

Coping Skills for “Crazy Times”

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Effects of:

Covid-19

Death of Mr. Floyd
by Police

Riots

Chronic state of fear made worse by watching news, social media and frequent fear-based conversations

Chronic state of loss

numbness, denial, outbursts, weight loss or gain

increased shock, preoccupation with thoughts, crying, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance- oversleeping/insomnia, irritability, self-criticism, yearning, guilt, physical symptoms- anxiety, difficulty breathing, sweating, nausea and vomiting

disorganization- confusion, depression, withdrawal, aimlessness, restlessness, apathy, feeling of unreality

These are all **normal reactions** to this abnormal experience. Our lives have been turned upside down. We need to acknowledge and work it through.

Events May Be Experienced as Traumatic

- ▶ **Violence**, the threat of violence, loss as a consequence of violence and structural violence all contribute to individual and community-level trauma.
- ▶ **Trauma** is caused by experiences or situations that are emotionally painful.
- ▶ **Violence** is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological or emotional harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.
- ▶ **Individual Trauma** can result in:
 - ▶ Re-experiencing- intrusive memories, nightmares, flashbacks, distress with reminders
 - ▶ Emotional numbing- dissociation, overuse of substances, food, anything that numbs
 - ▶ Avoidance- of thoughts or feelings and of external reminders
 - ▶ Increased arousal- irritability, aggression, exaggerated startle, difficulty sleeping/concentrating
- ▶ **Trauma resilience-** <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>
- ▶ **Community trauma-** <https://community-wealth.org/content/adverse-community-experiences-and-resilience-framework-addressing-and-preventing-community>

Mindfulness



Emotions can feel so unwanted and overwhelming that most of us have developed creative ways to numb and avoid.



Mindfulness is a practice which allows us to take a step back:

It is paying attention, in the here and now, without judgment.

It allows acceptance of what is, neither clinging to something nor pushing it away.



Once we stop fighting reality, pain is only pain, it is no longer suffering.

Emotions have a purpose:

- ▶ We need emotions to survive.
- ▶ We want to act on them if they fit the facts and it is effective to do so.
- ▶ They are physical events which have a beginning middle and an end.



Adapted from Skills Training Manual, Second Edition, Marsha Linehan, 2015 and Inside Out Movie

Need to Feel it to Heal it!

- Whenever you are seized by a strong emotion, stop what you are doing.
- Take a deep breath.
- Bring attention to your chest area.
- Observe what feeling you are having.
- Name the feeling 2-3 times gently/lovingly.



When fear takes over, people may:

- Avoid, withdraw, and isolate
- Struggle with sleeplessness, irritability, anxiety, muscle tension and panic
- Stop leaving their homes or engaging in community, even when it is safe to do so



When sadness takes over, people may:

- ▶ Isolate
- ▶ Cry for hours
- ▶ Stay in bed
- ▶ Stay up all night
- ▶ Stop caring for themselves or others



When anger takes over, people may:

- ▶ Attack and say/do things that push other people away
- ▶ Get physically aggressive
- ▶ Scream and yell to get their point across



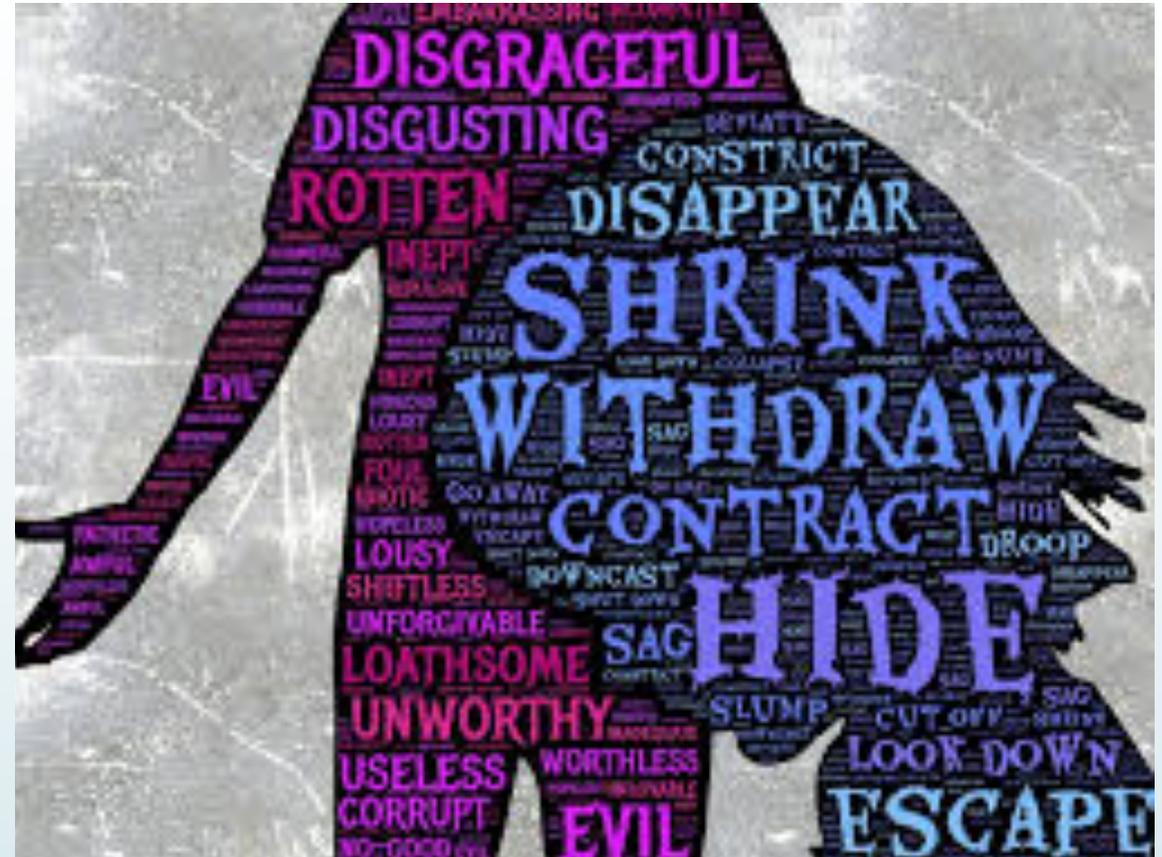
When disgust takes over, people may:

- ▶ Start feeling disgust for more things, including people
- ▶ Develop excessive cleaning/disinfecting behaviors
- ▶ Get very upset with family/others who are not keeping up with expectations
- ▶ Start avoiding things that are not contaminated



When shame/guilt take over, people may:

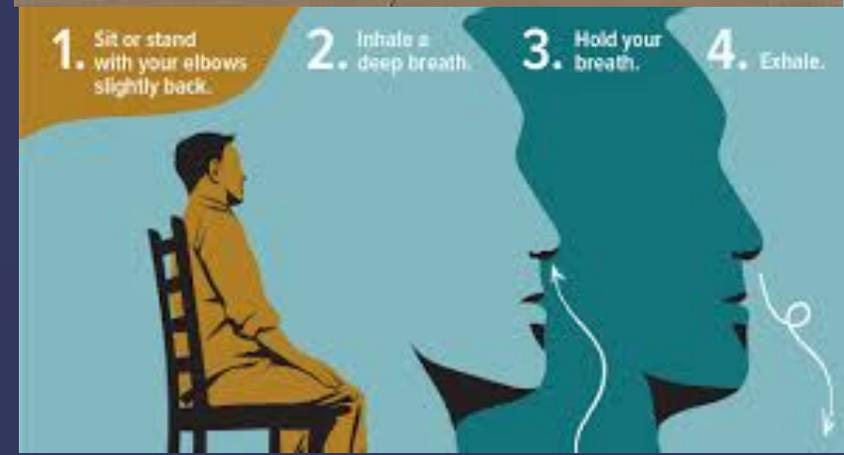
- ▶ Hide and withdraw
- ▶ Self-criticize
- ▶ Attack
- ▶ Blame other people as causes for their behavior



Managing Extreme Emotions

TIPP Skills for High Emotions

- Temperature- cold
- Intense exercise- 20 minutes
- Paced breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation



Mind Tricks to Change Your Biology

- ▶ Half smile- corners of mouth turned up slightly, with relaxed face and breathing, tells the brain that everything is okay.

- ▶ Willing hands- opening your hands in lap or by your side and breathing tells the brain that danger is over.

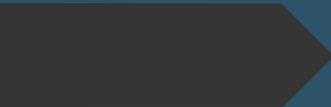


Fear – Am I in imminent danger? If no, approach feared situation.

Anger – Am I safe? If yes, gently avoid people in order to calm down.

Sadness – Find some time in day to allow sadness, then get active and find a purpose.

Shame/Guilt – Have I done something wrong? Do I need to apologize? If yes, then apologize and forgive yourself. If no, hold head up high, shoulders back and no apologies.



Check the facts:
Should I act on my emotion?

A dark grey arrow points to the right from the left edge of the slide. Below it, several thin, curved lines in shades of blue and grey sweep across the left side of the slide.

When bad things happen to us, people tend to have
3 unfortunate reactions:

Fight

Leads to self-criticism

Flight

Leads to self-isolation

Freeze

Leads to self-absorption

The antidote is:

**Self-
Compassion**

Whenever you notice you are in pain:

- 1- Give yourself kindness and care.
2. Remind yourself that pain is part of the human experience.
3. Hold your thoughts and emotions in mindful awareness, not clinging or pushing away.

Dr. Neff's Self-Compassion Practice

This is a moment of suffering. (Mindfulness)

Suffering is a part of life. (The Human Condition)

*May I be able to be kind to myself in the moment.
(Caring and Concern)*

*May I give myself the compassion I need. (Setting
your intention on self-compassion, affirming that
you are worthy of compassionate care.)*

Doorways To Self-Compassion

Loving-Kindness Meditation

Set aside some time in your day. Start with some deep breaths with your hands over your heart or in your lap.

- ▶ Picture yourself sitting in the chair. Feel the sensations in your body as you sit.
- ▶ Recall that every being wants to be free from suffering. Connect with that deep wish of yours and feel the warmth of that loving intention.
- ▶ Keep that image of yourself in your mind and repeat to yourself:

May I be safe.

May I be healthy.

May I live in peace.

May I live at ease.

- ▶ *You may shorten this to just a few words of your choice. Notice the sensations in your body as you continue your practice. When ready return back to the room.*



Validation

Everyone wants to feel heard!

When we are all cooped up in the same house, or if you are alone and talking with others, it is important to consider how others might be feeling.

Good relationships involve validating the people around you. Remember they are struggling too. Even though your situation might be worse, everyone is struggling right now.

Try to find some truth in how the other person is thinking or feeling, rather than judging how they should be feeling or behaving.

When we feel heard, our nervous system settles, and we are more open to listening and connecting with the other person.



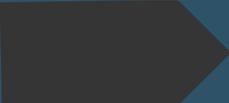
To Build Resilience

Try to:

- ▶ Maintain a daily routine
- ▶ Eat balanced meals
- ▶ Maintain a consistent sleep schedule
- ▶ Exercise daily/treat illness
- ▶ Get outside
- ▶ Connect with friends and family through creative distancing
- ▶ Feel your emotions and get on with your day
- ▶ Find a purpose
- ▶ Contribute time or resources to a cause or person
- ▶ Practice gratitude and mindfulness
- ▶ Practice self/other-compassion
- ▶ Recognize that we are all human
- ▶ Find meaning in the suffering
- ▶ Make lemonade out of lemons
- ▶ Accept reality as it is, rather than how you would like it to be

Try to avoid:

- ▶ Staying in your jammies all day, every day
- ▶ Staying up all night, sleeping all day or spending the whole day on TV, social media or video games
- ▶ Skipping meals or overdoing foods that don't fuel your body.
- ▶ Overusing alcohol, substances, or other behaviors to avoid your feelings
- ▶ Avoiding
- ▶ Judging or criticizing yourself for having emotions or making mistakes
- ▶ Blaming others or getting stuck in all or nothing thinking
- ▶ Stuffing emotions or pushing them away
- ▶ Over-watching or reading news about danger, danger, danger
- ▶ Invalidating yourself or other's emotions
- ▶ Comparing that someone has it worse so you shouldn't feel a certain way



Should I get help?

If you notice yourself or someone you care about struggling to get out of bed, function in their job or family, or start thinking that ***"It might be better if I'm not here"*** that is your sign **to reach out and get some help**

Reach out to your health insurance company to find a therapist or in **emergency call 911 or go to nearest ER.**

Try to encourage others to reach out to their doctor or insurance company. **If in imminent danger call 911.**

National Suicide Lifeline at 1-800-273-8355 or the Crisis Text Line in MN- text MN to 741741. For Washington, text HEAL to 741741.

If you or someone you loves is experiencing **domestic violence** **please call 1-800-799-7233.**

RESOURCES

MINDFULNESS APPS

- ▶ CALM, INSIGHT TIMER, HEADSPACE, TIME OUT—FAITH BASED- ABIDE, JESUS CALLING
- ▶ YOUTUBE HAS GREAT BREATHING AND RELAXATION EXERCISES AND YOGA.
- ▶ YOUTUBE ALSO HAS MINDFULNESS VIDEOS/APPS FOR CHILDREN (SITTING STILL LIKE A FROG) AND TEENS. SOME SCHOOLS ARE TRAINING CHILDREN IN MINDFULNESS AND YOGA

RESOURCES FOR SHAME

- ▶ BRENE BROWN- TED TALKS- LISTENING TO SHAME AND POWER OF VULNERABILITY, MANY BOOKS- JUST GOOGLE HER NAME AND
- ▶ PODCAST- UNLOCKING US, ALSO BY BRENE BROWN WITH FANTASTIC LISTENING AND LEARNING ABOUT GRIEF, SHAME, PERMISSION TO FEEL, OVER/UNDERFUNCTIONING, PERMISSION TO FEEL, ANXIETY, BOUNDARIES, HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST

LOVE MERCY, DO JUSTICE RESOURCES

- ▶ <https://salem-covenant.church/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/LMDJ-Salem-Logo-web.png>
- ▶ <https://covchurch.org/justice/engage-and-respond/?fbclid=IwAR0086fGluMoZQltjKeWM8RUcOZhnwx02fHprEEm9BCw02vJgnQH0cog5RE>
- ▶ http://mspmag.com/arts-and-culture/general-interest/how-to-support-the-twin-cities/?fbclid=IwAR1Mjse3E3_gnn7v3bN2z9Hnnw1-U2VHyWxR6abh7PMbQJKolkGcE1JXV_U
- ▶ https://www.psychologicalscience.org/topics/racism?fbclid=IwAR0hEv0rSTfq1m_W6o_evL4E6EyCVXij4LnBEM_ZTCyHXdiw2WXzhhYhozU



The End

May you be safe.
May you be healthy.
May you be at peace.
May you live at ease.