

# NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

The COVID19 pandemic has dramatically and unexpectedly changed the landscape of how we go about our daily business. All aspects of our lives have been changed and impacted from work to family/ home/ parenting, our social lives, schooling and even how we buy our groceries. As a result, many people have experienced an impact on their mental health.

## Change is Inevitable.

Sometimes change can be positive for our life, but at other times, it can be painful and upsetting. Often the hardest changes to understand and adjust to are the ones that are unexpected and out of our control; much like the pandemic we find ourselves in. Changes of this magnitude can be difficult to come to terms with, but you will often find that your experience of them can be managed.


## Expecting the Unexpected.

Change means doing something different and, as such, most people will react with some degree of discomfort. Change can be difficult because it can challenge how we think, how we work, the quality of our relationships, and even our physical security or sense of identity. There can be many different reactions to change including:

- Shock and disorientation
- Anger, sadness, worry and other emotional responses
- Coming to terms with the "new normal"
- Acceptance and moving forward

## SMG Health are here for you 24/7 365 days a year

Contact us for a free confidential appointment with one of our professional and experienced counsellors.

 1800 273 865

 [areuok@smghealth.com.au](mailto:areuok@smghealth.com.au)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT SMG HEALTH ON 1800 273 865

# NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

## A Practical Tool for Responding to Change.

Managing and accepting change in the COVID19 Pandemic. Russ Harris (author of The Happiness Trap), has devised the 'FACE COVID' tool to assist adjusting to the "new normal". This is a set of practical steps for responding effectively to the change brought by the COVID19 crisis, using the principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). The following is taken from Russ Harris' FACE COVID ebook(1):



### F = Focus on what's in your control.

The single most useful thing anyone can do in any type of crisis, COVID19 related or otherwise, is to focus on what's in your control. You can't control what happens in the future. You can't control the Coronavirus itself, or the world economy, or how your government manages this whole sordid mess. And you can't magically control your feelings, eliminating all that perfectly natural fear and anxiety. But you can control what you do - here and now. And that matters. If you feel swept away by the storm of emotions inside of us, you can try the following strategy to attempt to 'drop the anchor' and try holding your ship steady in the harbour by using this ACE formula:



### A = Acknowledge your thoughts & feelings

Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is 'showing up' inside you: thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, sensations, urges. Take the stance of a curious scientist, observing



### C = Come back into your body

Come back into and explore or connect with your physical body. You could do this by slowly pushing your feet firmly into the floor, slowly pressing your fingertips together, sitting up straight in your chair and feeling your back and spine straighten.



### E = Engage in what you're doing

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing right in the very present here and now. You can find your own way of doing this or you could use a strategy like looking around the room and naming 5 things you can hear and see. Notice what you can smell or taste. Use all of your senses.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT SMG HEALTH ON 1800 273 865



# NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

## The Ace Cycle in Practice.

Ideally, run through the ACE cycle slowly 3 or 4 times, to turn it into a 2-3 minute exercise. This will help you get the hang of 'dropping the anchor' to assist in managing our feelings and emotions.

Following this ACE activity, the COVID portion is about other strategies to assist you to learn to open up and make room for difficult feelings (we all experience them) and learn to be kind to yourself about having them. You can explore committed actions around your values as a guide to dealing with this crisis.

As this crisis unfolds, there may be all sorts of obstacles in your life; goals you can't currently achieve, things you can't do, problems for which there are no simple solutions. But you can still live your values in a myriad of different ways, even in the face of all those challenges.

## Sources of Support

If you're not feeling like yourself, or are noticing signs that you're struggling, reach out for support sooner rather than later.

Here are some of the many sources available to you:

- ✓ You can contact us at SMG Health for free and confidential counselling and coaching on 1800 273 865.
- ✓ Make an appointment with your GP.
- ✓ If you are in crisis or worried about your safety, you can also call us at SMG Health (1800 273 865) or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

## Helpful Resources

Go to your SMG Health Wellness Gateway for information, support and guidance on adjusting to change - our COVID19 Adjustment Wheel is a personalised tool that has been designed to help you manage change and overcome challenges.

If you would like more information about Russ Harris' FACE COVID tool, it can be found at:  
[www.actmindfully.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FACE-COVID-eBook-by-Russ-Harris-March-2020.pdf](http://www.actmindfully.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FACE-COVID-eBook-by-Russ-Harris-March-2020.pdf)

More information about coping with the COVID19 pandemic in families and children can be found at:  
<https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT SMG HEALTH ON 1800 273 865