



Taking Authority To: _____

[Enjoy the music for a few minutes as we join together today....](#)

Trish Haak, LCSW, Veterinary Social Worker

VA-MD College of Veterinary Medicine

haakp@vt.edu

The mind is an “emergent, self-organizing, embodied, and **relational** process that regulates the flow of energy and information within the body and between self, others, and the planet.”

-Dan Siegel, MD [Dr. Dan Siegel](#)

When it comes to our mental health and crises, how we relate to ourselves and others makes a difference. Through a compassionate, non-judgmental stance, we are better able to process our experience and take helpful actions.

When we do this, we are integrating our experience into our lives, versus becoming stuck in our experience.

I invite you to share in the chat box...

One thing you do every day that is stabilizing (eat, talk, walk, etc.), or...

One thing you look forward to every day.



Our Common Humanity

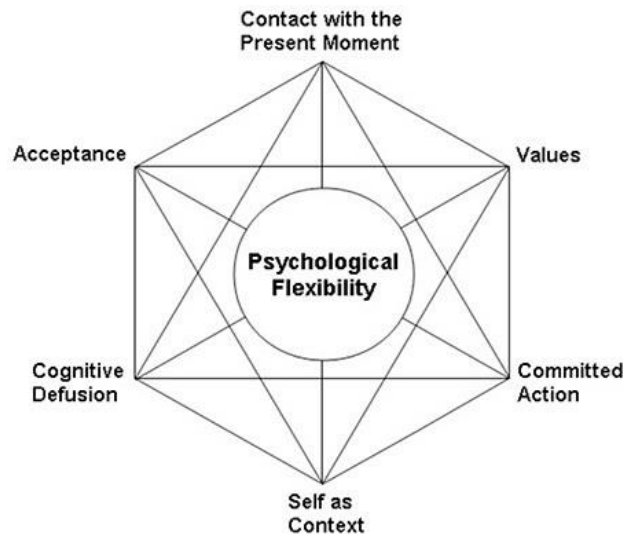


We are "in this together"...

- We are each affected in different ways by this common experience.
- And it is bringing out our humanity, and acts of compassion.
- "When we train our lens of awareness on these acts of kindness, we can't help but be moved by the basic goodness that lies at the core of our actions." -Richard Davidson, PhD:

Tip: Worry, anxiety, and fear are normal right now and serve great purposes! But limit media exposure, as this too contributes to more of the fight, flight, or freeze response -->the opposite of what we need to achieve for health, wellbeing, and resilience.

FACE COVID



Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

- Stephen Hayes, PhD, developed ACT in 1982.
- Six core processes were identified to promote psychological flexibility in the face of human suffering.
- World-renowned proponent of ACT, Russ Harris, MD, has adapted ACT concepts for our current times.

FACE COVID

[Russ Harris's FACE COVID-How to respond effectively](#)

F = Focus on what's in your control

A = Acknowledge your thoughts & feelings

C = Come back into your body

E = Engage in what you're doing

C = Committed action

O = Opening up

V = Values

I = Identify resources

D = Disinfect & distance

Focus on what's in your control: Consider a bag of rocks



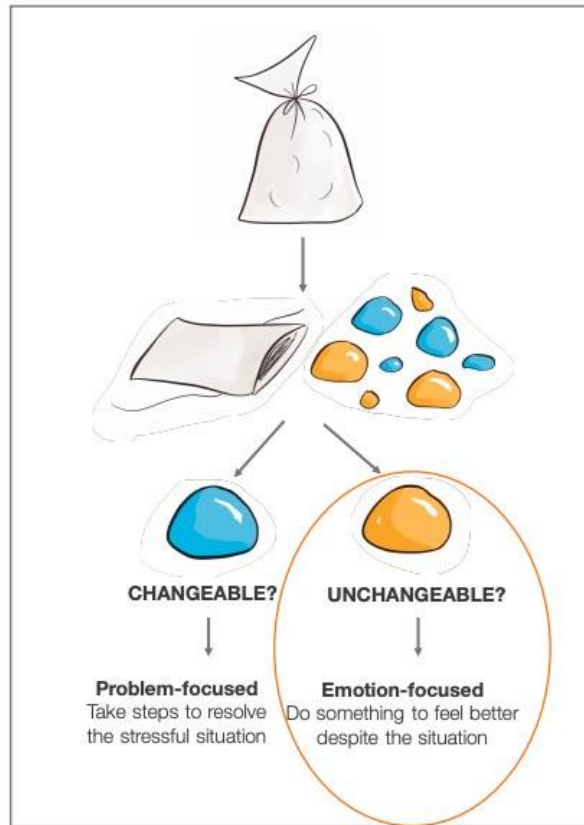
Focus on what's in your control....

- And control the heck out it.
- The brain “gets on with life” through active coping. When we physically move and/or mentally plan (when we feel or are truly trapped), we set ourselves up for a cycle of competence vs passive coping (freezing, despondency). Bessel van der Kolk, MD, "The Body Keeps Score"

Flexible Coping Diagram

-Dr. Karmel Choi

Flexible Coping Diagram



Adapted from Sikkema, Choi, et al. (2018) *Evaluation & Program Planning*
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2018.02.007>

Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings (but do not feed them)



Just notice....

- Acknowledging our thoughts and emotions with a nonjudgmental and compassionate stance enables us to respond with intention vs react to our emotions.
- Start with 1-2 minutes a day to just notice, with compassion, and non-judgmentally.

On your own paper or device, I invite you to write down your thoughts and/or feelings.

Mindfulness resources for our times:

[Tara Brach](#)

[Insight Timer](#)

[Center for Healthy Minds](#)

Dropping an anchor: Your Values



Again, just notice, with compassion, and non-judgmentally...

- What matters most in your life?
- In these times of uncertainty, allow your values to anchor you.

On your own paper or device, I invite you to write down one or more value.

Free values cart sort resource:

[Personal Values Free Online Test](#)

Taking Authority To: Your Committed Action



Now we can use our thoughts, feelings, and values as our compass towards committed action.

- Compassion is associated with acting to relieve suffering. [See the definition of compassion from Greater Good at Berkeley University.](#)
- Through self-compassionate awareness of thoughts & feelings, we are better able to manage our nervous system response.
- When we are able to manage our nervous system response, we are better able to integrate our experience into our life, rather than allowing our experience to define us and become stuck in it.
- This integration allows us to take steps towards what matters to us.
- No matter the thoughts and feelings, considering your value(s), whether mental or physical, what action can you take?

On your own paper or device, I invite you to write down or think of one action you can try to commit to taking. This can be daily, most days, or just once. It may be something you mentioned at the beginning of our session, or something new.

As you commit to this, enjoy new dimensions of life and be comforted by the compassion that comes with embracing what matters to you.

Compassion related resources:

[Greater Good's Guide to Wellbeing During Coronavirus](#)

Shine your beacon of light



I invite you to share in the chat box, one of the following....

- something you are grateful for
- a recent funny moment
- something you are proud of
- a victory

Peace be with you as you grow during these times.