



MANIBEN NANAVATI WOMEN'S COLLEGE,

P.G DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

UNDER THE MIND-MELA INITIATIVE

& SELF CENTRAL CARE



PRESENTS

MANAGING LOCKDOWN

MAKE THE MOST DURING LOCKDOWN

At this point, we are witnessing an event that no individual, no society, or country has witnessed in our lifetime, perhaps. An unprecedented event like this gives rise to unprecedented reactions. How we spend this time in lockdown says a lot about who we are and our mental health. While it is wonderful if one pursues unmet goals and upskills themselves in this time, I encourage everyone to observe the thoughts and feelings that come to them when they are still.

I see my social media feed full of friends mastering new skills, cooking, baking, creating, homeschooling children, curating their life in lockdown, as it were. Being a Psychology professional, it's easy to see that engagement is often a foil for avoidance. The drive to constantly push and improve ourselves is understandable, but the need to slow down and examine what issues this pandemic is bringing up within is imperative too. It could be a fear or anxiety for health, it could be certain standards we have set for ourselves, our plans being upside down - it could even be issues within the family we have been ignoring. All of these are mental health concerns that our everyday lives before lockdown helped us avoid.

What does one do in these times? Priority, balance, and community are the words that come to mind.

Reflect and prioritize on a few things that are important for each day, or the week.

Health and diet, communicating with others, a hobby, or even mindfully doing your own tasks, like making one's bed, when done repeatedly, provide a sense of certainty and quiet joy in these times.

**IT'S NOT ABOUT
"HAVING" TIME.
IT'S ABOUT
MAKING TIME.**

Balancing out work alongside family and personal time is another important facet.

Maintaining boundaries between work and home while at home and working with a purpose (rather than a “target”) in mind are personally helping me keep the focus. If you find yourself frequently relying on how much you do as a measure of self-worth, examine where that belief came in first.



Lastly, the isolation part of the lockdown has the capacity to insulate us even further from others in the community and neighborhood.

It's important to acknowledge the privilege we have and extend a little bit of ourselves in any way we can to our friends, neighbors, maids. Coordinating donation drives, holding counseling sessions, or even dropping groceries off for at the doorstep of elderly neighbor are small steps that go a long way.



We were called human beings for a reason, take this time to focus on the “being” for a change. Focus on intentionality, connection, and practice gratitude often, and privately at first.



Dr. Shoma Chakrawarty, Assistant Professor,
P.G Department of Psychology,
Maniben Nanavati Women's College.

MANAGE YOUR SCREEN HOURS

The lockdown due to coronavirus has increased the time individual spend on different screens, be it television, mobile phones, laptops or tablets with nothing much to do individuals are scrolling the screen for entertainment. It is been seen that this pandemic has forced many to work from home, maintain social distancing and isolation has lead the usage of screen specifically smartphones skyrocketed. It shows how people want to know about the outside world through news updates, or about their social circles by checking various social media apps happening. Whatever activity we are indulging on our screens needs to be manged responsibly, cause the information available for pandemic is overwhelming and distressing can take a toll on mental on health. Eventually we may become compulsive checkers as our anxiety to know about others has to be met, showing signs of Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) and Fear of Other People's Opinions (FOPO) as suggested by U. K Psychologist . We don't say don't use the smartphones but positive engagements on the screens can enrich your experience.



So How do we do that??? Here we go

- **Digital Detox:** Set Time Limit for screen usage for the online activity i.e Limit the amount of time you spend on social media sites and hold. There are various days challenge available online, one can start doing that. Use

Screen Time, Offtime & Moments which are available on iOS & android Phones.



- ***Use only for Social Connectedness:*** Try reaching to your loved ones, family, friends through video chatting mode rather than checking the social media platforms.
- ***Become member or form online communities:*** People here can plan activities through party like singing songs, watching movies, exercise, sharing cooking tips etc.
- ***Make your schedule:*** Plan your day wisely see its easy to handle and hassle free. Make a family ritual like playing, cooking, watching movies together, workout sessions etc.



- **Indulge in offline activity:** Pursue your hobby which may have been missed due to our busy schedules previously. Indulge in card, board games with other family members.

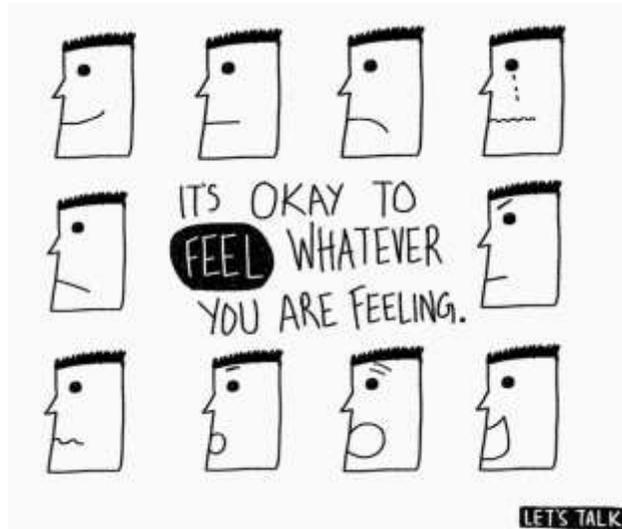


- **Take a Digital Holiday:** Inform on social media platforms about your break i.e how long you will be inactive.



Dr. Anuja Deshpande,
 Assistant Professor & P.G Co-ordinator,
 Department of Psychology,
 Maniben Nanavati Women's College.

MANAGE YOUR FEELINGS



For all of us, this is the first time we are going through global collective suffering. It's a time fraught with uncertainty and anxiety. It's natural to feel a range of emotions, even conflicting ones currently. Getting bogged down by the 'I should be feeling this right now', or 'I shouldn't be feeling this right now' is not going to be of any help. Whatever you are feeling is valid. *Let's be kind to our feelings, and the feelings of those around us.*

Simple Things We can do:

- ✚ *It's also best to not compare ourselves to anybody doing anything, right now.* Different people may have different ways to cope with the uncertainty. For some, working can keep them going. For others, it could be something else. Remember, this is a pandemic, not a productivity test.
- ✚ *If you're interested in exploring your feelings to understand where they are coming from* writing, practising presence and mindfulness, breathwork and meditation can all help. Incorporating some movement and establishing routines and rituals can be very helpful too. Listen to yourself, and honour your needs. **Self-compassion is most important right now.**

- ✦ *If you're struggling to make sense of whatever is happening:* you can also talk to a mental health professional. Many are offering free therapy, or sessions at subsidized rates. If that's something you don't feel comfortable with, even talking to a friend or family member can help. Let someone around you know how you are feeling. So many of us are having similar experiences, and it always helps to have support.



Ms. Nyamat Chadha,
Assistant Professor,
P. G Department of Psychology,
Maniben Nanavati Women's College.

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS FOR DEALING WITH THE COVID19 ERA

These times have pushed us into uncharted territory. It has brought a lot of uncertainty with most of us facing anxiety over our future. Our old ways of being are no longer helping and most of us wonder when things will come back to “normal”. Fear, grief, anger, frustration are all common feelings that we may experience.

It is important for us to accept our feelings however they may be. That does not mean that we need to get overwhelmed with them and come at a standstill. We can be proactive about the situation and try to manage our emotions in healthy ways. One way of doing it is by using positive affirmations. Positive affirmations are simple, declarative statements that help us verbalize new thoughts. We can reiterate them several times a day and they can have profound effects on your mind. Using them in moments of stress helps train our brain to temporarily overcome negative feelings. That in turn can help us deal with our present much better.



Some positive affirmations that can help dealing with the current stress can be :

- ✦ I am doing the best that I can*
- ✦ I accept all my feelings, without labelling them as positive or negative*
- ✦ I am taking all the steps necessary to safeguard myself and those around me*
- ✦ I can handle this situation well*
- ✦ I live in the present moment*
- ✦ I am grateful for today*

- ✦ *I can face any challenges in life*
- ✦ *I am a survivor*
- ✦ *This is an opportunity for personal growth*
- ✦ *I let go of my need for certainty*
- ✦ *I let my mind rest*
- ✦ *I embrace change*
- ✦ *I am patient with myself and others*
- ✦ *I have enough energy to do what needs to be done*
- ✦ *I don't have to figure everything out today*
- ✦ *I act with courage and integrity under all circumstances*
- ✦ *I choose to respond with compassion and understanding*



Ms. Neha Bhansali,
Assistant Professor,
Department of Psychology,
Maniben Nanavati Women's College.

YOGA IN THE TIMES OF CORONA

The Corona pandemic has literally brought the entire world to a standstill. Current times are quite shocking and yet revelational. Revelational because it has given us opportunity to take a pause, reflect and look at life with a renewed perspective. A tiny virus has given the biggest blow to the hubris of humanity. At the most fundamental level, this revelation is humbling.

We, as human beings always look at the world from our limited perspective which is usually shaped by years of life experiences and conditioning. As a result, our outlook is very self-centered. As per classical Indian scriptures, the internal faculty due to which we develop an 'individualized' perception of ourselves and the world is called 'Ahamkara'. It can be roughly translated into English as 'ego'. Ahamkara is nothing but our sense of separate self. It is the 'I'ness of our being. It helps to differentiate between the individual self and others. It also serves the function of protecting us from external influence or perceived threat. Its manifestations are infinite and closely intertwined with our existence. Let it be our likes and dislikes, our opinions, interactions with others, all are coloured by this Ahamkara. It is also a root cause of our problems. It is the reason behind conflict, anger and selfish attitude.

For the longest time, mankind has been ruling the world an attempt to conquer the forces of nature. We have always considered ourselves as superior to other creatures and have tried to selfishly use all the natural resources for our comfort and convenience. After destroying nature for many years, now in the wake of this moment, we are suddenly realising that we have no power when nature takes over. Right now, its not even a huge natural disaster which has made us vulnerable and helpless. It is a virus, not even visible to human eye, which has made us understand how 'little' we really are in the vastness of the universe.

The cause of
suffering is
that the
unbounded
Self is
overshadowed
by the world.

-Patanjali

In this context, the concept of 'Anant Samapatti' from Patanjali Yogadarshan can ground us to reality. This concept implies an experiential understanding of the enormity of reality and in that context merging of individual consciousness with the Cosmic Consciousness. Another application of this concept involves an on-going learning process of understanding what a broad-minded perspective towards individual life and life around oneself is. When it comes to our individual lives, the virus has thrown away our plans and agendas and there is uncertainty looming over us. It has also taught us how ephemeral everything is. It has made us witness the the most fundamental duality of human existence- life and death and their hand-in-hand existence. In the true regard, the concept of Anant samapatti makes us understand the traps of our individual and collective ego. If felt experientially, it can at least humble us in front of the forces of nature. It shows how narrow-minded our perspectives are and that is the root cause of our problems.

The pandemic has also led to a social media frenzy and frankly speaking it is bombarding us with information which is surely overwhelming. Our social media feeds are filled with images and videos of people doing Yoga. It seems that the pandemic has made us again believe ever so strongly in the 'usefulness' of the ancient science of Yoga to enhance our physical health which is so crucial at this time. People are also realising that Pranayama (breath regulation and expansion practices) can come to our rescue for better lung functioning. There is no denying of the fact that Yoga can enhance physical

and mental health. But it is not just a 'tool' to be used right now to boost our immunity or to health in general.

Yoga, in its essence, is a way of life. So, even though we see images of people crashing the goal of doing headstands or doing perfect Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations), it is important to remember the ultimate purpose of this classical spiritual practice.



Patanjal Yoga Darshan, the classical scripture on Yoga was not written for people to gain health, cure illness or lose weight to fit into unrealistic beauty standards. It was written for holistic personal transformation, with the spiritual aspect being its ultimate purpose, mental well-being as complimentary and physical health being a positive effect on the way.

The word Yoga also implies harmony and balance. It is the dynamic balance between one's body, mind and intellect. In the current situation, this balance is between our physical and mental health. It is also between negligence and paranoia. We need to avoid both, extreme casual attitude and extreme fear or anxiety. Both can have detrimental effects on us. It is necessary to retain our internal poise and equanimity to cope with the situation at an individual and collective level. In order to be in the state of dynamic balance, various types of meditations can definitely help us. *Mindfulness meditation is one such open monitoring meditation wherein the person tries to maintain non-judgemental, moment-to-moment awareness of bodily sensations, feelings, thoughts as they are.* So rather than suppressing our anxieties and fears, we can be aware of them and accept them as valid without getting overly engrossed in them or being overly reactive. Yoga or mindfulness can make us more resilient in times

like these by preventing us from wallowing in the set back. Having said that, it requires a lot of practice with patience to reach this state, but it is not impossible.



Another offering of Indian culture in the time of pandemic is 'prayer'. It is the right time for all of us to pray for not just our health, but also for the health of entire existence. Praying for others naturally includes our health and well-being as well. The collective energy of faith is the best antidote to fear.



सर्वेऽपि सुखिनः सन्तु सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चित् दुःखमाप्नुयात् ॥

Dr. Sanhitta Karmalkar,
Assistant Professor,
Department of Psychology,
Maniben Nanavati Women's College.