

HOW TO **STAY COOL** IN QUARANTINE

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The following guidance has been written primarily for use by Container Solutions employees globally, but it is being shared externally to act as a useful reminder for all workplaces in these challenging times. It is an ongoing and evolving document and has been compiled using various sources, which have been referenced as much as possible throughout the document.

Understanding Anxiety in a Disaster Situation

- Remind yourself that emotions such as sadness, fear, anger and frustration are all perfectly **normal reactions** to the current situation and you are absolutely not alone in having these feelings.
- **Do not try to minimise or deny your emotions.** Give time to them, although this may feel painful. Accept that you will experience these emotions during this difficult period. It can help to write these feelings down and to share them with others.
- **Accept your feelings.** It's a sign that your body's natural defense mechanisms are activated. You are also more likely to engage in health-seeking behaviours if you accept these feelings.
- **Most importantly, focus on what you can control** in this situation—i.e., social distancing, choosing to turn off the news, what you eat, your sleep routine, how frequently you check in to social media, etc. Make a list of what you know you can control

and what you feel you cannot. You are much more likely in this type of extreme event to feel out of control than with other stressors, but if you try to focus on what you can control, this will help. This hopefully will then lead you to spend less time focussing on what is on the 'out of control' list.

- **Play the long game.** Take time to process what is happening. Give yourself time to adjust. If you carry on as if nothing is changing, you will burn out before this ends.
- **Know that your feelings of worry** are being triggered due to this situation being unpredictable, novel, and ambiguous— all the ingredients that can lead to worrying thoughts and ultimately anxiety. This is perfectly normal.

Empathetic Responding

In times of crisis and threat, research shows that people will tend to respond in one of three ways; with **some being more helpful than others**:

- 'I wish this would all just stop' ... 'this will blow over soon'. = **Wishing thinking**, and means you will be less likely to engage in health-related behaviours.
- 'I need help from you as I cannot cope with this myself' = **Support seeking**, or excessively relying on others for emotional support. It is important to reach out to others in times of crisis, while at the same time being mindful of the impact this may have on the people around us.
- "I would like to help you", "What can i do to support you?", "I wonder what I can do to help my community with this?", "I wonder how this situation is making X feel?" "How could I help"? = **Empathetic Responding**, which is generally considered to be the most effective for communities and also for an individual's own psychological well being. Communicate in safe ways with people in your communities who are vulnerable and be a sympathetic ear for those suffering the most. Maintain your relationships.

Daily Life

- **Reach out** to family and friends as well as colleagues. Consider talking over Slack, text, and email as much as possible. Try to create new routines to allow for this time. Remember some of us are experiencing long periods of self-isolation and are uncertain how long this may go on.
- **Control what you can in your home environment.** Ensure you have a sensible amount of the supplies you need for now. Establish a coordinated family plan if you are now isolating with partners and children. Look at ways to ensure you stay healthy and maintain fitness where you can. If you live alone, reach out and create regular online hangouts in the evenings with family and friends. Build a new routine and schedule when you feel you have adjusted to this change. Reach out to us at Container Solutions whenever you need to.
- **Take care in the morning.** For many people, anxiety can often be worse in the mornings. Just take it a step at a time. Reach out if you would like to have regular hangouts every morning with colleagues.

- **Be mindful of your media consumption**, and how this could also be affecting other people with whom you might be in isolation. Consider the sources of the information you are absorbing. Catastrophic thinking does not care about facts and accurate information, so feeding this with 'doomsday' type articles and Twitter feeds is unhelpful. Reduce the number of news alerts you are receiving daily on your phone if you feel they are increasing your anxiety.
- **Maintain healthy daily routines.** Keep to a rhythm if you can: good sleep patterns, healthy diet, frequent hydration, create work/home boundaries if possible, consider practicing meditation ([Headspace](#) is a helpful meditation app, but there are others) Use one of the exercise apps, which offers daily routines that can be done at home. Try to have time offline each day and turn your phone off, work in 50- minute bursts and get up to move for 10 minutes.
- **Avoid the excessive use** of unhealthy coping strategies, such as drugs and alcohol.
- **If you now have your children at home** throughout the day, understand that this is a huge change for them also and they will want to be around and close to you. Look at ways to do this whilst also creating some gradual boundaries for you to be

able to work. Everyone understands that there is now a 'new normal', and if you are having a meeting with a child by your side, this is OK. **We all need to adapt to the changing aspects of how to work.** Older children may adapt more easily to this new situation in terms of academic learning, but will still need to understand what these boundaries are and how you are now going to interact as a family. Don't feel under pressure to create an educational timetable straight away. Home educating takes time to plan and prepare for. You are not a 'home educator', you are a parent/caregiver and, for now, this is the most important thing. Know they want to be close and feel safe. Focus on what they enjoy doing for the time being and know this is OK.

- **If you are now spending more time with your partner** and have not worked from home together in this way before, talk about what you both need. If you are sharing a small space together, **talk about how to create some boundaries.**
- **Share any positive stories** you hear about, including about people who have **recovered from COVID-19.** Stories from China now talk about life returning to normal. This will happen for us. We will be able to go back to meeting up with friends and family, going to the gym, eating in restaurants. But for now, try to focus on now what you can control, the slower pace you have never had to experience before. Books you have not had

the chance to read, films you have not yet watched, music you have not yet discovered, recipes you have not experimented with, conversations you have not had time to have. Open the window, sit on the balcony, walk in the garden. Slower activities are challenging for many in the fast-paced world we live in, but maybe over these next few months this is our time to do this. Think about the amazing health workers we have in all of our countries who are working tirelessly to be there for us in this crisis. Share positive images of this.

- **Refrain** from using terms such as 'the Chinese virus'. This is a global virus, it is not attached to any continent or country. Think about the impact of such labels on people in the community. If someone you know has had the virus, then do not refer to them as 'victims' or 'cases' but instead 'people with COVID-19'. This maintains a separation between the person and the illness and allows us to humanise them.

Dealing with Change and Loss

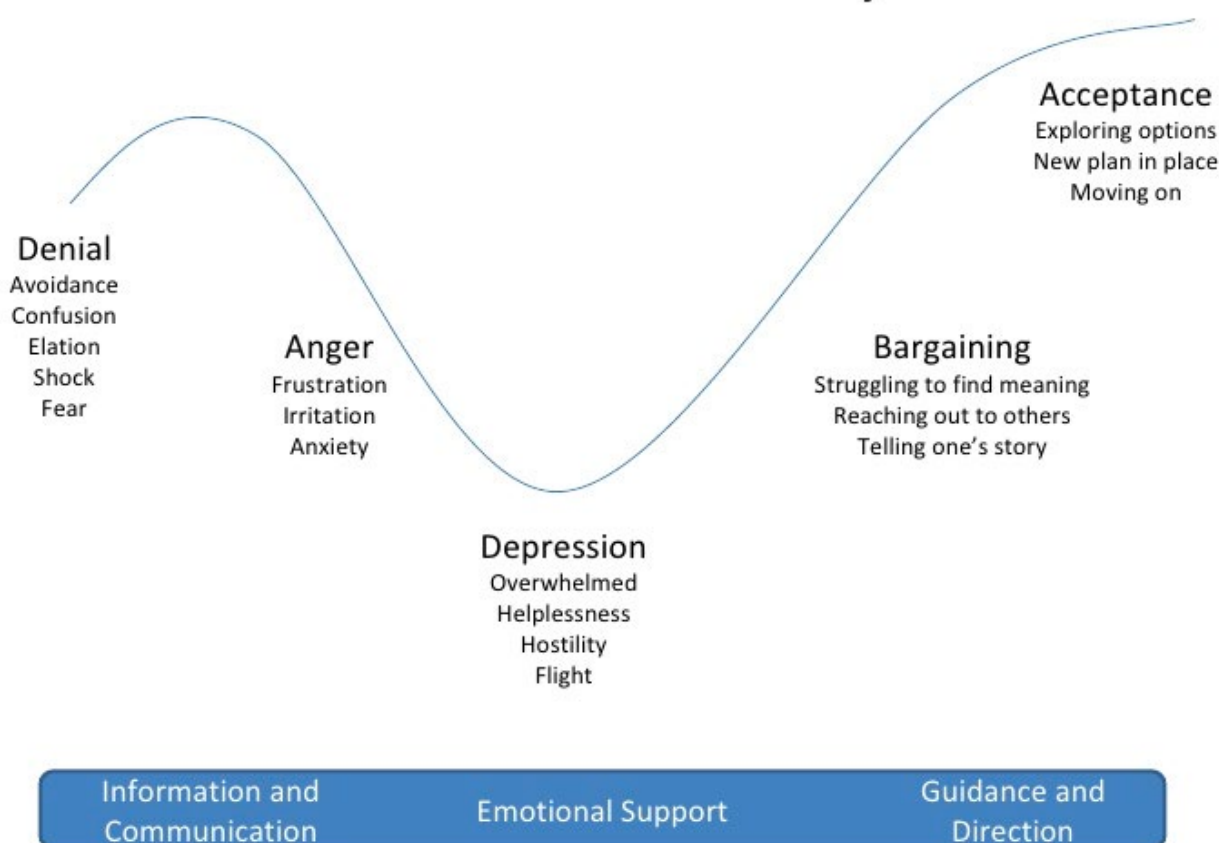
Alongside the unprecedented changes we are facing, it is likely that we are all going to be experiencing **some form of loss** over the next few months, not necessarily in terms of bereavement but the loss of normality, freedom of movement, social connection, hobbies, and new experiences. This will lead us to enter into the stages associated with grief.

It is more important than ever to be aware of the emotions associated with each of these stages. We talk a lot at Container Solutions about emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, empathy, interpersonal relationships so as to support practices of [psychological safety](#).

We will go through a number of stages as we progress through this crisis situation as postulated by Swiss-American psychiatrist Kübler-Ross in the model below. She concluded these are the stages that individuals go through when they are experiencing illness and dying. However, it is a helpful model to think about in a crisis situation when individuals are experiencing sudden and significant unexpected changes. **It is helpful as it shows us how we will eventually reach a point of acceptance and a time when we will make plans for a new future.**

There will be **shock and denial** at first and this will move on to feelings of anger. We may move on quite quickly to feeling **helpless, overwhelmed** and wanting to **escape this situation**. But it is a cycle and we will move to **accepting** what has happened and develop new plans and options. We will adapt. This is how we experience very difficult and sudden changes in our lives.

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle



External Support

Don't hold back from asking for help if you need it. Reach out to others if you are feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope. We are all in this together.

If you feel you would prefer not to seek help within your own organisation, please consider the following online resources with direction on how to get psychological support:

Mind.org/UK:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/?ctaId=/need-urgent-help/using-this-tool/slices/using-this-tool/>

Samaritans.org:

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/talk-us-phone/>

Dutch Ministry of Health resources:

<https://www.government.nl/topics/mental-health-services/question-and-answer/help-for-mental-health-problems>

Togetherweare-strong:

<https://togetherweare-strong.tumblr.com/helpline>

Want To Read More?

Check out the rest of the Container Solutions blogs:

[Tech Events in the Time of COVID-19:
Tips for Survival](#)

by Carla Gaggini

[How Container Solutions' Creativity
Can Help You Cope With the COVID-19
Crisis](#)

by Heather Joslyn

[Will COVID-19 Build a Case for More
Remote Work?](#)

by Heather Joslyn