

# TACKLING NEW CHALLENGES

CONTINUING THE WORK AND COPING WITH COVID-19



# BPD COMMUNITY

## In This Issue

MAKING THE MOST  
OUT OF ISOLATION

THE DALAI LAMA  
SPEAKS

WISE WORDS FROM  
MARSHA LINEHAN

## TURNING LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

Covid-19 has thrown all our lives into some form of chaos. Whether it's adjusting to spending most of our time indoors, being unable to visit our loved ones, or being hyper-vigilant about daily activities, we're all facing an unprecedented situation that we need to adapt to.

One way of finding solace in this difficult time is knowing that we are in this together. Although it can be emotionally and physically exhausting, it is important to focus on what we can control, such as our own actions, rather than what we can't control, such as when things will get back to normal. So, what are some small actions we can take to turn lemons into lemonade?

### 1) Don't do it alone

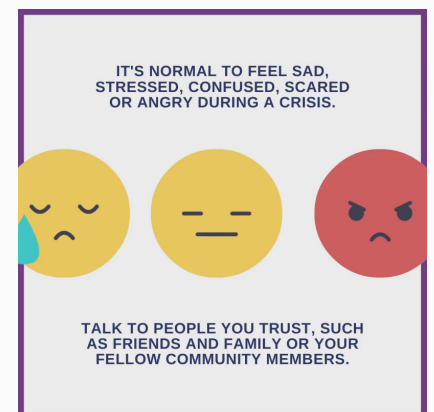
This chaotic time could lead to a mixed bag of emotions for many of us, whether it's feelings of happiness, fulfilment and gratitude for what we have or, on the other end of the spectrum, feelings of a loss of control, sadness, loneliness, and isolation. We understand many people in our community are struggling during this pandemic and we want to let you know there is support out there.

While you may not be able to see your usual therapist or social worker in person, many health and social work professionals have shifted appointments online, which could be a good option for you.

BPD Community's Family and Friends group continues operating online along with our Facebook page, which is a great place to reach out to others in our community. Similarly, [Beyond Blue](#) has a free counselling service for anyone needing mental health support to cope during this time.

Sharing our feelings with our families and friends also helps to ease the burden of this stressful time. It allows us to validate our own feelings, as well as presents an opportunity for those we trust to show up for us. Additionally, it can also send the message that we are open to listening to our loved ones, hence, building more trusting and wholesome relationships.

While we can't see our loved ones in person, it's a great time to explore free apps to catch up online. Some examples are Zoom, Google Duo and Houseparty – if you want to throw in some games into a video chat.



### 2) A routine

In many cases, staying at home has meant saying goodbye to our daily routine. This could mean no more alarms, no rushing to catch public transport, meal prepping for the week or working out what to wear the next day. The absence of a routine can lead to lethargy and a lack of motivation, resulting in feelings of sadness, loss of control and even depression.

One way to avoid this is to structure your day. The first thing on this list should be to develop or maintain your sleep schedule. For adults, 8 hours a day is usually considered optimal.

Another step is to plan your activities for the next day every night. This could be a list of things to do, a schedule, a mind map or even just setting an intention for what you wish to accomplish the next day.

Similarly, establishing a morning routine such as morning meditation, yoga, journaling or even a jog can help to kickstart your day.

While it might seem like everyone on social media is baking sourdough or redecorating their home don't put too much pressure on yourself to be 'productive'. Allow yourself to take breaks, be kind to yourself when you are unable to achieve all you wanted to, and recognise that you are trying your best.

### 3) Eat healthy

Preparing for self-isolation means stocking up with groceries to last us at least a week. Stocking up on non-perishables could lead to a surge to buy unhealthy foods such as chips, sugary drinks, chocolates and other sweetened food like pastries and biscuits. Instead, try to buy healthy non-perishables such as oats, grains, dry fruits, pasta, and canned vegetables and fruits.

If you find that you are slipping down a path of unhealthy eating, speak to a loved one, or consult free online resources like [Nutrition Australia](#) for fact sheets and recipes to get back on track. Maybe even get creative and share recipes with a friend!



### 4) Exercise

Spending more time indoors doesn't mean we can't get active. Our minds and bodies are connected, therefore, exercising daily can be beneficial for our mental health as well. Whether it's going for a walk, doing a free yoga class on YouTube, or setting up an exercise circuit in your living room using canned food as weights, it all counts.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week to stay healthy during this pandemic. The organisation's exercise guide is available [here](#).

While we need to stay at home as much as possible, it's okay to go outdoors to get some exercise. Taking a few minutes a day to get some fresh air, work your muscles and stretch your body can go a long way.



### 5) Find a hobby

To make the most out of all the spare time we suddenly find ourselves with, it may be a good idea to try a new hobby.

Hobbies are a great way to get in touch with your creative side and to simply do something without being under pressure. Have a book that you've been dying to read, or that recipe you just can't wait to try but can't find the time? Now is your opportunity.

Whether it's reading, cooking, baking, painting, learning a new instrument or even just doing a jigsaw puzzle, a hobby is a great way to let your hair down and engage your creative brain.

Free tutorials available on YouTube are a great place to start. Similarly, Skillshare, an online skill learning platform also offers an array of classes in the art, design, writing, photography and other creative areas.

## HELPLINES AND RESOURCES

If you or someone close to you are in an emergency, danger or require immediate assistance call Triple Zero (000) for emergency services.

- [Lifeline](#) provides crisis counselling and suicide prevention services. Call 13 11 14 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or use their [online chat service](#)
- [SANE Australia](#) provides phone and online counselling. Call 1800 18 7263 (Monday to Friday, 10am - 10pm) or participate in their [online forums](#)
- [Tandem](#) provides support for carers of people experiencing mental health issues. Call 1800 314 325 or participate in their [online forums](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#) offers online and phone mental health support. Call 1300 22 4636 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or use their [online chat service](#)
- [1800Respect](#) offers confidential counselling, information and support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence. Call 1800 737 732 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or use their [online chat service](#)
- [BPD Community's](#) Covid-19 strategies and techniques are available [here](#).

# LEARNING FROM HIS HOLINESS

In 2018 his holiness the Dalai Lama spoke at a Sydney Conference about how to have a happy and meaningful life. During this pandemic, can we apply some of his teachings to improve our situation?

## On happiness...

Happiness is our right and to be happy we need hope. When we lose hope we tend to seek to ease that pain with alcohol or drugs. Loss of hope also leads many to suicide. Hope is, therefore, essential to happiness and it is the very reason we live - it is our purpose in life.

In our society we tend to focus on materialism which is the belief that we can find happiness from owning things things external to ourselves. This belief is central to our modern culture. But feeling happy starts in our mind, it is part of our inner experience. We struggle because we seek solutions outside ourselves.

If we have too much anger, too much fear, we might seek happiness by experiencing the good things in life – music, food, nature etc. This is not enough if we do not attend to our inner values. This is where we need to focus to know what we need to lead a better life.

## On emotions...

With fuller knowledge of our emotional system we can pay attention to the causes of our anger and fear. We can pay attention to these disruptive emotions to understand what causes them in order to address them. For example, self-centredness comes from distrust and fear. When we realise this, we can replace it with more positive emotions such as compassion, and then, forgiveness and acceptance.

## On compassion...

Compassion can give us inner strength and self confidence. Each day as we practice compassion a little more, we slowly build our personal strength, our real confidence.

Our happiness is achieved when we understand our values and live by them. Our negative emotions can hold us back, so it is important to understand them so we can turn them around. As we develop compassion for others and for ourselves, we can rebuild ourselves as the person we want to be.



**“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”**

– THE DALAI LAMA

## CHECK OUT OUR COVID-19 HANDY HINTS AND SURVIVAL SKILLS!

Community is one of the key ingredients of pulling through hard times such as this pandemic. BPD Community is blessed to have a loving, caring and empathetic community of individuals willing to share their experiences to help each other overcome and even benefit from this difficult time. We have now begun curating videos shot and shared by our dear friends. Whether it is Covid-19 survival skills, journaling tips, or mediation, Barb, Steph, Sarah and Adrian [have got you covered!](#)



# CHANNELING MARSHA LINEHAN IN COPING WITH THE PANDEMIC

"Give me the strength to change what I can change, the grace to accept what I can't change and the wisdom to know the difference between the two."

We all know these words but what do they mean for us in this strange time we are facing?

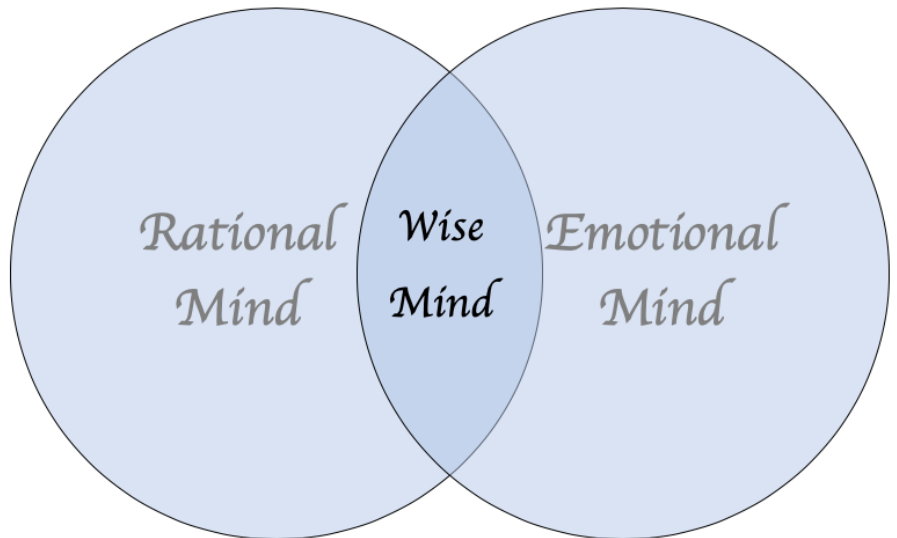
Psychologist and author Marsha Linehan shared her definition of a wise mind: a balance between the emotional mind and the logical mind.

We have all felt the heavy fear of uncertainty with this virus and what it means for us and those we love. Worrying about having enough toilet paper and impatience with social distancing rules might be responses to that anxiety. When we allow our emotional mind to rule, we do not act wisely.

When we focus on just the rational mind, we override our feelings and the feelings of others. This is also unwise. Our emotions can guide us to wisdom.

These are not just words, but powerful concepts that lead to powerful practices.

So, what can we change? This virus and what it does? No. The people that



we live with, their behavior, how they think? No. What is within our power to change? Really, only ourselves.

We might say, "Why should we change? There's nothing wrong with us." Well, of course there's nothing wrong with us. However, if we practice acceptance of ourselves and others, we will want to change, to make our lives happier.

People with lived experience of BPD are strong, we live with stigma and discrimination and we continue on. Changing ourselves requires so much

personal strength, but it can be done. There are many simple techniques we learn to help achieve this task: having values based boundaries (limits); respecting the boundaries of others; validation and listening skills; non violent communication; and of course mindfulness.

It is with mindfulness that we identify our emotions more easily and then work towards meeting the demands of our emotions in a healthy way. BPD Community's [mindfulness resources](#) could also help ease the burden of this stressful time.