

SHIFTING YOUR MINDSET DURING A PANDEMIC

With the ongoing uncertainty of COVID-19 and the impact of suddenly working from home or facing rolling lockdowns, it's easy to catastrophise or worry about the future.

This worry and anxiety can take a toll on us physically, emotionally and mentally.

Sometimes, the temptation to ease our anxiety with information can make us feel worse; gluing ourselves to the computer or TV for news updates can add to the anxiety and fear about the impact of the pandemic on our lives.

We don't want to be consumed by anxiety, so changing our mindset about what is happening around us is essential so we can stay happy, healthy and productive during the pandemic.

Keep things in perspective

It's natural to roll a lot of 'what if?' questions around in our minds during any stressful time. With an invisible threat to our health it can be easy to worry constantly about the worst-case scenarios.

Instead, we need to take a broader view of things that are within our control and do what we can to make ourselves and our family safe, without letting fear and anxiety take over.

Ask yourself, ***"What are the things that are within my control to change?"*** Discuss this with your partner or friends and make sensible changes in your life. Perhaps you will get groceries delivered instead of visiting the supermarket, or you could offer to drive your partner to work instead of them catching public transport.

Ask yourself, ***"Am I overestimating the likelihood of the worst-case scenario?"*** It's important to understand the risks but equally important not to let yourself become overwhelmed by anxiety. Resolve to take things as they come, one step at a time.

Ask yourself, ***"What strategies have helped me cope with fear and anxiety in the past?"*** Even though the cause is different this time, coping mechanisms that have worked well in the past can be adapted to help you through this period. Remember that good nutrition, regular exercise and quality sleep are crucial for your overall health and wellbeing, but also help sustain your mental health.

Ask yourself, ***"What is a small, helpful or positive action I can take right now?"*** Action can sometimes be the best medicine for anxiety or uncertainty, but make sure it is measured, constructive and sensible. Channel your energy into these small, positive actions.

See the positives and seize the opportunities

Consider the following fears that many people are feeling right now and then think about the upsides or realities and then think about the other opportunities that might arise in your own circumstances:

1. I'm stuck at home...

...but I get to stay SAFE at home and spend more time with my family.

2. I will get sick...

...but I can take POSITIVE steps to reduce the risk, like social distancing, hand washing and wearing a mask when I'm out in public.

3. I will run out of groceries while locked down...

...but I have PREPARED for this and will use essential items wisely and carefully.

4. Everything is shutting down...

...but the most IMPORTANT places, like medical centres, pharmacies and supermarkets will stay open.

