

F.A.C.E. C.O.V.I.D

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'FACE COVID' was developed as a way of responding effectively to the Coronavirus pandemic, using elements of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). This encourages individuals to accept their feelings and emotions rather than feel guilty for them. It works for common difficulties including stress, anxiety and low mood.

F = Focus on what's in your control

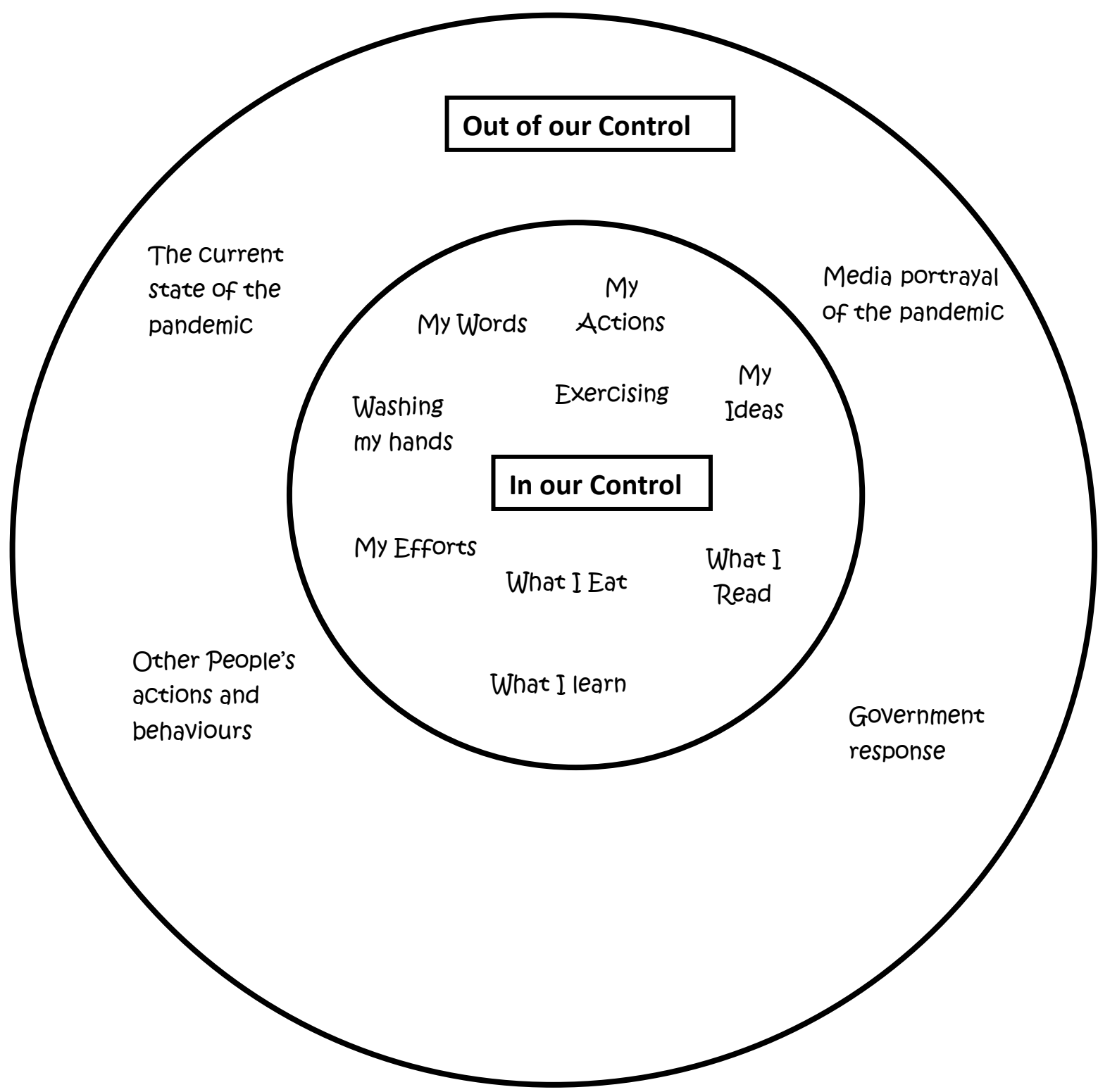
You can't control what happens in the future, but you can control *what you do* - here and now. This can make a huge difference to yourself, anyone living with you and a significant difference to the community around you.

The reality is, we all have far more control over our behaviour, than we do over our thoughts and feelings. So our number one aim is to take control of our behaviour - right here and now - to respond effectively to this crisis.

The Control Circle

The diagram below gives examples of things we can control to support us during the pandemic. The examples outside of the diagram represent things out of our control. Think about:

- What can you control?
- What you can't control? How is this affecting your well-being?



Out of our Control

The current
state of the
pandemic

Media portrayal
of the pandemic

My Words

My
Actions

Washing
my hands

Exercising

My
Ideas

In our Control

My Efforts

What I Eat

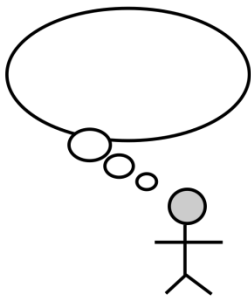
What I
Read

Other People's
actions and
behaviours

What I learn

Government
response

A = Acknowledge your thoughts & feelings



Take the stance of a curious scientist and observe what is going on in your inner world.....

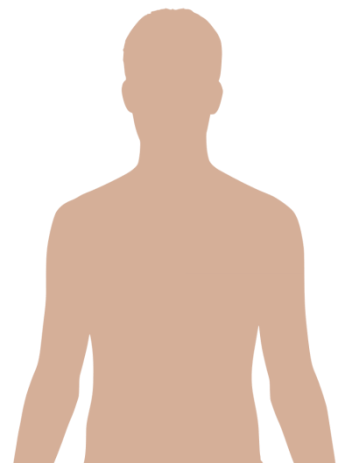
Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is 'showing up' inside you: thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, sensation, urges.

Use a notepad and write down what is going on and be honest with yourself.

C = Come back into your body

Come back into and connect with your physical body. You could try some or all of the following strategies or find your own methods:

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



Note: The aim is to remain aware of your thoughts and feelings and continue to acknowledge their presence. You are not trying to avoid, turn away, escape or distract yourself from what is happening, you are gaining as much control over your physical sensations as possible to support you.

E = Engage in what you're doing

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing. You could try some or all of the following suggestions, or you can find your own methods:

- Look around the room and notice something you can see (ideally try and find 5 things).
- Notice 3 or 4 things you can hear
- Notice what you can smell
- Notice what you can feel
- Notice what you can taste/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.

Further Support - <https://www.actmindfully.com.au/free-stuff/free-audio/>

This link allows you to download some free audio recordings of 'Dropping Anchor'. This is a useful skill for:

- Handling difficult thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, urges and sensations more effectively
- Switching off auto-pilot and engaging in life
- Grounding and steadying yourself in difficult situations
- Disrupting rumination
- Manage obsessing and worrying
- Focusing your attention on the task or activity you are doing.

Exercises vary from 1 minute to 11 minutes in length. You can listen, download or stream them to use as a guide to help you. The better you anchor yourself in the here and now, the more control you have over your actions – which makes it a lot easier to do the next steps:

COVID

C = Committed action

Committed action means effective action guided by your core values. These are actions you take because it's truly important to you; action you take even if it brings up difficult thoughts and feelings.

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

Think back to *The Control Circle* and focus on the things in your control rather than things out of your control.

O = Opening up

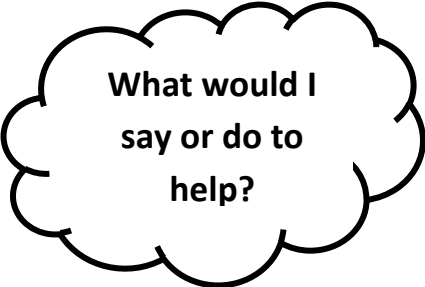
Opening up means making room for difficult feelings; these are guaranteed to continue showing up as the crisis unfolds. These can include fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, guilt, loneliness, frustration, confusion and many more.

These are normal reactions and we can't stop them from arising. What we can do is:


- Open up and make room for them
- Acknowledge they are normal
- Allow them to be there (even though they hurt)
- Be kind to ourselves

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

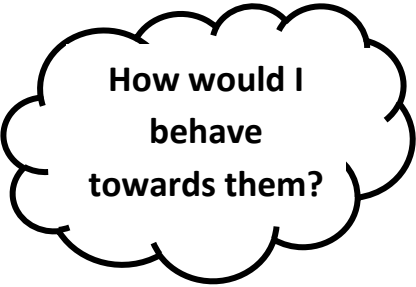
So ask yourself, 'If someone I loved was going through this experience, feeling what I am feeling – if I wanted to be kind and caring towards them.....



What would I
say or do to
help?



How would I
treat them?



How would I
behave
towards them?

Learn to treat yourself the same way and be compassionate towards yourself for what you can do.

V = Values

Committed action should be guided by your core values. Ask yourself:

- 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.

Look for ways to 'sprinkle' these values into your day. Let them guide and motivate your committed action and think about:

- What are kind, caring ways you can treat yourself as you go through this?
- What are kind words you can say to yourself?
- What are kind deeds you can do for yourself?
- What are kind ways you can treat others who are suffering?
- What are 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 can include your social networks (i.e. family, friends and neighbours) 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 during this time.

You can also reach out to health professionals, external services and emergency services. At the end of this booklet, we have included some contacts to support you.

One very important aspect of this process involves finding a *reliable and trustworthy* source of information for updates on the crisis and guidelines for responding to it.

D = Disinfect & distance

Although you are aware of this, it's worth mentioning the importance of disinfecting your hands regularly and following government guidance on social distancing as realistically as possible.

Just remember, it's important you don't cut off emotionally and reach out for support when you need to.

Remember.....

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