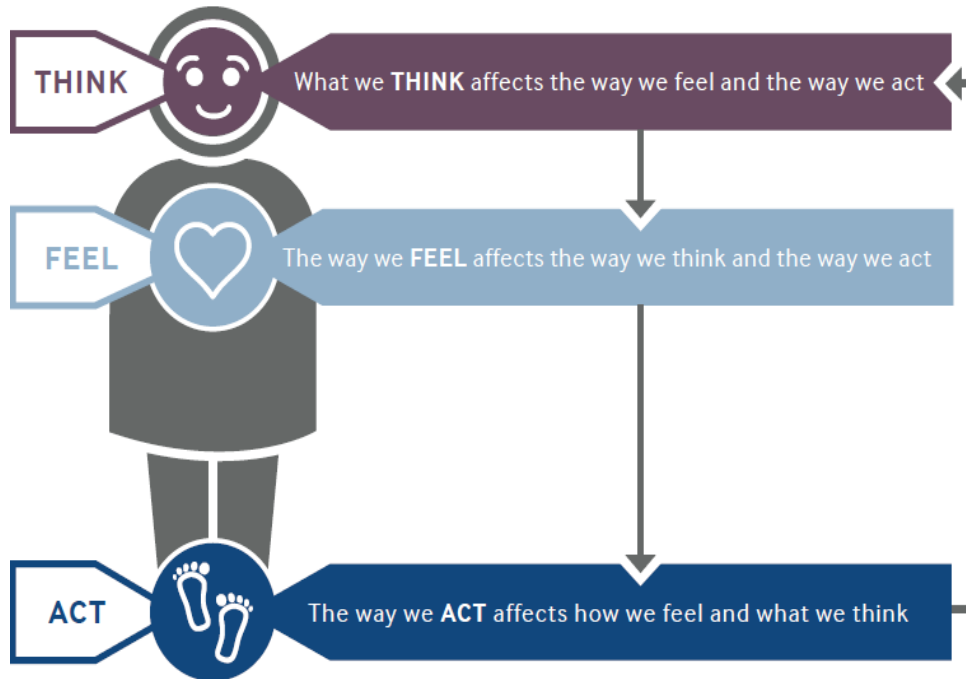


As a caregiver, taking care of yourself is essential. This is especially true in this moment of great instability, when it is common to feel uncomfortable emotions such as stress, anxiety, anger and sadness. One way to practice self-care is by becoming still through intentional reflection and breathing.



Stop and reflect

When our mind is full it is very difficult to concentrate or be present with the person sitting in front of us. What we think, what we feel and how we act forms a cycle between the 3 as shown in the drawing below. It helps to stop and reflect what's going on so that we can "come back" and be present with the person sitting with us. Being present helps us to practice being a guide on the side.



Catch a breath to quieten down

1 Sit comfortably in your chair with your feet firmly on the ground, hands in your lap and your back supported by the chair.



2 Let your eyes settle - either open or closed. Allow a soft gentle smile on your face.



3 Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts and breathe out for 4 counts:

IN 2,3,4

HOLD 2,3,4

OUT 2,3,4

- Do this a few times until you feel yourself settle down and become calm.
- Count in your mind while you breathe and get into the rhythm.



South Africa - HIV
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For assistance or more information contact SADAG (<http://www.sadag.org/>) or The South Africa HIV ATTC (<https://attcnetwork.org/centers/south-africa-hiv-attc/home>; Email: sahivattc@uct.ac.za)