



The COVID No-Panic Handbook

A short guide for ensuring your
emotional and mental well-being
during the COVID crisis

Published by 1to1help

Created in collaboration with
Psychological Counselling Experts



Introduction



It is that time of the year again. What was supposed to be a sigh of relief one year later feels more like a repetition, like we are revisiting the year 2020. Just when we thought that life was getting back on track, we were forced to confront a very unsavoury reality — the unexpected resurgence of the pandemic in full force, and with it, the disruption of our seemingly normal lives.

This pandemic has had a devastating impact on people's health and their lives. More so because it has also debilitated people's already fragile mental and emotional health.

With this in mind, we decided to do our bit to mitigate the impact of this pandemic in the way we know best — by helping individuals and organisations preserve their emotional and mental health and emerge stronger from this crisis through our expertise in the domain of emotional well-being. This handbook is an effort in that direction.

Last but not the least, we would like to **dedicate this handbook to the frontline responders** who work tirelessly and selflessly to care for us and to heal us, to **our partner organisations' frontliners**, for prioritising the safety of their teams and being available to extend support round the clock, and to **all those impacted by the pandemic**, who continue to show strength, resilience and hope.

Handbook Fundamentals



- **Who is this handbook for?**

Designed for anyone who's been personally impacted by the Covid-19 disease and would want to find healthy ways of coping with multitudes of emotions, this handbook can help the readers acknowledge and normalise their emotional responses to the pandemic, and cope with them.

- **How can you use it?**

You can use it to identify the stage of Covid that you relate with the most, introspect on your emotional response and pick out tips or techniques to alleviate your worries. You can also share this resource with loved ones or anyone who you feel might be suffering as well. As far as the techniques and skills laid out in the handbook go, remember, just like any other skills and techniques, these too require your patience and practice!

- **Does this also contain advice for managing physical symptoms of COVID-19?**

No, the scope of this book is limited to the emotional fallout of the disease. For coping with the physical symptoms of COVID-19, we would urge you to contact your physician or relevant medical authorities.

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Hi there!

*If you've been worrying about COVID-19,
you're not alone.*

*If you've been affected by COVID-19,
you're not alone.*

*And, if you're recovering from COVID-19,
you're not alone.*

*If you nodded to one, or all three of these
statements, then this handbook is
ideal for you.*





Apart from causing physical sickness, COVID-19 has also caused



Stress



Anxiety



Depression

This handbook can help you tackle any, or all three of these effects.

Are you ready to face Corona Panic head-on and come out stronger?

Then let's get started!

Part I: What If I Have COVID-19?

If you're worried about getting COVID-19 or suspect that you have the symptoms, it's natural to feel worried or paranoid.



"Are these COVID symptoms?"



"What if my test result is positive?"

Common Thoughts



"How will I cope with isolation?"



"What if I've infected someone else?"

Keep in mind that all these thoughts and feelings are very natural. This is your mind trying to prepare you for all types of outcomes.



If these thoughts and feelings are affecting you too much, here's how you can cope:



Remind yourself to be patient and try not to jump to conclusions till your test results come back.



Keep up with your daily routines to maintain a sense of normalcy in your life.



Stay connected with your loved ones and voice out your worries. Don't bottle it up.



BONUS: Helpful Technique!

Decatastrophizing

What it is:

A simple technique to actively question your thoughts and assumptions, thereby arriving at a more realistic way of looking at the situation.



How to apply it:



“What is the most realistic outcome?”

Ask yourself and say aloud / write down:

- “What is the worst-case outcome?”
- “What is the best-case outcome?”

Most likely, the most realistic outcome is what we might need to cope with. Focus on that.



Decatastrophizing

Try this simple technique to challenge your fears and manage them better by answering these questions.

1. What catastrophe is bothering you?

2. What would the worst-case scenario look like?

3. What would the best-case scenario look like?

4. If the worst-case scenario came true, how would you cope? What techniques or strategies could help you? Whom can you turn to for support?

5. Now that you know how to cope, what would the most-realistic outcome look like?



Part II: I Have COVID-19 & I Don't Know What To Do

Receiving your test results may create a whirlwind of emotions within you, beginning with worry, anxiety, uncertainty to guilt.



"Will I recover easily or am I in this for a long time?"



"Can my family manage without me?"

Overwhelming Thoughts



"How can I stay away from my family and kids for 14 days?"



"Could I have infected someone else?"

Keep in mind that all these thoughts and feelings are very natural. This is your mind trying to adjust to the worst-case outcome.



If you're overwhelmed by uncontrollable thoughts, here's how you can cope:



Follow your medical professional's advice. This is not just important for your recovery, but also a reminder of what you can do to stay in control of the situation.



Remember that this is the time for healing and rest. This is crucial for both, your body and mind.



Do not label yourself "COVID-positive". You are much more than a statistic, and this too shall pass.



BONUS: Helpful Technique!

Self-Efficacy

What it is:

Self-efficacy is your way of focusing on the ability to handle any given situation.



How to apply it:



- List three things you did well before you tested positive and talk about how you felt then.
- List three things you want to achieve in the coming weeks and how you're going to get them done.
- Think about how you expect to feel when you've done them and write it down.

You should immediately begin to feel a lot clearer and more focused.



Developing Self-Efficacy: The Three Things Exercise

A handy tool to keep track of your goals and your skills.

1. List three things you did well in the past week.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. How did they make you feel? List three emotions/feelings you had.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

3. Name three things you want to accomplish in the coming weeks.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4. List three ways in which you will accomplish these goals.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

5. How will you feel after accomplishing your goals? Name three emotions.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____



Part III: How Do I Deal with Isolation?

Staying in isolation may have a significant impact on your mind. This period of isolation could trigger feelings of loneliness, fear, frustration, impatience and cabin fever.

You may also persistently worry about when you're going to feel better.



"When will I get better?"



"I don't know how much longer I can do this."

Distressing Thoughts



"I miss my loved ones and my regular life."



"What if my loved ones fall ill taking care of me?"

Keep in mind that all these thoughts and feelings are very natural. This is your mind trying to cope with being cut-off from everyone else.



If you're finding the situation overwhelming, here's how you can cope:



Remind yourself that you are doing the right thing by staying isolated from others.



Remember, **socially distant** \neq **emotionally distant**. Stay virtually connected and talk about non-COVID topics with your loved ones. Ask them how they are doing. Let them know what you need from them.



Keep your days as structured and routine as possible. Take up indoor hobbies.



Try not to watch an excessive amount of news or COVID-related visuals on social media.

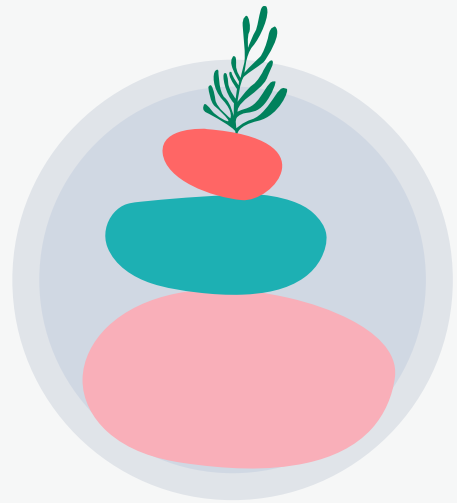


BONUS: Helpful Technique!

Mindful Meditation

What it is:

A meditation technique to train your mind to focus and pay attention to the present, instead of allowing negative, uncontrolled thoughts to dwell too long.



How to apply it:



- Sit in a comfortable and relaxed position. Pick something to focus on (like your breath, an object, a point on the wall, etc.)
- When your mind wanders, bring your attention back to the object.

*Start your day with a mindful emotional check-in.
Repeat during the day.*

Part IV: I Recovered from COVID-19, But Am I Safe?

Once you have recovered, there could be a feeling of immense relief, celebration, or maybe even fatigue after everything you've been through. However, it's still important to take precautions and stay safe.



"Nothing is better than feeling like myself again."



"I can't wait to start working again."

Positive Thoughts



"I'm so relieved to be out of isolation."



"I'm so happy to be around family and loved ones again."

It's understandable that you're relieved to be out of isolation. However, it's important to take precautions and still follow COVID protocols.



If you're unsure of what to do, here's how you can cope:



Be patient with yourself. Don't lose hope if you aren't as energetic as you were before.



Continue to keep to your routines as much as you can.



Reflect on your experience and remember what got you through it (your strength and resilience).



Continue to stay aware of your thoughts, feelings, and triggers about the pandemic.

BONUS: Helpful Technique!

Resilience & the Strength-Finder Exercise

What it is:

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenges and hardships.



How to apply it:



Reflect on your strengths to remind yourself of how you got through the difficult time.

- What got me through COVID?
- Am I doing enough to utilise my strengths every day?
- One area in which I can utilise my strengths better, every day/week.

*Start your day with a mindful emotional check-in.
Repeat during the day.*

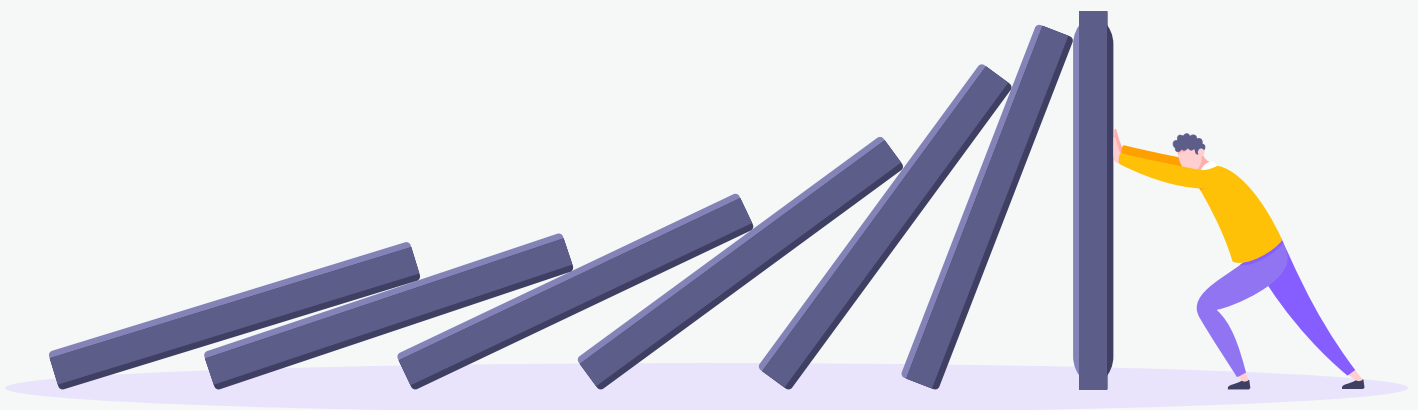


Strength-Finder Exercise: What Makes Me Resilient?

You've just come out of a very taxing situation, and you probably feel very relieved and happy. Great going! However, we sometimes don't recollect what made us stronger or what helped us overcome. Introspecting on the questions given in this worksheet will help you that.

- What was the tough situation you've had to overcome by yourself? (For instance, recovery from Covid-19, staying in isolation, experiencing uncertainty, feelings of loneliness, etc.)
- What were your initial thoughts and feelings about this situation? Were you feeling afraid, frustrated, close to giving up trying?
- Despite these initial feelings, which of your qualities helped you overcome the situation and emerge stronger? Your hope that things will get better, the strength you got from a loved one, or your focus and determination to feel better?

While life may have its own unpredictable difficulties, your ability to bounce back from hardship remains constant. This is what you need to focus on. Think about how you can utilise these qualities better in the coming days, weeks and months.





In Conclusion

No matter what stage you're at, the COVID-19 pandemic has uniquely affected everyone the world over. As we've come to see for ourselves and in those around us, the sadness, anxiety and depression is unfortunately inevitable, but through mindfulness and self-care, a little can go a long way in coping with them.

Additional Resources

You can also use these additional resources or log on to our website **1to1help.net** to get more information on managing your emotional well-being during the pandemic.

- 8 Ways to Ensure Emotional Well-Being During Lockdown
- Mindful Breathing Exercises
- Staying Positive While Social Distancing
- Healthy Lifestyle While In Quarantine
- Safety Measures During Covid-19