



Central and  
North West London  
NHS Foundation Trust

# 'FACE COVID'

How to respond effectively  
to the Corona crisis



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Abridged by Dr Ryan Kemp, 19 March 2020



*Wellbeing for life*

'FACE COVID' is a set of practical steps for responding effectively to the Corona crisis, using the principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).

**F**ocus on what's in your control

**A**cknowledge your thoughts and feelings

**C**ome back into your body

**E**ngage in what you're doing

**C**ommitted Action

**O**pening up

**V**alues

**I**dentify resources

**D**isinfect and distance physically

# F

## Focus on what's in your control

The Corona crisis can affect us in many different ways: physically, emotionally, economically, socially, and psychologically. All of us are (or soon will be) dealing with the very real challenges of widespread serious illness and the inabilities of healthcare systems to cope with it, social and community disruption, economic fallout and financial problems, obstacles and interruptions to many aspects of life... and the list goes on.

And when we are facing a crisis of any sort, **fear and anxiety are inevitable**; they are normal, natural responses to challenging situations infused with danger and uncertainty.

It's all too easy to get lost in worrying and ruminating about all sorts of things that are out of your control: what might happen in the future; how the virus might affect you or your loved ones or your community or your country or the world – and what will happen then – and so on.

And while it's completely natural for us to get lost in such worries, it's not useful or helpful. Indeed the more we focus on what's not in our control, the more hopeless or anxious we're likely to feel.

So the single most useful thing anyone can do in any type of crisis – Corona-related or otherwise – is to:  
**focus on what's in your control.**



# A

## Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings

Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is 'showing up' inside you: thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, sensation, urges. Take the stance of a curious scientist, observing what's going on in your inner world.

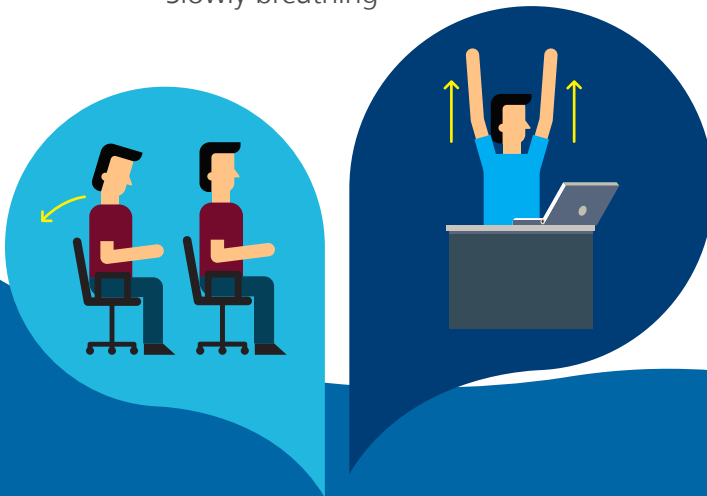
And while continuing to acknowledge your thoughts and feelings, also...

# C

## Come back into your body

Come back into and connect with your physical body. Find your own way of doing this. You could try some or all of the following, or find your own methods:

- Slowly pushing your feet hard into the floor
- Slowly pressing your fingertips together
- Slowly straightening up your back and spine; if sitting, sitting upright and forward in your chair
- Slowly stretching your arms or neck, shrugging your shoulders
- Slowly breathing



# E

## Engage in what you're doing

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing.

Find your own way of doing this. You could try some or all of the following suggestions, or find your own methods:

- Look around the room and notice five things you can see
- Notice three or four things you can hear
- Notice what you can smell or taste or sense in your nose and mouth
- Notice what you are doing
- End the exercise by giving your full attention to the task or activity at hand

# C

## Committed Action

Committed action means effective action, guided by your core values; action you take because it's truly important to you; action you take even if it brings up difficult thoughts and feelings. Once you have dropped anchor, using the ACE formula, you will have a lot of control over your actions – so this makes it easier to do the things that truly matter.

What are simple ways to look after yourself, those you live with, and those you can realistically help? What kind, caring, supportive deeds you can do?

Repeatedly throughout the day, ask yourself 'What can I do right now – no matter how small it may be – that improves life for myself or others I live with, or people in my community?' And whatever the answer is – do it, and engage in it fully.



## Opening up

Opening up means making room for difficult feelings and being kind to yourself. Difficult feelings are guaranteed to keep on showing up as this crisis unfolds: fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, guilt, loneliness, frustration, confusion, and many more.

We can't stop them from arising; they're normal reactions. But we can open up and make room for them: acknowledge they are normal, allow them to be there (even though they hurt), and treat ourselves kindly.

Remember, self-kindness is essential if you want to cope well with this crisis – especially if you are in a caregiver role. If you've ever flown on a plane, you've heard this message: 'In event of an emergency, put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others.'

**Self-kindness is your own oxygen mask; if you need to look after others, you'll do it a whole lot better if you're also taking good care of yourself.**

# V

## Values

Committed action should be guided by your core values: What do you want to stand for in the face of this crisis? What sort of person do you want to be, as you go through this? How do you want to treat yourself and others? Your values might include love, respect, humour, patience, courage, honesty, caring, openness, kindness .... or numerous others.

What are kind, caring ways you can treat yourself as you go through this? What are the kind ways you can treat others who are suffering? What are the kind, caring ways of contributing to the wellbeing of your community? What can you say and do that will enable you to look back in years to come and feel proud of your response?

# I

## Identify resources

Identify resources for help, assistance, support, and advice. This includes friends, family, neighbours, health professionals, emergency services. And make sure you know the emergency helpline phone numbers, including psychological help if required.

Also reach out to your social networks. And if you are able to offer support to others, let them know; you can be a resource for other people, just as they can for you.

# D

## Disinfect and distance physically

I'm sure you already know this, but it's worth repeating: disinfect your hands regularly and practice as much social distancing as realistically possible, for the greater good of your community. And remember, we're talking about physical distancing – not cutting off emotionally.

This document is also available in other languages, large print, Braille, and audio format upon request. Please email [communications.cnwl@nhs.net](mailto:communications.cnwl@nhs.net)

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضاً بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبصيغة سمعية عند الطلب

## Arabic

این مدرک همچنین بنا به درخواست به زبانهای دیگر، در چاپ درشت و در فرمت صوتی موجود است.

## Farsi

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে, ব্রেল এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধ পাওয়া যায়

## Bengali

Dokumentigaan waxaa xitaa lagu heli karaa luqado kale, daabacad far waa-wayn, farta indhoolaha (Braille) iyo hab dhegaysi ah markii la soo codsado.

## Somali

Mediante solicitação, este documento encontra-se também disponível noutras línguas, num formato de impressão maior, em Braille e em áudio.

## Portuguese

நீங்கள் கேட்டுக்கொண்டால், இந்த ஆவணம் வேறு மொழிகளிலும், பெரிய எழுத்து அச்சிலும் அல்லது ஒலிநாடா வடிவிலும் அளிக்கப்படும்.

## Tamil

Este documento también está disponible y puede solicitarse en otros idiomas, letra grande, braille y formato de audio.

## Spanish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w formacie audio.

## Polish

આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી બીજી ભાષાઓ, મોટા છાપેલા અક્ષરો અથવા ઓડિઓ રચનામાં પણ મળી રહેશે.

## Gujarati

Be belge istenirse, başka dillerde, iri harflerle, Braille ile (görme engelliler için) ve ses kasetinde de temin edilebilir.

## Turkish