

## ***Roll With It***

First, focus on what is in your control. As humans we crave certainty and thrive on routine. These last 14 months have put a large question mark on most of our daily routines: Will school be in-person or fully remote? Can my son or daughter go to a birthday celebration for a friend? Will there be year-end school celebrations? The reality is that, for now, much of our routines are out of our control. To support our wellbeing and those in our circle, it is crucial that we take one day at a time. As said by Kanwer Singh, “You don’t need to trust a world you can’t control, just trust yourself to do your best to get through it” (p.87). [Finding Silver Linings](#), [Finding Three Good Things](#) and [Practicing Mindful Moments](#) are “brain” tools we can use to help us live in the present moment, reduce stress and anxiety, boost overall happiness and improve social relationships. Live in the present and be your best self to the best of your ability.

Next, challenge your thoughts. In the best of times, research has shown that “47% of the time we are actually thinking of something other than what we are doing” (Jain, 2014), and in stressful situations people often overestimate how bad something is (CAMH, 2020). So, while it is normal to feel nervous, anxious, and even stressed about what is to come as we head into the second year of the pandemic, it is key to challenge the “*what ifs*” that inevitably creep up. What if I get sick from COVID? What if the internet goes down when I am supposed to be doing a presentation for class/work? What if I don’t get to see my parents? The “*what ifs*” could go on forever! It’s important to remember that you have handled stressful situations before and can do it again. And for the times you get stuck in a negative thinking mode, [use questions](#) to identify the fact(s) and reasonable next steps: Is this thought true? How do I know this to be true? Is this thought helping me? What’s next and is this best? Being aware and curious about our thoughts is the secret for a productive and positive mindset.

Last, make self-care a priority. The [World Health Organization](#) highlights that “Almost all people affected by emergencies (such as COVID-19) will experience psychological distress, which for most people will improve over time” (WHO, 2019). Some people may have difficulty sleeping, others with focus. If we do our best to maintain a regular sleep schedule, eat healthy, and train our brain to be present in the now and focus on the positives, we need to acknowledge that we are doing our very best and be alright with where we are at on any given day. I think Tal Ben Shahar said it best by saying “Permission to be human”.

Be intentional. Be positive. Be well.

Theresa Blake, Director of Positive Education

## Resources:

CAMH, Challenging Your Thoughts: [camh\\_covid19\\_infosheet-challenge\\_worries-pdf.pdf](#)

Greater Good Science Center, UC at Berkeley: [Finding Silver Linings](#)

Greater Good Science Center, UC at Berkeley: [Finding Three Good Things](#)

School Mental Health Ontario: [Practicing Mindful Moments](#)

## References

CAMH. (2020). Retrieved from Coping with stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19/coping-with-stress-and-anxiety>

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