



# Coping with COVID: Identity

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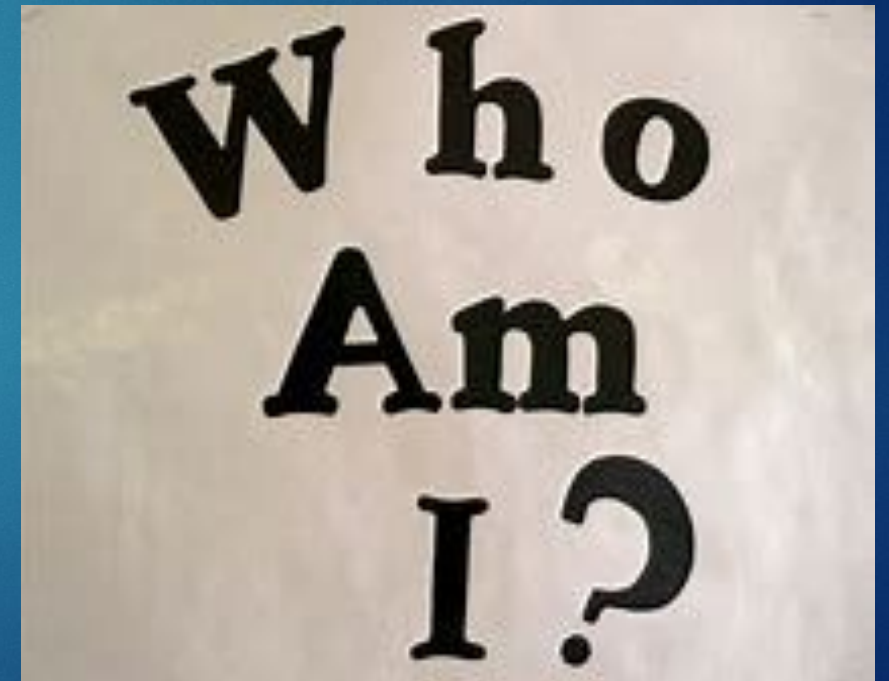
# We are human

- You may have noticed an increase in:
  - *Anxiety*
  - *Worry*
  - *Difficulty concentrating*
  - *Loss of motivation*
  - *Lack of discipline*
- You are trying to survive in an uncertain time
  - *Avoidance and distraction are coping strategies*
  - *Our brain needs to be distracted from time to time. Just like you need a break while studying*
  - *Take Time to check in with yourself to see if it is helpful for you or unhelpful to be distracting*
  - *Give time to feel your emotions even ones that might feel more unpleasant like sadness and anger*
- You may not have noticed any changes in yourself and that's fine too



# Ways Identity May have Changed

- ▶ COVID-19 may have changed ways that we define our identity in unexpected ways
- ▶ It may have interfered with how we interact with our identities
  - ▶ Being student, professor, worker, child, parent or friend may look different
- ▶ Loss or change of identity impacts emotions
  - ▶ Feelings of confusion
  - ▶ Possible loss of self esteem
  - ▶ Feeling of isolation
  - ▶ Loss of purpose
- ▶ Some identities may become more important than they were before or missed more than before



# Identities that Could be Impacted

- ▶ Student
  - ▶ Moving to remote classes changes being a student
  - ▶ Graduating senior
- ▶ Professor
  - ▶ Change in the ways we are connecting to students
- ▶ Worker
  - ▶ May be furloughed from job or working remotely
  - ▶ Going to work with different procedures
- ▶ Health Status
  - ▶ Being concerned about becoming ill
- ▶ Care taker
  - ▶ Caring for siblings or children while juggling other responsibilities
- ▶ Hero
  - ▶ Finding ways to care for your community and the world



# Who are you now?

- ▶ The core of who you are has not changed
  - ▶ Your values, beliefs, and personality are still consistent
  - ▶ Your worth is not dependent on productivity or labels
- ▶ Focus on what can you control in this situation
  - ▶ Identity does change over time and that is normal
    - ▶ When one graduates, they are no longer a student and they take on new identity
  - ▶ Some change in identity is unexpected and unwanted
  - ▶ Radical acceptance- accepting yourself and the current situation fully
    - ▶ Does not mean that you have to enjoy or like the situation
- ▶ Identity and intersectionality
  - ▶ Recognizing different pieces of your identity, we are all more than one identity
  - ▶ Seeing how they intersect and relate to each other
  - ▶ Recognizing privilege and oppression in your identity

# Cope through the moment

## ACCEPTS Skill

- ▶ The goal is to accept and survive, its okay if you are doing the best you can in this moment
  - ▶ ACCEPTS skill does not fix the present moment, but gives you tools to help soothe to get you through this moment
- ▶ **A**ctivities- Do something safely
- ▶ **C**ontributing- Help others (safely)
- ▶ **C**omparisons- Think about times that you have felt differently
- ▶ **E**motions- Engage in something that attends to your emotional needs
- ▶ **P**ushing away- Don't address the thought through distraction
- ▶ **T**houghts- Engage your brain
- ▶ **S**ensations- Engage your senses



# Build yourself up

- ▶ Give yourself permission to feel how you are feeling
  - ▶ This could be accepting moments that feel better or you feel okay
  - ▶ Accepting moments where you feel bad
- ▶ You don't have to have all the answers
- ▶ Learn a new skill (youtube)
  - ▶ Help grow your identity in a new area
- ▶ Research something that you are interested in
- ▶ Be kind to yourself and others
- ▶ Find ways to reconnect with identity variables that you love
  - ▶ If you love being a student, what do you love about it
    - ▶ Can you find new ways to be curious and learn
  - ▶ If you are an athlete can you find a new exercise routine to build strength

# Resources

- ▶ Apps for coping: Welltrack, Headspace, Mindstrong, Calm, Slumber, and many more. Share your favorite apps with friends.
- ▶ Information on COVID-19: World Health Organization (Who.int), Center for Disease Control (Cdc.gov), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Samhsa.gov)
- ▶ Psychology Today Provider Database to find a local therapist (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>)