

***This message has been approved by Tanya Rowell, CEO  
Public Service Commission***

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### **Coping with Changing Times**

Most of us haven't experienced anything like COVID-19. It has impacted all of us to varying degrees in many ways – socially, economically, emotionally, and for some, physically. These unexpected and abrupt changes have affected us all and have left many of us waiting and wishing for the days when “things would just go back to normal.” So many times over the past many weeks, I've found myself thinking this way or hearing from others, “I just want things to go back to normal.”

#### **Validate:**

However, with things in flux, we will continue our efforts to adapt and adjust the way we live. Hugging, shaking hands, or any other form of personal contact with others are things we now need to reconsider for our continued safety. These necessary changes to our daily lives, can be distressing and can activate feelings of anxiety and grief. These feelings are all valid. In fact, just the process of recognition of our feelings and the feelings others are experiencing helps us to move forward.

#### **Acceptance:**

When we have made space for our feelings, then we can practice acceptance. A way to shift our thinking, to accept new phases and transition as they arise. Acceptance doesn't mean we are A-okay. It means that we can *accept* what is and what must be and still not feel comfortable or happy with the situation. When there is acceptance, we can begin to refocus our thoughts and energies away from worry and being upset over what we've lost, and closer to hope, possibility, and gratitude for what we have.

#### **Shifting Perspective:**

This practice takes effort. It takes motivation and determination to make the most out of a situation that is outside our control. We can control our focus on the positives that exist and offering ourselves compassion. Again, by taking our time and energy away from the distress over about what is no longer, we can more easily identify and build on positives that may have previously even gone unnoticed, or that we simply took for granted. We hear statements such as, “I really enjoy meals with my family now that we're at home more in the evening,” “I love walking the trails by the house. I never seemed to have the time before,” or “By working from home, I can actually exercise in the morning before turning on my computer. I don't miss the commute!”

**Gratitude:**

COVID-19 has changed our lives so much, and we have the right and the need to validate this, and in some ways, grieve this loss. But we are also able to accept this time of transition and then recognize what COVID-19 may have given us....perhaps a greater appreciation for our health and wellness, deep gratitude for our family and friends, our work, and the simple blessings of life that may have been taken for granted. This is one important step in managing our mental wellness during this challenging time.

Author: Jennifer Smith, MSW, RSW

**EAP is available to provide support and assistance in managing and acceptance in this time of transition.**

**Contact Information:**

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