

# Adjusting to Change



looking after your well-being  
in challenging times

LISTENING LOUNGE 2020



# The Importance of Routine

it's important to maintain as much structure as possible through these uncertain times, it can be very easy to get lost in thoughts of worry or panic, thinking about the future and things we have no control over. We must focus our attention to what we can control rather than what we cannot, by focusing on what you can do right now, you can gain a sense of stability. You are able to control your actions, what you eat, who you speak to, what clothes you wear etc, so try to focus on 24-48 hours at a time.

schedule in time for things like online exercise classes, walks, a new dinner recipe, reading, writing etc. these things will give the day meaning and offer a sense of accomplishment.

## Try to..

- Create and maintain a schedule
- Get up in the morning at the time you ordinarily would, shower, get dressed, have some food and make your bed
- If you are working from home, ensure you are keeping your regular work hours and taking breaks as you normally would
- Get some fresh air when you can:
  - Breakfast on the balcony/patio
  - Playing with the dog in the garden
  - Have a cup of tea in front of an open window
  - If you can, get some exercise outdoors
- Avoid overwhelming yourself with negative and scary media updates. Check your local news a couple of times a day
- Socialise with friends/family via phone/FaceTime/Zoom
- Eat well and avoid turning to drugs and alcohol to cope
- Reach out for support where you need it, whether it's for social interaction, food deliveries or wellbeing helplines.
- Each day try to include 2 productive activities (wash windows, organize clothes, mow the grass) and 2 pleasurable activities (yoga, long bath, family board game, reading a book)
- Keep active and mobile (walk up and down the stairs, yoga, tai chi, stretch, exercise videos or going for a walk/run where possible)
- Go to bed at your usual time
- Be kind to yourself and others



**S**top!  
**T**ake a breath  
**O**bserve  
**P**ull back  
**P**actice and / or  
**P**roceed

## **S**top and Step Back

*Don't act immediately. Pause.*

## **T**ake a Breath

*Take one slow, deep breath*

*in through the nose - Hold it - OUT through the mouth*

## **O**bserve

*What am I thinking about?*

*What am I focusing on?*

*What am I reacting to?*

*What am I feeling in my body.*

## **P**ull Back and Put in Some Perspective

*Zoom out, see the bigger picture*

*Is this fact or opinion?*

*Is there another way of looking at it?*

*How important is it right now, and will it be important in 6 months?*

## **P**actice What Works

*What's the best thing to do?*

*Only do what will help most*

*Do what is BEST for the situation*



# RIGHT NOW

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5 things I can see

4 things I can hear

3 things I can touch

2 things I can smell

1 slow deep breath

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When we realise we cannot change a situation but feel overwhelmed by upsetting thoughts and very uncomfortable feelings, we can use our five senses to do something RIGHT NOW that will help improve the moment. RIGHT NOW is a grounding technique when we use the senses. It is also effective when we think of anything that changes our focus of attention

**5** things I can see right now, or imagine I can see right now (notice colours, shapes, light and shadow, movement, near and far, dimensions, texture).

**4** things I can hear right now, or imagine I can hear right now. (Notice 4 things you can hear right now. You might notice the sounds around you, near and far, loud and soft, sounds from within your own body, those in the room, those outside the room.)

**3** things I can touch right now, or imagine I can touch right now (Notice 3 things you can touch, right now. Reach out and touch things around you. What are they? What do they feel like? Maybe you can massage your hand or stroke your pet).

**2** things I can smell right now, or like the smell of. (What 2 things can you smell around you, right now. Notice the smells in this place, where you are, right now, your wrist, your clothes, whatever is nearby).

**1** slow deep breath. In through the nose, out through the mouth (bring your attention to your breathing, perhaps counting your breaths, or just noticing those sensations of breathing).



# DO ONE THING



**Choose something to do.**

**Do it mindfully.**

**How long for?**

**20 minutes !**

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When you are feeling intense emotion, rather than acting on it, DO ONE THING for 20 minutes, this can break the vicious cycle of destructive actions, such as self-harm, binge eating/drinking, verbal and physical violence. Given you that much needed break from depression and anxiety. Concentrate totally on whatever distraction technique you have chosen to do. It is helpful to pick activities that burn off some of the adrenaline associated with high emotions, do it with enthusiastically, hard and thoroughly. If your mind wanders or you feel the emotion, kicking in again, do not succumb to it. Keep going for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, assess how you are feeling, if you still feel emotional. Repeat the same activity for another 20 minutes. Keep going until you are able to think clearly enough to make a wise decision.

*"It is under the greatest adversity that there exists the greatest potential for doing good, both for oneself and others."* - **Dalai Lama**



# SELF CARE

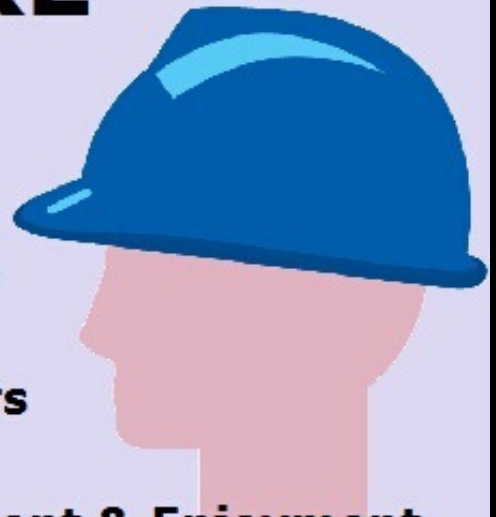
**S**leep

**E**ating & **E**xercise

**L**ook at other factors

**F**ind Fun, Achievement & Enjoyment  
(every day)

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The acronym "SELF care" can remind us what we can do regularly in order to protect and improve our mental health.

**S**leep

**E**ating & Exercise

**L**ook at - Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking, Treating Illness

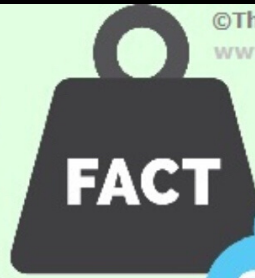
**F**ind something every day that gives you a sense of achievement, ability and enjoyment. Things to do .Be kind to yourself, Take up a hobby/or learn a new skill, Help others, Have some fun/or be creative, Connect with others, Exercise regularly, Eat healthily, Relax, Balance Sleep



**Ask yourself:**

**Is this**

**FACT  
or OPINION?**



**Come back to the FACTS!**

At times of stress we are affected by powerful opinions and emotions. The strong emotions reinforce our opinions, which in turn, intensify our emotions and generate a powerful response. If we are having a powerful or extreme emotional response to something we hear, read or watch, it can be helpful to ask ourselves whether what we are thinking is FACT or Opinion.

### **Fact**

- Evidence to support its truth
- Undisputed
- Driven by rational thought

### **Opinion**

- Based upon a belief or personal view
- Varies according to individuals, knowledge, experience, culture, belief systems etc
- Driven by and reinforced by emotion

Realising that many thoughts are opinion rather than fact makes it less likely that we will be distressed by them, and more able to make wise and calm decisions about the best action to take. If it's a fact, then we can make choices about what we can or cannot do. If it's an opinion, we can recognise that our opinion is based on emotion. We can then look at the facts - what we do know about the situation. When you notice yourself getting emotional, ask yourself: Am I reacting to a FACT or OPINION?



# IT WILL PASS



**Thoughts and feelings come and go. Situations change. Sometimes all we can do is keep going.**

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When we are feeling trapped in a distressing situation it can be helpful to imagine we are passing through a long tunnel. When we travel through the tunnel, we might want to get away and escape. Stopping or trying to escape does not help, as we are still in the tunnel. There is no option; we just have to keep going. The emotion will pass. There are often times when we feel distressed, but we are unable to change the situation, and there is no option but to just go along with it. Those physical sensations of distress we experience are just physical sensations. That reactive urge to do something, to escape, to avoid, to withdraw, to attack are normal body reactions. We can learn to notice the physical sensations and notice our impulsive urges to react. Rather than reacting in the old way, we can acknowledge the fact that these are normal responses, and choose not to react, but simply to let it be. We can imagine we are going through a tunnel or sitting out the storm, and accept that it is as it is, it will pass.



# Meditation, Mindfulness & Breathing

As the number of Coronavirus cases increases, feelings of anxiety, stress and worry increases alongside it. Short-term stress and anxiety can be part of a healthy range of emotional experiences, and at times can make us feel safe. However, when we experience stress with no break, it can burden our immune system and cause more problems like anxiety, depression and sleep disruption.

## Meditation

Meditation helps deactivate the emotional centre of the brain, which is responsible for reactivity that keeps us engaged in news cycles and fuels chronic stress. When we help our brains stay grounded, we can better engage the rational part of our brains. Meditation is simply training in awareness. You're not trying to shut-out or stop thoughts or feelings, you're learning to notice and observe them without judgement.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness and Meditation are different, but there is a relationship between the two. Mindfulness is the quality of being present and fully engaged with what we're doing in the moment, and not holding any judgement, whilst aware of our thoughts and feelings without being caught up in them. Reflect on how often you've eaten a meal and not really tasted it, or driven to work without really thinking about it. Time can pass by whilst our minds are elsewhere. One of the best ways to experience happiness and prevent stress is by living in the moment. We train this moment-to-moment attention through meditation, which then allows us to develop the skill of mindfulness so we can apply it to everyday life. Examples of mindfulness are:

- Washing your dishes mindfully e.g. noticing how your body feels standing at the sink, feeling the warm water flow through your hands. Picking up the first dish, notice it's weight, its texture and shape. Starting to scrub, smell the soap and if you notice your mind has wandered, simply bring it back to warm water.
- Bring awareness to the transition you make between spaces. When you leave one kind of space and enter another, e.g. through a doorway, pause, even for a second and take a breath. Be aware of the differences you may feel when you enter a new space.

**Note:** There are many more ways you can integrate meditation and mindfulness exercises into your daily routine & life. We've included links to resources at the end of this pack, so have a look and see what interests you. Bring some curiosity and give different methods a try at different times of the day, during different bouts of mood & feeling.

## Breathing and Relaxation

Your breath is one of your best tools to use against daily stress, frustration and angst. Controlled breathing can help lower blood pressure, promote feelings of calm and relaxation and relieve stress.

There are many different breathing methods that you could try, and apply throughout the day. An example is:

- 'Equal breathing' - some find this helpful before bed, and to help take your mind off of thoughts and distractions. Begin by sitting or lying down, and inhaling through your nostrils for 4 seconds, and then exhaling for 4 seconds. Focusing on your breath, and the sensation of air coming in and going out. Once you try and test this method, you can increase the count to 6-8 seconds.

'Progressive Muscle Relaxation' Close your eyes and focus on tensing and relaxing each muscle group for 2 to 3 seconds. Start with your feet and toes, and then move up to your knees, thighs, glutes, chest, arms, hands, neck, jaw, and eyes. Maintain deep, slow breaths the entire time. You can find helpful guided instructions for this on YouTube (search 'progressive muscle relaxation' or 'body scan').

# Have Some Fun

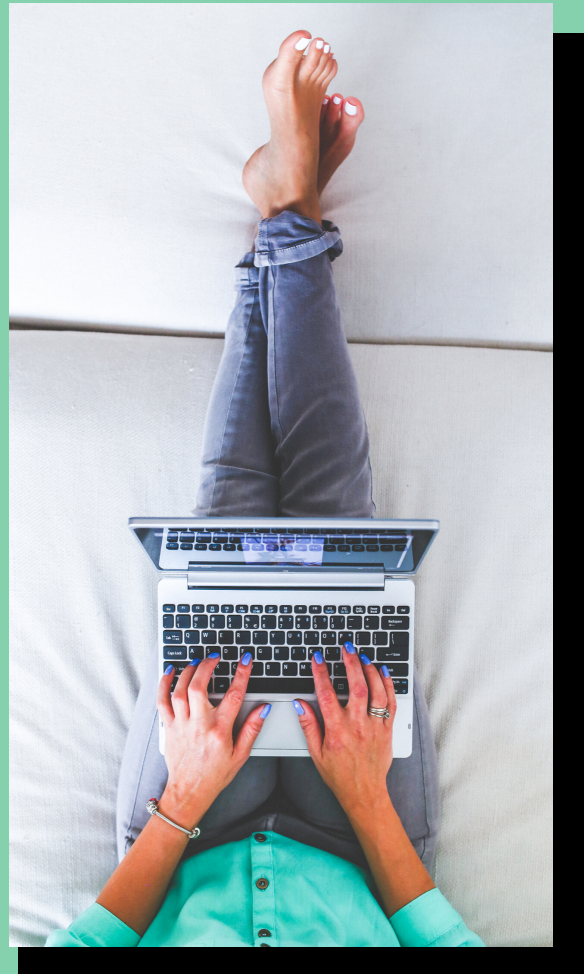


Just because you're restricted, doesn't mean that you can't have fun and make memories.

All you have to do is improvise!

- Learn a new language - there are lots of options online and on the App Store
- Workout - dance around the house, stream free daily workout videos online. Get your body moving and release those endorphins!
- Get creative - create a collage with old magazines etc. or do some art with whatever materials you have!
- Play games online with friends to stay connected
- Fancy dress video party with friends or family - dress up isn't just for Halloween.
- Cook/bake a new recipe - use the SuperCook app or myfridgefood.com for easy recipes using what you already have in your kitchen
- Knit a hat - or something else
- Have a movie night with pizza and popcorn
- Online karaoke session - you can't physically meet up with your friends but you can still deafen them with power ballads.
- Charades with the family
- Live stream a DJ set/stream a full festival set of your favorite artist and have a night out-in (for all those who have had their festival plans cancelled)





# Useful Links

A SELECTION OF HAND PICKED LINKS WE  
THOUGHT MAY BE OF USE

- <https://www.fetch.je> - "Fetch is the one stop marketplace for collection and delivery from local businesses."
- <https://www.thehappybroadcast.com> - "ANXIETY-FREE NEWS. A counter hate & fear project that features positive thoughts & news from around the world"
- <https://www.headspace.com> - Website and app for lessons on the fundamentals of meditation and mindfulness. Guided meditations tailored to anxiety, depression, acceptance and more.
- <https://yogawithadriene.com> - Hundreds of free videos guiding you through yoga sessions for all different interests/ailments/ability-levels.
- <https://www.skillshare.com> - Thousands of free classes featured on this platform.