We enter February still in dealing with COVID. We've dealt with so many variants that I feel like the virus needs one of those alliterative names used to describe groups of individual animals (e.g. prickle of porcupines, gaggle of geese, zeal of zebras). In fact, I'm doing that now. The variants shall now be known as a chaos of COVIDs. "Look at that chaos over there, overstaying its welcome because our aunt refuses to tell it to leave. And she doesn't even live here."

Well, a part of that cataclysm overstaying its welcome nabbed me as I had plans heading into the new year. Luckily, I was asymptomatic, but that's twice now that I've been taken out of service due to these cataclysms—they've snuck up using my family and coworkers. I'm over it now, but it serves as a reminder that COVID is becoming increasingly transmissible, which says a lot for a virus that was already spreading at disturbing rates.

With COVID being inescapable right now, let's take a quick dive into our anxiety. In addition to cancer constantly camping at the back of our minds, COVID has been living there rent-free for the past couple of years, as well. If the fire department existed in our heads, we'd be fined for surpassing maximum occupancy.

Because of this, it's important for us to know how and when to exercise mindfulness. This is one of the reasons we include Alex's mediations in this newsletter. It's important for us to acknowledge our anxieties, no matter how big or small they feel to us. Because our anxieties are always valid—ignoring them only allows them to do more damage as they feed on our insecurities. While they may never go away completely, by engaging in meditation, mindfulness, and therapy, we learn how to keep anxiety from rendering us numb and...
paralyzed.

As always, Alex and this group are here to help you through your anxiety, so please reach out if these are becoming an obstruction in your life.

Speaking of this group as a whole, we’re expanding and evolving with the times, which means that our committee should match that, and it is. Last month, we highlighted Candance's departure from the committee, and this month we're going to highlight a new arrival in Caleb Scoville.

There’s some more info further down in our "Knowing the Group!" segment, but here is a brief intro to that intro. He’s an addition to our committee as we expand into other facets of cancer affecting young adults. The majority of our group was diagnosed during or within our ventures to young adulthood. Caleb represents the young adults that were diagnosed as children, presenting a different perspective than we are used to.

We are excited to have him join our committee and offer insights from his journey!

This has been your monthly insight into and from the mind of Samuel Snow. Onto the news.

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**DALLAS YACS CALENDAR**

**February 15th, Tuesday, 7:00pm** — Virtual Cooking Class

**February 22nd, Tuesday, 7:00pm** — February Virtual Support Group

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**We are here for you!**
Help us recognize your milestones! Do you have an appointment, scan, or cancer-versary coming up? Let us know so we can send you a note of support! Just follow the link below.

**Share your milestone!**

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**Knowing the Group! Feat. Caleb Scoville**

This month we're introducing the newest member to our committee, Caleb, who was diagnosed at the age of nine with a medulloblastoma brain tumor.

Caleb kept it brief when describing how cancer has affected his life, "Cancer was and is devastating for the individual and family. Looking back over the years, I can see how cancer was a blessing in my life. Cancer introduced me to a world of people and experiences that have made me a better person and who I am today."
I need more submissions!

If you'd like to be featured in a future newsletter—and let's face the facts, if you're reading this, we want to feature you—then send us an email through THIS LINK, bolded so you won't miss it.

As we receive your responses, they're added to our supply and we pull one per month for the newsletter.

Have Some Feedback?

If you have anything you'd like us to know that isn't covered in the survey or milestone link, tell us here.

Merch Show-and-Tell
This month, group member Meghan Hitchcock was kind enough to send showing her donning the group's t-shirt. She even sent it over with the pet tax included.

If you're looking at that picture and wishing that you'd purchased some of our merchandise, we've got you covered. We're having another round of sales in the not-so-distant future, so keep an eye on you inboxes.

In the meantime, if you do have some Dallas YACS gear and feel like showing it off, send those picture to our email. I'd love to include it in our newsletter.

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**ROBERTO'S JOKE CORNER**

What did the dog do after it accidentally scratched its owner?

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**ALEX'S MEDITATION MOMENT**

Well, we can’t go through the month of February without talking about love, and I want to do that in this month’s newsletter by focusing on the core of love and relationships—you! Loving yourself is the tough-stuff type of love, and I hope I can help make it more accessible by sharing three tenants of self-love.

First, you don't have to earn love. Start thinking about love as something that's innate and not earned. You are worthy of love just because you exist, not because of some XYZ qualifier that says you now deserve love. Second, you don't have to be a finished project to love, and actually, I am more steadfast than ever in my belief that we don't cross a finish line of love of ourselves or others—both are and should gain strength and transform over time. And, sometimes, the love of others mirrors in some way that capacity of love inside of us and reminds us, “Oh yeah, I have that!”
When we connect with others, something comes alive in us—love has a generative quality in that way. Finally, love is an ability, not a commodity. No matter what you may go through, no matter what you may do, love is never destroyed. Now, it can definitely be covered over or hidden, it may be hard to find, may be hard to trust, AND it’s your capacity to love, to connect, to understand your life, to have clarity, to have wisdom, that fundamentally make you who you are. The practice below is a step toward opening your heart to receiving love simply because you exist! It is a simple gesture of respect, just like caring for your body, resting your minds, and inviting beauty in your soul that can be repeated to show love to yourself, which can deepen your connection with others.

1) **Imagine you’re encircled by people who love you.** Sit comfortably, eyes open or closed, and imagine yourself in the center of a circle made up of the most loving beings you’ve met. There may even be some people in your circle who you’ve never met but have been inspired by.

2) **Receive the love of those who love you.** Experience yourself as the recipient of the energy, attention, care, and regard of all of these beings in your circle of love. Silently repeat whatever phrases are expressive of that which you most wish for yourself, not just for today but in an enduring way. Phrases that are big and open, something like: May I be safe, be happy, be healthy. Live with ease of heart. May I be safe, be happy, be healthy. Live with ease of heart.

3) **Notice how you feel when you receive love.** As you experience yourself in the center of the circle, all kinds of different emotions may arise. You may feel gratitude and awe, or you might feel kind of shy, like you would rather duck down and have all of these beings send loving-kindness to one another and take their attention off of you. Whatever emotion may arise, let it just wash through you. Your touchstone is those phrases—May I be happy. May I be peaceful… or whatever phrases you’ve chosen.

4) **Open yourself up to receiving love.** Imagine that your skin is porous and this warm, loving energy is coming in. Imagine yourself receiving. There’s nothing special that you need to do to deserve this kind of acknowledgement or care. It’s simply because you exist.
5) **Send loving care to the people in your circle.** You can allow that quality of loving-kindness and compassion and care you feel coming toward you to flow right back out to the circle and then toward all beings everywhere, so that what you receive, you transform into giving. You give the quality of care and kindness that does actually exist in this world. That can become part of you, and part of what you express or return. When you feel ready you can open your eyes or lift your gaze.

After accidentally scratching its owner, the dog a-paw-logized.

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**PROMPT OF THE MONTH**

You are in a world absent of COVID; you have two weeks to go wherever you want and do whatever you want. All expenses are covered. What is your plan?

If you'd like your response featured in next month's newsletter, simply include it in an email to the group's email, dallyacs@gmail.com.
That's it! You've reached the end of our newsletter. Until next time...

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