

# Seeking PEACE and CALM during COVID-19

NAFASI | FIU

Emotions are **natural, informative and important** and they can help us learn about ourselves and others, even during calls for social distancing.

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## PURPOSE

- ▶ Emotions are signals that help us understand the world around us
- ▶ What you **feel** influences what you do. What you do can make situations better or worse

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## EXPERIENCE

- ▶ Emotions exist on a continuum (low to high) and can be complex (more than one at a time). Having insight into **your own** emotions helps you understand your experiences and helps you decide what to do
- ▶ Your body sends you messages about how you feel. For example, strong emotions can be experienced by a racing heart, tight muscles, butterflies in your belly, and sweaty palms. You might be feeling some of these now in regards to COVID-19

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## AWARENESS

- ▶ People experience and express emotions in different ways
- ▶ Observing emotions in **other people** requires understanding both **verbal** and **nonverbal** cues (e.g., body language, facial expressions) and allows us to better connect with others. Videoconferencing gives us unique opportunity to examine these cues on new platforms

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## COMPASSION

- ▶ We never truly know how people are feeling or what they might be going through. Being kind and accepting – especially when people appear sad, worried, or angry – communicates that we care and support them
- ▶ By being patient and understanding, we can improve our perspective-taking; after all, we all feel sad, worried, or angry sometimes, especially in light of the current circumstances”

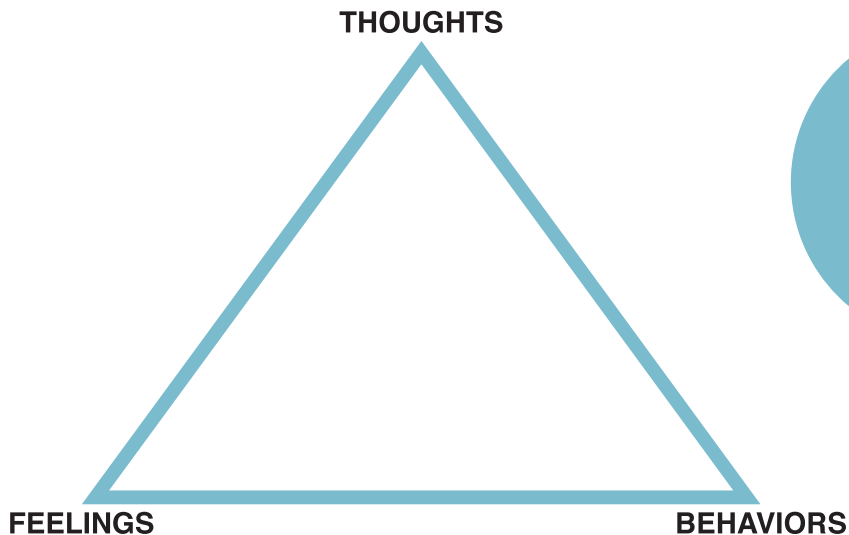
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## EXPRESSION

- ▶ Emotions can look different for people across cultures, contexts and situations
- ▶ Sometimes we hide our emotions making it hard for other people to know what we feel inside
- ▶ We don't want to eliminate the emotion; we want to understand it, label it, know why it's occurring and allow it to motivate us toward a healthy desired outcome

**NOTE:** Though it can be hard, practicing emotion skills during moments of calm prepares us to use them when we need them most

# The Cognitive Triangle



This triangle represents the dynamic interplay between our thoughts, feelings and behaviors

Emotions are tied to what we **feel** in our bodies (physiologically), how we **think** and what we **do**

## Emotion Literacy Strategies

### 1 THINKING FLEXIBLY

- ▶ Practice looking at situations differently as this can change how we feel
- ▶ Evaluate the thoughts that make us feel happy, sad, excited, angry, or nervous
- ▶ Consider different thoughts for the same situation and how they make you feel

### 2 QUICK CALM

- ▶ A Mindful Minute for relaxation enables us to manage stress in positive and healthy ways
- ▶ Steps: C-A-L-M
  - Close your eyes
  - Attend to your breath (perhaps using 4-2-8 breathing)
  - Let go of your thoughts
  - Muscles relax

### 3 EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- ▶ Give someone time and space to calm down
- ▶ Listen attentively and offer your full attention (eyes and ears)
- ▶ Validate and accept their feelings and emotions, even if you do not agree
- ▶ Summarize and reflect what they are saying

## Let's Try It

**EXAMPLE:** Kevin is socially distancing due to COVID-19

### CONSIDER:

- ▶ What might Kevin be thinking?  
e.g. "Everything is out of control"
- ▶ How might each thought make him feel both emotionally and physically?  
e.g. Emotionally: worried, hopeless;  
Physically: tense, shaking, racing heart rate
- ▶ What might he do based on how he feels and thinks?  
e.g. avoid reaching out to friends and family, decreasing his physical activity, spending less time working toward personal goals
- ▶ How would Kevin's feelings and actions change if he thought differently?  
If Kevin instead thought, "Some things feel very much out of my control, and other things I can control," he may feel differently -- e.g. Emotionally: motivated, hopeful;  
Physically: more relaxed and at ease.  
This might cause him to spend more time connecting virtually with friends and family, increasing his levels of indoor physical activity, and working toward personal goals