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Returning to the Present Moment

During the initial overwhelm and struggles associated with the pandemic, we shared with you a practice of “ [Staying with the Present Moment During a Pandemic](#)”. As the pandemic has persisted, perhaps longer than we would have believed and definitely longer than we would have welcomed, we invite you to explore that practice again. While sharing the original article, we can also explore some additional practices as we continue our journey living with COVID-19.

Key Concept:

Remember that being in the present moment is about our internal experience, rather than external situations or demands. Whatever stressors are coming at us and activating us, what we truly have influence over is our internal responses to these situations. While our environment can feel demanding and uncertain at times, engaging in a practice of being in the present moment can help us return to a place of inner stability. It means we let go of our knee jerk reaction to control situations, our past or the future. Instead we engage with ourselves and what is happening within us, right now.

In practice this looks like unhooking from those outside stressors like: “What will the next announcement be?” “Will my child be OK through this?” “How can this be happening?”, etc. These stressors may indeed be happening, but there is personal empowerment to shifting our focus to our own mindset. We have influence over how we react to what is happening outside of us.

Practices:

-When the news is scary and we notice our mind and bodies activating a threat response, it’s helpful to bring ourselves to the present moment experience. Place your hand over your heart and actively tell yourself that you are safe. Speak it aloud if the situation allows. Regardless of what is happening around you, you are safe in this moment. Really notice what it feels like to be safe and secure.

-Practice a quick body scan. Bring your attention to parts of your body, perhaps where you are feeling any pain or discomfort. Then actively bring a sensation of relaxation to the area. Even briefly doing this in one area, especially our head can be effective. For example, notice what your jaw feels like, then actively relax it. Tune into your forehead and then let it soften. Repeat with your eyes, nose, ears, cheeks, scalp, etc. and embrace the sensation of creating relaxation for your body.

-Trust in your inner capacity. When things feel difficult and overwhelming, we need to shift from focusing on what could happen to what we are capable of. Regardless of what comes your way, remind yourself that you have found ways to make it work so far. Tell yourself that: “Whatever happens, I can manage it”. You have coped with change and crisis before and you got through it. In the present moment you will manage. You have skills, strategies and resource within

you that are available to you in every moment. You don't have to attempt to predict a crisis, because whatever shows up, you will manage.

Here is a guided audio meditation for face relaxation you might like to try:

[Face Relaxation | Mindfulness Meditation | The Mindfulness Project - YouTube](#)

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