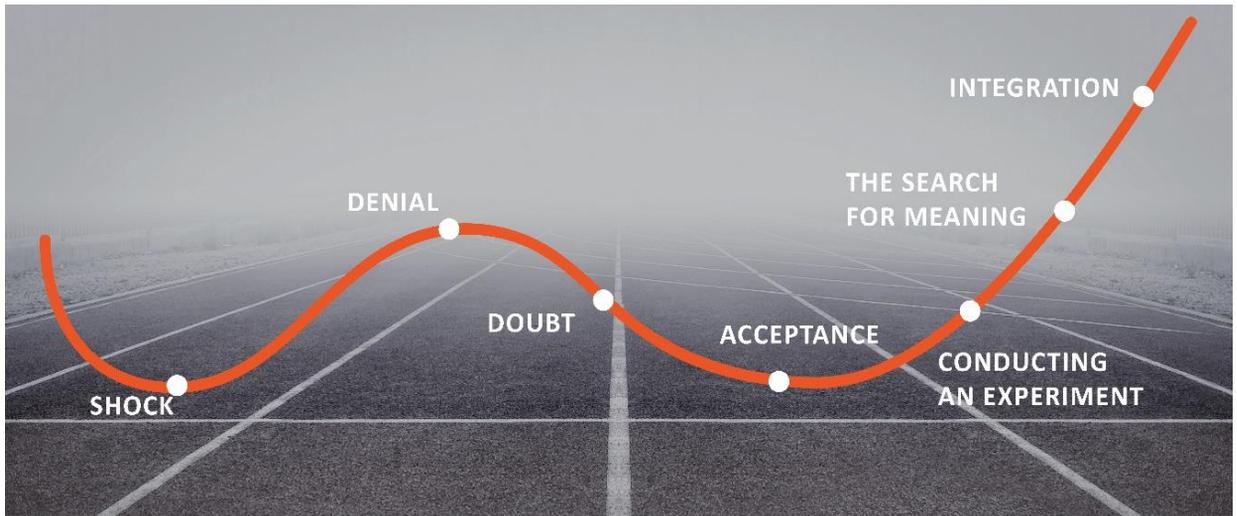


## WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US IN CRISIS AND HOW TO HELP OURSELVES?

Whatever causes the crisis it is always characterized by the fact that old behavior strategies and approaches to life no longer work. If we want to emerge successfully from the crisis, we need to learn new ways of dealing with it. If the learning of new ways of dealing with crisis succeeds, then we often experience stronger and more resource-rich results. However, adapting to change takes time. Give yourself time and remind yourself that all your reactions are human and normal in an abnormal situation.



Each of us accepts changes in life in a different way. Some people manage these changes fairly easily and quickly, others need a longer period of time. And there will be someone who will never accept change. **People experience several phases when adapting to change.** There is usually a lot of disbelief at first - is it really happening right now and with me? Then comes anxiety - there is so much confusion all around! There may also be anger which is basically because we feel powerless in this new situation. The feeling of acceptance comes slowly - yes, I don't like this situation, but I'll see how I can adapt to it; I may not know what will happen next month, but what can I do today? How can I take care of myself right now?

## THREAT AND EMOTIONS

When faced with a real or imagined threat, the human body is made in such a way that it "turns on" the physiological stress response - it switches to survival mode. When the survival mode is activated, the body is physically prepared to run, fight or freeze. Faster mobilization is achieved through emotional responses, which are a more primitive but also a faster process, rather than thinking which would involve more complex brain centers and take more time. This type of mechanism helped people survive in a primitive environment with direct physical danger, but rarely helps in today's environment.



**At the moment, we all feel threatened, and the danger seems even more terrible because it is not really visible, understandable and predictable. That is why we react with intense emotions - fear, anxiety about the future, about getting sick; anger and irritation in relationships where our personal borders seem to be broken; low mood and disappointment with a significant loss of sense of value.**

## HOW TO HELP YOURSELF?

- **Notice and accept your emotions.** Write down or tell someone how you feel!
- Engage in **physical activity** or use muscle relaxation techniques.
- Explore a more realistic view. Some helpful questions:
  - Am I confusing thoughts with facts?
  - What are the facts that prove my thoughts?
  - Do I jump into rushed conclusions?
  - What are the pros and cons of such thinking?
  - Have I assumed that there is nothing I can do to change the situation?
- Various **mental health applications** may be helpful: What's up, Self-Help for Anxiety Management (SAM), CBT, Thought Record Diary, Happify, Breathe2relax.
- **E-learning** is also effective in understanding the relationship between our thoughts, emotions and behaviors and how to manage emotions and stress. Learn more about the training content:
  - [STRESS MANAGEMENT \(ENG, LV\)](#)



## HOW TO REACT TO THE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS OF OTHERS WHEN COMMUNICATING?

- If You notice that You are overcome by anger, **take a break!**
- **Before reacting, try to take the others perspective within Your mind.**
- Tell-Yourself – «probably it is not easy to be in such a situation... or to feel the way the other feels right now...»).
- **Show that You understand how the other person is feeling** («I see that you are upset... angry... sad... disappointed...»).
- **If You are being hurt emotionally or physically stop it** («please do not speak to me in such a tone...using such words» or leave the situation and ask help from others).

## I AM AFRAID

Loss of control, uncertainty, unpredictability... How to live with such feelings and how to learn to accept them? It is obvious that the Covid-19 poses a threat to our physical health, but it is as well accompanied **by** psychological uncertainty and insecurity. **If You experience fear, try some of these exercises!**

- **Come up with an action plan!** To increase the feeling of safety, you rethink the potential risk scenarios and come up with an action plans. For example, what are you going to do if You or anyone close to You will get infected, or You will get into work or financial problems? When we **create** concrete plans, our mind can relax and will be able to react more appropriately in case of need.
- **Explore what you can and cannot control?** Create two columns on sheet of paper. In one column write the things that you can control at this moment in the other column write things you cannot control (see the example on the next page).

## WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT IN YOUR CONTROL?

### THINGS I CAN INFLUENCE RIGHT

#### NOW

- My behavior
- My **Emotions**
- My attitude
- Keeping two meter distance
- Staying at home



### THINGS I CANNOT INFLUENCE

#### RIGHT NOW

- That others buy out products in the stores
- Governments actions
- The spread of the virus
- The content in social media

- 
- **Use mindfulness techniques** and refocus on the current moment and do not try to predict the future (because it is impossible).
  - **Information**
    - Decrease and limit information sources. Use only a few reliable information sources.
    - If You spend too much time exploring information on the internet, designate a specific period of time or several periods within a day when You will allow Yourself to surf the internet.
  - **Take breaks**
    - Turn of the internet, tv or radio for a period of time.
    - Come to an agreement with Your family, friends, that You are going to talk about other topics or that You are going to do things together that increase pleasant feelings.
  - **Write down Your feelings!** That will allow to increase clarity and to vent emotions.
  - **Talk to Your close ones** about the situation, Your thoughts and emotions.



**CONCENTRATE ON THINGS THAT YOU CAN CONTROL – YOUR BEHAVIOR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS!**

## I AM AFRAID ABOUT MY HEALTH! HEALTH ANXIETY.

*«Maybe I am paranoid, but just from the information and the conversations about the virus I am starting to think that I already feel all the symptoms.»* At this moment many of us have felt the same or in a similar way. Rationally we might even understand, that the bodily feelings are not related to Covid-19, but the anxiety does not leave. Even those that usually do not concern themselves much with their health, at this moment might start to think that they feel several of the physical symptoms and that their health seems less stable.

- **Do not ignore Your bodies reactions,** but accept them and try to explain them to Yourself and normalize those that are related to stress.
- **Write down Your worries!** Take a notebook and allow Yourself to worry, write it down and put it away. Writing overall reduces tension, helps to structure thoughts, and to see the situation from different angles.
- **Work with Your thoughts!** Not always all of our thoughts are in accordance with reality. Search for facts, that either prove or disprove the thought. Try this approach. Instead of thinking “ I am going to get sick with the virus!” rephrase this thought to “I have a thought, that I could get sick!”. Such paraphrasing allows to discern that the mind has this thought, not that it is 100% reality.
- **Stay in touch! Call, chat!** Communication, support, talking about the important as well about other things gives us the feeling of safety and in turn our anxiety lessens a little bit.

Everyone finds their own way to deal with the difficulties in life. We strengthen our vitality by choosing helpful and safe ways to cope. When it is very difficult, we can ask ourselves: "What has helped me with this difficult situation so far? What do I do that helps me survive this situation? What did I do when I was in a similar or equally difficult situation? "

At first glance, an unforeseen situation can seem completely insurmountable, painful, difficult and unbearable. However, if we try to take care of ourselves, ask for help from those who can support us, and do not try to escape the difficulties or pretend that they do not exist, over time we begin to see how strong we can actually be. And after a while - what we have learned from this experience.

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