

Growing into a new normal around Coronavirus

So, week 11 finds us in a place where some of the restrictions have been lifted and there are more plans to further unlock the lockdown.

This feels like a double-edged sword in some ways.

It's freeing to think social (access to family and friends) and public (shops and schools) life is returning to something we're more used to, but with that may come some anxiety too.

Whichever position you have been in over the past 2 couple of months - *whether that was in lockdown, shielding, working with PPE, social distancing* - there now remains a further time period of adjustment.

The actual timescales to 'return to normal' are unclear and what will normal look like now anyway?

Ultimately, what will be demanded of each of us in the coming months is to continue showing adaptability, flexibility, resilience and courage.

It is important to acknowledge that everyone is an individual and therefore progress towards re-integration to the wider world will be very different for each person.

So how do we start to feel our way towards a new normal, **living with** the pandemic instead of being **locked away** from it?

There is a grief model¹ that introduces the idea that when we lose somebody we love, the grief doesn't always get that much smaller, or become something we can 'get over' or simply 'move on from' so it disappears from our life.

Instead, the work in the grieving that we do is to make our world around that loss bigger, so we can hold and work with the feelings of bereavement that we have experienced.

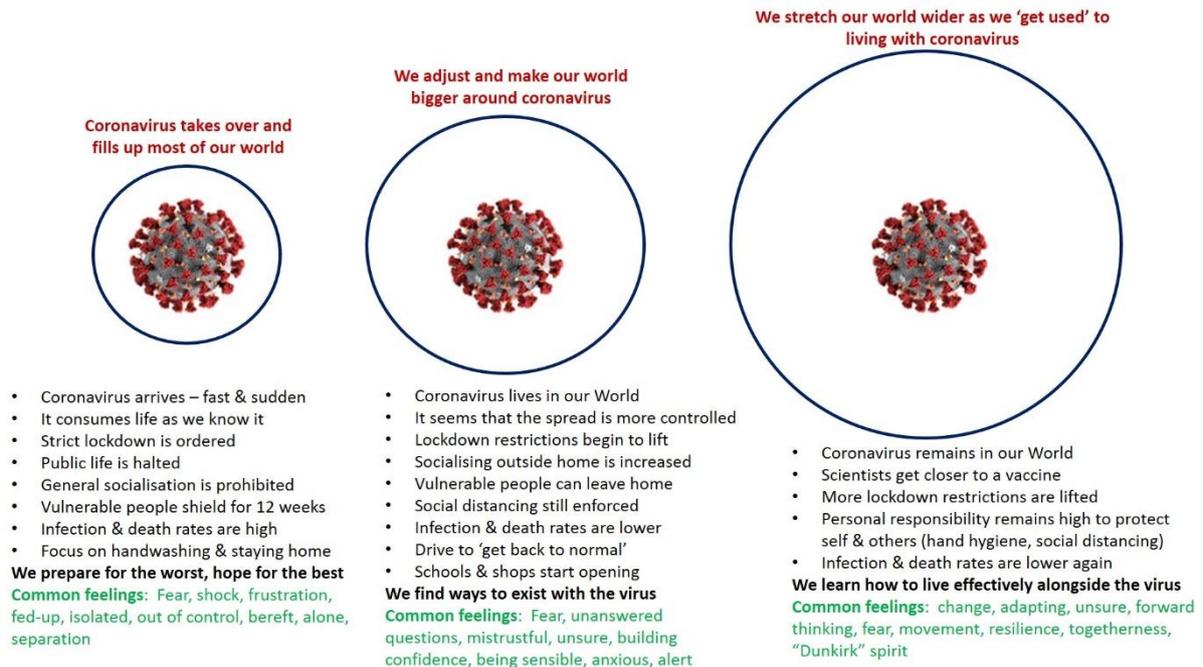
This feels like a model that could be adjusted to show how we live *alongside* coronavirus, as it's probably not going to just disappear any time soon.

Using the knowledge we have about how to keep ourselves and others safe, there is a pathway to start connecting to a wider scope of living and being with people outside of the household or work-place.

¹ Growing around Grief – Dr. Lois Tonkin

Coronavirus – Tips to support mental health & wellbeing – 2nd June 2020

This is an interpretation of what a model for growing normality around Coronavirus could look like:



There is a linear timescale that runs across this set by the Government, outlining phases they expect us to move through.

However, there is no set timeline for when people need to or should move from one section to the next. Remember, everyone is an individual and will be able to engage in a greater or lesser extent with the movement suggested above based on their own circumstances.

It seems simple enough on paper, but perhaps the biggest thing for many people right now is being able to trust that the world out there is safe enough to start going back out into it. Trust in others that they are following the necessary hygiene rules to keep everyone safe. Trust in yourself that you know much more about this virus now than you did at the start of the lockdown and that you know what the clear, practical steps are to keep yourself and those you care about safe. Remembering you can be in direct control of that.

Maybe this model will help you to start thinking about how you can grow your world around the threat of coronavirus. What do you already have in place to help you start to move into a new normal living alongside it? Or perhaps what you still need to be in place before you can look at what re-integration means to you.

We hope this week's article offers some useful thinking. Take care of yourselves.

Tash, Catherine, Rach, Frankie and Sarah x