

# Calming Corona Concerns

Please read in conjunction with EASA tips sheets on *Stress, Sleep and Anxiety* (partial material taken from APS)

## Learn the Facts

Media keeps us in touch with the world, however it also has the capacity to overwhelm us, as with any overload of information, try to find one credible, factual and up to date resource source and stick with this regarding the pandemic. Consider: [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au) or [who.int](https://www.who.int). Right now, every source of data is clear, frequently washing your hands in the right way and physically distancing yourself from others reduces the chance of infection.

## Perspective - Panic vs. Concern

Panic can be brought about by over focusing on risks without the balance of resources i.e. Anxiety is an overestimation of risk and an underestimation of your resources.

**Action** → get great at estimating your chances of an event occurring i.e. what's the risk for someone of your sex, your age, your health whilst taking your precautions against your exposures?

**Action** → list all your resources and if there is an ability to research how to add another; plan for this, you could ask someone who knows you well and cares about you what other resources you have or could build.

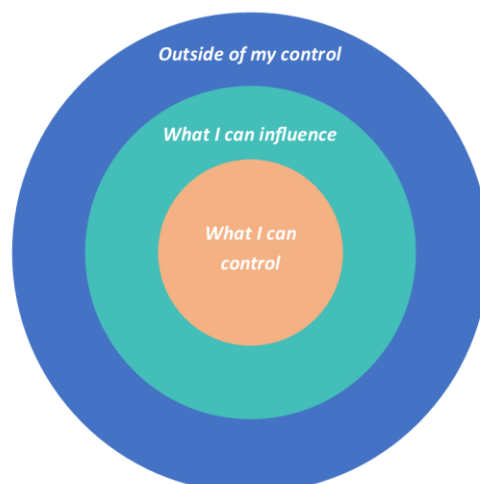
Panic can be increased by focusing on speculation, doom-based conversations and overwhelming ourselves with information from less credible news sources.

## Concern can lead to calm if you...

- Use facts in your planning i.e. *"I might have to work from home and therefore I need to check if I can do this"* and *"If I get the virus and it's a bit like the flu, I probably need the things in the house that help me at that time such as easy to heat food, paracetamol, tissues, good movies and online resources"*.
- Be reasonable, consider the advice you would give right now to someone you love, use the same tone with yourself and the same messaging i.e. *"my immunity is good, I am following advice, take each day as it comes, one step at a time"*.
- Continue as usual where there is no current data suggesting to change, keep your routines as we find them comforting, try adapting only one thing at a time.
- Turn fear of the unknown into working effectively with what you can control, see this simple diagram that has been adapted from Covey's Circles of Influence and Control.

When we consider the diagram, bring to mind certain things that may fall into each circle for you.

1. Things outside of our control
  - i.e. weather, traffic jams, legislation, government directives
2. Things that we can influence, (do your research about how to do this)
  - i.e. the behaviour of others
3. Things that we can control
  - i.e. our own behaviour, like washing your hands, showering after work.. that's you in control of you



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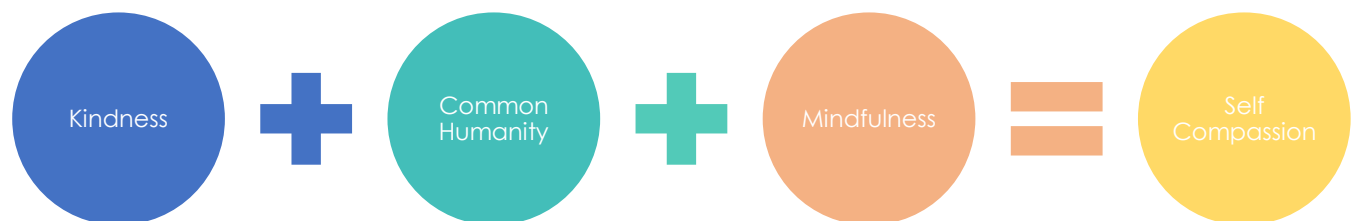
# Calming Corona Concerns

By acknowledging aspects of life, especially ones that may be stressful, as things that are outside of our control, we are able to refocus our energy on what we can influence and control. For example, you as one individual cannot control the pandemic, but we can influence the behaviours of those close to us by having conversations about wellbeing and cleanliness. We also know that we can ensure we eat healthily, expose our body to sunlight in the morning or afternoon, drink plenty of water and get a great sleep.

## Still Worried? Try Self-Compassion

Put your hands over your heart – feel the heat of your skin under your palms, notice how that feels. Now acknowledge how you are feeling, your anxiety, your upset and your fears. Then take your attention to where you are feeling the most tension in your body. It will likely to be in your gut, chest, throat or jaw. When you find it, focus on it, put all your attention on it, you could imagine it's a shape or texture or colour... (i.e. a black lump, pink smoke etc.) stay focussed on this area of tension and give it permission to leave, allow it to start to go, stay focussed on it, allow it to get smaller, paler, thinner and fade away, drain away, stay focussed on it until it's gone.

*You are a resource that needs care...*



## What can I do when I feel overwhelmed?

- Don't sweat the small stuff, identify and stick with priorities. Focus on the essentials that require your energy right now and let the other stuff go.
- Use your breath to calm your body and mind – try taking a deep breath, push your tummy out when breathing in to breathe deeper, then hold it for the count of 3. Now breathe out of your open mouth slowly like breathing out of a straw. Repeat 10 times. What do you notice?
- Try progressively tensing, holding for the count of 3 and then releasing your muscles in your body. Start with your toes, scrunch them right up, hold and then release. Don't forget facial muscles and do your gut and shoulders 3 times. Now what do you notice?
- Try staying in the present moment, our mind can wander into the future or the past, neither of which we have current control over. Spending large amounts of time trying to predict the future or change the past is linked to depression.