

MANAGING EMOTIONAL RESPONSES DURING COVID-19

*“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor.”
—Thích Nhất Hạnh*

WHAT IS STRESS?

According to the Cleveland Clinic ([2020](#)), “*stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response*”. The body may respond *physically, emotionally* or *mentally* to stress.

RESPONDING TO STRESS

Stress is a normal part of life. During the current Covid-19 crisis, however, we are all likely facing heightened levels of stress and new challenges. Some individuals may not have access to the resources and supports they need.

You may be feeling particularly stressed, and so might those around you. This can lead to interactions driven by emotional responses to stress. This could cause conflict or other challenges to arise between your friends, family and colleagues.

Remember what is within your circle of control. It's important to accept that *we can't control current events or the actions of others; however, we can control how we respond.* Remembering this can reduce our stress-levels and help us to effectively respond to situations.

When you find yourself feeling frustrated, overwhelmed, or upset...**STOP**, take a moment to reflect, and try this skill we have included. We know this is helpful for us at the Mosaic Group, and we hope it will be helpful for you, too!

USE A SKILL CALLED “STOP”

“STOP” is adapted from *Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)* and the work of Marsha Linehan (2014).

S.T.O.P!

S – Stop! Don't react to whatever stimuli you may be facing. Stay in control of both your emotions and your physical body. Remain still.

T – Take a step back! Remove yourself from the situation. Take a quick break or a deep breath. Don't act impulsively based on your feelings.

O – Observe! Take a moment to notice your surroundings and environment—both inside and out. How do you feel? What are others doing or saying?

P – Proceed mindfully! Think about your goals in the situation and act with total awareness. What can you do to make the situation better, and what kind of action will make the situation worse?

Until next time, take care, stay healthy, and be well!