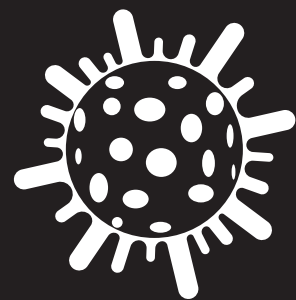


Responding to
COVID-19

mindfulnessclinic.ie



Symptoms of Coronavirus

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms of Coronavirus to appear.

The main symptoms to look out for are:

a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry

shortness of breath, breathing difficulties

fever (high temperature) or **chills**

Other symptoms are **fatigue, headaches, sore throat, aches and pains.**

www.hse.ie | www.who.int | www.cdc.gov



DO'S



Avoid crowded places



Cover nose or mouth when coughing or sneezing



Use alcohol-based sanitiser that has at least 60% alcohol



Avoid sharing utensils, water bottles and personal hygiene items

DON'TS



Hugging, kissing and shaking hands



Touching surfaces usually used by public (railings, doors)



Go out if you feel sick except to see your doctor



Panic buy and stockpile food



Staying Calm and Connected

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) has prompted unprecedented difficulties around the world. Sudden and unexpected events can elicit different emotions, uncertainty and catastrophic thinking. Sustained high anxiety can make it challenging to respond. The following suggestions, based on CBT and mindfulness, can help to manage the challenges during the pandemic crisis.

P

Presence

Practicing mindfulness, awareness of present moment experience.

Focusing on the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching).

Anchoring and calming mind and body through the breath and breathing meditation.

Grounding through the soles of the feet meditation.

Attention training by focusing attention, sustaining attention and open monitoring of experience (breath, soles of the feet meditation, body scan). Bringing mindfulness to everyday routine activities such as eating, brushing your teeth, showering, and walking.

A

Acceptance

Remember the art of mindfulness is allowing everything to be as it is. Other words for acceptance include, softening, opening, letting be, being with, allowing, staying with whatever is arising. Learn to tolerate uncertainty and dissatisfaction as our reactions to uncertainty fuel anxiety, panic and fear.

N

Nurture

Allow this time of slowing down to be an important appointment in your life. Practice self-care by getting plenty of sleep, eat a balanced diet, physical exercises to burn off extra energy, avoid alcohol and manage sugar cravings to keep moods balanced and at ease.

Remember resiliency is about bouncing back. Draw on the skills you have used in the past that have helped you manage difficult times, visualise yourself coping well. Draw a circle and write the things you can control or manage within the circle. Some ideas may include developing an action plan to decrease risk, practicing good hygiene and different activities that will enhance your mood. Wellbeing has two main components: feeling good and functioning well.

D

Discipline

One of the most significant challenges during a crisis is the deliberate practice of upholding structure and wellbeing. Discipline is beneficial to mental health for maintaining structure, sleep, diet, physical exercise, mindfulness, social connection, work, and relaxation. What you practice becomes stronger.

E

Empathy and Self-Empathy

Relationships are under more significant pressure during a crisis. One helpful response is mentalising, the practice of holding the other person in mind and by not losing perspective. Connect in with the other person, talk, communicate and share coping resources. Ask yourself the questions “what do I need right now?” and “how best can I take care of myself?” Choose to respond rather than reacting. Allow your empathy to hold in mind what the other person is experiencing and what they need.

M

Mastery

Take time to develop mastery, accomplishment, personal satisfaction and achievement to enhance mood positively. Align your days with structure and engagement. Remember aligning your mind to accomplishment, achievement and pleasant events is one of the most helpful ways to interrupt low mood, dissatisfaction and the lack of motivation.

I

Intention

Set an intention each day to establish structure, stability and safeness. An intention is a simple mindset and a valued action in realising your goals. Intention creates focus, vision and clarity of mind and behaviour.

C

Connection

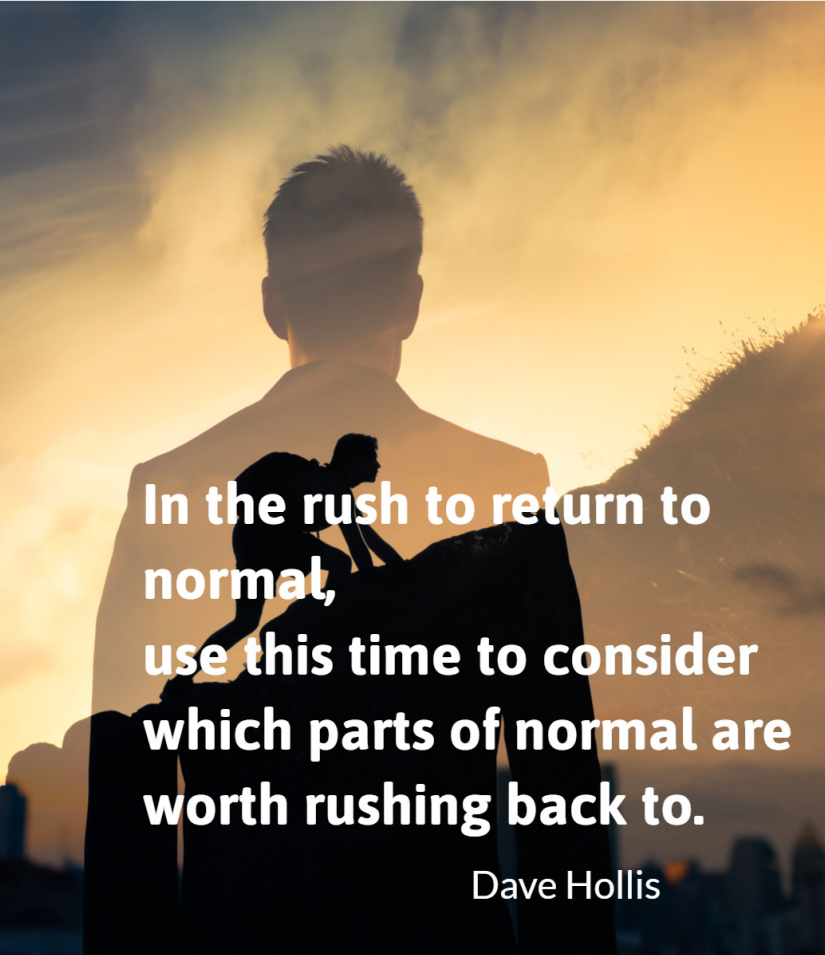
Connect in with your mind, body, the five senses, spirituality and nature.

Communicate with family and friends as you adapt to social distancing. Write a letter of appreciation to family members who you cannot meet. Alternatively, wish the person well through Metta/Loving Kindness.

Ten Ways to Manage Self-Care and Live Mindfully



1. **Meditation** (*body scan, mindful movement, sitting meditation*).
2. **Emotion Regulation** *using the 3-minute breathing space (3MBS), S.T.O.P, or simply putting on the pause button.*
 - S** Stop
 - T** Take a Breath
 - O** Observe what is happening in mind and body
 - P** Proceed with something that will help you
3. **Action Step**
Do one thing each day mindfully, connect in with accomplishment/mastery and savour pleasant and positive experiences.
4. **Awaken the senses** through curiosity, wonder, awe and play
5. **Be gentle and kind to yourself**
6. **Be gentle and kind to others**
7. **3 x 3 minutes** Sounds, Thoughts, Breathing (Joseph Goldstein)
3 minutes each day being present to sounds and hearing
3 minutes each day awareness of thoughts and thinking
3 minutes each day being mindful of breath and breathing
8. **C.A.L.M practice by focusing on**
 - C** Chest
 - A** Arms
 - L** Legs
 - M** Mind
9. **Intention practices in the morning and the G.L.A.D. exercise towards the end of the day.**
GLAD: reflect over your day and recall and visualise moments of...
 - G** Gratitude
 - L** Learning
 - A** Accomplishment
 - D** Delight
10. **Remember when you cannot go outside, go inside.**



In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to.

Dave Hollis

Gratitude

Science suggests that expressing gratitude boosts your health and spreads happiness. Gratitude may help in recovery from depression and anxiety: Wong, Owen, Gabana & Gilman (2015) and may help health care professionals to manage perceived stress and depression (Cheng, Tsui & Lam (2015).

“Gratitude is a vaccine, an antitoxin, and an antiseptic.”

John Henry Jowett, 1864

INTENTION PRACTICE A Precious Human Life

Every day, think as you wake up,
Today I am fortunate to have woken up,
I am alive, I have a precious human life.
I am not going to waste it
I am going to use
All my energies to develop myself.
To expand my heart out to others,
To achieve insight for the benefit of all beings.
I am going to have kind thoughts towards others,
I am not going to get angry, or think badly about others,
I am going to benefit others as much as I can.

H.H. The XIV Dalai Lama

Habits of thinking need not be forever. One of the most significant findings in psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think.

Martin Seligman, 2012

The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.

William James, 1879

Loving Kindness and Compassion

The practice of Metta/Loving Kindness can help to cultivate compassion, equanimity and wholesome states of mind that transforms the automatic negative thoughts that fuel anxiety, panic, fear and blame during times of stress and difficulty. During this time of crisis, reciting words of Loving Kindness to our family, friends, neighbours, to people who are struggling (with health, homelessness, financial difficulties, uncertainty), to our frontline staff (nurses, doctors, police, care attendants), to ourselves and humanity

Loving Kindness

May I be well
May I be free from suffering
May I be happy
May I be at peace.

Equanimity

Breathing in, I calm my body
Breathing out, I calm my mind
May I be balanced
May I be at peace

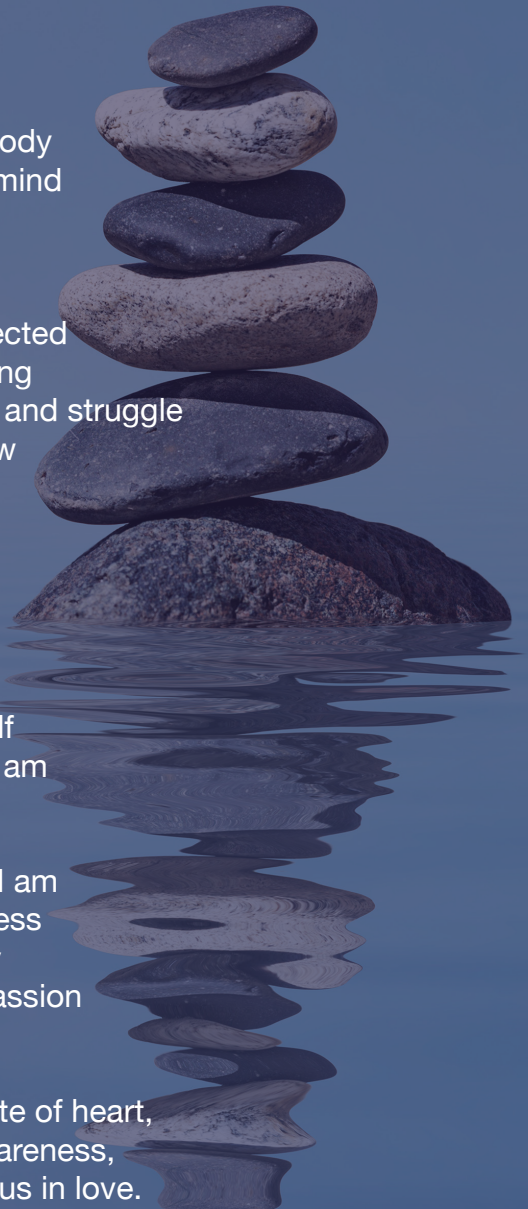
May I feel calm and connected
May I feel safe and strong
May I breathe through uncertainty and struggle
May I be here right now
Gerry Cunningham

Compassion

May I be safe
May I be peaceful
May I be kind to myself
May I accept myself as I am
Christopher Germer

May I love myself just as I am
May I sense my worthiness
May I live with dignity
May I hold myself in compassion
Jack Kornfield

May I live this day compassionate of heart,
Clear in word, gracious in awareness,
Courageous in thought, generous in love.
John O'Donohue



Observing and Describing Emotions

Focus on rational responses and wise mind rather than emotional and automatic reactions. Describe and allow your feelings. Remember the average emotion lasts about 30 to 90 seconds. Ask yourself “what do I need right now?” or “how best can I take care of myself?”

- 1. What is the name of your primary emotion?**
Surprise, Anger, Shame, Interest, Fear, Disgust, Sadness, Happiness
Now, rate the intensity of that emotion from 0-10:
- 2. What was going on in the environment (prompting event) or what were you thinking when you began to have this emotion?**
- 3. What are your assumptions or projections about this situation or feeling? What are you telling yourself about this emotion?**
- 4. What sensations do you notice in your body with this emotion?**
(Notice the changing sensations of your breath, heart rate, face, stomach, chest, legs, throat, neck, head, muscles).
- 5. What is your body language with this emotion** *(posture, facial expression, gestures)?*
- 6. What is your automatic reaction or impulsive behaviour with this emotion? What do you feel like doing or avoiding?**
- 7. What will be the outcome of skilful behaviour or responsive action?**

“If we winter this one out, we
can summer anywhere”

Seamus Heaney



Recommendations

What if thoughts: Pay attention to “what if” thinking which fuels anxiety and panic. The mind wanders 46.9% of the time into the past (ruminations) and into the future (projections). Keep things in perspective and train your brain to return to the present moment. Remember the impermanence of change - nothing is fixed, enduring and stable.

Limit social media influences and avoid anxiety-provoking news. Get the facts and gather the information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precaution. Check-in with www.who.int or www.cdc.gov

Reach out: Do not be anxious about seeking professional help from a counsellor, therapist or mental health professional. Most therapists are adapting to this crisis by offering online therapy via Skype, Zoom or by telephone. Support vulnerable people in your locality by telephoning, shopping or providing support. Stay in contact with your family, friends and other supports.

Children: Promote play, creativity, structure and routine. Reassure them that they are safe, encourage your children to express their worries and anxieties and teach coping skills.

Self-Quarantine: Keep in contact with family and friends via social media, telephone, Skype or Zoom. Enhance self-care by maintaining structure, routine, mastery, creativity, play and positive or pleasant events. Allow this time to be a time of growth and learning by keeping yourself busy through reading, writing, films, games, relaxation, exercise and habit releasers as you develop new skills and resources in managing your response to COVID-19.

