

How to cope with COVID-19 anxiety



Anxiety is the fight or flight response in our body – our body is trying to protect us. If you feel your heart racing, your palms getting sweaty or a flutter in your stomach - that's anxiety. A little anxiety is OK now and again. It becomes a problem when the anxiety is frequent, constant or interferes with your daily life. The following techniques may help:



Anxiety can be managed: Remember a thought is just a thought; thinking something does not mean it is true. Begin to become aware of when your anxious thoughts are beginning to spiral, take a mental step back and observe them but try not to get caught up in them.



Trigger your soothing/contentment emotional system: Use 10 minutes each day to focus on your breathing. Find a quiet place to sit down, become aware of your breathing as you inhale and exhale. Put your hand on your stomach and feel it rising and falling as you breathe.



Relax your body: Do you feel any pain? Are you holding tension anywhere? It's common to hold tension in the shoulders. Raise your shoulders up as if you're shrugging and then lower them again, repeat 2 or 3 times. Acknowledge this movement and enjoy the feeling of relaxation.



Focus on your breathing: as you're sitting quietly, focus on your breathing as you inhale and exhale, put your hand on your heart and say: "May I be well. May I be happy. May I be free from anxiety".



Awaken your senses: Look around where you are, name 3 things you can see, 2 things you can hear and one thing you can touch. This will help bring you back into the present and distract you from your anxious thoughts.



Take one day at a time: This time will pass. Go easy on yourself and those around you.