

FACING OUR CHALLENGES

As we live with ongoing uncertainties related to COVID, world events, and other challenges in our lives (such as snow days and power outages!), it's normal to feel worried, anxious and unsettled. While there will continue to be so many things in our world that we cannot control, *we can use coping strategies that help us reduce our stress response and become more resilient.*

I just read a new blog written by Melli O'Brien, an excellent mindfulness teacher and retreat leader (her website is mrsmindfulness.com). She shared a coping strategy called **F.A.C.E.** which can help us feel less anxious and more resilient during stressful times. I've summarized the F.A.C.E. strategy below.

F.A.C.E.

F = Focus on what's in your control

When you are facing a challenge, focus your energy on what you can control and acknowledge the strong, often painful feelings you're experiencing. Being present to overwhelming emotions (even for a short period of time) reduces their power and makes them easier to manage. ***Remind yourself that you have control over how you respond to every challenge you face.*** Most important, be kind to yourself during this difficult time – you're doing the best you can!

A = Accept what you cannot control

As you shift your focus to what you can control, you can start to let go of things you cannot control. Instead of struggling with a situation that is out of your control, Melli suggests acknowledging "right now it's like this." When you are able to let go of something you can't control, you can focus on using strategies that will help you respond in the most helpful way that supports yourself and others.

C = Come back to the present moment

When you find yourself overwhelmed with a challenging situation, bring yourself back to the present moment. Come back to the present by taking some slow deep breaths. You can also do anything that helps you feel grounded in the present, such as going for a walk, taking 5 minutes to close your eyes and breathe, enjoying your favorite coffee or comfort food – the possibilities are endless! Being in the present moment will help you feel calmer, more balanced and better able to think.

E – Engage in action guided by your values

When you are facing a challenging situation, think about one step (even a small one) you could take that would be consistent with your personal core values. When you connect your actions with your values (such as love, kindness, courage, playfulness, and patience), you can easily identify an action you can take that could improve the situation and help others as well as yourself.

By focusing on what you can control and taking action, you shift from feeling helpless to being more hopeful and empowered.

Every time you use F.A.C.E. you will increase your resilience which will help you better cope with future challenges.

Adapted from: How to Cope in a Crisis, Melli O'Brien, <https://mrsmindfulness.com/how-to-stay-strong-in-adversity/>