



Lessons from COVID-19

It is an annual tradition for many of us to reflect on lessons from the year gone by as we head into a new year full of hope and mystery. 2020 offered us even more lessons to discover - both painful and positive.

I invite you to use this document to pause and reflect on the lessons you learned for yourself this year. Let this booklet be a guide to outline what worked, what didn't, and to start setting up actionable steps - **with a focus on developing healthy coping strategies** - that will benefit you most moving forward into 2021.

The list below offers common **themes to consider** as you make your way through the questions:

Mental Health	Work-Life Balance	Personal Development
Physical Health	Working from Home	Mindfulness & Meditation
Stress Management	Workplace Stress/Anxiety	Hobbies & Leisure
Mood & Anxiety	Time Management	Creativity
Negative Thoughts	Burnout	Exercise & Nutrition
Self-Esteem	Job & Career Search	Time in Nature
Energy & Motivation	Education	Relaxation & Sleep
Relationships	Screen Time	Community & Culture
Home Environment	Professional Development	News & Politics
Boundary-Setting	Goal-Setting	Accessibility
Family Dynamics	Communication	Gender & Sexual Health
Parenting	Finances	Spirituality & Religion
Caregiving	Housing	Race & Ethnicity
Intimacy	Safety	Social Supports
Grief & Bereavement	Climate Change	Giving Back

Other: _____



What did I enjoy about this year or what did this year highlight for me?

What did I notice this year that I've taken for granted in years past?

What are my silver linings from this year?



What are the main takeaways, insights and discoveries that I made this year.. and after completing this exercise?

After completing this exercise...

I'm proud of myself for _____

I'd like to work on _____

I'd like to continue _____

In 2021, I would like to focus on _____

Other: _____



My 2021 Action Plan

Now that you have reflected on the past year, let's take some time to convert these lessons into meaningful actions.

Coping Strategies

When our emotions are heightened it can be difficult to remember the coping strategies that work for us.

Using the list of coping strategies you created on p.3, let's create a simple guide that you can call upon the next time you're feeling down, anxious, or just a little "off". Put it in a place that is easily accessible, such as posting this list to your refrigerator or writing it down in your phone.

That way, the next time you're feeling overwhelmed you won't have to guess what to do.. you'll have your handy list to refer to!

You can use the template on p.7 or create your own fun design. Here is an example:

Ex. My Coping Strategies:

Cues that I am feeling off:

Heart races, stomach tightens

I want to be left alone

Difficulty focusing

What actions or words can I use to comfort myself?

Tell myself, "I'm here for you"

Hug myself

Make myself a cup of tea

My Top 3 Coping Strategies:

Go for a walk

Watch YouTube

Zoom with my friend Anna

When I don't feel like using using my coping strategies, I will find encouragement by reminding myself of how these strategies make me feel:

Re-energized

Empowered

A Little more at ease

Relaxed

Less Anxious

Other coping strategies to try:

Exercise

Meditate

Read

Take a shower

Drink water



My 2021 Coping Strategies

Cues that I am feeling “off”:

My Top 3 Coping Strategies:

Other coping strategies to try:

What actions or words can I use to comfort myself? (If you are having difficulty with this, visualize what you may offer or say to a loved one going through the same challenge.)

When I don't feel like using my coping strategies, I will find encouragement by reminding myself of how these strategies make me feel:



Goal-Setting

Let's face it. We all have the best intentions when it comes to New Year's resolutions.. but without making the commitment to setting specific and actionable goals these resolutions are merely wishful thinking.

Your goals do not have to be overly grand or ambitious. I believe that developing and maintaining healthy coping strategies is in itself an imperative goal, because without proper strategies to regulate our emotions we are more likely to give up when difficulty arises..and therefore are less likely to accomplish our more grand or ambitious dreams.

The best way to hone your coping skills is to begin by selecting one or two strategies that you can realistically start practicing right away by setting specific and realistic goals:

Ex. Resolution:	<i>I want to learn how to knit mindfully.</i>				
Goal:		Strategy	Frequency	Time	Length
	I will practice	<i>knitting</i>	<i>every day</i>	at <i>7:00pm</i>	for <i>20min.</i>
Practicing this strategy will help me feel: <u><i>proud, more relaxed</i></u>					
I will re-evaluate the frequency, time, length, and feelings of this goal on: <u><i>February 1st.</i></u>					

Resolution:					
Goal:		Strategy	Frequency	Time	Length
	I will practice			at	for
Practicing this strategy will help me feel:					
I will re-evaluate the frequency, time, length, and feelings of this goal on:					

Resolution:					
Goal:		Strategy	Frequency	Time	Length
	I will practice			at	for
Practicing this strategy will help me feel:					
I will re-evaluate the frequency, time, length, and feelings of this goal on:					



That's it! You made it through 2020!

You took the time to reflect on your lessons *and* you took steps toward applying your insights into specific actionable goals that will further support your development of healthy coping strategies in the new year.

I hope you take a moment to recognize your accomplishment of making it through this uniquely challenging year. January can pick up speed quickly, and we all need support to follow through on the resolutions we set for ourselves.

If you have not done so already..

I invite you to keep yourself accountable to your goals, and to discover more simple coping strategies, by [signing up for my free 7-day Anxiety and Mood Management Action Plan](#).

Ready, 2021? You got this!