

# COVID-19: CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Brought to you by:



Source Supported by,  
Lakshmy Kumar *CHt., K.B., P.A.*  
Registered Counsellor

Student Development and Counselling Department



Focusing on what you can control changes everything! You can take steps to reduce your own personal risk and the risk you will unknowingly spread to others.

**Things you can control**

- Your Breathing
- Sanitize Your Hand
- Wear Your Mask
- Exercise Daily
- Eating Healthy Meals Everyday
- Phone or Video Call Your Loved Ones
- Positive Words of Affirmation
- Your Own Thoughts and Actions
- Helping Each Other

**Things you can't control**

- The Duration of the Virus
- The Global Spread
- The Attitude of Those Around You
- Your Work or Living Situation
- Travel Restriction
- Other People's Irrational Fear
- The Health of Your Loved Ones
- Impact on the Local Economy

# Step

## 2

### IDENTIFY WHAT TRIGGERS YOUR STRESS, FEAR AND ANXIETY

According to the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), when a crisis or a sudden unexpected event happens in our lives, an intense emotional reaction triggers in us. We evaluate and interpret the crisis or situation based on our core belief system, which was established and developed as a result of our early childhood experiences, moral values, cultural and social norms.

Our "response to the critical event or triggers" varies from one individual to another and is solely based on our interpretation process that comes together with the intense emotional reaction, belief system, physiological and behavioural changes that happens within us.



What runs in your mind?

How you feel?

What happens to your body?

### How to identify our triggers?

- Start a journal and write down all the noticeable symptoms that you are experiencing.
- Record all the possible triggers that you think could have caused the stress, fear or anxiety.
- Recognise and acknowledge all your emotions (anger, frustration, annoyance, guilt, etc.)
- Identify the changes in your behaviour towards yourself and others.

### Step by step guide to analyse your situation:

Describe the event or situation that triggered you

Write down your initial thoughts about the situation

Identify all the emotions you feel at the moment (anger, anxiety, shame, hurt, sadness etc.)

List down all the responses, behavioural changes and actions taken to deal with the situation

Take note of your physical symptoms (rapid heartbeat, sweating, loss of appetite, insomnia and etc.)

# ANALYSE YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM: RATIONAL VS IRRATIONAL BELIEF

We are not disturbed by the events, but by the beliefs or views we hold about the events, that causes emotional disturbances.

Let's analyse your belief patterns

**Rational beliefs**  
are the core of  
psychological health

Vs

**Irrational beliefs**  
are the core of  
psychological disturbances

**Refers to the beliefs  
that are:**

- flexible
- consistent with reality
- logical
- helpful to the individual in the attainment of goal and purpose
- acceptance of reality with healthy belief

**Refers to the beliefs  
that are:**

- rigid
- inconsistent with reality
- illogical
- unhelpful to the individual's well-being and happiness
- non-acceptance of reality with unhealthy beliefs

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed everyone's life to some extent. Some may have easily adapted to it while some still struggle. It is common to feel discomfort during this period, however adapting to changes is vital and necessary.

**Unhealthy/Irrational Beliefs**

**Healthy/Rational Beliefs**

"I **must have** my freedom to go where I want"

"I **want to have** my freedom but I don't have to go out now"

"It's **awful** that I can't be with my family during this time"

"It's **bad** that I can't be with my family during this time but I am glad we can still connect online"

"I **cannot stand** or tolerate the limited movement pressure"

"It's **hard but I can stand** and tolerate the limited movement pressure"

"I'm **not good and worthless** for not being able to cope"

"I may be fallible but I **accept myself** and know that my worth is not dependent on my coping skills"

Start with changing your views by simply making alterations to your statement without demeaning or degrading your current experiences.

# Step 4

Emotions are a set of feelings that we experience based on the situation which we are in or influenced by the people we are with. Since young we have always been encouraged and allowed to express our positive emotions freely such as happiness, joy, gratitude, love, etc.



But the same does not apply when it comes to negative emotions such as sadness, regret, disappointment, anger or jealousy. We choose to avoid, disapprove or disregard these emotions completely and we believe that showing any of them is a sign of weakness.



**But the truth is,**

We should embrace and acknowledge ALL our emotions including the negative ones. Emotions are great indicators that helps us to understand what we are going through internally and externally. Suppressing or battling our emotions may cause us great psychological pain if left unnoticed or untreated.

## EMOTIONAL CHECKS AND BALANCES HEALTHY VS UNHEALTHY NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Now, let us understand what are healthy negative emotions and unhealthy negative emotions.

After all, not all are bad!

We just need to identify, acknowledge and process them accordingly.

### Unhealthy Negative Emotions:

It interferes with the ability to change what can be changed realistically and disables a person from accepting constructively what cannot be changed.

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger
- Guilt
- Shame
- Hurt
- Jealousy
- Envy

These interfere with constructive actions and result in destructive behaviour.

### Healthy Negative Emotions:

It helps the person to strive to change what can be realistically changed and accept constructively what cannot be changed.

- Concern
- Sadness
- Annoyance
- Remorse
- Regret
- Disappointment
- Healthy Jealousy
- Healthy Envy

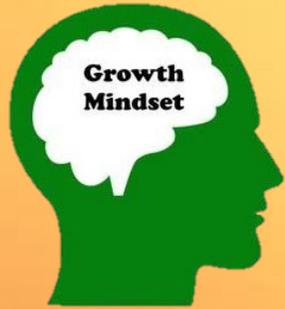
These produce self-helping and community-helping actions.

### Self-check Questions:

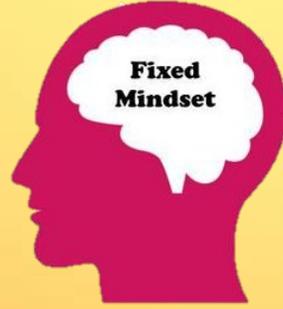
What is my level of emotions during this pandemic?

Am I able to understand and accept the changes that are happening around me?

Our mindset plays a critical role in how we cope with our life challenges. While we face constant changes in life, our mindset and belief will determine the way we perceive our situation and the decision we make out of it.



Which one is your mindset?



**Intelligence is static**

**Intelligence can be improved**

Those with a fixed mindset are more liable to give up and create a need for approval.

They become more concerned with how they will be judged and fear that they might not meet the expectations.

Those with a growth mindset can contribute to greater achievements and increased efforts.

They are willing to try new things and accept that making errors are part of their learning process.

We are capable of changing our mindset from **FIXED** to **GROWTH**.

All it takes is **PERSISTENCE** and **BELIEF** that it's possible to create the changes that we want in our life.

"I don't like to be challenged"	<b>CHALLENGES</b>	"Challenges help me grow"
"When I'm frustrated, I will give up"	<b>OBSTACLES</b>	"I am determined to persistently try and never give up"
Failure is the limit of my abilities"	<b>FAILURES</b>	"My effort and attitude determine my abilities"
"My abilities are fixed and perpetual"	<b>ABILITIES</b>	"Failure is an opportunity for me to grow"
"Feedback and criticism are personal"	<b>CRITICISM</b>	"Feedback is constructive, I learn from criticism"
"I feel threatened by the success of others"	<b>SUCCESS OF OTHERS</b>	"I am inspired by the success of others"
"I'm either good at it or I'm not. I stick to what I know"	<b>EFFORT</b>	"I can learn to do anything I want. I like to try new things"

As a result, they may limit themselves and achieve less than their true potential.

As a result, they are able to unlock new skills and reach their true potential.

## LOOK OUT FOR CUES: YOUR BODY IS SENDING YOU A MESSAGE!

Sometimes we feel broken, overwhelmed and exhausted with the challenges we face in our lives. Our body is a direct reference point for us to cross check if we are managing well or not.

Our body is just like a GPS system where every time we go the wrong direction, it alerts and redirects us to alternative paths to reach our destination. NOW, imagine our body sending us the same message to us every time we take a wrong direction in our lives.

### How is our body sending us the messages?

It shows us through many aspects such as physical, emotional, cognitive and behaviour.  
Let's look into it!

#### P H Y S I C A L

- Heart palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Heavy breathing
- Feeling choked
- Difficulty swallowing
- Tiredness
- Muscle aches
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Stomach aches
- Startled

#### C O G N I T I V E

- Worried something bad will happen
- Unwanted fear
- Intrusive memories
- Flashbacks
- Recurrent nightmares
- Dissociative amnesia
- Difficulty making decisions
- Disorientation
- Poor attention span
- Poor concentration
- Poor memory
- Impaired judgment

#### E M O T I O N A L

- Sadness, depression
- Emotional numbness
- Guilt
- Shame
- Jumpy, on edge
- Anxious
- Panicked
- Angry, irritable
- Confused
- Feeling lost
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness

#### B E H A V I O U R

- Sleeping disturbances (Insomnia, Hypersomnia)
- Crying spells
- Withdrawal, isolation
- Poor personal hygiene
- Not eating and drinking
- Angry outbursts
- Restlessness
- Not caring for others
- Derealisation

You can use grounding techniques to help create space from distressing feelings in any situation, but they're especially helpful if you are dealing with:

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) - Dissociation - Anxiety - Self harm thoughts - Traumatic memories - Substance abuse

## Physical Techniques

These techniques use your five senses or tangible objects, things you can touch to help you move through distress.

### Breathing

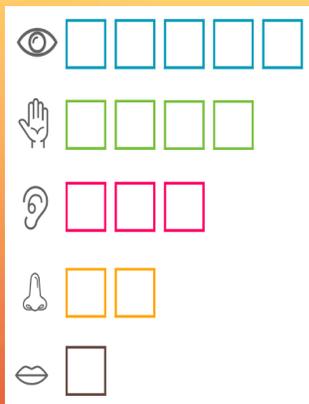


Start controlling your breathing rhythm, inhale and exhale slowly until you start feeling the connection with your body and soul. Keep your feet grounded and continue with the breathing technique until you feel calm, composed and relaxed.

**Inhale through nose  
Hold for 5 seconds  
Exhale through mouth**

**Repeat 5 times**

### 5-4-3-2-1



Use all your five senses to list down the things you notice around you. You can try this technique while seated, standing or walking around.

**Start with:**

- 5 things you can SEE**
- 4 things you can TOUCH**
- 3 things you can HEAR**
- 2 things you can SMELL**
- 1 thing you can TASTE**

### Feel Your Body



Focus on how your body feels from head to toe, noticing each part.

- **Can you feel your hair on shoulders and forehead?**
- **Do your arms feel loose or stiff at your sides? Can you feel your heartbeat?**
- **Is it rapid or steady? Are your legs crossed or your feet resting on the floor?**
- **Is your back straight?**

# Step 8

These grounding exercises use mental distractions to help redirect your thoughts away from distressing feelings and back to the present.

## SELF CARE GROUNDING TECHNIQUES - PART 2

### Mental Techniques

Use  
Mathematics  
and  
Numbers



You don't have to be a mathematics pro, simple numbering and calculations can help centre you.

You can try:

- 1) Running through a times table in your head.
- 2) Counting backwards from 100
- 3) Choosing a number and thinking of five ways you could make the number

( $6+11=17$ ,  $20-3=17$ ,  $8 \times 2 + 1 = 17$  etc.)

Imagine  
Yourself  
Leaving  
Behind The

Painful



Picture yourself:

- 1) Gathering the emotions, balling them up and putting them into a box.
- 2) Walking, swimming, biking or jogging to get away from painful feelings.
- 3) Imagine your thoughts as a song or TV show you dislike, change the channel or turn down the volume - they're still there but you don't have to listen to them.

Describe  
What's  
Around  
You Using

Your Five



Spend a few minutes and take a close look noting all the things around you. Use all your five senses to provide as much detail as possible.

The sofa is black in color and made of soft fabric.

It feels cold as it is raining heavily outside.

I smell the bitterness in my coffee.

The texture of the lemon cheese cake is creamy and has a sweet and tangy flavor.

I hear the dogs at my neighbor's house barking.

You can use these techniques to comfort yourself in times of emotional distress. These exercises can help promote good feelings that may help the negative feelings fade or seem less overwhelming.

## Soothing Techniques

### Listening to Music



Listen to your favourite music or song, pretend as if you are listening it to the first time. Focus on the melody and lyrics. Does the song give you comfort or create any other physical sensations? Pay attention to the parts that stand out most to you.

Repeat kind words and phrases to yourself.

- "You're trying hard and doing your best"
- "You're having a rough time, but you will make it through"
- "You're strong and you can move through this pain"

### Practise Self-kindness



### Picture the Voice or Face of Someone You Love



When you feel distressed or upset, visualise the face or voice of someone close to your heart. Imagine their face or the sound of their voice. Imagine them telling you that the moment is tough but you will get through.

Write or mentally list four to five things in your life that bring joy and happiness. Visualise each one of them briefly.

### List Positive Things in Your Life

*your life is as good as your mindset*

Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be desperate or at the brink of a meltdown to seek therapy. At the same time, therapy isn't usually necessary for all the little struggles that we face in our daily lives especially if you have a strong support system of family and friends.

# SEEKING HELP WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO REACH OUT?

## How Do You Know That You Need To Seek Help?

You are experiencing unexpected mood swings



When you notice that you have more negative emotions or thought processes and it's persistent.

You are withdrawing from the things you used to enjoy



Loss of motivation in doing what you usually enjoy. This is a red flag that something is amiss in your life.

You are using substance to cope with your issues



You find yourself turning to substance abuse as a way to deal with what's happening in your life.

Your sleeping or eating patterns are irregular



You notice that there are disruptions in your sleeping and eating patterns.

You are having harmful thoughts



Uncontrollable thoughts of harming or hurting yourself. You feel like you've lost control

Help is readily available and seeking for mental health professionals is vital for your self-care. You are not alone and we are here to assist you.  
Don't hesitate to contact your counsellor for further assistance.