

# Masterclass :

## Riding the Corona-coaster

Navigating anxiety and difficult emotions during  
all phases of the COVID-19 pandemic



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Karlien\_OT



Karlien Terblanche Occupational Therapy



# What to expect?

- Gain an understanding of the phases of emotional response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Understand your own anxiety symptoms and how it shows up in your body, your mind and your inter-personal behaviour
- Build resilience through learning a few tools and techniques to manage anxiety and difficult emotions
- Have some idea of the way forward



# Who am I?



- B.Occ.Ther (University of Pretoria)
- M.Occ.Ther. (Advanced Occupational Therapy), specialisation in mental health and psychiatry (University of Stellenbosch)
- Group Psychotherapy Intermediate Training (Centre for Group Analytic Studies, Cape Town)
- Certified IEQ9 Enneagram Coach (Integrative9 Enneagram Solutions)
- Certified Sensory Intelligence Coach (Sensory Intelligence® Consulting)
- 11 Years experience in working as an OT in the field of mental health and psychiatry in inpatient and outpatient settings



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# Grounding through the senses





# Let's start our journey...









# Phases of Response

-We're ready for this!

- Manic doing and toxic positivity
- Ex. Panic buying, planning, scheduling, to-do lists
- Preparation according to the 'old rules'
- Exercise apps, yoga mats, routines, crafts...
- Individual response







# Phases of Response

## The waiting game

- Anxiety and fear
- Arguments, anger, irritation
- Confusion
- Failure of our usual coping mechanisms
- Initial plans fall apart
- Waiting, waiting, waiting...



# Phases of Response

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## Acceptance

- Allowance of our emotions
- Re-grouping
- Re-birth
- Innovation
- Intentional support
- Hope
- Community
- Sustainable response
- Flexibility replaces rigidity







BUILDING FLEXIBILITY AND RESILIENCE





## What is acceptance?

Radical Acceptance  
is the willingness to  
experience our  
lives as is



IT'S RAINING

I don't like rain.  
I wish it wasn't raining. My  
day is going to suck  
because rain is so  
inconvenient. Why does it  
always rain when I need the  
sun?



IT'S RAINING

Yup.



# Common Acute Stress Reactions to Disasters



## PHYSICAL PROBLEMS





# Common Acute Stress Reactions to Disasters





# Common Acute Stress Reactions to Disasters





# Common Acute Stress Reactions to Disasters



**INTERPERSONAL  
PROBLEMS**



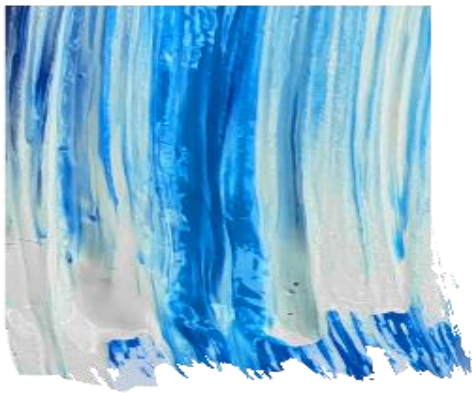




*It's okay  
not to be okay*

...at any  
time!





NOW  
WHAT?



# Take 5



Self-compassion

Speak to someone

Deep breaths

Change your environment

Protect your headspace





Thoughts  
are not  
facts





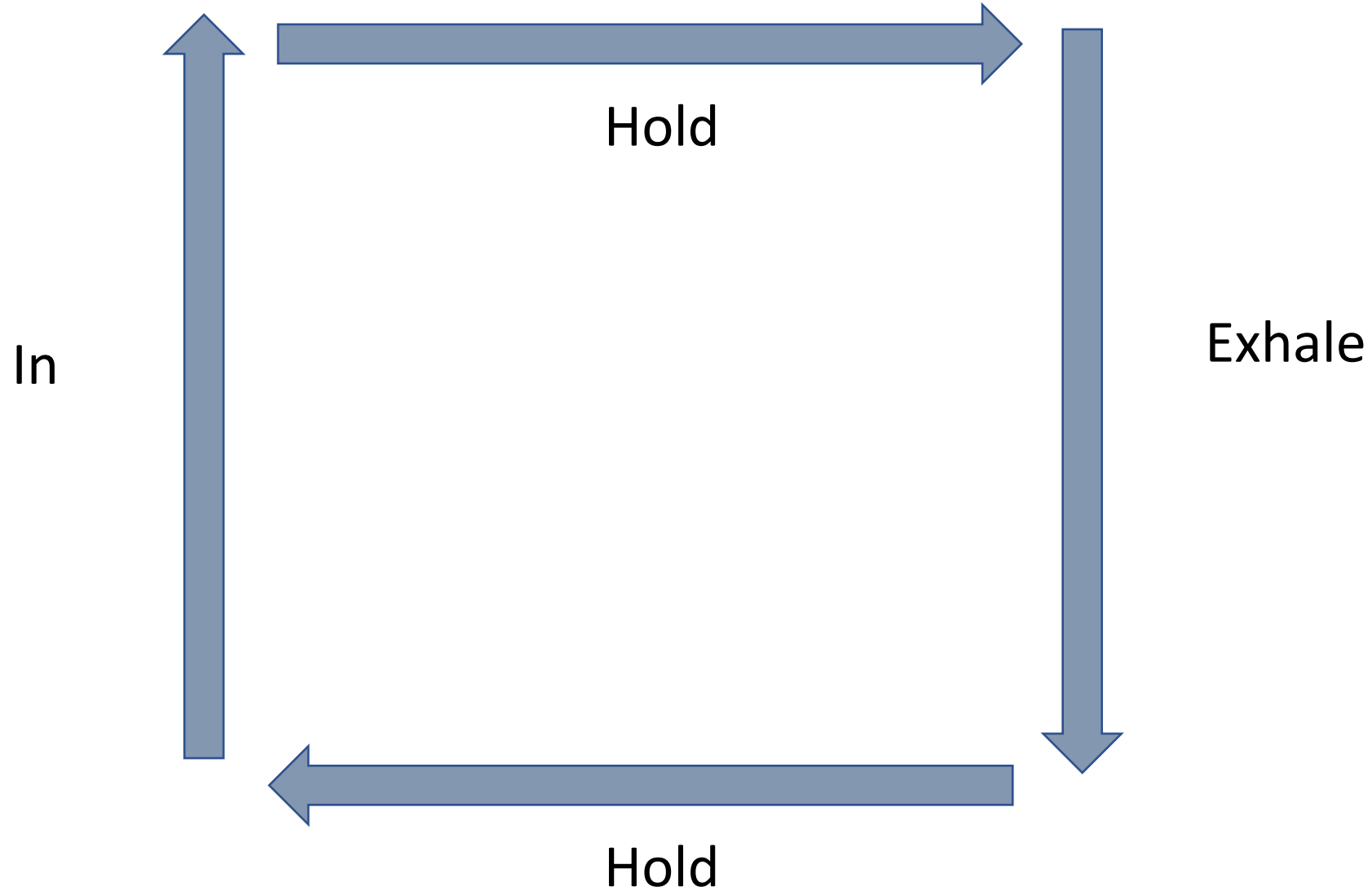
Help someone  
else-  
out of your own  
head

Photo by Anna  
Shvets





# Box breathing



# Take home messages

- Understand that trauma is a process
- Give yourself the space to know where you are
- Understand your anxiety symptoms
- Radical acceptance
- Take action!





# Activity : Making it practical

Answer the following questions in your journal or notebook:

- What stands out for me from this presentation?
- What did I learn that I didn't know before?
- Was there anything that I knew, but was reinforced for me?
- What phase of trauma do I recognise in myself at the moment?
- What symptoms of anxiety and stress am I familiar with?
- What can I do going forward to become more resilient and emotionally flexible?
- What are concrete next steps I can take to move to action?
- Is there any way I can support or help someone?



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