

## COVID-19 - Response and Responsibility

Sat 28 March 2020



## Self-care

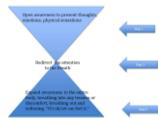
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## Mindfulness practice

- ❖ Pause
- ❖ **Bringing your awareness to the here and now**, with kind attention, no judgement
- ❖ What am I thinking
- ❖ What am I feeling
- ❖ What am I noticing in my body



## Acknowledge that we are affected

- ❖ Acknowledge that this is a difficult time for us as professionals as well.
- ❖ Most of the time we have a sense of structure of our lives and all sorts of plans in our diaries, all of this is off the table for now, we don't know how this will unfold and naturally this brings anxiety for all of us.
- ❖ It is really important to being aware that we are in this with our clients

## Compassion for ourselves and others is needed

- ❖ There is a common humanity aspect to it, the way we are in it all together → **this new reality is being shared by all of us**
- ❖ And it is also affecting each of us specifically.
  - We all of our own association with wellbeing, aloneness, our own fears and coping mechanisms.
  - Understanding how this crisis is ducktailing with each of our own familial and cultural history is important.

## Reminder - Simple strategies

Looking after your **basic needs** is vital.

- ❖ Making sure you eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, exercise, connecting with family and friends and engaging in your hobbies, fun and pleasurable activities.
- ❖ Anxiety and the release of stress hormones can weaken our immune system and exacerbate physical symptoms.
- ❖ Breathing and mindfulness techniques can help you relax.
- ❖ Remind yourself we can go out into nature (healing effect)

## Reminder - Move your body

Even if you are in a confined space you can do the following, for example

- ❖ Jumping jacks, push-ups
- ❖ Skipping rope
- ❖ Stretching, Tai Chi
- ❖ Chair yoga
- ❖ Youtube exercise videos

## Set up (new) routines

- ❖ How to spend time with family in a meaningful way (*negotiate shared space and time together*);
- ❖ Attempt to have a dedicated physical workspace
- ❖ Think about how you can use the time and work with your energy levels
  - Projects to make my life more organized / manageable / efficient /enjoyable
  - Projects I enjoy or want to explore, but haven't had time for during day-to-day life

## Set up (new) routines

- ❖ Devote part of every day to self-care
- ❖ Allow for a dedicated worry time → establish a particular time for your worries, set a timeframe and stick to it → it might be helpful to write your worries down and put them in a “safe container” or “worry box”.
- ❖ Do problem solving on what you have agency over, and develop a plan

## Grounding strategies

- ❖ Bi-lateral movements
  - Crossing the midline activities (e.g. cross-crawl)
  - Lazy eight (can be drawn as well)
- ❖ EMDR music / bilateral sounds
  - For example (*Brainspotting: BioLateral Sound Healing David Grand, PhD*)
  - Panning from left to right



## Being with Uncertainty

“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”

Viktor Frankl.

## Approach to uncertainty - Kelly McGonigal, PhD

- ❖ Give yourself permission to feel whatever you are feeling (*anger, fear, frustration, loss*) because as you know our need/want to control is about avoiding these feelings, so allow yourself to feel whatever is difficult

### Approach to uncertainty - Kelly McGonigal, PhD

- ❖ shift focus to the choices you have control over -
  - you can choose, **WHAT you want to bring to this situation** (e.g. courage, being resourced, asking for support, establish peer support, helping others),
  - **WHO do you want to be in this situation** - we can't control this situation, but we can choose who we want to be in this situation, and we can choose to bring compassion both to our clients and to ourselves

### Approach to uncertainty - Kelly McGonigal, PhD

- ❖ By asking “*What can you choose?*” we increase the awareness of our internal resources.
- ❖ It is a great way to reframe and think about what we **CAN** do during these difficult times

### Approach to uncertainty - Kelly McGonigal, PhD

We can choose lots of things:

- ❖ Think of previous challenges you have overcome.
- ❖ Ask yourself: “*How can I make use of this situation for myself and others?*”
- ❖ Create a sense of community - connect with others.
- ❖ Help another/be compassionate
- ❖ Pause, slow down, breath, relax, reflect - as clear thinking & compassion goes off-line when we are anxious (fight/flight)

### Ways of coping

- ❖ Draw on previous challenges you have overcome
- ❖ We all have different styles of coping (*1 day at a time, what has to happen in this hour, this day*) → **what is your personal strategy?**
- ❖ Be compassionate to yourselves - we might feel split between caring for ourselves, family and friends and our clients as well

## With our clients

- ❖ DON't get drawn into sharing Covid-19 news - *did you hear what happened here*, with your clients and supervisees.
- ❖ Talking about it to a certain degree is Ok to establish a sense of connection but spending all the time together on this is not helpful.

## With our clients

- ❖ We need to educate ourselves because sometimes our clients are seeking information
- ❖ and one of the ways to help with anxiety is share the information we have for example what's known on safety procedures (*e.g. wash your hands - for 20 seconds in soap and warm water, keep distance*)
- ❖ direct them to official information sites

## Remind yourselves

As counsellors and psychotherapists you have demonstrated over and over again that you are

- ❖ Resourceful
- ❖ Creative
- ❖ Adaptive
- ❖ Resilient
- ❖ And have lots of helpful strategies you teach your clients



## References

Kulkarni, C., & Khandale, S. R. (2019). Effect of brain gym exercises on the attention span in young adults. *International Journal for Advance Research and Development*, 4(4), 71-75.

<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/audio/index.php.en> (free mindfulness meditation)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu\\_kSaFzSR0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu_kSaFzSR0) (BioLateral Sound Healing David Grand, PhD)

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/TheContainer.pdf> (Container script)