

# Helpful Tips for Emotional Health During COVID-19

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Once we are aware of our triggers and value system, we can begin to understand why we think what we do. Often we have **distorted thoughts** leading us to have more intense and unhelpful

feelings and behaviors. Our anxiety will take residence in these future thought patterns amplifying stress levels. By keeping a thought log and using the **3 Rational Questions** we can develop **Counter thoughts** that are based in reality, are true, goal oriented and helpful emotionally.

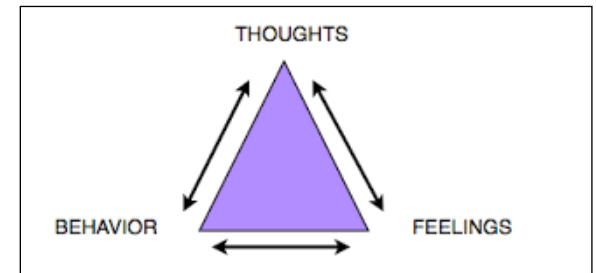
Consider the relationship between our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Then ask yourself, “am I in my **wise mind**, **reasonable mind** or **emotional mind**?”

Our goal is to remain in our wise mind and to have non-skewed thoughts.

For instance, a worry thought, “When I go back to work I am not safe anymore.” Can be changed to a realistic counter thought such as, “I will follow CDC guidelines and use

common sense as I go back into the workplace. I can still use precautions taken to limit my exposure to any illness in the community such as washing my hands. I will take this one day at a time.”

It helps to refocus our energy toward what we are grateful for, why we are choosing to do what we are doing and what we find has true meaning in our lives. Try writing a **gratitude list**.



## Mindfulness Tools

Mindfulness strategies can help us calm our mind by choosing what to focus on. This lowers stress hormones. One strategy is to focus on one thing at a time while taking a walk or sitting down. For instance, listen to one noise for the duration of a walk or focus on a song while bringing your attention back to the sound or music each time you find your mind thinking about something else.

## Reducing Vulnerability

Before engaging in your goals or challenging yourself, make sure that you address vulnerabilities **FIRST**. If you are tired-sleep, Hungry- Eat, Need to take medication- take them, & Address pain and physical discomfort. Then you are ready to use your tools.

## Goal Setting

Remember to set & focus on 3 types of goals each morning: Daily, Weekly and Monthly. Make sure they are realistic!

\***BOLD TERMS** can be googled to help you look more deeply into these therapeutic concepts.

\***PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT** is available to help you through this.

Live less out of habit  
and more out of intent

## The 3 Rational Questions

1. Is my thought based on FACT?
2. Is my thought helping me feel the way I want to feel?
3. Is my thought helping me reach my goal?

If NO to any one of these three questions, we must change our thought so that it meets each of the three rational questions as a YES.

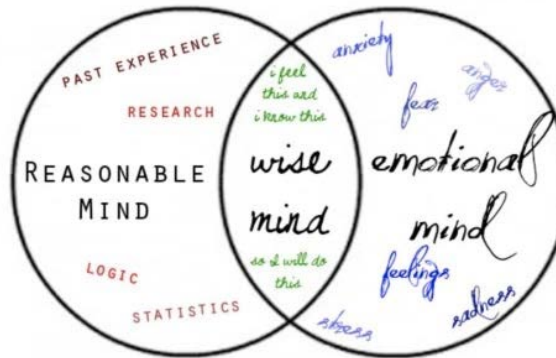
**For Example:** "I will come down with COVID-19 if I go to the supermarket or someone is too close to me. "

Since this is not a fact, does not help us feel the way we want to feel or help us achieve our goal, we must develop a counter thought.

"It is important to take safety measures so that I reduce my vulnerability to Covid-19, with these measures taken, I will prepare myself to the best of my ability to stay healthy and to keep my loved ones healthy. I must eat and this is a necessary risk to take."

## Managing anxiety when leaving the house

**W**orry will likely enter our mind as we begin to leave our homes again. This is to be expected. It may be helpful to spend time imagining what this experience will be like for you before



you actually leave the house. What **worry thoughts** enter your mind when you do this? Are you able to convert your worries into helpful or even neutral counter thoughts using the 3 rational questions? Continue using imagination until you are able to tackle your anxious mind by replacing anxious thoughts with realistic counter thoughts. We cannot eliminate all anxiety but we can manage it by using reality based thinking.

It may help to measure the intensity, frequency and duration of your worrisome thoughts on a scale of 1-10 as you begin addressing your fears. This will allow you to

see that over time your worries become less powerful. Repetition is key to developing these new **neural pathways** that can result in a lasting change in your emotional response to your triggers.

Eventually you will be ready to slowly take steps to integrate back into your daily routine by staying mindful of your thoughts and adjusting your thoughts to the triggers you encounter. Continue using **self care tools, soothing tools and coping tools**. These are the foundation of emotional wellbeing and stability.

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