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FOR more information on Gabrielle's Theory of the '3 stages to Pandemic response' please visit: www.gabrielletreanor.com



3 Stages of Pandemic Response Explained:

Stage 1

You feel overwhelmed by the changes, the uncertainty, the news, yours and others' feelings. You're trying to make it through each day, you're angry with other people's behaviour, you're frequently checking the news and scrolling social media. You find it hard to think about anything else, you feel powerless, you're lethargic, unproductive and it's affecting your sleep. Many of the symptoms of grief are tied up in this Survival stage.

Stage 2

You don't like what's happening but you're not railing against the situation so much, you've realised it helps to check in with the news and social media less often and you're creating a new routine in this current normal. You're feeling a bit more able to let go of what's not in your control, you're noticing the little things that make you smile and you're getting the hang of chatting with your loved ones on a screen. You're counting the days since life radically changed and longing for life to get back to normal but you're making do for the moment.

Stage 3

Here you're starting to look ahead to what you want life to be like after this is over. You're getting a sense of what you don't want to go back to, what parts of 'normal' life weren't actually working for you and that there's an opportunity here to make changes. You're savouring the present more rather than worrying about the past or future, you're feeling a burgeoning hope and you feel more connected to the people who really matter to you. While you are fully aware of the severity of the situation and appreciate how difficult life is for so many, your eyes are opening to what you may have taken for granted in the past and how you want to live going forwards.

Can you recognise which stage you're in today?

You're going to move around the stages, in and out of them, back and forth, depending on many factors. This is an evolving process, you're adapting and changing just as the situation is. And none of it is wrong. How you're feeling is not wrong.

Spending time in one stage more than another isn't a reflection on who you are or your ability to deal with what's happening. It's simply an aid to help you to understand what's going on in your head and heart. And, with that knowledge, look at what will help you.

In Survival it could look like giving yourself a break and allowing yourself to just get through the day.

In Acceptance it could mean looking for others to talk with, share what you're thinking and feeling, find new ways of dealing with the challenges and be inspired to look for and explore the potential and possibilities that lie within this time.

And if you're spending (or wanting to spend) more time in the Growth stage it could mean looking at what will help you with the changes that you're feeling called to make. What support will empower you to go through and emerge from this time more confident that you can and will live your life in a way that feels true to yourself? Again, what support feels right for you is up to you.

Just as in 'ordinary' life where we each respond, act and feel differently, where we each have different needs, the same applies in these extraordinary circumstances.



Be Kind to yourself



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Due to the Coronavirus pandemic life is changing for all of us for a while. When lots of things change at once it's easy for us to feel overwhelmed. If you are at home you may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious, or concerned about your finances, your health or those close to you. It's important to remember that it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. Try to remember, this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass.

Connect with others

Connecting with your friends and family is important for your mental wellbeing. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family via telephone, video calls or social media instead of meeting in person – whether it's people you normally see often or connecting with old friends. Calling a friend to see how they're doing can boost both your wellbeing and theirs. Use these

Keep your mind and body active

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour such as getting up late and not getting any exercise that end up making you feel worse. Try to ensure you keep to a daily routine, having a routine help you to feel in control. You might find it helpful to write a plan for your day or your week. This will help you give some structure to days spent at home. Include time for something you enjoy as well as work, exercise and keeping in touch with friends and family. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise inside where possible and outside once a day, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs. Feeling anxious or worried can make it harder to get a good night's sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally and physically, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment.

Keep yourself informed

Being concerned about the news is understandable but for many people it can cause distress and anxiety. Limit the time you spend watching news coverage or reading about the outbreak especially if this is making you worried. Decide on a specific time to check in with the news. Stick to trusted sources of information such as nhs.uk

Learn something new

Use the time you are spending at home to learn something new. Perhaps think of an interest or hobby that you usually don't have the time to pursue due to your regular schedule and commitments - now might be a good time to get into something. Drawing, painting, creative writing or learning a new language.....there are lots of possibilities!

Why not:

- Keep your brain occupied and challenged by reading books, magazines, doing puzzles

- Listen to a chatty radio station or podcasts, watch films and do puzzles.
- Look up some new recipes to create healthy dishes; it's important that you are eating balanced meals at regular times. Perhaps come up with a meal plan as you should be food shopping as least often as possible

Useful websites

Public Health England - Looking after your feelings and your body

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876996/Easy_read_looking_after_your_feelings_and_body.pdf

Every Mind Matters – Looking after your mental health

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2BMSkLAqgM&feature=youtu.be>

Building your wellbeing and helping you cope

<http://learn.4mentalhealth.com/sites/default/files/courses/wb8/index.html>

NHS One you free resources

Exercise, free workouts - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/>

Sleep advice - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/>

Recipes, health eating - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/eat-better/>

How are you, free quiz for over 18's - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/how-are-you-quiz/>