**Dear JVs, November 28, 2016**

The PCs and I recently met with Jack Kennedy as a space for them to heal and recover from long times on the road, away from home and their support. Myst be hard for you too. Thank you for caring for them.

Jack Kennedy reminded us of Leonard Cohen’s lyrics: “There’s a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”

In this dark season, it’s an excellent reminder of how perfectly imperfect I am. That in the dark moments and

If you have a resource to share, please send it to me at [cchu@jvcnorthwest.org](mailto:cchu@jvcnorthwest.org). Please post this letter in a central location so everyone can read it!

Joy to you and your communities,

Carolyn

**Around the Holiday Dinner Table**

You can love your family or community, and still dislike having difficult conversations with them. Movie tropes The holidays can be joyous for some, or a dread-filled gathering for others. No matter the case, dinner table conversations will happen and always are at risk of taking a turn. Here are some tips and tools from OneTable.org which can translate for the holiday dinner table to the JV dinner table.

Tips for Having Tough Conversations(Adapted from OneTable.org)

* Acknowledge that our responses to the election are complicated and far reaching; we’re not going to cover all aspects of this issue.
* Appoint a facilitator.
* Acknowledge that you or your guests might have moments of discomfort and vulnerability – and that it’s okay.
* Establish group ground rules.
* Do not tokenize people (Don't make someone speak for everyone you think is "like" them.)
* Everyone should only speak from their personal experience.
* Ensure that everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to speak.
* Be respectful of introverts – and of silence.
* Avoid the terms “right” and “wrong.”
* Take a deep breath (or two) before responding.
* If you’re offended, consider removing yourself from the conversation, calling people “in” not “out,” or moving back to listen.
* Use facts graciously - not to shut down a conversation.

Emergency Preparedness

**Stay Informed. Make a Plan. Build a Kit.** These are three tasks we want to you and your JV community to undertake during the month of December to prepare for potential disasters in your area. Every year JV locales experience disasters – wildfires, floods, winter storms and more. In case of disaster, we want you and your JV community to be prepared, to know your evacuation routes, and to take instructions from FEMA directors seriously. Here are more things you can do.

* Find out what disasters are possible in your area – including home fires, wildfire, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, and winter storms.
* Identify smoke alarms in your house and check the batteries. Change the batteries at least once or twice per year.
* Develop and practice [a Community Emergency Plan](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTYxMTE3LjY2NDU3ODkxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE2MTExNy42NjQ1Nzg5MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3MzY0Nzg1JmVtYWlsaWQ9YXBvdHRoYXN0QGp2Y25vcnRod2VzdC5vcmcmdXNlcmlkPWFwb3R0aGFzdEBqdmNub3J0aHdlc3Qub3JnJmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&102&&&https://community.fema.gov/action/test-communication-plans?lang=en_US) and include your local evacuation routes (see handout in this month’s resource letter).
* If you commute, make sure you have a commuter emergency plan for travelling between work and home (see handout).
* Have emergency supplies in a Go Bag (see handout) – and keep your JV emergency contact list inside.
* Sign up for [local alerts and warnings](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTYxMTE3LjY2NDU3ODkxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE2MTExNy42NjQ1Nzg5MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3MzY0Nzg1JmVtYWlsaWQ9YXBvdHRoYXN0QGp2Y25vcnRod2VzdC5vcmcmdXNlcmlkPWFwb3R0aGFzdEBqdmNub3J0aHdlc3Qub3JnJmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&105&&&https://community.fema.gov/action/access-alerts-and-warnings?lang=en_US), so you know when you need to evacuate, <https://community.fema.gov/action/access-alerts-and-warnings>.
* Download the FEMA App to find out the location of open shelters.
* Be ready to evacuate yourself and your family with Ready’s Evacuation Guidelines, <https://www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family>.
* Contact your local emergency management agency for the evacuation routes in your community, <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-management-agencies>.
* At Orientation, we sent each of your JV communities home with a booklet from the American Red Cross called Prepare! A Resource Guide. LINK to the guide online.

During January area visit, your program coordinator will check in with you about the progress you made this month! Please let us know what questions you have about preparations in your area. You can contact Amy Potthast [apotthast@jvcnorthwest.org](mailto:apotthast@jvcnorthwest.org) on JVC Northwest’s safety committee with specific questions.

**Dealing with Winter Darkness**

Darkness bringing you down? For some of you, living in a climate of darkness may be new. Seasonal Affective Disorder or more commonly known as seasonal depression is a real thing. Here are some tips for self-care during the winter months:

* Take Vitamin D
* Use the Happy Lamp (your house should have one!)
* Stay active/busy—go for walks, bike, run, hike, do yoga, workout
* Find a winter project: knitting, painting, writing short stories, making movies, jam sessions, learn a new hobby
* If on medication, talk to your doctor about how your prescription is working for you
* Remember your SPICES (social, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional and spiritual needs)
* **Talk about your mental health** Perhaps you’ve never seen a counselor before or you’ve been seeing one for years. There are a lot of benefits to seeing a counselor, even if you don’t feel in like you’re in crisis. It is better to respond and take care of yourselves in moments of relative calm and do work then in times of imminent crisis and chaos. The process of finding a counselor can be intimidating and feel vulnerability. First of all, seeing a counselor is a normal, healthy and good self-care practice. We all have moments of needing extra support and our friends, family and communitymates may not always be able to provide the support we need. A counselor is a great space to process and feel listened and heard. Secondly, the easiest way to find a counselor is through your health insurance, meaning you may have to call your health insurance provider to figure out what your coverage is and if there are covered counselors in your area. Your PCs may also have a list of mental health professionals for your locale. Thirdly, there are other options if you can’t find a counselor through your insurance such as apps or websites like Good Therapy or Psychology Today that let you search for therapists in your area. Lastly, if you do feel overwhelmed or in crisis, you can always text the Crisis Text Line and you’ll connect with someone within minutes and it’s a free resource for any type of crisis. Here are the steps for that:   
  1. Text START to 741741 from anywhere in the USA, anytime, about any type of crisis.  
  2. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds quickly.  
  3. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment

Mental health is as important to your wellbeing just as physical health. If you’re having a hard time, due to the weather or not, please reach out.

**After the Election: A To-Do List**

**http://www.cultofpedagogy.com/election/ Suggestions for bringing students together in discussions emphasizing connection, critical thinking, and listening.**

**Agreements for Productive Conversations During Difficult Times http://nonprofitwithballs.com/2016/11/7-agreements-for-productive-conversations-during-difficulttimes/**

**Difficult conversations can arise in your classroom at any point in time, creating community agreements is one technique for holding one another accountable for the conversation climate. (Re)Building Classroom Community Post Election http://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/rebuildingclassroom-community-post-election These resources - from Facing History and their partners at StoryCorps—are designed to help your students gain critical thinking skills, empathy and tolerance, and a sense of civic responsibility Teaching Tolerance: Classroom Resources: http://www.tolerance.org/civility Teaching Tolerance is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. In addition to this resource, his site includes lists of films and discussion questions that could be used in higher education. You can also share with your members for their use during service if you’d like.**

Writer Sherman Alexie: Thunder Boy Jr. . Radio | OPB  
  
<http://www.opb.org/radio/programs/thinkoutloud/segment/writer-sherman-alexie-thunder-boy-jr/>

**Winter Bike Safety**

**Books the JVC Northwest Staff is reading**

*Shrill* by Lindy West - Carolyn says, “I tried to read this book before falling asleep, but it kept me awake giggling. I appreciate Lindy West’s biting commentary on misogyny, policing of women’s bodies, and internet trolls.”

*Ready Player One* by Earnest Cline

Evicted

*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith - Zach says, “A wonderful look at a young girl’s life growing up in the slums of Brooklyn at the turn of the 20th century. Sounds boring but this is my favorite book that I’m now rereading for the first time in a while. It’s not topical, it’s not recent, it’s just good.”

JVC Northwest also has a Goodreads profile with other reading suggestions! You can access this by going to the website <https://jvcnorthwest.org/60th/> and clicking “Book Club.”

**Reminder you can find this resource letter and others on**