

Two Types of Reappraisal

Rethinking

One strategy that some people find helpful for influencing their emotions is *rethinking*. This strategy involves changing one's thinking to alter one's emotions. This strategy is based on the insight that different ways of interpreting or thinking about any situation can lead to different emotions. This means that finding new ways of thinking about a situation can alter your perspective on it. For example, consider someone who stays at home under lockdown due to COVID-19 and is experiencing anxiety, sadness, or anger. In this case, rethinking might involve recognizing that the situation is only temporary, as dedicated people worldwide are working diligently to develop a vaccine or a treatment.

Here are some examples of what someone might say after using *rethinking* during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. "I know from world history that keeping calm and carrying on gets us through tough times."
2. "Scientists across the world are working hard to find treatment and vaccines. Throughout history, humans have been resourceful in finding solutions to new challenges."
3. "Washing hands, avoiding touching my face, keeping a safe distance...There are simple and effective things I can do to protect myself and my loved ones from getting sick and to stop the spread of the virus."
4. "In the past, people have overcome many challenges that seemed overwhelming at the time, and we will overcome COVID-19-related challenges too."

Refocusing

Another strategy that some people find helpful for influencing their emotions is *refocusing*. This strategy involves changing one's thinking to alter one's emotions. This strategy is based on the insight that finding something good in even the most challenging situations can lead to different emotional responses. This means that refocusing on the positive aspects of a situation can change how you feel about it. For example, consider someone who stays at home under lockdown due to COVID-19 and is experiencing anxiety, sadness, or anger. In this case, refocusing might involve realizing that staying at home allows them time to do things they may not have been able to do before, such as reading, painting, and spending time with family.

Here are some examples of what someone might say after using *refocusing* during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. "This situation is helping us realize the importance of meaningful social connections, and helping us understand who the most important people in our lives are."
2. "Medical systems are now learning to deal with amazing challenges, which will make them much more resilient in the future."
3. "Even though we are physically apart, we are finding creative ways to stay connected and our hearts are more connected than ever."
4. "I have been inspired by the way that frontline health care workers have responded with resilience, generosity, determination, and deep commitment."