

FACE - Coping strategies

F = Focus on what's in your control



Fear and anxiety are inevitable for everyone in this current situation; these are normal, natural responses to challenging situations that feel uncertain and worrying.



You can't control what happens in the future. You can't control Coronavirus itself or the world economy or how the government manages the situation. We have far more control over our own behaviour. You can control what you do – here and now – and that can make a huge difference.



When a big storm blows up, the boats in the harbour drop anchor – because if they don't, they'll get swept out to sea. Dropping anchor doesn't make the storm go away but it can hold a boat steady in the harbour, until the storm passes in its own good time.



We are all going to experience 'emotional storms' during this crisis: these might include unhelpful thoughts spinning inside our head and uncomfortable or painful feelings whirling around our body. If we start to feel swept away by that storm inside us, one initial, practical step is to 'drop anchor', using the simple ACE guide.

A =
Acknowledge
your thoughts
and feelings



C =
Come back into
your body



E =
Engage in what
you're doing



You can run through this ACE cycle slowly and peacefully 3 or 4 times. Please turn over to find out more!

A = Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings

Silently and kindly acknowledge your thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, sensation, urges.

Try to take the stance of a curious scientist, observing what's going on in your inner world.



For example, you might notice, "I am thinking that something bad is going to happen, which is making me feel scared and sick".



C = Come back into your body



Remaining aware of your thoughts and feelings, connect with your physical body. You could try some or all of the following, or find your own methods:

- Slowly push your feet onto the floor.
- Slowly straighten up your back and spine; if sitting, sitting upright and forward in your chair.
- Slowly press your fingertips together
- Slowly stretch your arms or neck, shrugging your shoulders.
- Slowly breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 1-2-3-4



E = Engage in what you're doing

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

- Look around the room and notice 5 things you can see
- Notice 3 or 4 things you can hear
- Notice what you can smell or taste or sense in your nose and mouth



Try to have a go at this ACE cycle slowly 3 or 4 times.