



## **Psychological phases of the impact and adjustment to COVID 19**

The **first phase** of the impact was shock, grieving for how we lived, and high levels of stress leading to an overload on all our symptoms. We needed to remember that we had coping strategies that we should adapt to cope with the current situation. Most of us have begun this adjustment, sometimes slowly.

**Secondly**, as the public health measures become more operational, we begin a period of adjustment and acceptance of our new lifestyles and how we work. Ideally, we should each have created a new set of coping strategies that allow us to be positive within the new confines, accepting what is and managing in general with some ups and downs. For example, being OK with meeting friends virtually, only shopping for food, spending more time with your children, planning for the future but without setting timeframes.

Sometimes, however we can become complacent and maybe become tired of following the public health guidelines such as handwashing. At such moments, it is very important to remember that we need to adhere to the guidelines for ourselves, our families, friends and colleagues.

Our tolerance level for life problems has probably decreased today because of trying to cope with the situation as a result of the pandemic. A few of us may choose to use negative behaviours, which in the long term do not help, such as overuse of alcohol or aggression. If this is the case, then it is very important to seek help from professionals such as Staff Welfare.

We may be spending more time with our partners and families than usual. This often means adjustment and tolerance. Generally, it is best to maintain relationships as they are and avoid having big and significant discussions. However, sometimes this is unavoidable. If this is the case, then think about and plan for the potential outcomes and how you will cope in each one. Do you need to talk to a trusted person beforehand? What about safety? Remember you can contact local police if necessary.

**The last phase of our adjustment** will, hopefully, be recovery and returning to the lifestyles we once had. In some places, it will be difficult to predict when this will happen but it is something to hope for.

Thank you

**Please contact Staff Welfare if you have any concerns or questions: [sw@iom.int](mailto:sw@iom.int)**

**Further information** is available from: [iom.int](http://iom.int) staff welfare

