

# COVID-19

# BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

## Feeling anxious?

COVID-19 is not only a risk to our own and our loved ones' health, but also to the way we live. It's normal and human to feel anxious right now.

You may be feeling a 'fight or flight' response - this is our body and brain responding in the way they are supposed to! But unfortunately right now, we cannot fight the virus, nor 'flight' it - the best thing we can do is stay at home.

With our bodies pumped full of adrenaline and having no control over the situation, anxiety and distress are a natural and understandable response.

Over the next few pages you will find ideas and activities you can practice on your own and with your loved ones, to help you during this challenging time.

We also encourage you to visit The Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand's [COVID-19 FAQs page](#) for additional support and resources.

## Extra resources for families

If you're looking for additional family resources and support during this time, we recommend visiting the [Sparklers website](#).

Some of their helpful resources include:

- [How to keep kids calm](#)
- [How to help kids manage worries](#)
- [How to help your kids with differences and diagnoses](#)

# Take back the reigns

We need to take back the reigns, taking control of our wellbeing during this time.

## **Some ways we can do this are by:**

- Slowing down and keeping things simple.
- Using social media for connection - not for feeding fear about the virus.
- Getting quality sleep - if you're having trouble getting to sleep, try hypnosis - we suggest Michael Sealey on Youtube.
- Exercising for endorphins - move every day.
- Creating a new routine - the brain loves certainty, it likes to know what's coming next so create a new routine.
- Eating well - choose ONE new healthy habit you have been wanting to adopt but haven't had the time to. E.g. reduce your meat intake during this period, or have a smoothie for breakfast each week day morning, or cut your coffee intake down by 1 cup a day.
- Staying mindful on your alcohol consumption - enjoy a wine and know the difference between it bringing you joy and it making you feel down or flat the next day.
- Limit watching too much sensational news. Instead, get your news from reputable sources such as The Ministry of Health.



# Tools for combating anxiety

## 1. Visualise the future

A helpful NLP technique for combating anxiety is to visualise what you will be doing after the 'event' which is causing you to feel anxious.

Include all your senses when visualising this i.e. how it looks, how it feels, how it smells and how it sounds. For example, you might choose to visualise September and you are enjoying a walk, seeing all the new growth, feeling recharged, hearing happy people reconnecting with people and groups etc.

## 2. Reframing

Reframing helps your brain connect with a different lens at viewing a situation.

There is no better time than NOW to be practicing this tool. We are continually facing change, disappointment and incompleteness right now with everything being cancelled around us.

### Step 1: Self-Awareness

*Be aware of when you focusing on the negative viewpoint of something.*

### Step 2: Ask Yourself

*How can I change this lens and connect with a more positive and deeper meaning?*

### Step 3: Take Notice

*Does it feel differently now?*

## 3. Labelling

'Label' how you are feeling to avoid your amygdala hijacking your thoughts.

Your thoughts are simply thoughts and they are not actually real - so do not attach any unnecessary 'stories' to them.

## 4. Stay present

Consciously staying in the present moment is the BEST way to lower anxiety.

Right now, right here, what am I seeing and feeling, who am I with, what **quality conversations** can we have without talking about the virus.?

# Ideas for families

If you're in isolation with your family, why not change things up and try some different activities together. Here's a few ideas to get started:

- Take photos of things in the garden then search the web to try and find the names of them.
- Draw hopscotch on the drive way with chalk.
- Baking/cooking classes – teach your kids to make a meal by themselves.
- Shoot some hoops.
- Play tag on the lawn.
- Learn magic tricks with a deck of cards (Kids LOVE this!). Youtube is a great place to learn.
- Write a letter to a friend or family member and send it via post.
- Each person writes their own Bucket List for the future.
- Surprise your neighbours by writing notes and putting them in their letterboxes. You can ask them if they need anything.

# Ideas if you live on your own

- Focus on completion - write down all those incompletions you have rolling around in your thoughts from time to time. What do you find yourself saying, "I wish I had time to do this or that?" e.g. paint the spare room, sort the pantry out, declutter my wardrobe. Tick them off one by one!
- Reframe this period as 'you time.' What have you been putting off for yourself? What would fill your energy tanks up right now?
- Facetime/Zoom/Skype an overseas relative or friend you have been meaning to connect with for ages.
- Write down your goals. Never got around to doing your New Year's resolutions? Do it now!
- Walking date - if you're not in isolation, organise a friend to go walking with. Make it a routine - same time, same day.