

Taking care of our psychological wellbeing during COVID 19.

1. TRY TO REMEMBER, especially when we are feeling sad and scared, that we can nearly always try to influence how we think, feel and respond. Right now we all need to decide to try especially hard to influence our thoughts and feelings about all that matters to us and our society, and to help others do that too. This has a good chance of helping us feel less anxious, less sad, and less out of control.
2. LIST WHATS IMPORTANT TO PROTECT - make a list of what you don't want to be lost or damaged during this crisis, and keep referring to it. If it's your marriage, you really can decide to argue a bit less. If it's your fitness, you can decide to clear some time to exercise.
3. SLOW DOWN - try to slow down and catch up with thoughts and feelings, several times a day. Try to make that a routine, and schedule it. That only takes a few minutes each time, and should help us be less anxious.
4. THREE THINGS - every day, think of three things that have gone quite well – and do that with a friend, colleague or loved one if possible. Make that a routine. It takes only 5 minutes, and has a good chance of improving your mood.
5. BUDDY Up - make a “getting through it” buddy, and also reach out to someone else who may not have a buddy. That will make it easier to stick to your plan.
6. CONSCIOUSLY switch off sometimes from emails, news, social networking. It's hard to do but it's really worth it.
7. BE KIND TO YOURSELF - decide to do what you know is good for you (even if you don't always feel like it) – exercise, reading, listening to music, cooking, sleeping, TV, chocolate. We all need to be really kind to ourselves.
8. DECIDE not to do what is destructive for you and others even if you feel tempted. At times like this we need to take extra care.
9. EXPRESS GRATITUDE - make a conscious effort every day to say please and thank you much more often than usual. This will help your mood and that of those around you.
10. HELP OTHERS – it's a win-win – both you and they will feel better.
11. DON'T be harsh on yourself if you feel you have let yourself down. At times like this we will all do that or feel that several times every day, and in this crisis we will have so many opportunities to try to do a little bit better tomorrow.
12. JUST BE “GOOD ENOUGH”. Not every problem is our responsibility. And for those which are, we can only try our best, with the resources we have.
13. TRY TO BE CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS - Even if we follow all this advice, we will still have many scary and unpleasant feelings. Don't fight those feelings – they too

will pass. Instead, observe yourself, and become an expert on your own stress response and your own survival techniques.

14. IMAGINE LIFE AFTER - we have to live from day to day, as the issues are not going away anytime soon. But it can also be very helpful to imagine life after this, and the things that we will all enjoy and appreciate doing when this too has passed. I call this approach “short term realism, long term optimism”.

15. CHOOSE from these suggestions the top 3 strategies you could put in place daily that you know are things that support your well-being and you want to do consciously? Of course it doesn't have to just be three.

And please add to this list all those other things that work for you, and share them.

If we can apply at least some of these ideas and techniques several times a week, there is a good chance that it will help us feel less sad and less out of control, and will lift our mood and that of those around us, and even help us make better decisions. They are designed and proven to “take the edge off” and help us cope better.