
CONTINUING TO COPE WITH COVID-19

Rachel Schneider | LCSW | rachellcsw.com

While we do not have control over how we are impacted by Covid-19, many of us are choosing to take life-impacting precautions to better our chances of remaining Covid-19 negative. We are faced with competing choices of caring for our physical health and our mental health. In this Pandemic, making decisions often come at a cost to our emotional health or physical wellbeing. It appears that no choice is without a consequence.

What is certain is that if you have found yourself struggling, you are not alone. Most of us are experiencing emotional swings many times each day. This causes us to feel fatigued from the upheaval we have all faced in our lives- regardless of what our particular situation is. We feel isolated yet also choose to stay this way for the wellbeing of ourselves and others. We feel disillusioned about how the upcoming months will unfold yet at the same time remain hopeful that we will see progress and improvement. It has become a time of hypervigilance and worry but also a time that many of us have used to evaluate our home life, work life and priorities. We have spent this time reflecting.

Ten Survival Tips

- Practice reframing negative thoughts so that they are Neutral in nature. For instance: "I am so sick of being stuck at home, when will this ever end?" VS "I am fortunate to have a roof over my head and will call a friend or reach out online so that I do not feel as isolated."
- Set Long term, Middle term and Short term goals. Long term is 1 month, Middle term is 1 week, Short term is daily. By establishing goals, we feel more productive and motivated to move in a healthy direction. For instance: "This month I will work on eating at home more, This week I will make a menu for the week and Today I will purchase and prepare my food so that I can make my meals."
- Limit exposure to news sources and conversations with people in your life that are emotionally activating and trigger feelings of anger, despair, hopelessness and worry (other negative feelings as well) and try to replace these conversations and news watching with uplifting, educational and gratifying or neutral subjects.
- Get creative- consider engaging in projects, reading books, taking classes (Online) that you have not gotten to yet or think about something you have always wanted to try and see if it may be possible to work on this.
- Remember that most things do not last forever and that this too shall pass.
- Get outside, get dirty and try to enjoy the small pleasures that we are often too busy to notice.

Moving Forward

We have a critical decision to make. What will we choose? We can focus on each challenge as a compounded negative event OR focus on how we can continue to survive, overcome and successfully handle each of these challenges. As humans, we typically do not change unless we feel uncomfortable enough to do so. Consider the last time you made a significant change in your life. It is the same attribute that we can draw upon now. We are resilient and we are adaptable. I suspect you have already made many changes to adapt to Covid-19. We already have the tools we need to get through this. We simply must draw upon them and embellish them.

The psychological mission is not how to survive, but how to thrive with the ongoing nature of the Pandemic and other associated stressors.

- Call someone you have been meaning to call but never did
- Volunteer for a cause that is meaningful to you.
- Do something nice for someone else.
- Each morning establish your daily intention and mindset. For example: "Today will be a good day, I will focus on moving through my thoughts mindfully and will work on catching negative self talk and reframing it to be more neutral in nature. I will work on making my grocery list today and call my friend that I forgot to call back yesterday."

If today did not turn out the way you hoped for, try again tomorrow! If you need support, please reach out for help.

