

Coronavirus

10 tips to maintain a positive mindset during COVID-19

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COVID-19

Over the course of the coming weeks more and more of us may have to self-isolate as a protective measure to curb the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

This article aims to provide tips and hints to support the maintenance of a positive mindset and safeguard general wellbeing during this time.

1 Remember that you are not alone in your feelings

Very often, recognising we are not alone in our feelings can have a positive impact on our emotional wellbeing. Knowing that many others are also feeling anxious or uncertain can alleviate our worry that there is something wrong with us, or our ability to cope. Unexpected events, particularly those that throw-off our usual routine or functioning can often lead to increased anxiety. Identifying the reason for our feelings is a great way to ground ourselves and focus on acceptance and overcoming.

2 Focus on what you can control

Being asked to self-isolate or practice social distancing, not being able to see friends or family, working from home whilst also juggling childcare can all impact our sense of control over our daily lives. In order to cultivate and maintain a positive mindset in the midst of what can feel like chaos it is important to focus on the things you can control. Controlling how you react and respond to situations as they unfold can make all the difference to your sense of wellbeing.

3 Put some distance between the situation and your reaction

Very often we react to situations immediately and from an emotional place. Taking a few moments before responding is crucial. I would encourage you to take three deep breaths, and ask yourself what are my options here?

Whilst that may sound simple, the best mindset tactics often are. Deep breathing brings calm to our whole being and allows us to think more clearly. We also need to remind ourselves that we can handle the situation in different ways, and we are not stuck. This reduces feelings of anxiety which have a tendency to make us feel overwhelmed and unsure what to do next.

4 Embrace Stress

Everything that we have been taught about stress is wrong, and research has now proved it. Stress is only bad for your health if you believe that it is. Individuals who are able to find the value and meaning in their stress do not suffer ill health effects from stress.

This shift in mindset results in us embracing stress, because we realise that if there was no stress life would also have no meaning or value. And when we embrace stress our body changes its response to it. I would encourage you to watch Kelly McGonigal's incredible TED talk – how to make stress your friend.

5 Accept and overcome anxiety

A little anxiety can be a good thing, it prepares us for action. Too much anxiety can be debilitating and make our world feel small. I want to make sure that despite social isolation your world feels big. The first way to do this is to accept our feelings of anxiety instead of struggling against them. This reduces the accompanying feelings we can often experience such as anger, shame or guilt about our anxiety.

In order to overcome anxiety, it is important to recognise that you are not your feelings. So instead of saying I am anxious, start saying I feel anxious. It's about accepting the feeling without letting it define who you are. This one small change can have a big impact on your mindset.

Continued overleaf...



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6 Limit your news and social media consumption

Whilst it's useful to be informed, too many negative news stories and social media updates can have a profound impact on our mindset. We become consumed with negativity leading to feelings of panic and hopelessness. Limit your news and social media consumption to one hour a day in order to safeguard your wellbeing, and free up your time to positively invest in yourself.

7 Invest in yourself

Wherever possible find some time to invest in yourself over the coming weeks. More time at home doesn't have to mean more time in front of the telly or scrolling social media. Is there a book you've been wanting to read for a while, or a hobby you haven't had time to invest in? Is there a skill you would like to master or an online course you'd like to complete? Broadening our knowledge and skills in a variety of ways is an excellent way to cultivate and maintain a more positive mindset. The process of learning boosts our self-esteem, self-confidence and our sense of purpose.

8 Make a daily plan

A wasted day plays havoc with our positivity. Make a daily plan that includes regular breaks. Get up, move around, engage in a home workout or a brisk walk around the block (as per Government guidance you can leave the house for a short walk if you practice social distancing). Observe regular break/lunchtimes and make sure to eat a nutritious meal. Finally, try and separate your 'workday' from your 'home time' in order to maintain your evenings as your own.

9 Physical isolation doesn't have to mean social disconnection

Social connectedness is vital for wellbeing and whilst it will certainly be a challenge over the next few months it is not an impossibility. Arrange regular telephone/facetime/skype catchups with friends and loved ones. Talking about how you and others are feeling is important but please try as much as possible to talk about things other than COVID-19!

When I feel anxious or overwhelmed about a particular issue, I like to give myself permission to rant it out for no more than five minutes before moving onto something else. This supports the maintenance of a positive mindset by reducing our ability to dwell on negativity and instead acknowledge the positive things that have also happened that day.

10 Be kind and be helpful

Difficult and challenging times very often bring communities together, increase personal resilience and promote personal growth. As much as possible over the coming months we should practice kindness to ourselves and towards others. One of the best ways to maintain a positive mindset in times of difficulty is to help others. Identifying a bigger than self goal for the next few months can connect us to our core values, and this enhances our sense of purpose, positivity and gratitude in times of uncertainty.

Information kindly provided by
Mindset Matters



Please contact us at
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