

MANAGING ANXIETY & WORRY IN COVID-19 TIMES

How to care for
ourselves and
those around us

With many concerned with the new reality we are faced with during this time of pandemic planning and measures taken, it is important that each of us take the time to consider our own experiences of day to day challenges and how to care for ourselves and those around us.

Here are 3 points to consider when anxiety becomes overwhelming:

1. Anxiety can be useful

Anxiety offers us a lot of important information. It lets us know when we are threatened and feeling unsafe, when we should take caution, and it reminds us of what is important to us. We don't normally worry about things that are not important. If worry and anxiety are a big part of your thinking right now, that's because you really care about yourself, your well-being and the well-being of those you care about. In fact, not having anxiety during these times is not a reasonable expectation.

2. Talk about it

During times like these, having a heightened sense of anxiety is completely normal. Letting those around you know about your experience is an important strategy to be able to cope with the negative and scary thoughts we may have.

Be sure to reach out especially to your caregivers and important adults in your life, any helping professionals you are connected to, and, if you feel completely overwhelmed contact COAST at [905-972-8338](tel:905-972-8338).

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3. Do what already works & try something new

So often we don't give ourselves enough credit. Everyone has examples of times when anxiety and worry have been big, and they have found ways to cope well. Be sure to think of examples of ways you have coped well with anxiety and worry in the past. Many people say taking a warm bath, reading a good book, listening to your favorite music, exercising, playing video games that connect you with others, or any other ways that you have found that work.

This may also be a good time to expand the tools in your anxiety-busting tool belt by trying something new. With more time to yourself, now may be a great opportunity to experiment with anxiety reducing methods that have been well researched. Practicing mindfulness has been shown to be useful to numerous people in just about every situation. Connecting, or reconnecting with spiritual or cultural practices may be something to consider as well. One of the most useful ways of bringing anxiety back under control is to focus on and control your breathing using a variety of breathing exercises.

In this time when social distancing has become our new reality, we want to find creative ways of staying connected with those who are important to us. Connecting via social media, Facetime, or just old-fashioned phone calls will be important to limit social isolation.

Helpful apps & resources

Apps:

- COVE: Music for Mental Health
- Insight Timer – meditation app
- The Breathing App
- Breath Work
- Breathe: Meditation and sleep

Other:

- KIDS Helpline – 1-800-668-6868
- COAST – Crisis Outreach and Support Team – 905-972-8338
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Hamont.Response.COVID19/>