

## Mental Health Month

### October

Mental Health Month is celebrated each year in the month of October. This month encourages all of us to think about our mental health and wellbeing, regardless of whether we may have a lived experience of mental illness or not. It also gives us the opportunity to understand the importance of good mental health in our everyday lives and encourages help seeking behaviours when needed.

If you are struggling to decide where to seek support, please call us on **1300 130 130** to be connected with one of our clinicians.

#### TUNE IN

Tuning In means being present. It means being aware of what's happening within you, and in the world around you.

- **Tune In to your senses** – what can you sense right now? What can you feel?
- **Tune In to your communities** – what's happening that you can be part of, or that you can help others be part of?
- **Tune In to stigma** – how do attitudes and understandings of mental health and wellbeing impact people's ability to live the lives they want?

**Firstly**, taking a moment to Tune In can help still and focus your mind, it can help you understand what's going on for you and others.

**Secondly**, Tuning in can help you find a new perspective, and it can help you reflect and be present. It can help build self-awareness, help make effective choices, reduce the impact of worry, and build positive connections.

**Lastly**, Tuning In to communities and the impact of mental health stigma can help ensure that people who need support have safe places to talk about their experiences and reach out.

**To arrange an appointment today please call us on**

**1300 130 130**

**E: [enquiries@daccordoas.com](mailto:enquiries@daccordoas.com)**

#### How to stay positive during difficult times

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the world to its core. Even the cheeriest of people who always used to stay positive are catching themselves having a hard time staying optimistic. And it's understandable, with all the bad news that are on the headlines, reading all the news can be counterproductive. You have to stay informed, but being constantly bombarded with negativity can have a bad influence on your everyday life and mental health. Below are some useful tips on how to stay positive even during these difficult times:

#### Look at previous positive outcomes

Stay positive by thinking about all the bad situations you've been in and you've gotten over them. Every person has gone through a lot of negative situations during their lifetime, and yet all of us reading this are still here. *You will get through this and you will be stronger because of it.* Remind yourself of this on an everyday basis.

**“You will get through this and you will be stronger because of it”**

#### Practice self-care

If you are amongst the people that are working from home, staying indoors 24/7 can make you stop taking care of your body the way you're used to. This may take a toll on not only your self-esteem, but it can also compromise your immune system. So go outside, go for a walk, nourish your body and get some sleep. A Healthy body will help your mind stay positive as well.



#### Turn off the news

This may be the most difficult one, but it's also the most important one if you want to stay positive during these terrible times. Bad and dramatic things are happening in the world and your own state none the less. Truth is, only a little number of news is actually informative, and others serve only to fill your head with gossips and panic. Instead of reading and hearing everything that gets piled up in the news, carefully select what you truly want and need to know. This way you will stay in touch but also filter all the unwanted news that will only make you panic.

## Simple ways to get present

At one point or another we will have all experienced a time of adversity and stress. Draw on skills that you have used in the past to manage stress during this time. If you find yourself getting worked up by negative thoughts try using a grounding technique to centre yourself and engage with your environment.

### Drop Anchor

- Plant your feet onto the floor. Push them down and notice the floor beneath you, supporting you.
- Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down.
- Notice your entire body and the feeling of gravity flowing down your head, spine, and legs and into your feet.
- Look around and notice what you can see and hear around you. Notice where you are and what you are doing.

### Take Ten Breaths

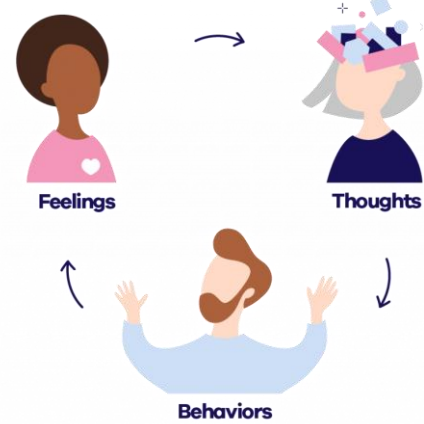
- Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until the lungs are completely empty – then allow them to refill by themselves.
- Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. Notice your rib cage rising and falling. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your shoulders.
- See if you can let your thoughts come and go.
- Expand your awareness: simultaneously notice your breathing and your body. Then, look around the room and notice what you can see, hear, smell, touch and feel.



## How to Change Negative Thinking with Cognitive Restructuring

We have all experienced negative thought patterns from time to time, but sometimes these patterns become so entrenched that they interfere with relationships, achievements, and even well-being.

**Cognitive restructuring** is a group of therapeutic techniques that help people notice and change their negative thinking patterns. When thought patterns become destructive and self-defeating, it is a good idea to explore ways to interrupt and redirect them. That is what cognitive restructuring can do.



### Cognitive Restructuring techniques

Here is a brief guide to some of the strategies involved in cognitive restructuring:

- **Self-monitoring:** Identify thoughts that spark negative feelings and states of mind. Cognitive restructuring depends on your ability to notice your thoughts, journaling can be a useful tool to assist with this process.
- **Questioning your assumptions:** Questioning allows you to consider new possibilities that aren't as drastic as the catastrophic ones you may fear.
- **Gathering evidence:** You might also gather evidence for or against your thoughts, assumptions, and beliefs. Cognitive distortions are biased and inaccurate, but they can also be deeply embedded. Dislodging and replacing them requires evidence about how rational they are.
- **Generating alternatives:** Cognitive restructuring helps people find new ways of looking at the things that happen to them. Part of the practice involves coming up with alternative explanations that are rational and positive to replace the distortions that have been adopted over time. Generating alternatives can also include creating positive affirmations to replace inaccurate or unhelpful thought patterns.

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