



Coping in a time of Coronavirus (Covid-19)

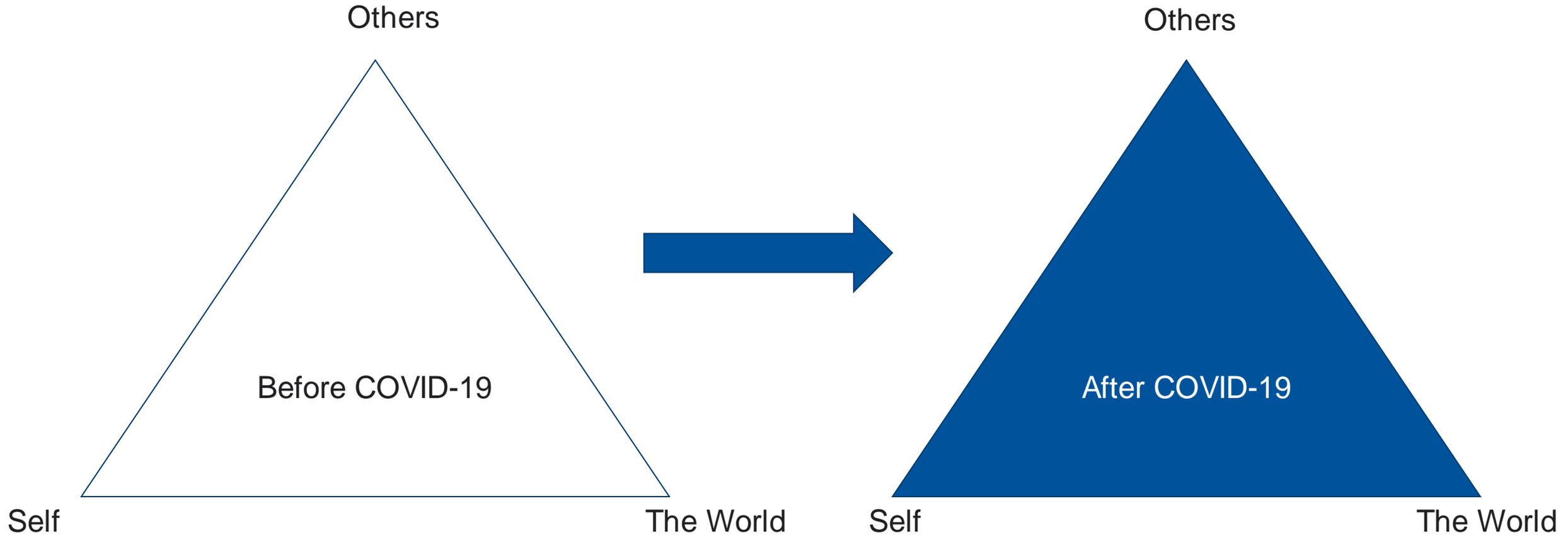
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Overview

This presentation outlines 5 steps for coping in a time of uncertainty, specifically amidst COVID-19.

- This is designed to take as little as 10 to 15 minutes per day, or more if you have time.
- You will preferably find a quiet, undisturbed space.
- You may want to take notes or keep a journal.
- This is aimed for individual use – share it with your colleagues and family as they might find it useful too.
- You can do the full 5 steps each day, or focus on one step at a time.
- The aim is that you feel better equipped to deal with the challenges of the current time.

A world event, like COVID-19, can be influenced by, and affect how we see ourselves, others and the world. Uncertainty and risk both add to anxiety and distress



Anxiety can show up in all sorts of areas of our lives:

 Difficulties falling and staying asleep, or sleeping too much

 Panicking about things at work that are undone and hiding mistakes or challenges

 Reacting to small things that don't usually bother you

 Struggling to make decisions and to distinguish facts and evidence from beliefs and fears

 Withdrawing socially and becoming isolated from others

 Using unhealthy soothing behaviours like drinking, drug-taking and comfort eating

Let's dispel some myths about coping:

Fear is a sign of weakness and a sign that I'm not coping	FALSE, fear is natural and appropriate in times of uncertainty and danger
If I cry, 'break down' or express sadness and grief, it means I'm not coping	FALSE, sadness and grief are human responses that we all experience
If I hold myself together emotionally in the face of danger it means I'm coping	FALSE, not necessarily, you might be avoiding emotions and in denial about what's happening
Anxiety is a normal response to dangerous situations, uncertainty, change and risk	TRUE, but unmanaged anxiety can be very distressing
Coping involves: recognising and facing difficulties, drawing on available resources, appreciating limits, tolerating distress and seeking help.	TRUE, there is no blueprint for uncertain times.

Introducing 5 steps for coping

This approach uses CBT, grief and compassion-based models to help you practice healthy coping at this challenging time. The steps are:

- **STEP 1: Acknowledging the situation**
- **STEP 2: Framing the loss**
- **STEP 3: Noticing emotional responses**
- **STEP 4: Identifying needs**
- **STEP 5: Drawing on resources**

STEP 1: Acknowledging the situation:

- However busy your role and even if it feels risky, STOP, take some time out and check in with yourself
- What is your understanding of what is going on? – for you? in the world? around you?
- What are the facts and evidence?
- What does this all mean for you personally?
- What are your main fears and concerns?
- How do you see your role? How would you like to be during this time? Anything holding you back?

You might find that your responses change as we adjust to the situation and find a 'new normal', or as events develop.

STEP 2: Framing the loss:

You might find yourself moving up and down between the stages; you might miss stages out. Likewise, other people experience different stages to you.



DENIAL: 'it's just like the flu' 'this isn't happening' 'keep on as normal' 'everyone is over-reacting' 'it'll blow over'



ANGER: 'this isn't fair' 'they've let us down' 'it's all Boris's fault' 'why is this happening to me?'



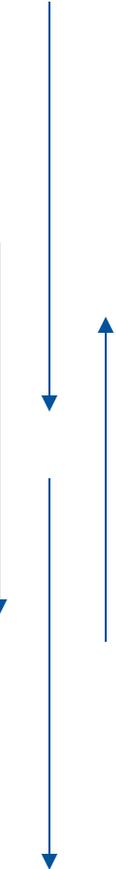
BARGAINING: 'if I keep working things will be ok' 'if I promise to be a better person then this will be ok'



DEPRESSION: 'disaster' 'it's the end of the world' 'there's no point in anything'



ACCEPTANCE: 'this is happening' 'it's really significant' 'we will get through this'



STEP 3: Noticing emotions

- Responses to this situation might be affected by:
 - Personal situation – financial, relationships, family, plans
 - Personality; attitudes; usual ways of expressing emotion
 - Previous experience of dangerous situations and uncertainty
 - General attitudes to health, disease and mortality
 - Identifiable or subconscious memories and experiences
- You might be surprised at the range of emotions; or find that you're avoiding or holding back emotions
- You might feel uncomfortable with some of the positive emotions you experience, if you have ideas about how you 'should' feel
- You might find strong or negative emotions distressing, uncomfortable or difficult to deal with
- There are no right ways to feel - try to be patient and gentle with yourself and others
- Emotions are just emotions...you can tolerate them

STEP 3: Noticing emotions. Use these scales to rate your emotions right now. Consider how these vary from day to day, hour to hour, or in response to particular thoughts or actions.



FEAR:

0%



100%



SADNESS:

0%



100%



ANGER:

0%



100%



SURPRISE:

0%



100%



JOY:

0%



100%



LOVE:

0%



100%

STEP 4: Identifying Needs - Being aware of emotions can help you work out what you need and be more tolerant of others'



FEAR: Reassurance, balance, a break



SADNESS: Comfort, soothing, understanding



ANGER: Listening, understanding, compassion, soothing, a release for energy



SURPRISE: Patience, adjustment, facts and evidence, surprise can feel positive, negative, or neutral



JOY: Acknowledgement, enjoyment, positive energy for dealing with the difficult times



LOVE: Connection, interaction, empathy, support for difficult times and challenges

STEP 5: Drawing on Resources. What can you use from previous experiences and what sources support can you draw on:

Use learning from previous experiences to remind you of what you are capable of, and what helped in the past

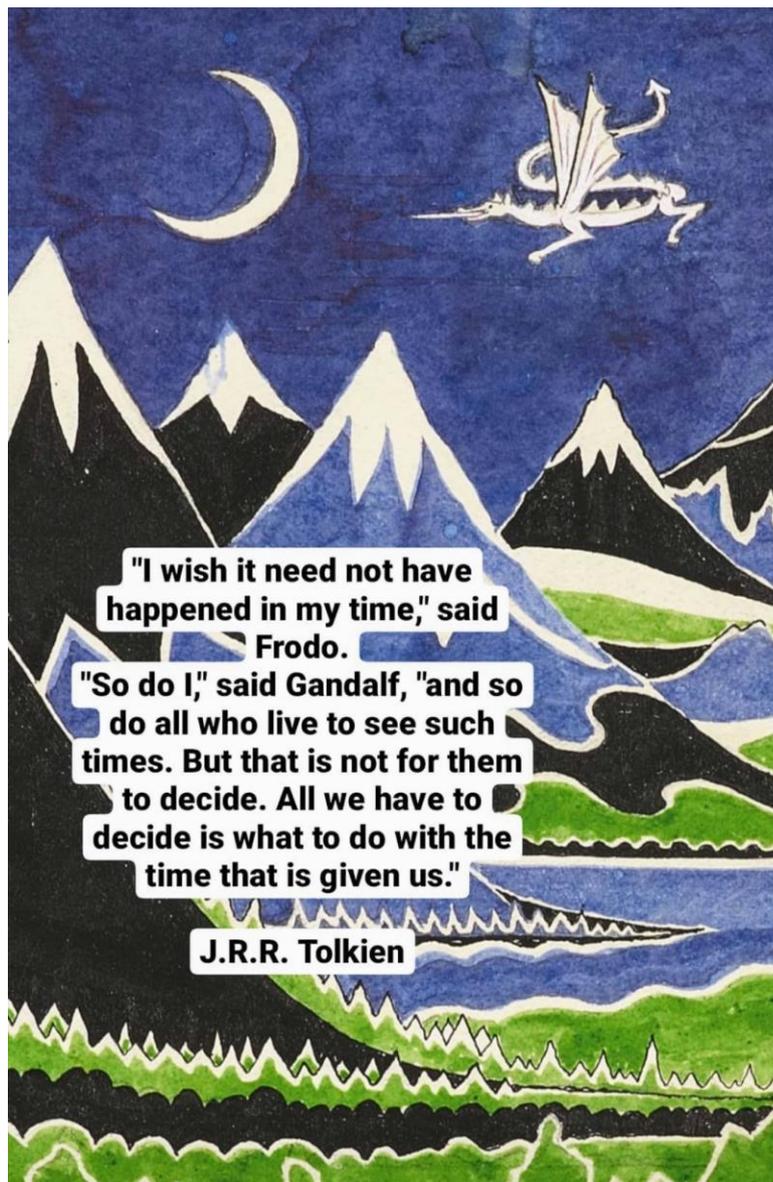
- Previous professional and work challenges
- School and exams
- Relationships, marriage and divorce
- Managing aging parents
- Dealing with health and illness
- Accidents and adverse events

And look for helpful sources of support

- Colleagues and support at work
- Family
- Friends
- Regular breaks
- Reliable news sources

And relief

- Exercise and activities
- Music, art, poetry
- Healthy eating
- Sleep and rest
- Relaxation and meditation
- Spending time in the garden



**"I wish it need not have
happened in my time," said
Frodo.**

**"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so
do all who live to see such
times. But that is not for them
to decide. All we have to
decide is what to do with the
time that is given us."**

J.R.R. Tolkien

Further support

- Useful guide to managing worry and anxiety in the midst of global uncertainty:
<https://www.psychologytools.com/articles/free-guide-to-living-with-worry-and-anxiety-amidst-global-uncertainty/>



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