

Evidence-Based Tools

For Coping with COVID-19

Staying Focused During These Intense Times – At Work and Home:

Since COVID-19 showed up it has triggered our minds to be extremely vigilant, trying to help us out by worrying, doubting, storytelling, problem solving, predicting, overanalyzing, etc. All this excessive thinking is normal during crises. However, we still have a life to live while we walk through this pandemic, and it is ok to focus on living it fully. The following tools have been shown to help manage distress.

- **Keep to your daily work and home routines as much as possible** – Commit to eating meals, working out, and sleeping at scheduled times.
- **Practice bringing your attention to whatever you're doing this very moment:** While brushing teeth, driving to work, engaging in work, eating lunch, watching TV, talking with family, friends.
- **Notice any loose thoughts that pop up** – Let them come and go like storm clouds in the sky. No need to change or get rid of them...let them be. Say to yourself: *"That's an interesting thought!"* or *"There's worry."* You can do the same with feelings and sensations (*"Ah, there's frustration," "nervousness and anxiety", etc.*).
- **Gently refocus back to the task at hand.** Cue yourself back by gently saying *"focus,"* or another word of your choice.
- **Notice when you get lost in, or struggle, with thoughts**-Complement yourself when noticing being lost in thoughts and gently refocus back to the task or what's important to you. This practice allows you to let go of worrying easier throughout the day.
- **Don't judge yourself for the loose thoughts that show up** - Thoughts appear on their own! Ask yourself: *"Did I ask these thoughts to show up, or did they pop up on their own?"*
- **Focus on one of your 5 senses** – Things you see, touch (chair, feet on floor, etc.), hear (sounds in/out of room) taste, smell. Notice when you wash your hands as if you're doing it for the first time or walking at work. This gets us out of our heads.
- **Our mind will be triggered to tell stories as to how this pandemic will turn out.** Ask yourself: *"Is it helpful for me to be entertaining this thought or story right now?"* If not, refocus your attention back to what you were doing. Repeat...
- **Ask yourself "What is this action I'm doing this moment in the service of?"** When we connect our actions to what is important, we are more likely to fully engage in it.