



Figuring out Your New Family Flow Master the ABC's of Your "New Normal"

Nina Crowley, PhD, RDN, LD

Objectives

Acceptance

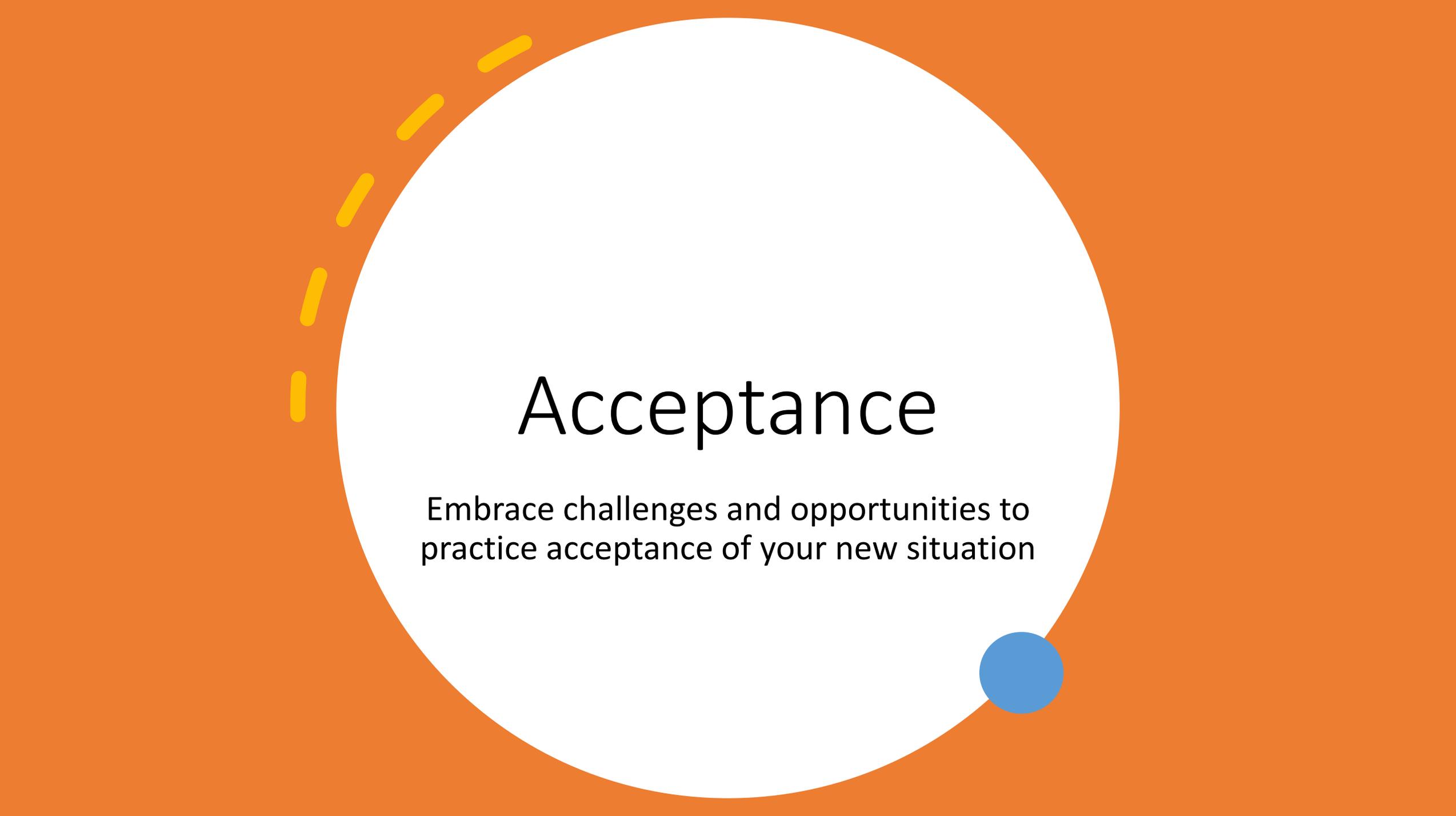
Embrace challenges and opportunities to practice acceptance of your new situation

Balance

Learn strategies and tools to balance family, work, and school schedules

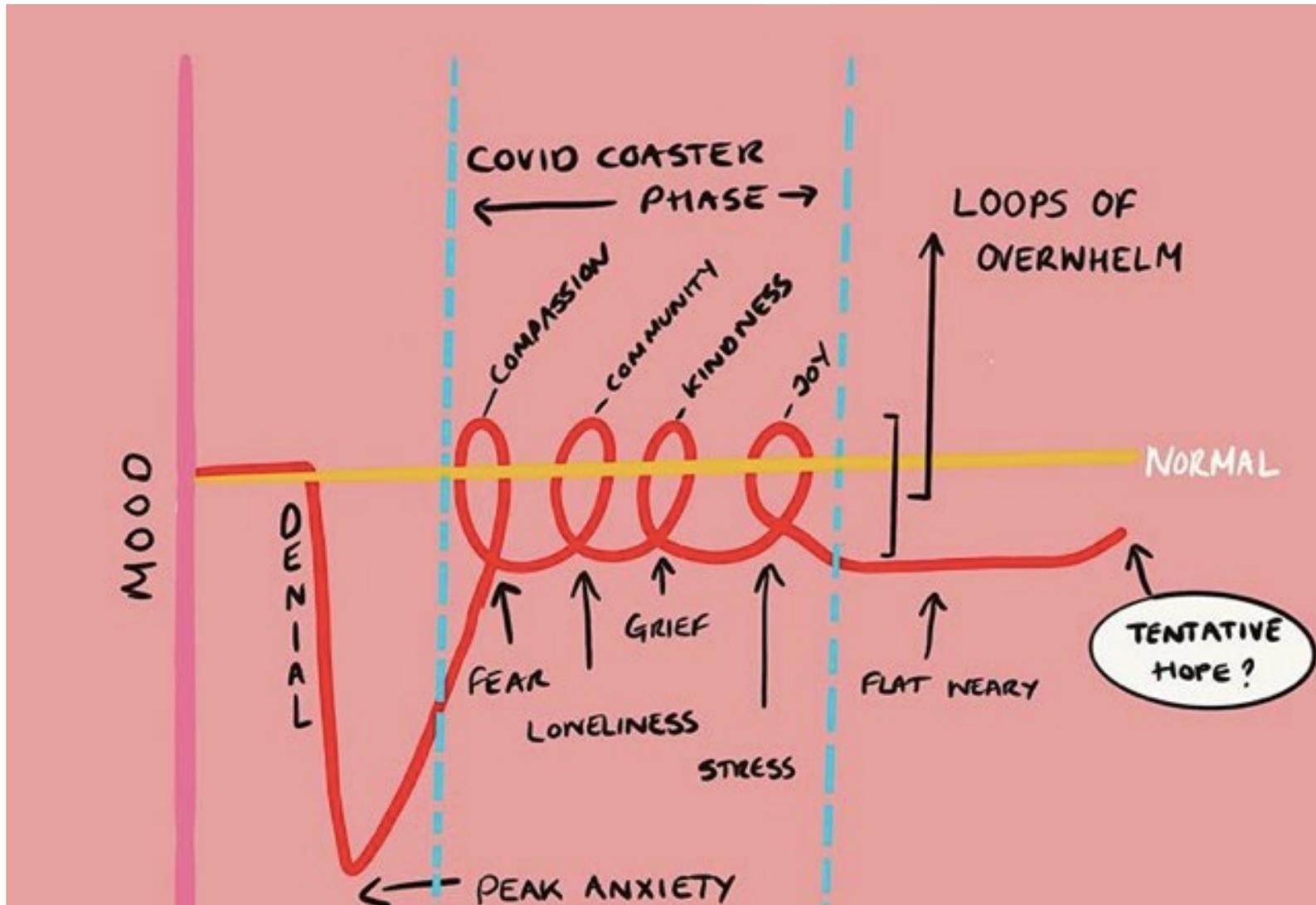
Care

Keep mental and physical health a priority for the family and turn healthy behaviors into habit



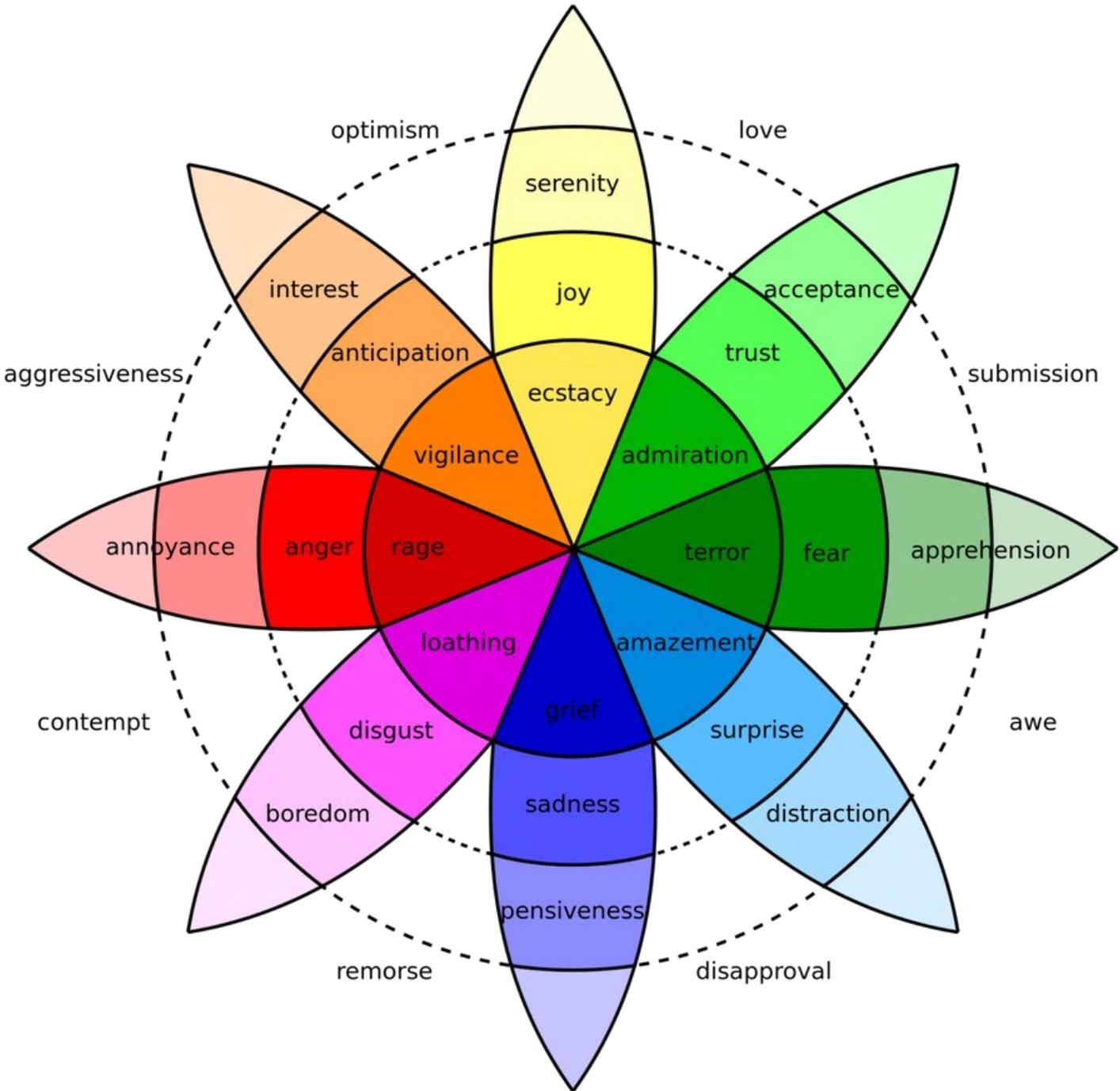
Acceptance

Embrace challenges and opportunities to practice acceptance of your new situation



Coronavirus
Emotion
Graph

Emotions



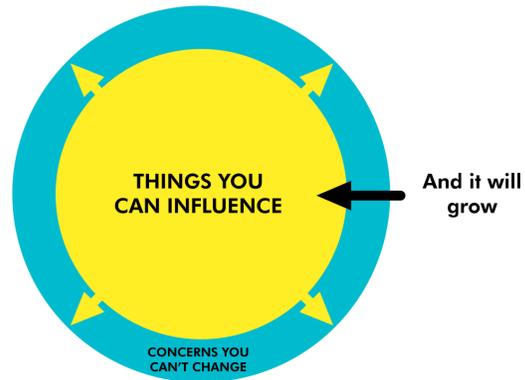
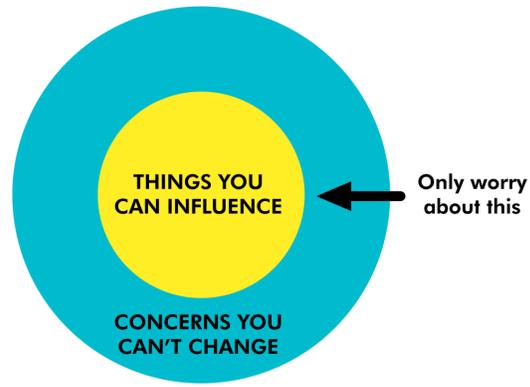
UNCERTAINTY IS EXHAUSTING. PRACTICE ACCEPTANCE

Accepting the Emotional Rollercoaster

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Mindfulness practice
- Psychological flexibility
- Awareness without trying to change

Consider 'Control' and influence

- Thoughts
- Words
- Actions
- Behaviors
- Responses



Thank you to CounselingTeacher.com for this image.

Self talk to accept your circumstances and move on



I'm not aiming for perfection...



A 'good day' looks like...



A small win today would be...



In the past when I've accepted my situation, I



If my best friend was struggling, I'd suggest...



How is that working out for you?



I can do hard things!

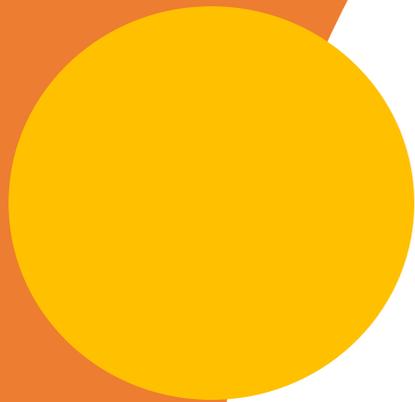


"I'm in this situation. I don't approve of it. I don't think it's OK, but it is what it is, and I can't change that it happened."

Know yourself!

- You know if you need to retreat, take time to self, or stay with people
- Even during pandemic, should try to honor these preferences

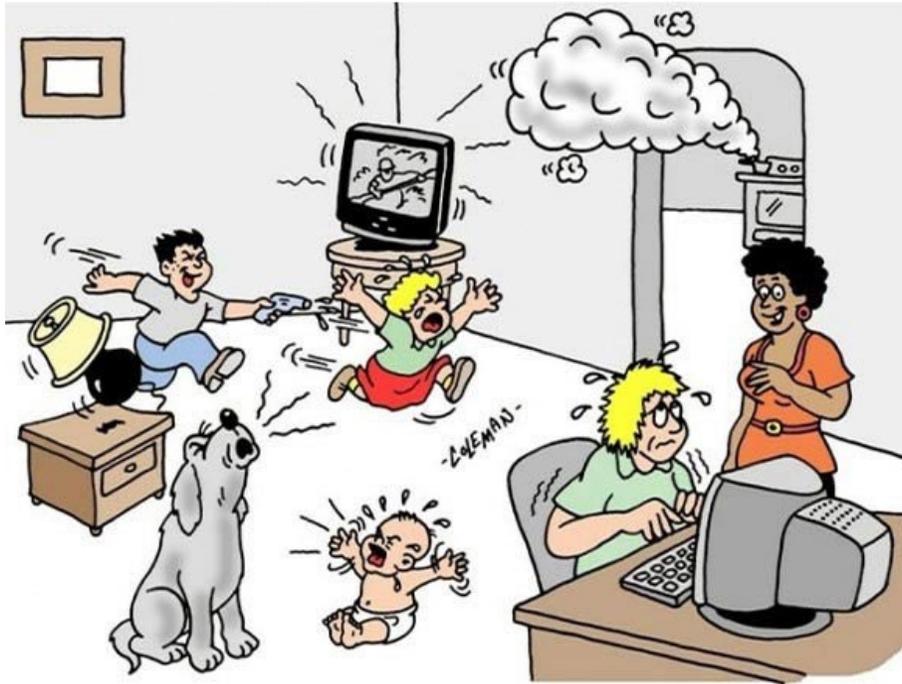




Balance

Learn strategies and tools to balance family, work, and school schedules

Abrupt shift to WFH



" IT MUST BE NICE HAVING A JOB
WHERE YOU CAN WORK AT HOME. "

Mother **HUMOR**



WFH



WFH in reality

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
--------	---------	-----------	----------	--------

ART	WRITING	YOGA	READING	YOGA
-----	---------	------	---------	------

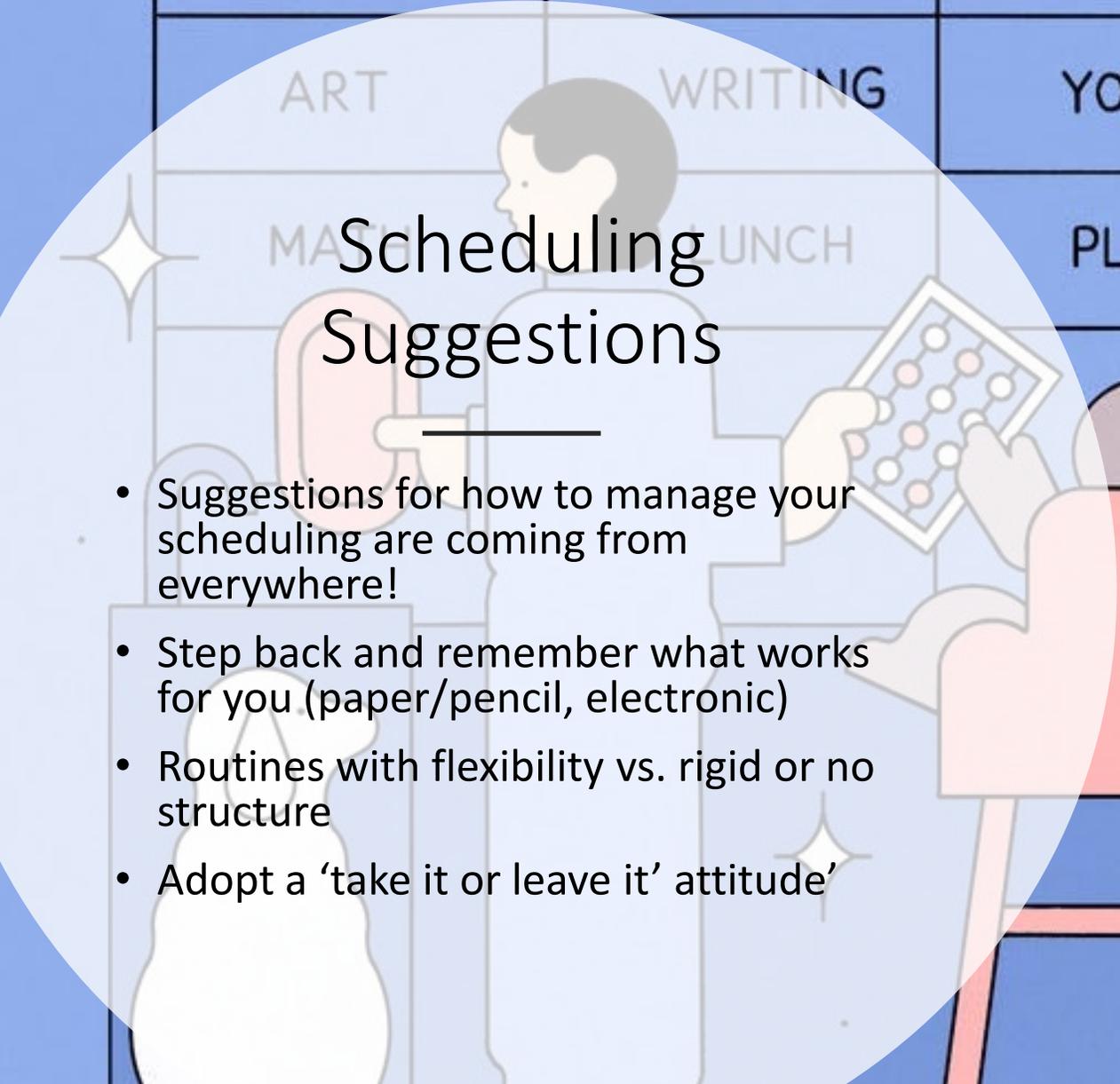
MATH	LUNCH	PLAY	A	☉
------	-------	------	---	---

--	--	--	--	--

				READING
--	--	--	--	---------

Scheduling Suggestions

- Suggestions for how to manage your scheduling are coming from everywhere!
- Step back and remember what works for you (paper/pencil, electronic)
- Routines with flexibility vs. rigid or no structure
- Adopt a 'take it or leave it' attitude'



Staying at Home... Together

- Shift to more time at home with family
- Acknowledge that each individual experiences this differently
- Varying levels of need for connectedness, routine, activity
- Working from home is different than staying at home and requires different boundaries
- Connect daily activities to mutual family values/preferences
 - Consider what you need for feeling appreciated and loved (words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, physical touch, acts of service)



Stop the Social Comparison

Drop the illusion of the
“Perfect Pandemic
Parent”



Caring for Yourself

Keep mental and physical health a priority for the family and
turn healthy behaviors into habit

Have your self-care needs changed?

- Get curious about how things have changed for you
- Since having less time with others, do you crave more time with friends?
- Since being with family more, do you crave more alone time?

SELF CARE MEANS
PAYING ATTENTION
TO WHAT YOU NEED:

coffee

time with friends

time alone

being quiet

speaking up

books

TV

exploring

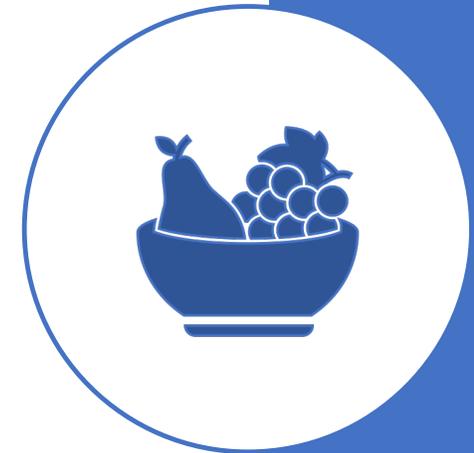
food

rest

nerding out

Opportunities for self-care through nutrition

- Keeping a routine with eating helps to keep your energy stable throughout the day
- Grocery shopping when you need to get in/out of store quickly or order online for pick up or delivery means better meal planning
- Many restaurants offer convenient prepared meals with healthy ingredients and drop them off to your door
- While you aren't sending kids/adults to school/work with a packed lunch/snacks – good to prepare like you were so you aren't in the kitchen preparing food all day
- Fresh produce available from local farmers who are innovating ways to bring the farm to you with drop offs, single orders and online ordering
- Planting, tending, and harvesting produce from a garden is both a smart way to eat, and an educational lesson
- Cooking meals can be therapeutic and allow you to de-stress and transition to the evening
- Getting into baking or cooking can be a challenge to focus on mastering a new skill set
- Meal planning, shopping, prepping, cooking, and eating can be shared with others in the home! They learn a new skill, you do it as a togetherness activity, and they offload your work!



Opportunities for self-care through movement

- Movement and physical activity linked to mental health
- Choose activities that are enjoyable and fun so they don't feel like obligation
- Moving more during the work portions of the day is important when not walking around as often as you might if working in a traditional setting
- Family routines around activities like biking, tennis, rollerblading can be great for everyone to be together and build a habit of moving together
- Exercise at beginning or end (or middle) of the day can help define the transition between work/home
- With gyms and in-person group classes limited, fitness professionals are getting creative and are offering many classes online that you can try/sample and find a new thing that you enjoy
- Adventure-seekers can still find many outdoor activities that allow social distance, movement, and being outside which is good for mental and physical health
- Group exercise can meet some of your social interaction needs and offers a healthy alternative to other activities traditionally centered around food/alcohol
- Re-work time spent in your day on commuting with intentional movement and you just found the 'time' you never had!
- Exercise is used by many as a way to de-stress, and get some precious alone time!



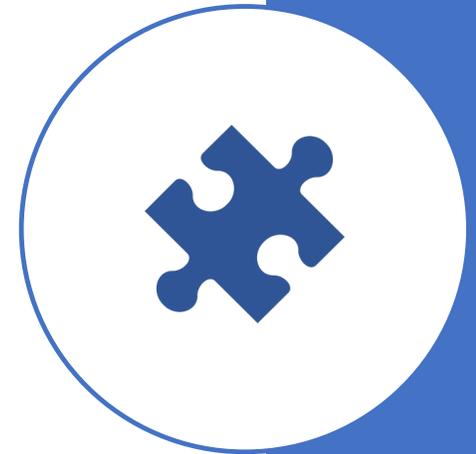
Opportunities for self-care through sleep

- With school transitioned to home and the summer in full swing, families with kids find that kids are sleeping later – this may be a time for adults to re-examine their own sleeping schedule
- Many find that watching 'mindless tv' is a great way to de-stress
- With movies and entire seasons of your favorite shows available at your impulse, easy to get in habit of 'binge watching' and staying up far later than planned
- Sleep schedule should take priority – set alarm for when to go to sleep
- Social media time is up for many – hard to limit, but important not to be on, staring at bright light before bed – set limits on social media use



Opportunities for self-discovery

- Social distancing and stay at home orders are imposing limits on people who rely on external influences to look within
- Without certain distractions, it can be an opportunity to pay attention to what you need and innovate creative ways to meet your needs
- Meeting your needs may in turn help you to feel less stress!
- Parents are often focused on how to help the kids occupy their time with crafts, activities, and old-fashioned ways to stave off boredom
- Find out what stokes your creative side, or helps you to feel energized or in 'flow' (and keep it going after the 'new normal' becomes old hat)



Conclusions

- Navigating your 'new normal' looks different for everyone
- Appreciating your individuality, preferences, and tendencies will help you to find a flow that works for your family
- Acceptance of the things that you cannot change can help you manage feelings of uncertainty
- Balancing the external influences and individual needs of your family is challenging
- Covid 19 has presented difficulty and hardship, but has provided opportunities to disconnect, find yourself, and connect