Max Planck Institute for psychiatry



Staying mentally healthy during social distancing, quarantine and exit restrictions due to the corona virus

Behavioural therapeutic interventions in a short programme of self-application

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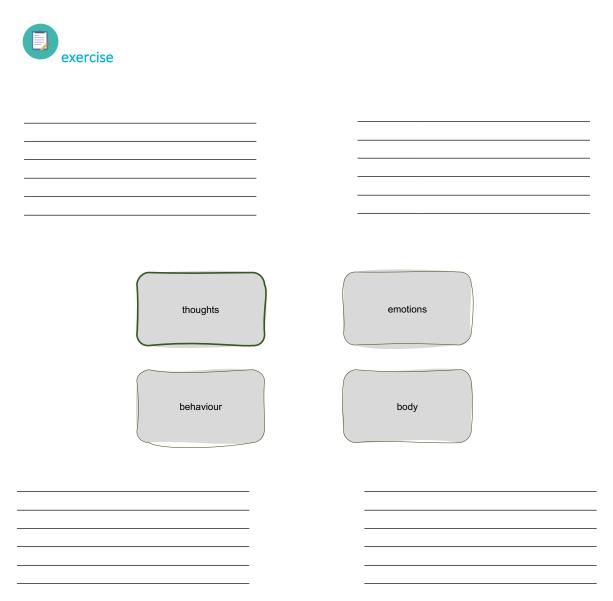
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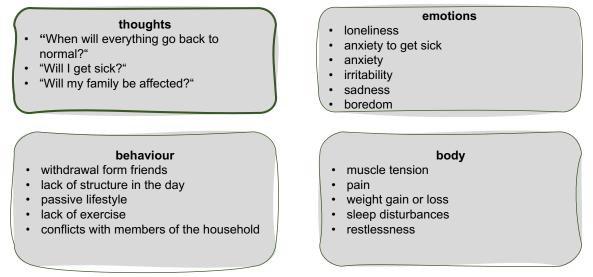
1. Mental consequences of the current health situation

In the current situation, with the all-dominant corona virus, it is easy to imagine that our mental condition is suffering. Social contacts and daily structure break away, existential fears and fears of falling ill develop. We all have to adjust to new circumstances almost daily, which demands a lot from the psyche. In psychotherapy we look at the thoughts, the feelings, the behaviour and the body.

Make a note of the changes you have noticed in yourself.



psychological effects due to the coronavirus situation

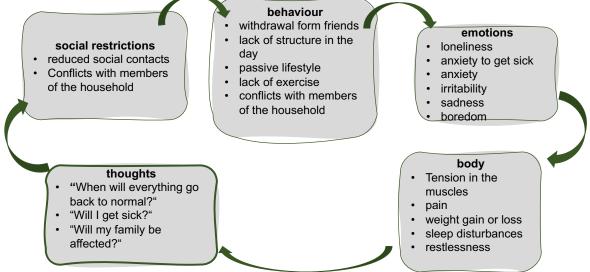


The thoughts and feelings described above are quite appropriate and understandable to the situation. However, it depends on their duration and intensity.

2. Conditional model of mental consequences

All factors are interdependent, so that a vicious circle can develop. This can lead to an increase in depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses. Especially if you have been under psychiatric or psychotherapeutic treatment before, the symptoms may worsen. You may already notice that much of what is worked out in therapy is currently no longer possible. Because currently we are confronted with initial restrictions that make hobbies and social contacts more difficult.

psychological effects due to the coronavirus situation



3rd application

You can use this as a workbook to take a closer look at your mental state every day. In doing so, you can actively contribute something to maintain your mental health or to prevent the worsening of mental symptoms. Read small parts that seem relevant to you or work through them from start to finish, as you need to. You will find information in this booklet and exercises. We recommend that you print out the booklet so that you can write in it.

Summary of the tips:

- 1. Create a daily structure Plan activities and create regularity.
- 2. Use your strengths to carry out positive activities.
- 3. Stay in social contact have a conversation with someone once a day, even if it is only for a short time.
- 4. Move around at least 30 minutes a day.
- 5. Allow yourself "bad" feelings too.
- 6. Try to think positive thoughts at the end of the day.
- 7. Create space for yourself when you live with someone.

Perhaps you already know exactly where your difficulties lie in your current everyday life, or perhaps you simply feel uncomfortable but do not know why. First fill out the questionnaire to find out which topics might be relevant for you.

Behaviour - Questionnaire

Please fill out the following short questionnaire to identify the areas of most difficulty. If your score is higher than 3, go to the displayed page to find exercises and materials for the topics you are interested in

Interested in				1 = no 2= rat 3= tru 4= rat 5= per	her no e parti her tru	t true ly
Question	1	2	3	4	5	Page
I find it hard to get out of bed.	1	2	3	4	5	7
I don't know how to spend my days.	1	2	3	4	5	8 - 11
I'm bored and I don't know what to do	1	2	3	4	5	12 - 13
I have too little physical activity and feel restless	1	2	3	4	5	14 - 15

4.1.1 Get out of bed



- Many people find it difficult to get out of bed without the pressure of deadlines.
- Get up at the same time regularly.
- Even on weekends!
- This is how you prevent sleep disorders, as sleep benefits from a lot of regularity. If you don't have any external appointments, you can also sleep a little longer than usual regularity is important

Tips to get out of bed

- Think about what can be good for this day in bed.
- Put on something proper in the morning do not stay in your pyjamas!
- Have breakfast: Take your time when you have it. Have breakfast every day as on the weekend. Think about how you would like to have breakfast on holiday and arrange it nicely (e.g. with fresh orange juice, fresh croissants, etc.)
- Plan to do sports immediately after getting up.
- Schedule a phone call right after breakfast.
- Plan a walk right after breakfast.
- Arrange online sports courses with friends.



Choose a new idea from the previous tips every day and carry it out. Observe what helps you get out of bed better. Write down your experiences in the protocol below. Make it a ritual

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

4.1.2 Daily structure¹

-ஜ́-Info

- Daily structure is important for mental health and is an integral part of most people's lives. The current restrictions can lead to a loss of the daily structure: through home office, closure of businesses, short-time work, closure of day-care centres, loss of voluntary work.
- The aim should be to bring structure to the day. On the following pages you will find suggestions and exercises for building the day structure.



Exercise 1

Work and external activities create a daily structure, as deadlines are set from outside. Usually you already know in the morning or the day before what the day will look like. We make use of this. Take a look at the sample schedule below.

Plan a day at home, with all <u>kinds of</u> activities. Be sure to alternate between strenuous and relaxing activities. Use the following template for this. If you have few ideas what you can do, use the building blocks on the second page and cut them out and stick them in the appropriate places.

Example: plan for a day

07:00 - 08.00	getting up	break	fast		
08:00 - 09:00	30 Min. Yoga	n re	ading th	ne paper	
09:00 - 10:00	washing clot	hes and	folding		
11:00 - 12:00	mail/bills				
12:00 - 13:00	preparing lu	nch			
13:00 - 14:00	eat lunch				
14:00 - 15:00	take a walk				
15:00 - 16:00	clean the livi	ing roon	า		
16:00 - 17:00	care for plan	ts			
17:00 - 18.00	make a call				
18:00 - 19:00	prepare dinr	ner			
19:00 - 20:00	eat dinner				
20:00 - 21.00	watch a mov	vie or TV			
21:00 - 22:00					
22:00 - 23:00	relaxation ex	ercise a	nd go to	bed	

exercise

Daily planning

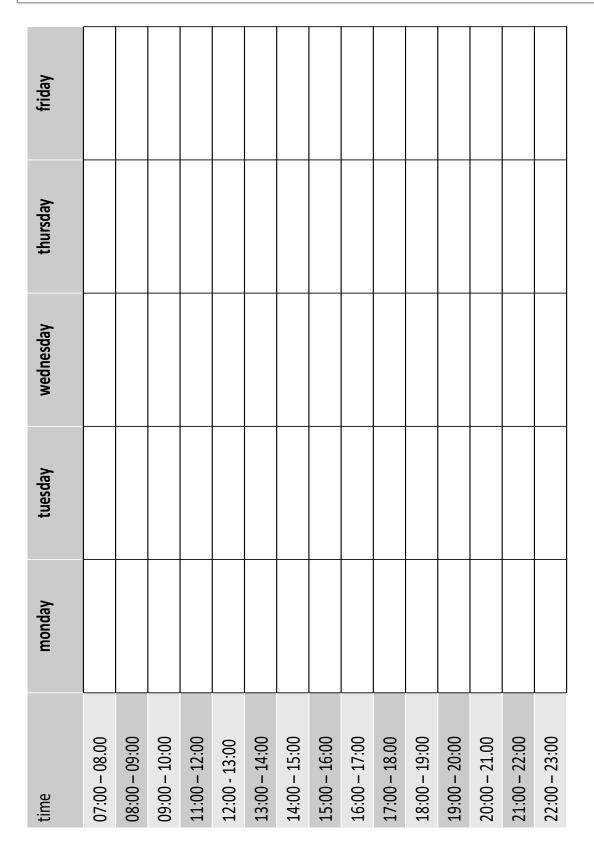
07:00 - 08.00	
08:00 - 09:00	
09:00 - 10:00	
11:00 - 12:00	
12:00 - 13:00	
13:00 - 14:00	
14:00 - 15:00	
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L	

Ideas Daily planning

Positive
Television
Relaxation exercises
Telephone/skyping
Body care
Food
Walking
Sports
online shopping
Flower care
Read
study language
Baking



Plan a whole week at home, with all <u>kinds of</u> activities. Be sure to alternate between strenuous and relaxing activities. Use the following template for this. If you have few ideas what you can do, use the building blocks.



4.1.3 **Positive activities**

-Ý Info

You can't just be productive all day long - a requirement that many people have in these times, by the way. For the mood it is important to do the things that are good for us. Especially when many opportunities outside the home are gone, this can be a problem. The following pages are intended to help identify positive activities and support their implementation in current everyday life.



Write a list of all the things that are good for you; that make you feel alive; that you enjoy; that give you a lot of concentration; that relax you; that are exciting.

Examples for positive activities

I feel good when I	I feel relaxed when I	I have fun doing
\Rightarrow	⇒	⇒
⇒	⇒	⇒
⇒	⇒	⇒
⇒	⇒	⇒
⇒	⇒	⇒
⇒	⇒	⇒
⇒	⇒	⇒
⇒	⇒	⇒
⇒	⇒	⇒



Some things, such as going to the gym, are currently not possible due to the health situation. Think about how activities that you usually like to do can be adapted so that you can do them at home or alone.

adjusting positive activities

Usually I like to do	How can I adjust this acitivity to the current situation?		
⇒	₽		
⇒	₽		
⇒	⇒		

Examples of positive activities and their current implementation

Examples for positive activities

I feel good when I

- ⇒ talk to a friend
- ⇒ take a hot shower
- ⇒ eat chocolate
- ⇒ watch a good movie
- ⇒ read
- ⇒ snuggle
- ⇒ watch videos on youtube
- \Rightarrow ride a bike
- ⇒ take a walk

- I feel relaxed when I ...
- ⇒ take a bath
- ⇒ do a relaxation exercise
- ⇒ am mindful
- \Rightarrow look out the window
- ⇒ write in my journal
- ⇒ put on bodylotion
- ⇒ listen to good music
- ⇒ meditate
- ⇒ do yoga

- I have fun ...
- ⇒ riding my bike
- ⇒ exercising until i sweat
- ⇒ sunbathing
- ⇒ having a good conversation
- ⇒ watching a funny movie
- ⇒ dancing and singing
- ⇒ shopping online
- ⇒ having sex

adjusting positive activities

Usually I like to do	How can I adjust this acitivity to the current situation?		
ightarrow going to a yoga class	find online classes (e.g. on youtube) or find exercises in books and do them at home		
⇒ going to the gym	⇒ find workouts online		
Sound to the Shin	⇒ try an alternate sport (running, Nordic walking)		
➡ meeting friends	call more or use video services, send e-mails or text messages, write a letter or a postcard, send a package		
⇒ travelling	think about where you want to go next, do research about that destination, cook the local cuisine, try learning the language		

Info - Search for alternatives

Many cultural institutions currently offer alternatives on the Internet. The Munich State Opera, for example, has created online schedules where concerts or ballet are broadcast live.

Available: https://www.staatsoper.de/stream.html

Online programme of the Deutsche Oper Berlin:

https://www.deutscheoperberlin.de/de DE/corona-aktuelle-hinweise

collected offers you will find in this article: https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/streaming-angebote-opern-und-konzerte-im-netz-ld.1547661

4.1.4 Movement

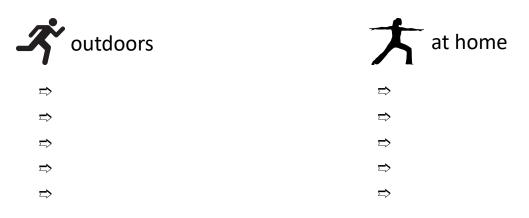


Regular exercise is good for the mood and should be done even during these times. People who exercise little have a higher risk of developing depression. One hour of sport per week is enough. This does not have to be competitive sports, but light exercise can be sufficient.



Plan at least one hour of exercise a week, preferably at least 30 minutes of exercise a day. First collect ideas for exercise in the fresh air and at home. Then include them in your weekly and daily schedule. You will find more ideas on the next page.

ideas for physical activity



ideas for physical activity



⇒ running

- ⇒ taking a walk
- ⇒ Nordic Walking

(withouth restrictions)

⇒ play ping-pong

⇒ play badminton

⇒ play volleyball

t home

- exercise with or without weights
- ⇒ do yoga exercises
- ⇒ do back exercises

 \Rightarrow dance

⇒ stretching

Info

There are "online fitness studios" where you can take part in online sports courses, either for a fee or free of charge.

This article gives an overview of further offers: <u>https://www.sueddeutsche.de/sport/sport-uebungen-coronavirus-workout-zu-hause-training-1.4852843</u>

Also on youtube.de you can do many sports courses by entering the search term: "Yoga beginners" for example

4.2 Social contacts - What can I do for my social contacts?

Social contacts are very important for mental health. We currently practice "social distancing" - in other words, we keep a social distance. Already after a short time we notice that this does something to our mood. It is extremely important to maintain social contacts but at the same time to keep physical distance. So it is rather "Physical Distancing" and "distant socializing". Thanks to technologies like telephone and internet it should be easier to stay in touch. At the same time, staying at home more often can lead to more conflicts in the family, with the partner or children.

4.2.1 Staying in contact



- Try to find social contact every day either by phone, email, mobile, social networking, chatting on your balcony or professional networks.
- Also plan for social contacts.
- Talk about your loneliness.
- Many psychotherapists* currently offer telephone or video consultation hours.
- Even short contacts of a few minutes can provide relief.



Make a list of reference persons. People you can contact: Family members (even distant ones), friends, acquaintances, colleagues, neighbours, professional helpers. Realizing who is in your social network can already reduce the feeling of loneliness.

Who?

How?

- •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •



Think about each person, how and how often you can keep in contact with them. It can also be a way to reactivate contacts and intensify others.



Look for ways to stay in touch with others and try different things. Take the initiative, even if you are otherwise a reserved person. In the current situation everyone needs support.

- ⇒ Phone
- ⇒ Video telephony with individuals (Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp)
- ⇒ Video telephony in a group (Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom, HouseParty)
- Make appointments online for social occasions: doing sports, eating together, having an apertif, coffee or tea)
- ⇒ Talk to neighbours at the window or balcony
- ⇒ Write a letter or a postcard
- ➡ Record and send voice messages
- ⇒ Exchange information in chats or forums



Remember beautiful social occasions. Try to put yourself in that situation again. Use photos, videos, diary entries to refresh the memory. Take your time for this. Use the attached questions with pleasure.

Write down an experience here:



⇒ Which person has positively surprised you lately?

⇒ When you take care of a loved one - what does it look like?

⇒ What do you particularly like about your girlfriend/boyfriend?

⇒ Who makes you feel safe?

⇒ Who can you really laugh with?

⇒ What funny incident with a friend or acquaintance comes to your mind?

⇒ What would you rather do together with others than alone?

 \Rightarrow If you could give an award to someone, who would it be and why?

⇒ With whom can you relax best?

⇒ Who has helped you through difficult times before?

4.2.2 Solving social difficulties at home

Spending a lot of time together at home can lead to difficulties. Especially when life is otherwise structured by work, sports and social contacts; some people experience the many hours spent together as stressful.



- Look for feelings that may indicate that you need time alone: Irritability, inner restlessness, annoyance with little things these can be indications that it is currently "too much" and that you need to retreat
- Communicate to your partner/roommate the need to be alone Say it!
 - Find solutions together. This also works in cramped living conditions:
 - Go for a walk alone.
 - Watch a movie by yourself.
 - Divide household tasks so that you can do them separately.
 - Define clear times when you separate work, sport and private life.
 - Divide the rooms for certain periods of time.
 - "Date" at times when you do something together, e.g. play games, cook and eat together, watch TV together, go for a walk
 - Also split up the care of the children. If only one of you is at home, ask your partner to look after the children in the evening so that you can take time for yourself.
- Communicate with your partner/roommate even if you do not want to talk.
- Be understanding if your partner also needs time for himself.
- Often a few minutes to an hour are enough to clear your head take it.

It's normal to be annoyed by the people you love too. Seldom have you spent so much time together without outside activities. Allow yourself these feelings and needs.

4.3 Thoughts - How can I deal with stressful thoughts?

In this new situation, many thoughts about the virus itself and its social and economic consequences come to mind. Also the confrontation with constantly new information and statistics, can lead to circles of thoughts.

4.3.1 Cannot switch off

With daily new reports about the corona virus and its consequences, it can be difficult to switch off mentally. Often, messages on the mobile phone are read before falling asleep, which can disturb sleep. There is already the term "infodemy" around, which also means that there are many rumours and false reports. The following exercises can help you to let go in your thoughts.



Set fixed times when you read news about the corona virus - but no more than 2-3 times a day. Each time the thought comes to your mind that you want to read, postpone it to your set time.

Exercise 2

Do not read any more messages before falling asleep. Instead, read a book or do a relaxation exercise. If you want to get better, try not to look at your smartphone 1 hour before going to bed.

Exercise 3

In conversations, pay attention to how much space the topic "Corona" takes up. You may be more stressed after a conversation that was only about Corona. If this is the case, try to direct the conversation to other topics. However, it may also be that it is good to talk to others about your own Corona-related fears, in which case you do not need to change anything. See what does you good!



Grübel-Ort: This technique is often practiced in psychotherapy. Find a place to brood in your home. This should not be the sofa or the bed - a rather uncomfortable place. Go to this place every time you have to think about Corona in a stressful way. Only brood over Corona there.



Stop brooding: Observe your thoughts - do you brood/ruminate over the same worries or do you solve a concrete problem? Thinking circles can be very stressful and have a negative effect on mood and drive. Recognize thought circles and interrupt them by saying "STOP! Clap your hands or thighs - change your posture.

About²

In this way you can see whether you are ruminating or constructively solving a problem.

rumination

- thoughts like "When will this be over?", "What will happen in the future?", "Should we have been better prepared?"
- mostly about the future or the past, things you cannot change
- ⇒ circulating, you reach no solution
- ⇒ your mood deteriorates
- through these thought processes you feel exhausted and depressed or anxious

problem solving

- precise problems "Which groceries do I need to buy today?, "How can I structure my day?"
- mostly topics in the present that you have influence on
- ⇒ you mood stays neutral or improves as you solve a problem
- ⇒ you have enough energy to deal with the problem

If you notice that you are ruminating, try to interrupt it and redirect your thoughts.

4.3.2 Putting pressure on yourself

Observe yourself: Are you perhaps under pressure to use your time particularly efficiently or sensibly now? Are you often dissatisfied with those similar days when you can't do much and can't pursue your hobbies and can't see friends?



Exercise 1

Tell yourself at least 3 times a day that everything you are feeling at the moment is fine and that you are not able to do much right now. Give yourself permission to rest. As reminders, you can hang notes with encouraging sentences in your apartment.

For example, "I can't do much right now and it's okay if I do little", "I don't have to do anything right now".

4.4 Body - What can I do for my body?

During the initial restrictions, many facilities where we do something for our physical health and fitness have closed. Gyms, yoga studios, sports clubs, dance clubs and exercise trails are closed. Nevertheless, the body needs exercise. Try to incorporate exercise every day (see page 14). At the same time, mental tension can also result in physical tension - the consequences: Tension, increased pain and sleep disorders. So make sure you get enough exercise, relaxation and sleep hygiene.

4.4.1 Relaxation



Info

Everyone understands relaxation differently, for some it means being active in sports; for others it means sitting in front of the television. Psychotherapeutically, we often mean relaxation methods, such as:

- ⇒ Progressive muscle relaxation according to Jacobson
- ⇒ Autogenous Training
- ⇒ Mindfulness exercises
- ⇒ Breathing exercises
- ⇒ Hypnosis

Perhaps you have already tried some of these, otherwise take the opportunity now.

Exercise 1

Observe your body and whether you feel tense. Record the signs of tension here:

⇒

- ⇒
- ⇒
- ⇒
- ⊐>
- ⇒
- ⇒



Try one relaxation exercise per day. It helps to practice not only when you are very tense, but before that. Instructions for relaxation exercises can be found on many health insurance companies' websites. We have compiled some of them for you below. You can also find many other instructions on the Internet, find something that you like and that suits you.

<u>Progressive muscle relaxation according to Jacobson</u> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8NdFOXBgxE - from the AOK

https://www.tk.de/techniker/magazin/life-balance/aktiv-entspannen/progressivemuskelentspannung-zum-download-2021142 - from the TK for download

Autogenous Training

https://www.vigo.de/rubriken/koerper-und-seele/entspannung-undachtsamkeit/lesen/autogenes-training-cd-bestellen.html - CD order option for AOK insured persons

Breathing exercises

https://www.tk.de/techniker/magazin/life-balance/aktiv-entspannen/atementspannung-zumdownload-2007126 - from the TK for download

Mindfulness exercises

https://www.tk.de/techniker/magazin/life-balance/aktiv-entspannen/body-scan-download-2007110 - Bodyscan from the TK for download

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLCg4mkhlAg - Bodyscan from the AOK

4.4.2 <u>Sleep hygiene ³</u>

Sleep and the quality of sleep can suffer under the changed conditions. Perhaps you suffer from not being able to sleep through the night or have difficulty falling asleep. All understandable reactions when you are generally tense. Try to follow the rules of **sleep hygiene.** It is important: you can try out these rules if you are having trouble sleeping. Observe whether it has a positive effect on your sleep.

Info - sleep hygiene rules

- 1. Sleep in a darkened, quiet room in a cool environment.
- 2. No more eating just before bedtime.
- 3. Alcohol, nicotine and caffeine can disturb sleep leave them out before going to sleep.
- 4. Make sure you get enough exercise during the day to keep yourself busy but be careful. Overstraining usually leads to poorer sleep.
- 5. Alcohol, nicotine and caffeine can disturb sleep leave them out before going to sleep.
- 6. Find a sleeping ritual and practice it regularly.
- 7. Do not look at your mobile phone immediately before going to sleep.



Think of a sleeping ritual. The body and also sleep react positively to regularity and routine. You can prepare the body for the coming sleep before going to bed. Consciously drink a cup of herbal tea, review the day, think about what was "good" today, do a relaxation exercise, read a few pages in a book ... whatever suits you. The ritual should make a clear distinction between day and night.

4.5 Emotions - How can I deal with stressful feelings?

In the current situation, you are probably confronted with different feelings.



Exercise 1

Please write down here the feelings you are now confronted with. Also think about what triggers these feelings in you.

⇒

Examples of possible feelings:

Emotions during coronavirus

⇒ anxiety

- ⇒ anxious about the financial situation
- ⇒ anxious about the disease
- ⇒ anxious for family members
- ⇒ anxiety about the future

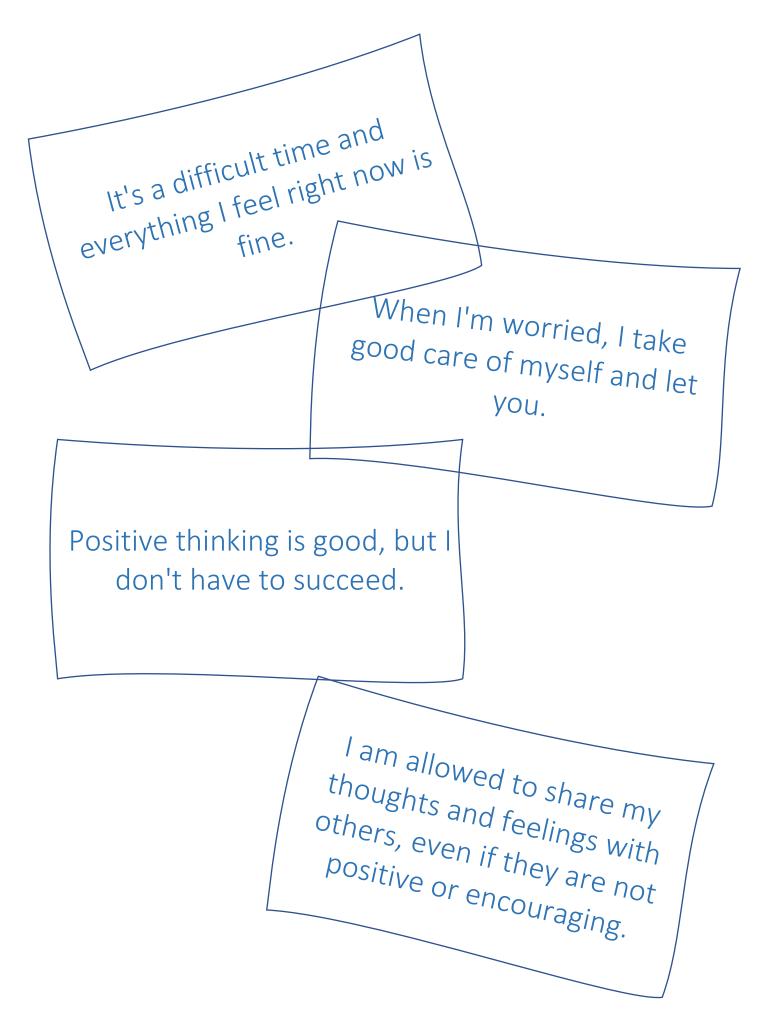
⇒sadness

⇒ being sad about the thing we cannot do at the moment (see friends, go to work, etc.)

- ⇒ helplessness
- ⇒anger
 - ⇒ angry at people who are not compliant with restrictions and risk others
 - ⇒ angry at politicians
 - ⇒ angry at members of the household that you have to spend a lot of time with

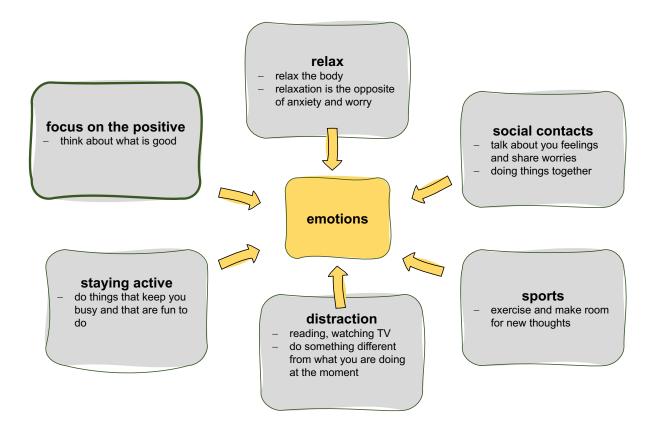


Give yourself permission for these feelings. We are in an exceptional situation which we have never experienced before and whose developments we cannot influence. It is okay to be afraid and feel helpless. Boredom and sadness are also perfectly fine. Tell yourself this regularly. If you have difficulties with this, hang up one of the notes.



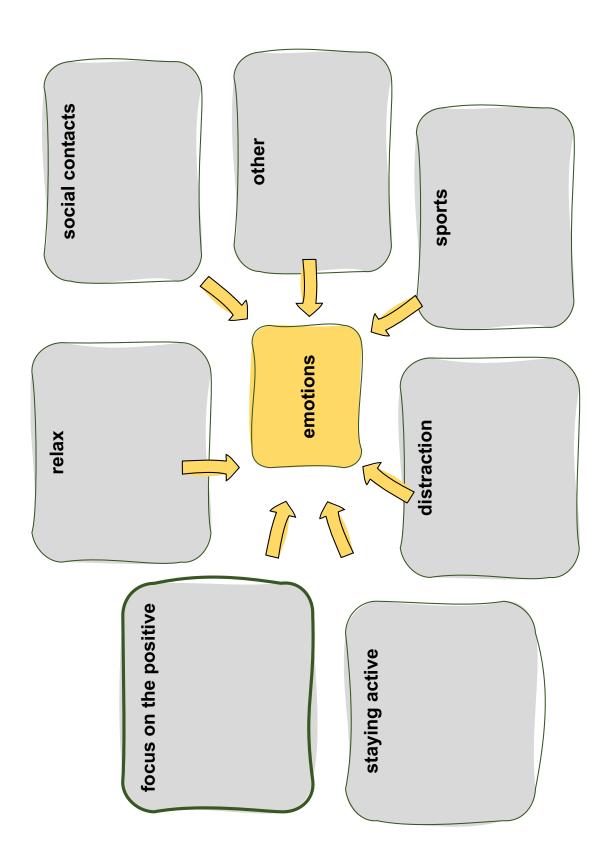


The acceptance of the feelings is very important! However, it is possible that these feelings become day-determining and you may be unable to act. If you notice that you are permanently burdened by these feelings and that this also affects your energy level, mood or relationships, try to influence your feelings through activities, sports, conversations or by focusing on positive things.



On the next page, fill out further options for you to influence your feelings.







Keep a positive diary. Focus your thoughts on the good things that are still happening. You can do this, for example, at the end of the day before you go to sleep or in between. The following questions can help. You can write it down or just think about it.

- 1. What did I do well today?
- 2. Which moment was beautiful today?
- 3. When did I feel good today?
- 4. What did I enjoy today?
- 5. What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

You can print, cut and staple the next page as a template for a positive diary.

What did I do well today?

Which moment was beautiful today?

When did I feel good today?

What did I enjoy today?

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

What did I do well today?

Which moment was beautiful today?

When did I feel good today?

What did I enjoy today?

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

What did I do well today?

Which moment was beautiful today?

When did I feel good today?

What did I enjoy today?

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

What did I do well today?

Which moment was beautiful today?

When did I feel good today?

What did I enjoy today?

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

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5. emergency contacts

In a mental emergency, various contact persons are available to you. Make use of them!

Psychotherapeutic practices are currently allowed to offer consultation hours (including initial contacts) via video consultation and are usually open.

Mental crises

<u>Nationwide</u>

Pastoral advice service Phone: 0800/111 0 111 or 0800/111 0 222 https://www.telefonseelsorge.de

Information phone German Depression Relief

Phone: 0800 / 33 44 533 https://www.deutsche-depressionshilfe.de

Upper Bavaria

Crisis Service Psychiatry Upper Bavaria Phone: 0180 - 655 3000 https://www.krisendienst-psychiatrie.de

loneliness in old age

Silver net - for people over 60 who feel lonely Phone: 0800 - 4 70 80 90 https://www.silbernetz.org

Domestic violence

Help phone: 08000 116 016, available around the clock https://www.hilfetelefon.de/gewalt-gegen-frauen/haeusliche-gewalt.html

6. literature

all contents have been created independently, but based on the following sources:

¹Hautzinger, M. (2013). Cognitive behavioral therapy for depression. Weinheim: Beltz.

² Teismann, T., Hanning, S., von Brachel, R., & Willutzki, U. (2012). Cognitive behavioral therapy of depressive brooding. Springer-Verlag.

³ German Society for Sleep Medicine (2019). Sleep Hygiene - Patient Guide of the German Society for Sleep Research and Sleep Medicine (DGSM).

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