**Taking time to reflect on how you respond during Covid19**

This guide will help you to record your reflections on how you as a health professional can respond effectively to the challenges you face in your work with people who are living with cancer during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Although not strictly a reflective practice model, the guide can help you to cope with your thoughts, and feelings in a way that helps you to do what is helpful and meaningful. It can be helpful both to people not experienced in self-reflection and also to more experienced reflectors at this time of crisis.

The guide is based on ‘FACE COVID’ which was written by Dr Russ Harris[[1]](#footnote-1) and is adapted here for you to record your practice of the steps. Please use it to record your thoughts, feelings and the actions you will take to care for yourself and others during the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Using the guide**

The steps in this guide use principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), an evidence-based approach widely used in health and wellbeing. FACE COVID involves a number of steps.



Committed action

Focus on what’s in your control





Opening up

Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings



Values



Come back into your body



Identifying resources



Engage in what you’re doing



Disinfect and distance

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**Focus on what is in your control**

It’s normal to worry and to feel anxious when we feel threatened or in danger and uncertain about what we can do. Many of the things we worry about are outside our control. Worrying about things we can’t control can cause us anxiety. Because we cannot change these things, that anxiety tends to increase the more we think about them. Things we can’t control right now are:

* What happens in the future
* Coronavirus itself
* The economy
* Our anxious thoughts and feelings

But we ***can*** control our own behaviour - what we do here and now. Please read <link to the FACE COVID document> before proceeding.

What things can you do here and now that you do have control over?

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**Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings**

Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is ‘showing up’ inside you. It is helpful if you take the stance of a curious scientist, observing what’s going on in your inner world and naming each thought, feeling, sensation…

Some questions you can ask yourself to help you with that are…

What thoughts am I having now?

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What sensations am I experiencing?

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What emotions am I experiencing?

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What urges am I feeling?

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And while you are doing that…

**Come back into your body**

Come back into and connect with your physical body. Find your own way of doing this. You could try some or all of the following, or find your own methods:

* Slowly pushing your feet hard into the floor
* Slowly straightening up your back and spine; if sitting, sitting upright and forward in your chair
* Slowly pressing your fingertips together
* Slowly stretching your arms or neck, shrugging your shoulders
* Slowly breathing

And while you are doing that…

**Engage in what you are doing**

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing. Find your own way of doing this. You could try some or all of the following suggestions, or find your own methods:

* Look around the room and notice 5 things you can see
* Notice 3 or 4 things you can hear
* Notice what you can smell or taste or sense in your nose and mouth
* Notice what you are doing
* End the exercise by giving your full attention to the task or activity at hand

(And if you don’t have any meaningful activity to do, see the next 3 steps.)

**Committed Action**

Committed action means effective action, guided by your core values; action you take because it’s truly important to you; action you take even if it brings up difficult thoughts and feelings.

Some questions you can ask yourself to help you with that:

What are simple ways to look after yourself, those you live with, and those you can realistically help?

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What kind, caring, supportive deeds you can do?

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Can you say some kind words to someone in distress – in person or via a phone call or text message?

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Can you help a colleague out with a task, or help a friend or family member with a chore?

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Can you comfort and soothe someone who is sick?

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**Opening up**

Opening up means making room for difficult feelings and being kind to yourself. Difficult feelings are guaranteed to keep on showing up as this crisis unfolds: fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, guilt, loneliness, frustration, confusion, and many more. We can’t stop them from arising; they’re normal reactions. But we can open up and make room for them: acknowledge they are normal, allow them to be there (even though they hurt), and treat ourselves kindly.

Some questions you can ask yourself to help with that

‘If someone I loved was going through this experience, feeling what I am feeling – if I wanted to be kind and caring towards them:

How would I treat them?

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How would I behave towards them?

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What might I say or do?

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Then, try treating yourself the same way.

How would I be kind and caring towards myself?

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For more on self-kindness, also known as self-compassion, read this eBook: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1__Q3UcT9Q8VuSbiRm7x7-xjaxy5xkrba/view?usp=sharing>

**Values**

Committed action should be guided by your core values: What do you want to stand for in the face of this crisis? What sort of person do you want to be, as you go through this? How do you want to treat yourself and others?

Your values might include love, respect, humour, patience, courage, honesty, caring, openness, kindness …. or numerous others. Look for ways to ‘sprinkle’ these values into your day. Let them guide and motivate your committed action.

Some questions you can ask yourself to help you with that

What are kind, caring ways you can treat yourself as you go through this?

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What are kind words you can say to yourself, kind deeds you can do for yourself?

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What are kind ways you can treat others who are suffering?

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What are kind, caring ways of contributing to the wellbeing of your colleagues?

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What can you say and do that will enable you to look back in years to come and feel proud of your response?

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**Identify resources**

Identify resources for help, assistance, support, and advice. This includes friends, family, neighbours, health professionals, emergency services. And make sure you know the emergency helpline phone numbers, including psychological help if required. Also reach out to your social networks. And if you are able to offer support to others, let them know; you can be a resource for other people, just as they can for you. One very important aspect of this process involves finding a reliable and trustworthy source of information for updates on the crisis and guidelines for responding to it. The World Health Organisation website is the leading source of such information: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<include Macmillan resources links here>

List here some of the reliable and trustworthy resources you can use during the Coronavirus pandemic

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**Disinfect and distance**

You already know this, but it’s worth repeating:

* Disinfect your hands regularly and
* Practice as much social distancing as realistically possible, for the greater good of your community.

And remember, we’re talking about physical distancing – not cutting off emotionally.

This is an important aspect of committed action, so align it deeply with your values; recognise that these are truly caring actions.

**Your summary**

What are your thoughts and feelings now about the process of going through these steps?

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What will you do to ensure you continue to implement the steps outlined in FACE COVID?

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Here is a link to a video on FACE COVID.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM&fbclid=IwAR0zvahyXr2zlPCmn7dhgQdgNa8x0FHv486uYIjX7bAAEYa9PyUaR5iWTPU&app=desktop>

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Original FACE COVID model created by Russ Harris: <http://thehappinesstrap.com/>

1. [www.TheHappinessTrap.org.com](http://www.TheHappinessTrap.org.com) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)