

## FACE COVID: Make a difference to your wellbeing



Taking care of yourself has rarely been more important than it is right now. The single, most useful thing you can do in any type of crisis is to focus on what's in your control.

### What is FACE COVID?

FACE COVID is a set of practical steps you can follow to best cope with the very normal feelings of fear and anxiety you may be experiencing in the current COVID-19 pandemic. These practical steps are designed by Dr Russ Harris and are grounded in the principles of positive psychology and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

### Who would benefit from following these steps?

Firstly, you would personally benefit from following the FACE COVID steps because what you choose to do – in the present moment - can make a huge difference to your own wellbeing. Secondly, those around you including your family, colleagues, and patients will be influenced by the behaviours you model.



### What are the FACE COVID steps?

**F** = focus on what's in your control  
**A** = acknowledge your thoughts and feelings  
**C** = come back into your body  
**E** = engage in what you are doing

**C** = committed action  
**O** = opening up  
**V** = values  
**I** = identify resources  
**D** = disinfect and distance

### Let's explore these steps one by one

#### Focus on what's in your control

Fear and anxiety are just some of the normal emotions we can experience in a crisis. It's all too easy to get lost in ruminating about what might happen in the future, however, such feelings are rarely useful or helpful. In fact, the more we focus on what's *not* in our control, the more anxious we are likely to feel.

We all have far more control over our behaviours than we do over our thoughts and feelings. So our number one aim is to take control of our behaviour – right here and now- to respond effectively to this crisis.

#### How do we do this?

Think of it as 'dropping anchor' in stormy seas to hold steady while the storm blows over. The first practical step is to follow the **ACE** principle:

- ✓ Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings
- ✓ Come back into your body
- ✓ Engage in what you're doing

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### Acknowledge your thought and feelings

Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is 'showing up' inside you: thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations. Take the stance of curiosity, observing what's going on in your inner world.

And while acknowledging your thoughts and feelings also.....

### Come back into your body

Connect with your physical body. Try some or all of the following:

- Slowly push your feet into the floor
- Slowly breathing

This will help you gain control over your physical actions, even though you may not be able to control your feelings.

As you acknowledge your thoughts and feelings, and come back into your body, also....

### Engage in what you're doing

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing. Try some or all of the following:

- Look around the room and notice 5 things you can see
- Notice 3 or 4 things you can hear
- End by giving your full attention to the task at hand

Ideally run through the **ACE** cycle slowly 3 or 4 times, to turn it into a 2-3 minute exercise.

The better you anchor yourself in the here and now, the more control you have over your actions. Which makes it a lot easier to do the next steps.

#### Further information available:

Watch the FACE COVID YouTube clip at <https://youtu.be/BmvNCdpHUYM>

Download the Nursewell app on the App store <https://apps.apple.com/au/app/nursewell/id1173365253>

### Committed action

Now you are better placed to take the protective actions against the Corona virus. In addition to frequent hand washing, wearing PPE and observing social distancing, consider:

- Saying a kind word to a colleague
- Helping out with a task or chore
- Taking some deep breaths

Repeatedly, throughout the day ask yourself 'What can I do right now that improves life for myself or those around me?'

### Opening up

Make room for difficult feelings as they show up, acknowledge they are normal and treat yourself kindly. Treat self-kindness as 'putting on your oxygen mask'. When you are looking after others you do better if you take care of yourself.

### Values

Take action based on your core values. What sort of person do you want to be as you go through this? How do you want to treat yourself and others?

### Identify resources

Identify resources for help, support and advice. This includes colleagues, managers, leaders and social networks

### Disinfect and distance physically

Disinfect/ wash your hands regularly and practice social distancing as realistically as possible. Remember this means physical distancing, not cutting off socially or emotionally.

## What else can I do to take care of myself?

Exercise regularly, eat well and get plenty of sleep to promote optimal immune functioning.