BREATHE

A spiritual care resource created by Kaseman's Spiritual Care Department

The Bottle *(Adapted by Chaplain Donnel from the film, Song of the Sea, by Will Collins)*

There was once someone who had encountered challenges, tragedies, and losses in his life. While feeling very lost and disoriented in his frustration, fear, despair, grief and sadness, he happened to cross paths with a snake oil salesman who offered a solution: "My friend, you are suffering," the salesman said. "Here, bottle up your feelings. It will instantly take away your pain. It's quick and easy"

Desperate, the grieving person did as the snake oil salesman suggested, but over time after bottling up his pain he turned into stone.

The grieving person who turned into stone had a child - and that child too was grieving and was feeling sadness as well especially after the parent disappeared. So, the child searched for their lost parent.

In their search, the child entered the snake oil salesman's shop, which was also where the missing parent who turned into stone was kept. When the salesman saw the child, he also invited the child to bottle their feelings.

"Here, this will protect you from your sadness," the snake oil salesman offered. "It's a quick and easy solution. It will keep your feelings from bubbling up. Those feelings, they are terrible, you know…nasty things that will make you sick and feel awful. Feelings are not safe. You have to learn to control it. Here, bottle it up and put it away. It will never hurt you again."

But the young child protested: "No, bottling feelings do not help at all! It just makes things worse!"

Then the child started singing the sweet song of grief:
"*Our tears falling down like rain to the ground will water seeds of change. Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be, let be, O let it be*."

At the sound of the beautiful song, somehow the salesman vanished into thin air, and the bottles cracked and broke open, releasing the feelings that had been trapped inside the bottle. And the song made the father who was stone become flesh once more. This time, the parent was able to cry and grieve openly, and feel the sadness of the loss. And tears came down like a flowing stream.

And altogether, this family sang the song of grief, and remembered beautiful memories of those who had died and what used to be.

REFLECTION: Reflect on the wondering questions below with a friend by taking turns in answering each question.

- Which part of the story did you find most important? What resonated with you?
- Which part of the story is about you? Where are you in the story?
- Notice moments in your journey when you "bottled up" your feelings.
- Notice moments in your journey when you expressed and managed your feelings.

Remember, keep on sharing your stories. Keep on listening to each other's stories.

WHICH PART(s) OF THE STORY IS ABOUT YOU?

LOST & DISORIENTED: Notice experiences when you felt lost, disoriented, & overwhelmed.

BOTTLING FEELINGS: What feelings emerged when you were overwhelmed? Notice moments when you suppressed, avoided or ignored your feelings as not to feel overwhelmed by them.

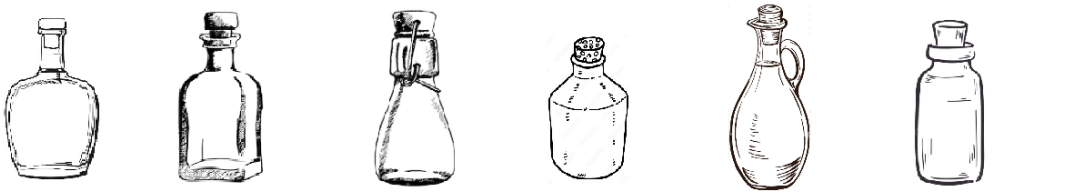
OPENING THE BOTTLE:
Notice moments when you realized that suppression or ignoring your feelings my not be the best coping tool. What actions helped you acknowledge them?

GUIDE: Who helped you open up so that you can feel your feelings?

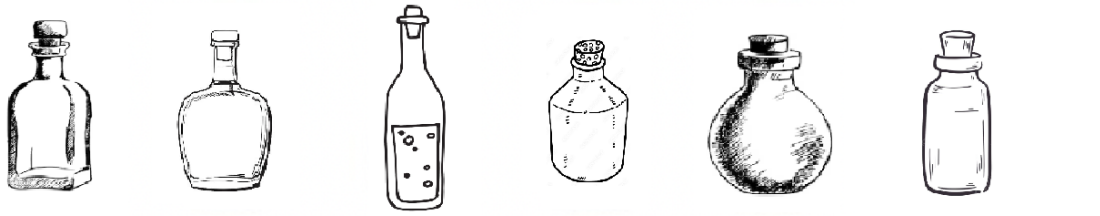
Our Bottled Up Emotions

INSTRUCTIONS: Below, circle a feeling *(& color the bottle above it)* that you have avoided, ignored, or masked (aka "bottled up").

ANXIETY ANGER SHAME SADNESS GUILT DESPAIR



SCARED WORRY OVERWHELM FRUSTRATION PAIN HOPELESSNESS

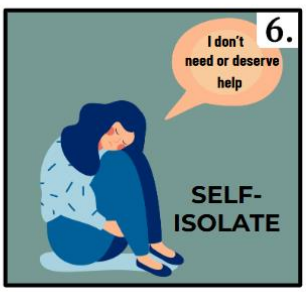


STRESS LONELINESS GRIEF INSECURITY FEAR DISAPPOINTMENT

REJECTION VULNERABLE TIRED JEALOUS HURT EMBARRASSMENT

Potential Ways We Bottle

INSTRUCTIONS: Below, circle a few that you have experienced.



INSTRUCTIONS: Learning to express and manage our feelings and emotions in a healthy way is an important skill to have. When they arise, what positive coping skills have you practiced? What other skills might you want to try in the future? Look at examples at the bottom of the page, then below, **write them in the giant droplets that came out of the bottle.**

Potential Tools to Open & Release