



March 2021

Ostomy Association of the Houston Area

AFFILIATED SUPPORT GROUP

"We help ourselves by helping others to help themselves."

We are a volunteer-based organization dedicated to providing education, information, support and advocacy for people who have had or will have intestinal or urinary diversions.

P.O. Box 25164
Houston, TX 77265-5164
www.ostomyhouston.org

Lockdown has Affected Your Memory— Here's Why

by Claudia Hammond, author of *The Art of Rest*, November 16, 2020,
excerpts by Metro Maryland.

Many of us have found ourselves in an isolated routine during the pandemic—and it turns out, that's not very good for our memories.

If, since lockdown, you have found it hard to remember to email someone, summon up the word you need, or yet again forgotten to buy the milk—you are not alone. I've lost count of the number of times recently that friends have bemoaned their worsening memories.

Data is not, of course, the plural of anecdote and it's too early for research comparing our memory skills before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. But in a survey conducted by the Alzheimer's Society, half of relatives said that their loved ones' memories had worsened after they began living more isolated lives. Limits on socializing within care homes and in some cases a ban on any visitors for many months seems to have taken its toll.

In the University of California Irvine beginning research on the lockdown affecting people's memories, they reported that even some of those amazing people who usually remember events like buying a cinema ticket 20 years earlier because they have highly superior autobiographical memory are finding they are forgetting things.

There are, of course, several different types of memory. Forgetting what you intended to buy is different from forgetting someone's name or what you did last Tuesday. But research on how memory

works points to several ways in which our newly constrained environment could be having an impact.

The most obvious factor is isolation. We know a lack of social contact can affect the brain negatively and that the effect is most serious in those already experiencing memory difficulties. For those with Alzheimer's Disease, levels of loneliness can even predict the course of disease.

Of course, not everyone has felt lonely during the pandemic, and the results of some studies have shown that levels of loneliness have plateaued over time.

The monotony of Zoom calls, usually on the same screen day after day, makes it hard for individual meetings to stand out. But even if we do not feel distressed at a reduction in human contact, many of us are still seeing fewer people than usual.

As holidays get cancelled, weddings are postponed, concerts and sporting events go ahead without live audiences, we have less to

(Continued on page 3)



We are a health support group, a non-profit, tax-exempt, organization of volunteers whose purpose is to provide mutual aid and education to persons who have ostomies and to their families. We are a Texas non-profit corporation. Membership fees and donations are tax deductible.

Patient Visiting and Support Services

Doctors and WOC Nurses, please note:

Upon request from a doctor, nurse, or social worker, a specially trained visitor will be asked to contact an ostomy patient by phone or visit them in person before and/or after surgery. The visitor will be matched as nearly as possible according to sex, age, and type of ostomy. The visitor does not give medical advice, and there is no charge for this service. Please contact our Visitation Coordinator, Marian Newman at 713-392-5768, or newmarian@gmail.com.

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Central Group News

Snow and a deep freeze in Houston!! I never would have believed it. I hope everyone found a way to stay warm during that dreadful week in February.

Attention everyone!!! Board Elections are coming up in May and we are looking for nominees to serve on our board. Members serve for three-year terms and our fiscal year begins July 1, 2021. Mike McGinty has been serving as treasurer and agreed to run again and we still have 2 openings to fill. If you are interested and want to learn more about our volunteer board, please contact me or any of the board members listed in this newsletter. Any member is eligible and we would love some folks from our satellite groups to join us—we meet virtually by Zoom. Please consider joining us—we need your thoughts and ideas.

Central Group met virtually on Monday, February 22nd. We welcomed members of Coloplast and learned how the Coloplast Care Program can support the Houston ostomy community. We enjoyed listening to a fabulous panel of experts with Shannon Triplett, Houston Area Territory Manager, Tabatha Kelley, WOC Nurse involved with the South Central Region WOCN Society and Coloplast Regional Manager, Coloplast Ostomy/Clinician Advisors: Nancy Carver and James Bartley.

Coloplast is the only company that offers a program with nurse validated education. They currently have over 400 patients enrolled in their program and they offer support to anyone who uses stoma-related products and you don't even have to use their products to enroll in their program. They offer lifestyle advice as well as practical and emotional support when needed and help with clinical and non-clinical needs. They can also help guide you on a 3-way call with your supplier when ordering your supplies—I know this process can be daunting. Check out their program and find out if it is right for you.

Coloplast Care Advisors assigned to the Houston region are:

James Bartley: 1-877-858-2656, usjbart@coloplast.com
(direct line: 612-337-7903)

Nancy Carver: 1-877-858-2656, usncar@coloplast.com
(direct line: 612-337-7886)

If you are not in surrounding Houston region, please call their Geo-Routed line for your assigned Advisor: 877-858-2656 or their Clinician Support Line: 855-863-3912.

Here is their website: <https://www.coloplastcare.com/en-us/ostomy>

Some of you have been asking about Home Health Care in Houston for ostomates. Pathfinder Home Health (281-364-9161) covers North Houston over to Katy. Kim McKinney is a WOC Nurse who works for Pathfinder Home Health and she sees all of the ostomy patients on service with Pathfinder. Patients would need to be eligible for Home Health under their insurance coverage. Thank you, Tabatha Kelley, for this valuable information!

Kathleen Duplessis, President, OAHA, 713-299-3180

HOPE—TCH Woodlands, Pediatric Group News

The HOPE group will not be meeting in March. You are welcome to join the Sugar Land Group Virtual Meeting on March 18, 2021.

MaryAnne continues to provide in-hospital ostomy education and support and follow-up in the outpatient setting. The group also has a group of moms who are available for social support via telephone on an individualized basis.

MaryAnne Lewis, maryannelewis@hotmail.com or 281-948-1490

Northwest Group News

The February meeting for the Northwest Group was cancelled due to unprecedented weather in our area. "Care for the Caregiver" will be presented on Wednesday, March 17th, at 7:00p.m. This special self-care program is provided by our own Patti Suler, OAHA Media Coordinator. All are welcome. Please contact Patti Suler or our Northwest program coordinator for the zoom link information which will be available closer to the meeting date. Contact information is in the back of this newsletter.

Billy Locke, 337-515-6354

Sugar Land Group News

Our February Meeting was cancelled due to weather and power outages, and we hope that you all are recovering and staying safe.

We have deferred our program to March. Please see below for details.

Join us on March 18, 2021 at 6:00 PM to learn about loving yourself in our Virtual presentation on "Love Your Stoma—Emotion and Stomas"

RSVP to jmburnham@houstonmethodist.org or 281-274-0188, please provide your name, e-mail address, and the normal Ostomy Group you attend. (login info in OAHA email)

Joan Burnham, MSN, RN, OCN, RN-BC,
Oncology Nurse Navigator (info above)
jmburnham@houstonmethodist.org .

Baytown Group News

Baytown Support Group did not meet in February, due to the inclement weather and the meeting has been rescheduled.

Baytown Support Group will meet on March 15 and continue to meet virtually on the Third Monday of each month from 6-7:00 pm until further notice.

Coloplast will sponsor the March 15th program. Look for the invite. We hope you will plan to join us.

Cindy Barefield, BSN, RN-BC, CWOCN
281-428-3033, cbarefield@houstonmethodist.org

Lockdown has Affected Your Memory—Here's Why *(continued from page 1)*

talk about. And as for tales of woe at work, they're mainly about the frustrations of technology letting us down.

Repetition of stories helps us to consolidate our memories of what happened to us—so-called episodic memories. If we can't socialize as much, perhaps it's not surprising that those memories do not feel as crystal clear as usual. When we do get the chance to chat, we also have fewer stories to tell.

It's true that you might be compensating with more online socializing. But those conversations are not quite the same. You might be less likely to mention the inconsequential things that have happened. To make it worth preserving with delays or drop outs, your story needs to be worth telling. If your threshold for what counts as interesting enough to say has risen, then once again you miss out on underlining those memories.

But there is more to it than a lack of socializing. Many people mention feeling a background anxiety to life now. Even if you appreciate how lucky you are, and know others have it worse, the sense that the world has become a more uncertain place can be hard to shake off.

At University College London, psychobiologist Daisy Fancourt and her team have been conducting research in the UK throughout the pandemic on how people have felt. Although levels of anxiety peaked when lockdown started and have gradually reduced, average levels have remained higher than in usual times, especially in people who are young, living alone, living with children, living on a low income or in urban areas.

Meanwhile, the Office of National Statistics in the UK has found that rates of depression have doubled. Both depression and anxiety are known to have an impact on memory. Worries tax our working memories, leaving us with less capacity available for remembering shopping lists or what we need to do for work.

This is all made more difficult by a lack of cues to aid our memories. If you go out to work then your journey, the change of scenery and breaks you take punctuate the day, giving you time points to anchor your memories. But when you work from home, every online meeting feels quite similar to every other online meeting because you tend to sit in exactly the same place in front of exactly the same screen. There is less to tag your memories too to help you distinguish them.

As Catherine Loveday, professor of cognitive neuroscience at the University of Westminster puts it:

"Trying to remember what's happened to you when there's little distinction between the different days is like trying to play a piano when there are no black keys to help you find your way around."

As well as the days merging into one, so do the things you do in those days. At home there are no cues to help you remember the different parts of your work. Every memory is tagged to sitting at your computer. At work you might remember exactly where you had a conversation—by the lifts or in the office kitchen—and that helps you not to forget it.

Then there's a general fatigue, which also doesn't help our memories. Zoom meetings are tiring, some work is much harder from home and holidays are getting cancelled. A lack of routine and anxiety about the pandemic can disturb our sleep. Put all that together—basically we're consistently tired.

So with the combination of fatigue, anxiety, a lack of cues, and fewer social interactions, it's no wonder that some of us feel our memories are letting us down.

And Loveday believes there is an additional factor involved—one that we might not have noticed: the impact on our brains, and our memories in particular, of spending time in different geographical locations.

Finding our way back home has always been important to our survival. As soon as we leave home, we start paying attention. Whether we are navigating our way through a forest or around a town, we make more use of the seahorse-shaped brain region known as the hippocampus. The studies showing that those black cab drivers in London who learned every back street end up with a larger hippocampus.

We need to engage the hippocampus in order to remember new information, but Veronique Bohbot, a neuroscientist at McGill University in Canada, has found that if people's lives become more confined and repetitive as they age, their use of the hippocampus decreases.

The good news is that there are things we can do about it. Going for a walk, especially along unfamiliar streets, will bring your brain back to attention. And even moving makes a difference. Do you have to sit at your desk for every meeting? If it's a phone call could you walk along the street chatting instead?

Making sure the weekdays and the weekends are different enough not to merge into one can help with the distortions our new life can have on our perception of time.

Loveday advises adding more variety to our lives, which might involve some creative thinking to achieve. If you can't go out, she suggests finding a completely new activity at home, and then telling someone about it afterwards to help you remember it better.

Deliberately reflecting on your day each evening can help you consolidate your memories. You could even write a diary. It's true that less happens that's noteworthy these days, but it could still be

We encourage you to bring your spouse or significant other and members of your immediate family to our meetings.

Lockdown has Affected Your Memory—Here's Why

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interesting to look back on one day. It can also help your memory right now.

And if you're forgetting to do things, then making lists and setting alerts on your phone can make more difference than you might think. You can also harness your own imagination. If you want to remember to buy milk, bread and eggs, then before you go picture yourself visiting each of the necessary aisles in the actual shop you are going to. When you get there, this imaginary shopping trip will pop back into your mind and you're more likely to remember everything you need.

We have an **Ostomy Visitor Training Workshop** every other year, so, this is the year for the workshop. Please **SAVE THE DATE: July 17, 2021 from 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.** This training carries on a service that our organization has provided for over 65 years. Upon completion of this program, attendees will be specially trained to visit with an ostomy patient before or after their ostomy surgery. Trained visitors do not give medical advice, but these visits help patients in their rehabilitation process by demonstrating an ability to live a normal and active lifestyle with an ostomy. **Stay tuned for more details as we begin planning this workshop!**

Kara O'Neil's Story: Discovering Strength In The Struggle From J-Pouch To A Permanent Ostomy

From UOAA January 2021 E-News

If you asked me 20 years ago when I was in college if I thought I could be a strong ostomate, I would have just stared at you in shock. Strength and I were not the best of friends. In fact, it was one of the things I often questioned about myself. I had no idea what was something worth crying about.

That all changed three years ago when I was put to the test when I went from sudden rectal bleeding as a result of ulcerative colitis, to having to remove my colon in a matter of four months. During the next three years, I had four more operations from trying the j-pouch and failing, to finally getting a permanent ostomy just this past December.

Somewhere along the way, I found my strength. I dealt with major emotional and physical changes faster than I could even process. I had to adapt to a whole new way of life and a whole new way of looking at myself.

These three years have been incredibly hard. They have tested me in every way, broken me down to smithereens of myself, and caused me to question everything. The true strength that just suddenly overcomes you when you least expect it is something you don't really understand until you are

there and have no other choice. Life after that is forever changed.

Along the way, I started to feel strong. I was amazed by what both my body and my mind could accept and turn into a positive. I started to really take care of my physical health, and in the three years that I have been the sickest in my life, I became the most physically strong I have ever been by participating religiously in barre class. This physical strength, along with the help of the ostomy community, is what helped me to then discover my mental strength.

I literally stared death in the eye and won. It is hard to even write that today.

Feeling very alone, I stumbled across some ostomy bloggers one night while scouring the internet. Reading their patient stories blew my mind at the time, because I didn't comprehend how they could just accept living with an ostomy. But all that changed and I began to understand when I was so sick that it was no longer a choice if I wanted to keep being a mommy. The decision to have a permanent ileostomy was the best choice I ever made.

I just had what I hope to be my final surgery and got my permanent ostomy on December 1, 2020. Since then, I have made some promises to myself. I want



to be my absolute best version of myself now that I am able to really live again. I want to help as many people with IBD and facing the possibility of an ostomy as I can. I want them to see what I have come to see, that they too can use such an incredibly difficult period in their life to find their strength and their best version of themselves.

"God said to me, I am going to show you pain. And then you are going to help other people who are in pain because you understand it" (Lady Gaga).

Central Group

Date: No Meeting this Month (Please join one of our other support groups.)
Contact: Denise Parsons 713-824-8841 rockynme2@gmail.com

Baytown Group

Date: Monday, March 15, 2021
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Virtual Meeting (Current Baytown Support Group members have been invited.)
Program: Coloplast will sponsor the program.
Contact: Cindy Barefield, CWOCN, 281-428-3033

Northwest Group

Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Virtual Meeting (Contact your group leader for login credentials.)
Program: Patti Suler, OAHA Media Coordinator presents "Self Care for the Care Giver"
Contact: Billy Locke 337-515-6354

Sugar Land Group

Date: Thursday, March 18, 2021
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Virtual Webex Meeting (Information is provided in the email of your March Newsletter.)
Program: "Love Your Stoma—Emotions and Stomas,"
 RSVP to Joan at 281-274-0188 or jmburnham@houstonmethodist.org
Contact: Joan Burnham, MSN, RN, OCN, RN-BC, Oncology Nurse Navigator (info above)

Woodlands Pediatric Group

Date: No meeting in March—Join one of the available group meetings this month.
Contact: MaryAnne Lewis, maryannelewis@hotmail.com or 281-948-1490

J-Pouch

For J Pouch questions, attend any of our group meetings, or call or text Ron Meisinger at 281-491-8220

Opportunities and Announcements

Use Those Shopping Cards

Kroger (LB326) and Randalls (3698) return a percentage of your purchases to the Ostomy Association on a quarterly basis. For information about shopping cards, please visit the website: <http://www.ostomyhouston.org/>

Anniversary Gift

As you celebrate the anniversary of your ostomy surgery each year, consider making a monetary gift to the Ostomy Association. Checks should be made payable to the ***Ostomy Association of the Houston Area*** and sent to the Treasurer at the address shown below.

AmazonSmile

On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), you are prompted to select a charitable organization from the list of organizations. You can change your selection at any time. To change your charitable organization: Sign in to smile.amazon.com on your desktop or mobile phone browser. From your desktop, go to Your Account from the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the option to Change your Charity. Or, from your mobile browser, select Change your Charity from the options at the bottom of the page. Select Ostomy Association of the Houston Area as your charity.

Memorial Fund

Donations can be made to our Memorial Fund to memorialize or honor individuals. Checks should be made payable to the ***Ostomy Association of the Houston Area*** and sent to the address below. When sending a donation, be sure to include the name of the person being honored so that acknowledgement can be sent.

Moving? Changing Your Email Address?

Please make sure we have your current contact information so we can reach you by email, U.S. mail, or phone. Send updates to Lorette Bauarschi at lorette@bauarschilaw.com.

For Anniversary Gifts, Memorial Donations, Mailing Changes, or Sponsorships, please send all correspondence to:

Ostomy Association of the Houston Area
 Attn: Mike McGinity, Treasurer
 P. O. Box 25164
 Houston, TX 77265-5164

(When sending a donation, please include the name of the person being honored so that appropriate acknowledgement can be sent.)



The **United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA)** can be contacted at:
www.ostomy.org or **800-826-0826**

Use this "Know Your Ostomy Checklist" the next time you need to talk about your ostomy with a medical professional or caregiver.

Know Your Ostomy Checklist®

Surgeon: _____ Surgery Date: _____

Ostomy Type: I have a (n) _____ Colostomy _____ Ileostomy _____ Urostomy _____ Other (_____)
 _____ Temporary _____ Permanent

(A healthy stoma should look red, moist, and shiny.)

Stoma Shape:

- ☐ Round
- ☐ Oval
- ☐ Irregular
- ☐ Smaller at the top, larger at the bottom
- ☐ Larger at the top, smaller at the bottom
- ☐ Has one opening
- ☐ Has two openings

Stoma Color:

- ☐ Red
- ☐ Pink
- ☐ Brown (not normal)
- ☐ Black (not normal)
- ☐ Maroon (not normal)
- ☐ Blue/Purple (not normal)
- ☐ Other

Stoma Position and Level:

- ☐ Below skin level (in a skin fold or sunken)
- ☐ Flush to skin level/at skin level
- ☐ Above skin level

Stoma Location:

- ☐ Right side of the body above the belly button
- ☐ Right side of the body below the belly button
- ☐ Left side of the body above the belly button
- ☐ Left side of the body below the belly button
- ☐ In or near a skin crease
- ☐ In or near a skin fold
- ☐ On a flat skin surface

Stoma Size:

- _____ X _____
- ☐ Round
 - ☐ Oval
 - ☐ Irregular

Advocates for a Positive Change
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www.ostomy.org 1.800.826.0826



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- 4 **Perforated diverticulitis** or an abscess
- 5 **Birth defect** (for example imperforate anus or spina bifida) Rare diseases (such as Hirschprung's disease and FAP)
- 6 **Blunt or penetrating abdominal trauma** to the bladder, rectum or colon (for example stabbing, gunshot wound, or sexual violence)



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"Without my ostomy surgery I wouldn't be here today." Mary F.



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cbarefield@houstonmethodist.org

Pat Thompson RN, BSN, CWON (281) 397-2799
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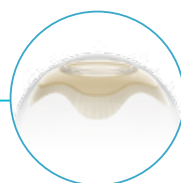
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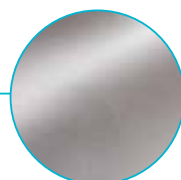
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Newsletter Advertising: Please contact the President or Treasurer for advertising opportunities.

Membership Application

Membership in the Ostomy Association of the Houston Area requires one easy payment. Please complete the following form and mail as directed with payment as shown. Dues of **\$25.00 per year** are payable to:

Ostomy Association of the Houston Area, Attention: Treasurer
P. O. Box 25164, Houston, TX 77265-5164

Date: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ E-mail: **(required)** _____

Surgery Date: _____ Birth Date: _____ Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other _____

Reason for surgery ☐ Crohn's ☐ Ulcerative Colitis ☐ Cancer ☐ Birth Defects ☐ Other _____

In addition to English, I also speak the following language(s). Foreign language spoken: _____

Why do we ask this? We have a patient visiting program and we are occasionally contacted by ostomates who are not fluent in English and we look to our membership to assist with communication.

Procedure or Relationship:

To help us complete our records, please answer the following.

Check all that apply.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colostomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Continent Ileostomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of Child with procedure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ileostomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Continent Urostomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Family Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urinary Diversion | <input type="checkbox"/> Pull-Through | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> J-Pouch | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse |

*Membership benefits include:
Monthly Support/Information
Meetings, Social Events,
Monthly Newsletter*

☐ I would like to attend meetings with the **(please circle one):**

Central Group Baytown Group Northwest Group Sugar Land Group Woodlands Pediatric Group

☐ I would like to become a member but cannot pay dues at this time. *(This will be kept confidential.)*

I learned about the Ostomy Association from

☐ WOC Nurse ☐ Physician ☐ Newsletter ☐ Surgical Shop ☐ Website ☐ Other: _____

I am interested in volunteering. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have enclosed an additional \$_____ as a donation to support the association's mission of helping ostomates.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY WITH THE UNITED OSTOMY ASSOCIATIONS OF AMERICA, INC.

Program/Speaker Coordinator for the UOAA 2022 National Conference



- Work with the UOAA 2022 Conference Committee Members to develop an educational and social program
- Contact suggested speakers to determine their interest and ability to participate advising them of workshop name, presentation date, time and “compensation”.
- Upon receipt of agreement to speak send thank you message and request bio information for introduction and Program Book as well as AV requirements
- 60 days out send follow-up message; give presentation instructions
- Prepare and maintain a status spreadsheet showing:
 - Workshop title
 - Workshop location, date and time
 - Speaker name and contact information
 - Speaker “compensation”
 - Required AV
 - Room setup
- Collaborate with Volunteer Coordinator to recruit workshop moderators
 - Create a working guide for session moderators
 - Train Workshop moderators during pre-conference
- Write speaker introductions to be used by moderators
- On site, manage and set up speaker Ready Room
- During conference, greet and welcome speakers, have them escorted to their room, give them any specific instructions
- Coordinate preparation (with Administrative Coordinator) and distribution of speaker certificates and speaker gifts
- Send post conference thank you messages for participating in conference

If you are interested in this volunteer position or would like to learn more about this opportunity please contact: Millie Parker at mparker75@tampabay.rr.com

Millie Parker will be stepping down as Program/Speaker Coordinator but will be available to mentor and coach the new coordinator.



Seatbelt Relief

NEW LOW PRICE ~~~ \$45 includes shipping within the USA.

STOMASPAN is a positive solution to a difficult situation and an Ostomate's bridge to ostomy protection. Created by an Ostomate, our patent pending device provides a bridge effect spanning ones stoma and ostomy bag, allowing relief from an uncomfortable and painful seat belt. Made in the USA of durable lightweight aluminum it weighs less than a cell phone. Stomaspan slips on and off a seatbelt quickly and conveniently and its compact size allows easy movement from one vehicle to another. It can be carried in a briefcase, handbag or kept in your vehicle console.

For more information or to place an order visit us at www.stomaspan.com