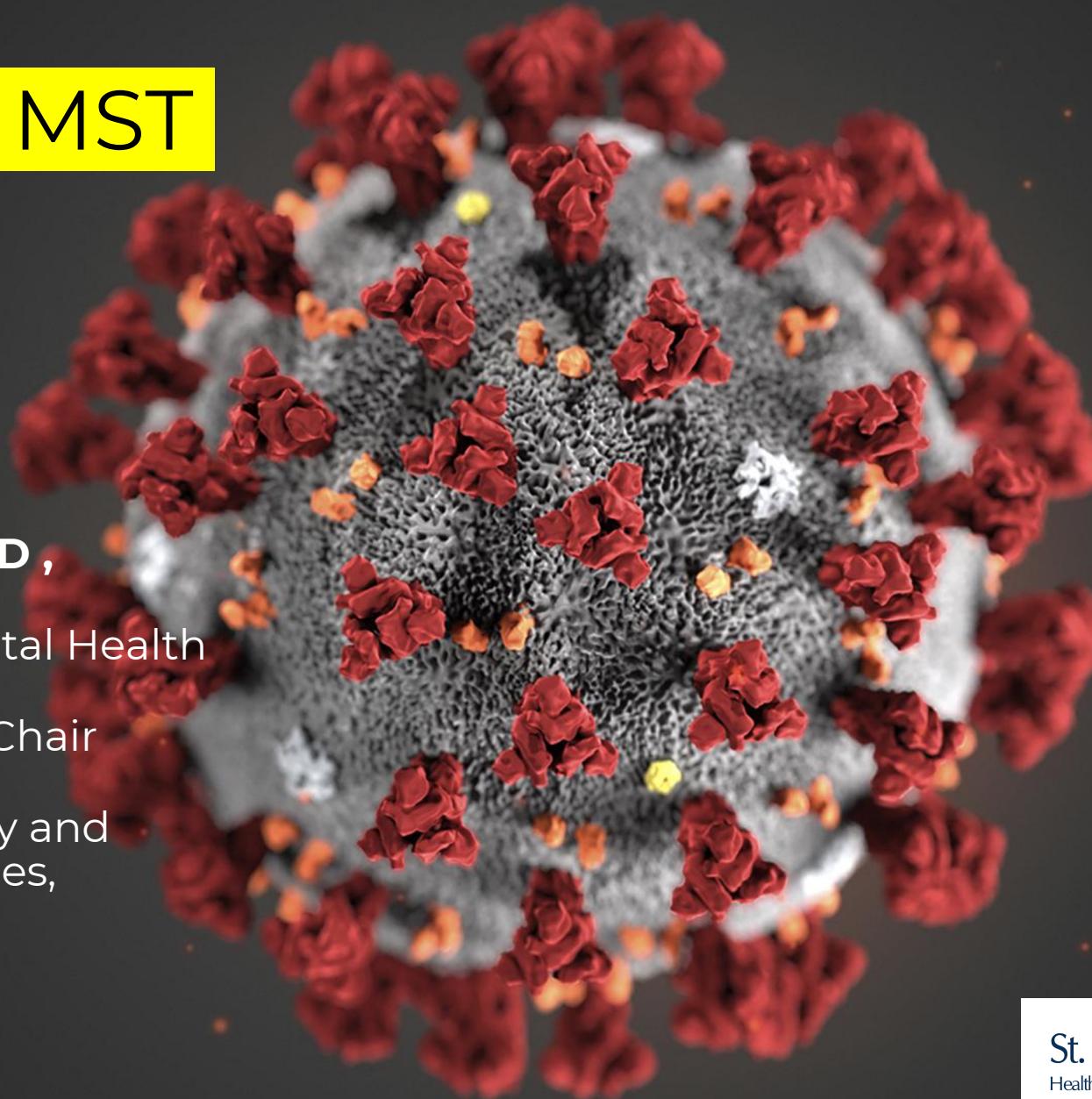


# Coping with MST during the COVID-19 pandemic

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RESEARCH  
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**McMaster**  
University   
PSYCHIATRY AND  
BEHAVIOURAL NEUROSCIENCES

St. Joseph's  
Healthcare  Hamilton

The Research Institute  
of St. Joe's Hamilton

# Land Acknowledgement

We meet on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish with One Spoon” wampum agreement.

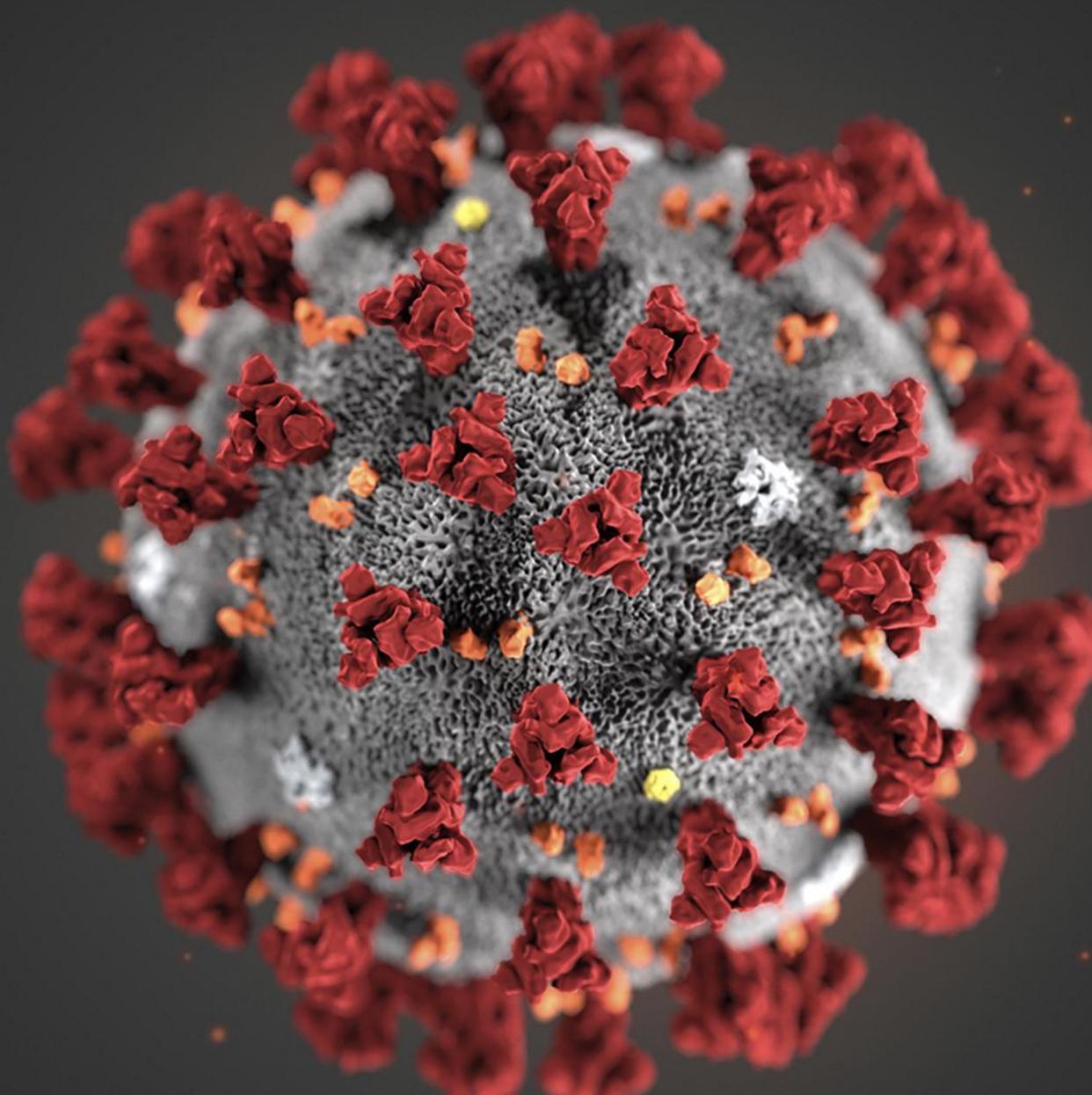
McMaster  
University

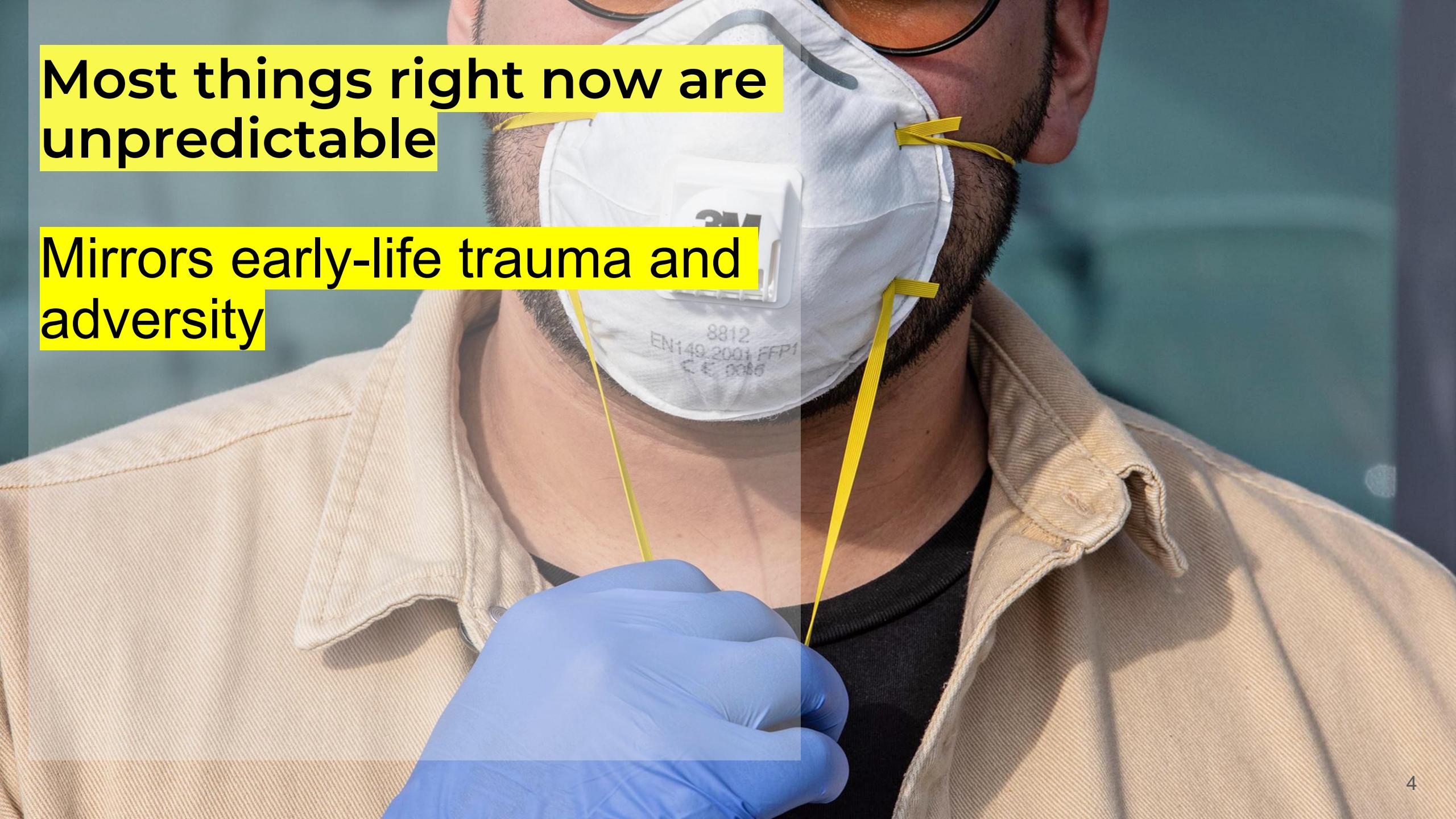


Our world has shifted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mandates, expectations, roles changed over night.

Uncertainty over how long this will last (timelessness).





Most things right now are unpredictable

Mirrors early-life trauma and adversity

# Moral arc of the universe (MLK)

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- Social movements to rectify racial inequity and injustice
- We all have multiple identities that intersect to create our unique selves
- Double burden that is currently unaddressed
- Other forms of minority stress (e.g., sexual minorities; [dis]ability; ethnic or racial)
- Revelations surrounding residential schools in Canada



# Intersectionality

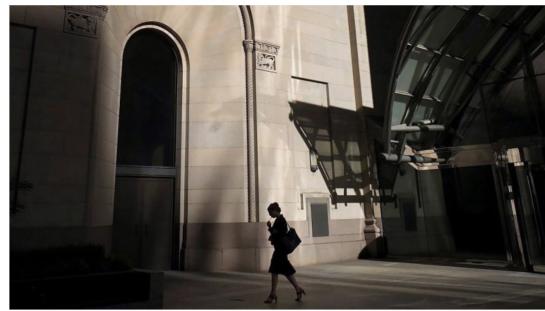
Toronto

Women's participation in labour force reaches lowest level in 3 decades due to COVID-19: RBC



'Men are already being rehired as certain industries get back on their feet,' RBC says

Tara Deschamps - The Canadian Press - Posted: Jul 16, 2020 6:42 PM ET | Last Updated: July 16



A woman walks through Toronto's financial district on Monday, July 30, 2018. A new study from the Royal Bank of Canada shows COVID-19 pushed women's participation in the labour force down to its lowest level in three decades. (THE CANADIAN PRESS)



## In N.Y.C., the Coronavirus Is Killing Men at Twice the Rate of Women

More men also are infected than women, and they are hospitalized more frequently, new data show. A similar pattern was seen in China.



Bodies being transferred to refrigerated trailers at the Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn on Saturday. Victor J. Blue for The New York Times

PART 2/3

## THE COMBINED EFFECTS OF SYSTEMIC RACISM & COVID-19 ON RACIALIZED HEALTHCARE WORKERS

COVID-19 has amplified the impacts of systemic racism on the physical and mental health of racialized people.

Racialized people are at a **HIGHER RISK** across these 7 domains:

### 1 COVID-19 EXPOSURE

Racialized people are at a **HIGHER RISK OF EXPOSURE** to COVID-19 because they are **MORE LIKELY** to:

Sources: 9-14



Experience income inequity & poverty



Live in high-density neighbourhoods



Live in congregate housing settings



Experience housing inequity



Use public transportation



Work 'essential service' jobs with greater workplace exposure

### 3 SEVERE OUTCOMES

Racialized people experience inequities that increase their risk of developing chronic health conditions. As a result, they are at **HIGHER RISK OF DEVELOPING SEVERE OUTCOMES** when infected with COVID-19.

Sources: 10, 11, 13

In Ontario, Canada, the most diverse neighbourhoods have:

**4X**

COVID-19 HOSPITALIZATION RATES THAT ARE 4 TIMES HIGHER than the least diverse neighbourhoods.

COVID-19 INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (ICU) ADMISSION RATES THAT ARE 4 TIMES HIGHER than the least diverse neighbourhoods.

Source: 9

### 2 COVID-19 INFECTION

Racialized people are at a **HIGHER RISK OF COVID-19 INFECTION**.

Sources: 9-14

**3X**

In Ontario, Canada, COVID-19 INFECTION RATES ARE 3 TIMES HIGHER in the most diverse neighbourhoods compared to the least diverse neighbourhoods.

Source: 13

### 4 COVID-19 MORTALITY

Racialized people are at a **HIGHER RISK OF COVID-19 MORTALITY**.

Sources: 9-14

**2X**

In Ontario, Canada, COVID-19 MORTALITY RATES ARE 2 TIMES HIGHER in the most diverse neighbourhoods compared to the least diverse neighbourhoods.

Source: 13

In the US, compared to white people, COVID-19 MORTALITY RATES are:

**3.7X** HIGHER for Black people

**3.5X** HIGHER for Indigenous people

**3.1X** HIGHER for Pacific Islanders

**2.8X** HIGHER for LatinX people

**1.4X** HIGHER for Asian people

Source: 9



# DANGER

Can't assume response

"This is everything I ever expected"

"Others now know what I live through everyday"

"I am fine."



**Loss**

**Routines/ office are safe  
and predictable**



**Re-traumatization**

**Control over your body and your space**

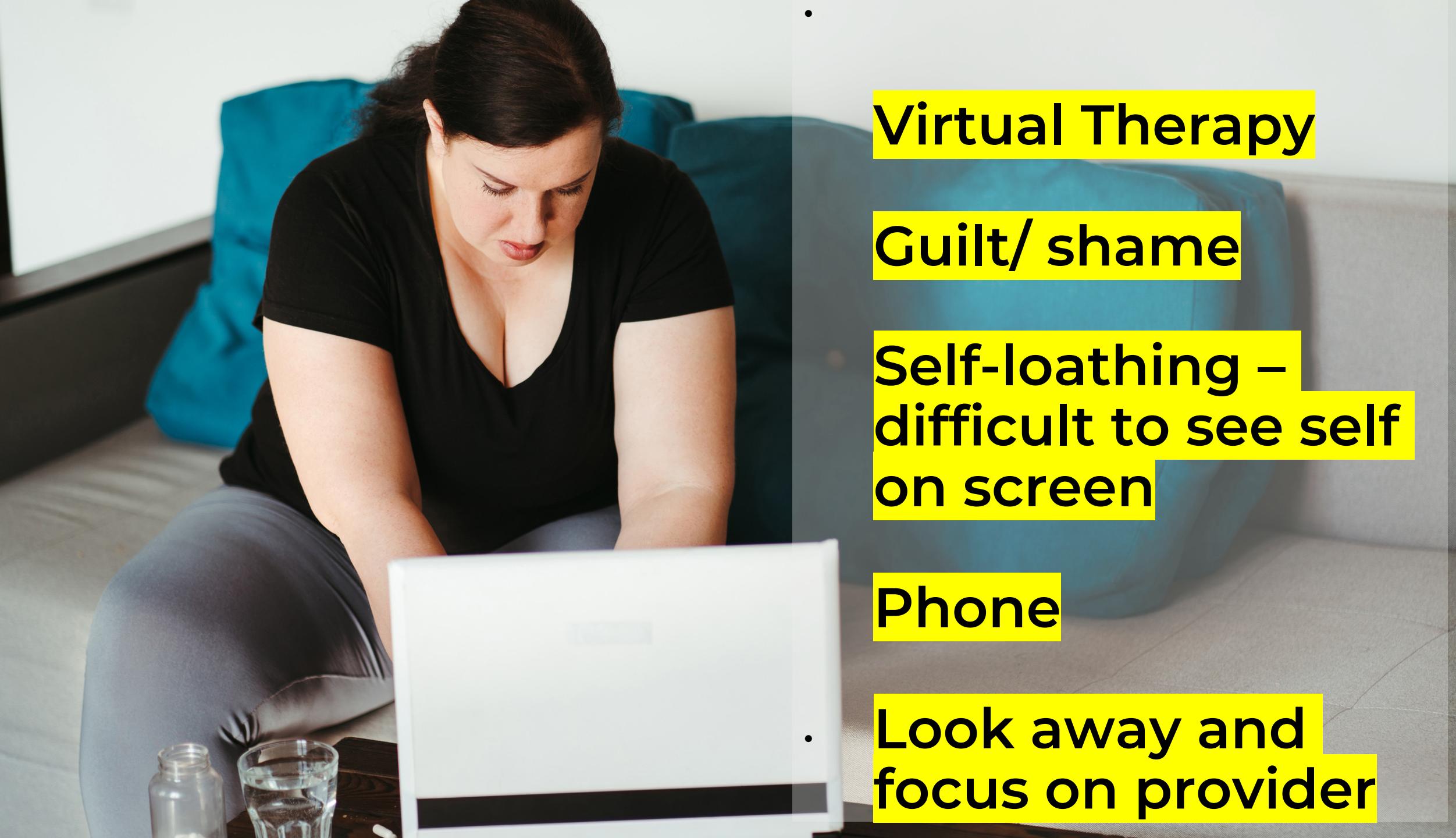
- 



“Physical Distancing” – can trigger feelings of rejection from the past

“Together but not alone” – Social support single greatest predictor develop PTSD





**Virtual Therapy**

**Guilt/ shame**

**Self-loathing –  
difficult to see self  
on screen**

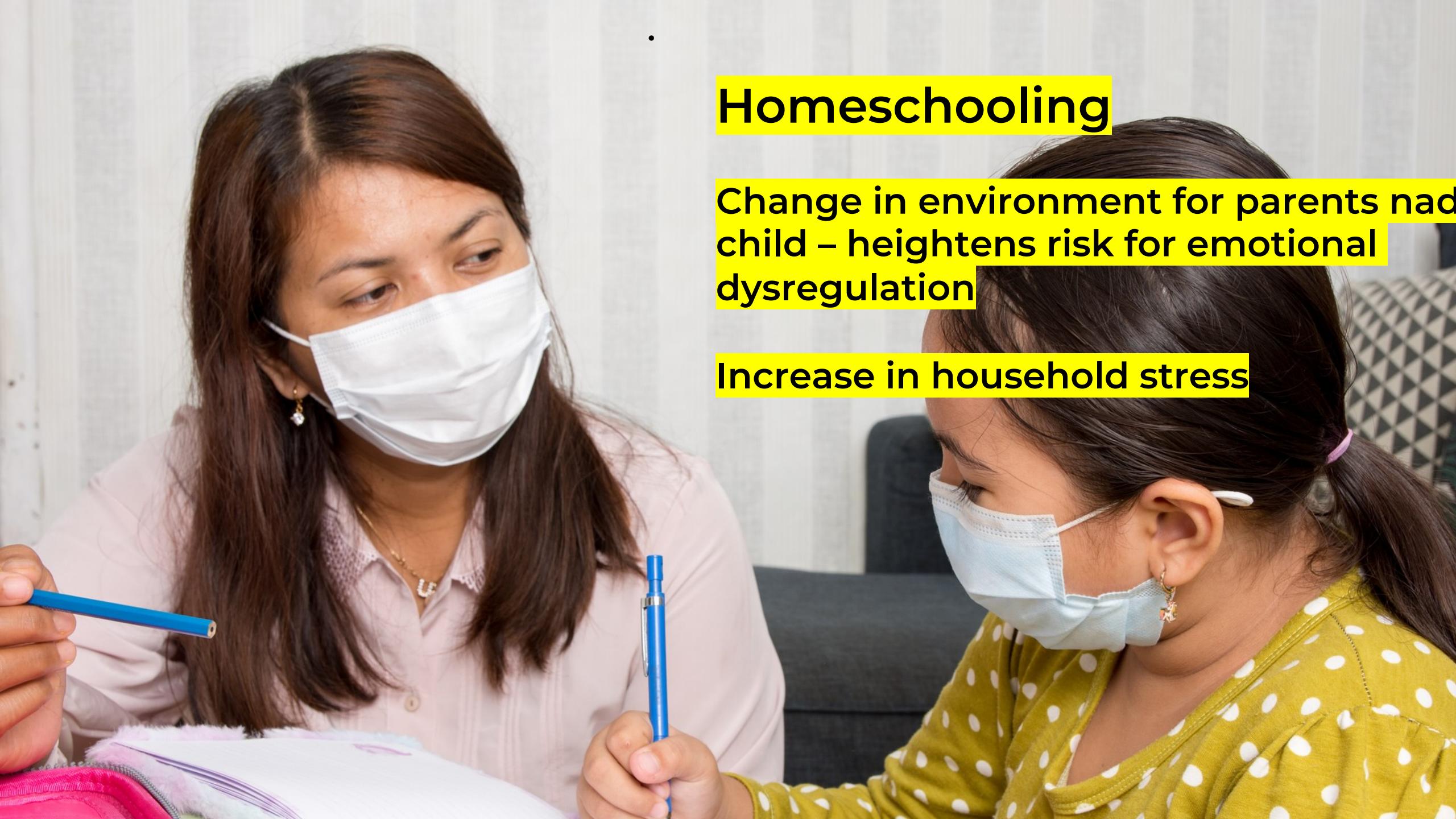
**Phone**

**Look away and  
focus on provider**

# Difficulty Reading Emotions

- Virtual environment makes reading emotions more difficult

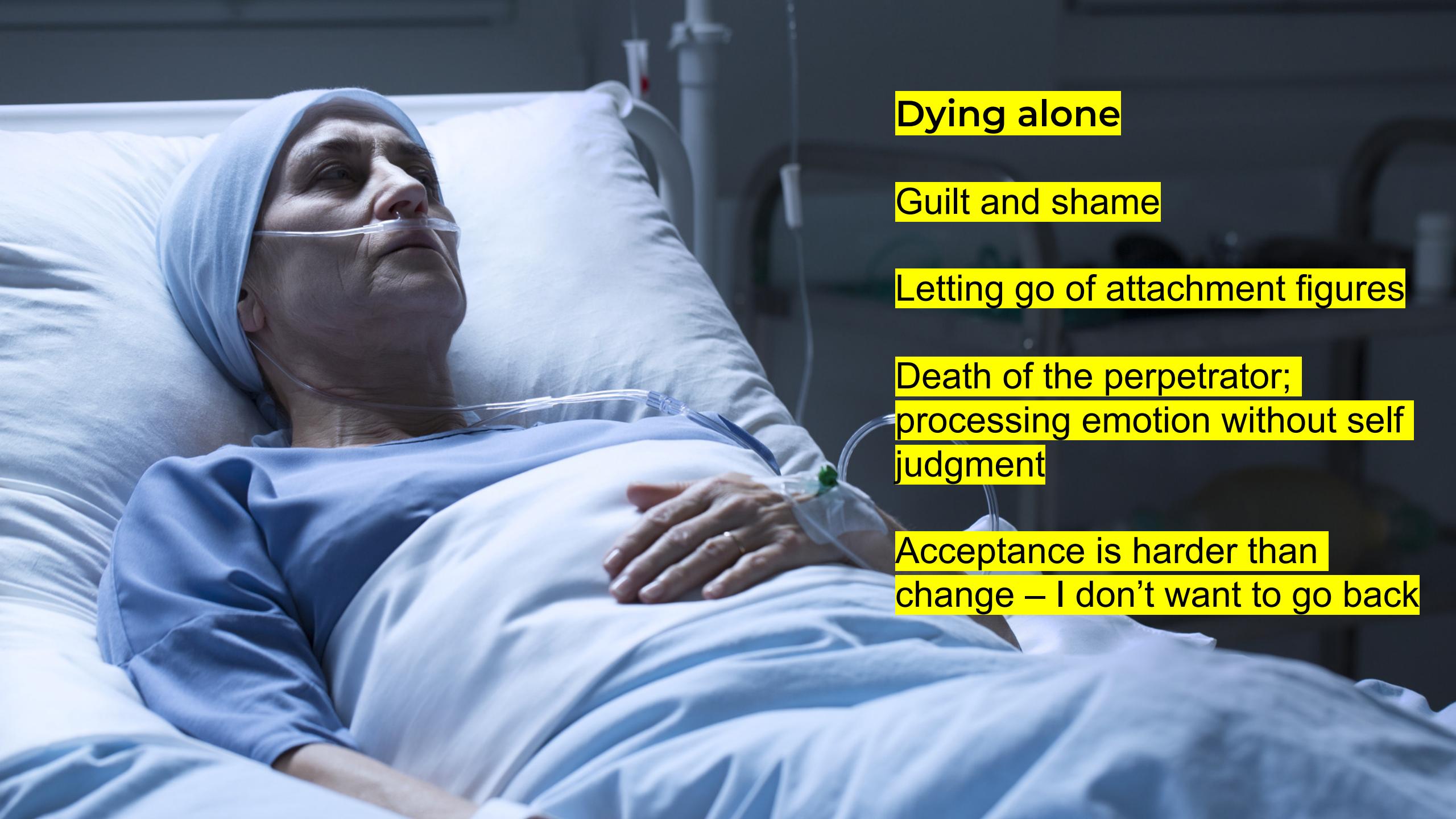


A photograph showing a woman and a young girl both wearing white surgical masks. The woman, on the left, has long dark hair and is wearing a light pink button-down shirt. She is holding a blue pencil and looking down at a worksheet. The young girl, on the right, has dark hair tied back with a pink hair tie and is wearing a yellow polka-dot top. She is also holding a blue pencil. They appear to be sitting at a table, possibly engaged in homeschooling or distance learning. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Homeschooling

Change in environment for parents nad  
child – heightens risk for emotional  
dysregulation

Increase in household stress

A woman is lying in a hospital bed, looking upwards. She has an oxygen mask on her nose and is connected to a ventilator tube. Her hand is resting on her chest, and she is wearing a blue hospital gown. The background shows medical equipment and a dark wall.

Dying alone

Guilt and shame

Letting go of attachment figures

Death of the perpetrator;  
processing emotion without self  
judgment

Acceptance is harder than  
change – I don't want to go back

# **Personalized Approach**

What are your warning signs?  
What has worked for you in the past?

# Proposed Strategies for Managing COVID-Anxiety: Grey Literature

Sources including the CDC and CAMH have published recommendations for managing stress and anxiety amidst the COVID-19 pandemic:

## **Stay informed, but know when to take a breather**

- Stick to trustworthy sources, limit the number of times you check for updates, step away from the media if you're feeling overwhelmed

## **Focus on what you can control**

- Wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, avoid all non-essential shopping and travel, get adequate sleep

## **Stay connected, even if you're physically separated**

- Stay in touch with family and friends via video chat, don't let the pandemic dominate every conversation

## **Take care of your body and wellbeing**

- Eat healthy meals, get adequate rest, exercise regularly, avoid excessive substance use
- Be patient with yourself, maintain a routine as best you can, make time for activities you enjoy, take up a relaxation practice
- Remember that you are resilient, you can challenge worries and anxious thoughts, and seek support

## **Give yourself permission to take a break from your anxiety.**