

## 2. Focusing on what you can control



With so many things about this situation out of our control, such as other people's emotions, what happens to the global economy, or if and when a COVID-19 vaccine will become available, it is important to keep your focus on the things that are within our control.

While it's natural for our minds to gravitate towards issues that are out of our control, and we don't want to dismiss these issues entirely, spending a lot of time dwelling or 'ruminating' about things we can't control is likely to leave us feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, and powerless.

It's also common for people to think "Everything is out of my control" when they are facing challenging or uncertain situations.

However, thinking like this can also make us feel anxious and helpless.

To balance out these kinds of thoughts, try to notice what things are in your control, for example:

- What you think about
- What you eat for breakfast
- What you wear each day
- What books you read

- What you do to relax
- When and how you exercise
- What you watch on TV
- How you organize your space
- What radio station you listen to
- Who you follow on social media
- How often you speak with your friends
- How you spend your spare money
- How you talk to yourself
- How you manage stress and anxiety
- Whether you make your bed in the morning
- How often you communicate with your family

This is by no means an exhaustive list. In fact, if you listed every single thing in your day that you have control over, the list would probably be surprisingly long.

Noticing the things that we have control over can calm the feelings of panic triggered by unpleasant and unexpected changes.

It can also help you to be more mindful about what you spend your time doing e.g., whether you choose to watch a calming or dramatic TV show), which in turn, can affect the way you feel.



#### **References:**

*The University of New South Wales  
St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney*

*Adapted by Get into Neurodiversity for a global audience*