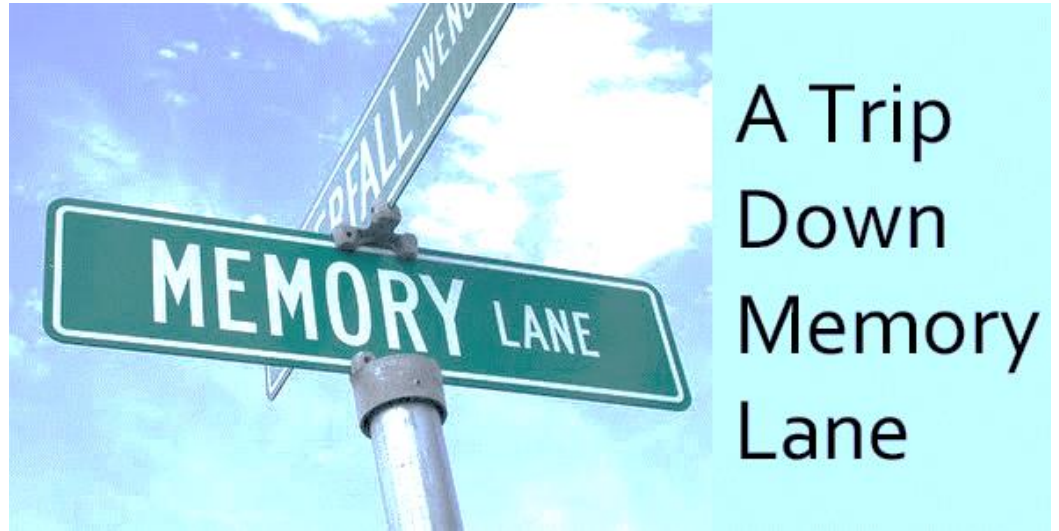
- Nostalgia Therapy
- Website and Activities Guide for a Trip Down Memory Lane
- The Benefits of Gratitude

### NHU Feature

- Word search

*"Nostalgia helps people find meaning in their lives, and it does so primarily by increasing social connectedness..."*

*- Review of General Psychology*



## A Trip Down Memory Lane

**Are you feeling alone? Depressed or bored due to Social Distancing? Read on for some helpful tips, activities and theories Involving the use of "Nostalgia Therapy"!**

It's been a year since the pandemic began, but things are starting to look up due to vaccine rollouts. As we wait for "herd immunity," let's explore how nostalgia, reminiscing and enjoying activities from childhood can boost our mood, immune system and lessen the anxiety that comes with isolation.

### Using Nostalgia Therapy to Cope with Isolation

Not yourself lately? Can't concentrate? Are you feeling disoriented? Bored? Depressed?

Whether Isolation has been a long-standing issue for you because of chronic illness or limitations or you're new to it due to the on-going pandemic, you may be interested in a pleasant way to cope. "Nostalgia Therapy" has become a newly recognized way to ease the anxiety that comes from a lack of social opportunities.

In a recent Psychology Today article (Using Nostalgia to Cope with COVID), Dr. Hal McDonald explains why we feel lonely, depressed or anxious during periods of isolation. While he does focus on people who have been affected by the pandemic, his observations and research suggest that a trip down memory lane is good for anyone that is suffering the long term effects of isolation due to a disability.

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### No Internet?

If you do not have access to the Internet at home, and are unable to access the websites listed in this newsletter, we would be happy to mail you a printed copy of the information that is available online.

To request a printed copy, please contact us via phone 414-299-0124.

Thank you!

New Horizons Un-Limited is a Milwaukee-based, non-profit organization that provides individuals with lifelong disabilities increased access to the information, tools and life experiences that will enable them to improve their lives.



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## Using Nostalgia Therapy to Cope with Isolation (continued from page 1)

Nostalgia therapy, remembering the past or engaging in activity that conjures up good memories helps a person feel less lonely. He explains:

*"We experience loneliness because we're physically isolated from the dozens of friends, family members, co-workers, and complete strangers with whom we normally rub elbows, shake hands, and share personal space every minute of the day".*

He goes on to explain further that there's something deeper happening:

*"We experience self-discontinuity, a sense of disruption or disjointedness between one's past and present self in response to the undeniable rupture the pandemic has torn in the mottled but generally coherent fabric of life as we know it."*

William Faulkner wrote "The past is never dead. It's not even past." Dr. McDonald seems to agree. He points out that today, a common and healthy reaction to loneliness or self-discontinuity is to invoke pleasant memories, to visit the past. The good news is these "nostalgic journeys," as he calls them, help us cope.

*"When our self-continuity, or the "sense of connection between one's past self and present self," is disrupted by such singular watershed moments as the pandemic we're all currently enduring, nostalgia can counter that disruption by promoting "feelings of continuity."*

The author then offered a personal example: apple toaster strudels. He found that eating a favorite childhood snack, strudel toasters, was therapeutic for him because the taste and aroma transported him back to his childhood family kitchen.

Author, Nicole Johnson from National Geographic in ([The surprising way nostalgia can help us cope with the pandemic](#)), cited the "nostalgic" benefits one pandemic-bound single mom, Amy Widdicks, got from taking her three children to a nearby drive-in movie.

*"The first time I went to a drive-in, I was nine years old, exactly the age of my oldest now," Widdicks says. "There was something incredibly comforting about telling my kids stories about how I'd done something exactly the same when I was their age".*

A piece published in Sage Journals from the Review of General Psychology ([Finding Meaning in Nostalgia](#)) concludes that:

*"Nostalgia helps people find meaning in their lives, and it does so primarily by increasing social connectedness (a sense of belongingness and acceptance), and secondarily by augmenting self-continuity (a sense of connection between one's past and one's present)."*

*"Nostalgia mobilizes us for the future," he says. "It increases our desire to pursue important life goals and our confidence that we can accomplish them."*

A timely piece from Psychology Today sums it up best:

*"If a random happy memory pops into your head out of nowhere, don't dismiss it as a trivial distraction ...Hang on to the memory and savor it for all it's worth. Not only will it provide you a welcome temporary escape into an undeniably simpler past; it will, more importantly, help you to cope with the very complex and troubling present in which we are living."*

### Guide to Websites and Activities

To help get you started down memory lane, here are some fun **activities**:

- Watch reruns of a favorite family show.
- Take time to enjoy the smell and taste of favorite meals from childhood.
- Look at photo albums or edit and put together new ones using old photographs.
- If you can, arrange time with loved ones outside – visit a park and have a picnic.

**You can also visit fun websites to get you thinking about good times:**

- [doyouremember.com/?](http://doyouremember.com/?)
- [www.retrowaste.com/trivia/1980s-trivia/](http://www.retrowaste.com/trivia/1980s-trivia/)
- [www.kotaku.com.au](http://www.kotaku.com.au)

**For more links and this guide,**

Visit: [new-horizons.org/gbuntc.html](http://new-horizons.org/gbuntc.html)

**Please Donate:** Since 1994, New Horizons Un-Limited has supported our community members with disabilities on their personal journeys. We provide the information, tools, training, and personalized guidance they need to find purpose and fulfillment in their lives. Please consider giving so that others may receive the gift of growth and progress. THANK YOU!!

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### The Importance of Gratitude

Sometimes it's hard to be grateful for anything when you are going through a tough time. Being told to be "grateful for things" in your life when you are struggling, can seem like a trivial or pollyanna-like prescription for depression.

Expressing gratitude, even half-heartily, has been shown to lift a person's mood and outlook. As hard and as false as it may feel in the beginning, being grateful is a method to reprogram your thoughts and attitudes and in doing so, believe it or not, **you will change your brain-chemistry** for the better.

To get started, try to pick two to three simple things to be grateful about each day. For example, if the sun is shining, and sunshine helps your mood, silently say I'm grateful for the sun today. If, you like, keep a gratitude journal. When you're having a difficult time, it can be beneficial to look back at what you've written previously. If it's a really hard time, find the smallest things that you can be grateful for. For instance, if you have a terminal illness it's unlikely you are going to be grateful for that, but you can be grateful for things like someone else bringing you dinner, a warm bed or your cat snuggling with you. All of these things can make the trauma of the big thing (the illness) more bearable.

**When you are grateful, you are in a position to receive love, support and service.** The opposite is true if you are angry, taking others for granted or not seeking help for depression. Always remember, when it comes to expressing gratitude, it is okay to fake it until you make it.

### Vaccination Information for People with Disabilities

When are YOU eligible? Where can YOU make an appointment for the vaccine in your state?

Visit: <https://www.new-horizons.org/gdecrv.html#Information>

### Coping with COVID-19 or Disability Isolation?

How are you doing? We have collected many tips from people with disabilities.

Visit: How to Meet Social and Emotional Needs: <https://www.new-horizons.org/gdecrv.html#Emotional>

### We would like to hear from you!

What is helping you through? –share your ideas that all might benefit.

Send email to: [horizons@new-horizons.org](mailto:horizons@new-horizons.org)

New Horizons Un-Limited Inc.  
811 East Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 937  
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**"NOSTALGIA THERAPY" is a newly  
recognized way to cope with Isolation. It's  
also a lot of fun!**

Trivia, TV Shows, favorite meals from childhood  
or songs from the past are just a few ways to get  
started on a trip down memory lane!

NOSTALGIA	PICNIC
THERAPY	PAST
SMELL	PARK
TASTE	FAMILY
CONTINUITY	FRIENDS
PRESENT	OLD TV SHOWS
TRIP	MOOD
PHOTOGRAPHS	IMMUNITY
OUTSIDE	LANE
MEMORY	SONG

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