

COVID19 Blog: STRUCTURE

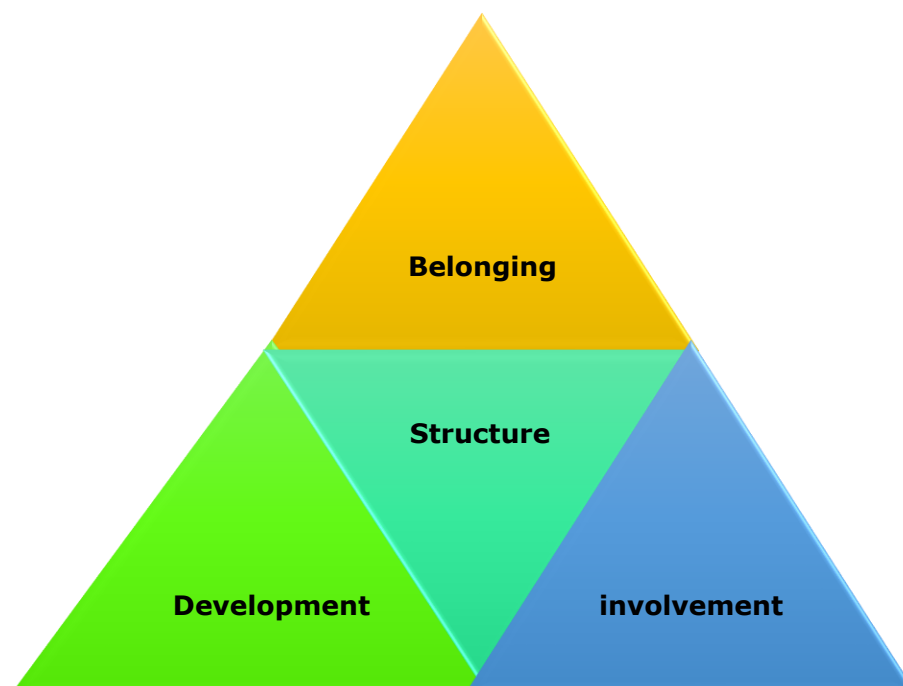
Having a healthy routine, with some certainty and order to every day, really helped, especially at the beginning when everything was so strange

I've craved structure during this crisis. A sense of order and certainty during these unknown and unfamiliar times has been comforting. Establishing a daily routine makes all the difference; it made me feel like at least something was predictable and within my control. So many of our familiar routines, our regular activities, have changed since COVID came along. Hopefully you have found a new rhythm and new routines.

This standard is a bit of a lynchpin to other standards, because when there is a daily routine which involves everyone, there are more opportunities to connect, to get involved, and to have a go at new things. Social distancing has made that so much harder, so now the daily routine is different. At work, face to face meetings, or activities, or groupwork may have stopped and it might be regular Teams meetings instead, where you can see each other and catch up.

Now the weekly residents meeting could be happening in small groups, in the garden. You could be all watching the same film, together but separately so you can share ideas and talk about it later in small groups.

At home, the weekly Zumba is now on Zoom, the regular family get together is a quiz online, and the Monday meet up is with a mate to exercise. Doing regular things together in a safe way is really important to keep everyone sane!



What has been your structure during COVID? How have you found trying to get a good routine? Sometimes its hard to create structure when things feel so uncertain. Start small, do one thing and stick to it, and make sure it includes other people.

Sometimes the structure doesn't feel that easy or nice either, certainly at the beginning. Getting into a freezing sea didn't start off nice or cycling against a head wind. Sometimes it still doesn't feel good, but the regularity of it is soothing, and the euphoria afterwards makes it so worth it.

What has been your structure during COVID? How have you found trying to get a good routine? Start with just one thing and stick to it. Include other people.

The structure of all of our lives is likely to change now. Some of that will no doubt be for the best. Not travelling as much perhaps, dealing with less people all the time may feel like a relief. But some will be harder – coming out of isolation may feel frightening, being unclear how to behave now, may feel confusing and frustrating.

Consciously creating good routines for yourself and for others can make this easier. And most importantly, it can help everyone stay connected, and carry on talking to each other; then everyone has a role and knows there are people around who care.

My daily sea-swim started out as a way to keep fit during lockdown when I was at my desk and on screens all day long. Doing it every weekday, with a buddy, was the only way I was going to make myself stick to it. I didn't appreciate how important the daily social contact was going to be. The face of a friendly golden retriever, the morning chat with a mate. That habit makes such a difference now.



Tiny the cat has a great routine now. Eat sleep stare repeat. She moves between her familiar sleep spots, turns up when its time for food and makes it known when she's ready for bed. She knows now when she will get some peace and quiet and when there's a human around to feed her and play games. It all becomes much easier to know what's going on.

Tiny's Weekly Schedule

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Eat	eat		eat		eat	
sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep
play	stare	play		stare	play	stare
eat		eat		eat		eat
sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep
stare		stare	play	stare	play	
eat	eat			eat		eat
sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	zzzz

Whilst lots of familiar routines will have changed, and you may have some new ones that you have really enjoyed and will continue. We have an opportunity now to review how things were before and check they are working. Maybe this is the time to ask exactly what those old routines were doing? Do they need to be the same now? Most regular activities have stopped during the restrictions. As they start up again, let's do things differently. This is the time to build in activities, routines, a structure that is relevant, meaningful, healthy and designed with together, that will make your place feel good for everyone.

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