Feelings - It's okay to feel however you feel!

During this very challenging time it is important to understand that we are all feeling so many emotions which may change or stay the same. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that YOU accept how you are feeling - without judgement or guilt! So here is some information to help you accept whatever your emotions are in each moment.

1) **Self-validation is accepting your own internal experience, your thoughts, & your feelings.**

   ➔ If you fight the thoughts and feelings or judge yourself for having them, then you increase your emotional upset.

   ➔ Accepting your thoughts and emotions will help you calm yourself and manage them more effectively.

2) The first step to Self-validation is to **be mindful of your emotions without pushing them away; being present.** Being present for yourself validates that you matter and that you have the strength to feel.

   To be present means to:

   ➢ <u>ground</u> yourself and not daydream, suppress, or numb your emotions

   ➢ <u>listen</u> to yourself

   ➢ <u>feel</u> the pain of sadness, hurt, and fear which is challenging and difficult

Avoiding emotions often results in quite negative consequences, while accepting emotions allows them to pass and helps build resiliency.

3) **Normalize your feelings.** Sometimes people don't see their emotional reactions as being normal. Remember:

   ❏ Everyone has emotions
   ❏ No one is happy all the time

   ❏ It's normal to feel sad, angry, hurt, ashamed, or any other emotion.

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When our routines are disrupted we may feel overwhelmed by frustration and disappointment. When you're frustrated, overwhelmed, angry (however you feel) about something:

1) **Take a step back and avoid judging yourself for those feelings.**
2) **Sit with your emotions without reacting to them.**
3) **Don't tell yourself how you *should* feel.**
4) **Accept how you do feel in the moment because you always have a right to feel.**

As Joanna Stern, PsyD, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute, explains, "**You tell yourself it's okay to feel anxious right now. It's okay to feel scared. It's okay to feel angry. You're accepting the feelings you have and validating them because we're all having those feelings. It's really important that you accept them as they are rather than fighting them.**"

In other words, says Dr. Stern, "**We say to ourselves: 'This sucks, and I'm going to be sad about it, and I'm going to be angry about it, and I'm going to feel anxious about it,' or whatever it is. This then allows us to move on and say, 'Okay, so now what needs to be done?' "**

Resources

Self-Validation

Learn to accept your internal experience and build your identity.

By Karyn Hall PhD
Psychology Today

4 Ways to Validate Yourself

By Sarah Newman, MA, MFA
Managing Editor of Psych Central
Last updated: 8 Jul 2018

Supporting Teenagers and Young Adults During the Coronavirus Crisis

Tips for parents with older children at home

Caroline Miller

Child Mind Institute