



## Talking Points for Client Conversations

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In times of volatile markets, for consistent messaging as well as to help you stay focused and confident, it's helpful to have a set of talking points for your client conversations.

We suggest framing your conversations with clients based on what you know or believe; what you don't know; what you cannot control and what you can control.

Feel free to add your own talking points to our list and rearrange them to an order that suits your message.

### What we know/believe

- About the financial markets
  - Periods of economic and market uncertainty and volatility have been a constant over many, many years!
  - While the coronavirus (COVID-19) is new, our markets have recovered from previous panics, such as the 9/11 attacks; SARS (2003); swine flu (2009); Ebola (2014); and the Zika virus (2015-16), just to name a few from the last 20 years.
  - Because we know to expect market declines, we build them into the assumptions of our financial plans.
  - The stock markets will recover. During the four major bear markets of 1973-1974; 1987; 2000-2002; 2007-2009, the market bounced back dramatically from its lowest point.
  - Emotions (fear & uncertainty) can lead to impulsive, irrational (and ultimately detrimental) decisions. Investors who give in to fear and panic lock in negative returns.
  - Historically, investors who stay the course have been rewarded for their patience
  - Time in the market consistently outperforms trying to time the market
  - We entered this period with a strong economy and low unemployment, which should help when the recovery begins.
  - Current yields on 10- and 30-year Treasuries are at historic lows. Low interest rates are good for business recovery and for the stock market.
  - Low oil prices benefit consumers (gasoline) and U.S. manufacturing and transportation businesses.
  - Fear and panic can be worse than the actual event.
- About Coronavirus (COVID-19)
  - If you're reasonably healthy, you might get infected and you might get sick, but it is extremely unlikely that you would die.
  - Older adults and people with severe underlying chronic medical conditions (heart, lung disease, diabetes) are at higher risk for developing more serious complications.
  - Coronavirus symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath
  - According to the CDC, over 36 years, flu activity has most often peaked in February (15 seasons), December (7 seasons), January (6 seasons), and March (6

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seasons) <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season.htm>. If the coronavirus follows this pattern, it should show signs of slowing down by April.

- According to the head of Italy's equivalent to our CDC, the people there who have died did not die **from** the coronavirus; they died **with** the coronavirus. That is, they died of whatever preexisting medical issue they had prior to contracting the coronavirus.

### **What we don't know**

- How long this current market downturn will last
- How far coronavirus will spread in the U.S. or how many people will be affected
- How long it will take until we begin to see a decline in the number of coronavirus cases.
- Whether "it's different this time."

### **What we can't control**

- Whether you or someone close to you will get infected
- What the market does on a daily basis
- How others around us will react to current events
- What events and activities are cancelled or postponed

### **What we can control**

- Follow CDC guidelines for handwashing/hand-sanitizing, telecommuting and social distancing
- How closely we follow every news report and social media post about the virus
- How frequently we track market movements and/or the value of our account(s)
- How proactive we are in reaching out to clients – phone calls, emails, webinars, third-party research and commentary.