

Support with Anxiety



Anxiety is the feeling of worry or unease about something. It can be an appropriate reaction to stressful stimuli, but it can become more constant and difficult to manage, affecting your daily life.

What does Anxiety look like?

Anxiety can be experienced in different ways:

- Light-headed/dizziness
- Headaches
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Unsettled stomach
- Restlessness
- Shaking/tremors
- Sweating

NB please visit a doctor if you experience any of the above for the first time, do not assume it is anxiety.

Managing vs. treating anxiety

Anxiety symptoms are often physical sensation and intrusive thoughts which means you can get even more worry that people are noticing or that you might faint in front of someone. This can create an anxiety cycle. For example, I get anxious in crowds so on a crowded train I feel like I can't breathe and I sweat (physical). I worry that I might faint or get crushed (thoughts) and that makes the physical sensations worse. Having a plan to manage anxiety at work, in a social setting and developing grounding techniques can help you feel like you can cope with your anxiety. Seeking advice from your GP or organisations like ANBU, Jothy or the Samaritans can help you reduce the anxiety. You may be recommended talking therapy or medication in the short term to help you out of the anxiety cycle.

Grounding Techniques

Feeling supported

- Lying on a bed, or on the ground; standing with your back against a wall can help you feel supported and centred
- Standing barefoot on the ground outside and closing your eyes can help you feel connected to the earth .

Breathing

Slowly breathe in for 5, hold for 3 and out for 7 (choose counts that work for you, it's useful to practice these techniques when you are not experiencing anxiety).

Sensory Grounding

- 5,4,3,2,1 – name 5 things you can see, 4 you can feel (e.g.your feet in your shoes), 3 things you hear, 2 you can smell and 1 you can taste
- Have a soothing playlist, natural sounds (ocean waves or rainforest sounds) or meditation app and play through your headphones, closing your eyes
- Challenge your senses – fizzy sour sweets or a strong scent can refocus your mind

Mindfulness

- Mindful meditation
- Mindfully observing your surroundings e.g. close your eyes and listening to sounds around you

Movement

- If you can't exercise at the time, then stretching or wiggling your toes can ground you to your body

Reach Out

Call someone – family, friend, organisation

Tips for living with Anxiety

- 1.First and foremost, look after yourself – prioritise sleep, fitness, healthy food as anxiety can worsen when you are stressed/tired
- 2.If you feel you can, talk to your manager at work so they can support you if you are finding it challenging or speak with your GP/Occupational health for advice
- 3.Confide in a friend you can check in on you
- 4.Have a built-in excuse so you can leave a social situation if it gets too much such as having a commitment later on/the next day
- 5.If you feel you can't keep a social commitment, it's ok to postpone or cancel
- 6.Say no – try not to overcommit at work or to social events to give yourself time to look after your wellbeing
- 7.Stop smoking, and avoid caffeine, alcohol and other substances which affect your body's physiology and can aggravate anxiety.
- 8.Know that no one is perfect, and you are doing your best
- 9.Think about what your triggers are, and use your personal plan of grounding techniques if you are in a triggering situation

Important Contacts

Emergency: 111 or 999 if you feel you are unsafe

Samaritans: 116 213 (e: jo@samaritans.org)

Jothy (Tamil speaking): 020 3371 0006



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