

COVID-19 Anxiety

November, 2020

I am feeling anxious about COVID-19, is this normal?

Anxiety is a normal response to the COVID-19 pandemic, given it is a threat to our health over which we have little direct control.

Anxiety motivates us to accept new limitations on our movements and social interactions, such as wearing a mask, practicing social distancing, isolating, and washing our hands.

These public health measures are designed to protect as many people as possible from the negative impact of the virus.

I do not deal well with uncertainty, what can I do?

Tolerating uncertainty is a learned behaviour, often the opposite to what we have experienced in our controlled environment, during our lifetime.

Uncertain and uncontrollable situations generate anxiety as we anticipate or predict the possibility of negative outcomes.

The feeling of uncertainty often generates negative outcomes, as we try to control the uncontrollable and predict the unforeseen.

Practice letting go of attachment to specific outcomes and be willing to tolerate the uncertainty. Worrying about what may happen is not productive nor does it help you deal with the resulting anxiety.

One way to tolerate uncertainty, and accept anxiety, is by observing what anxiety feels like in the body. Work on allowing anxiety to be present and remind yourself it is ok feel anxiety.

The more unwilling we are to accept anxiety; the more anxiety increases.

I seem to focus on worst-case scenarios, how can I stop this?

As the pandemic progresses, there is a great deal of negative news as the statistics continue to build, however there is also positive news related to treatments, new vaccines, and other prevention measures.

Seek information: both positive and negative.

Anxious minds tend to naturally focus on negative and threatening information, which of course results in increased anxiety. This is a protective behaviour to keep us aware of danger and safe.

When possible seek out and pay attention to positive information such as prevention techniques, treatment successes, new developments, and resources in place to help people recover.

The recovery rate far outweighs the mortality rate, and many people do not develop serious symptoms and recover quickly.

Be mindful of your thoughts, and notice if you are dwelling on worst case scenarios and take action to change your focus.

Remind yourself that humans are resilient.

Should I watch the news?

It is important to stay informed of information, related to COVID-19, from mainstream news channels.

It is recommended that you limit your consumption to 1 – 2 times per day to avoid becoming caught up in the vortex of conflicting opinions and interpretations.

Avoid conspiracy theories and false news articles, as they are not based on fact and are designed to create division, confusion, and social upheaval.

Social media is a poor good source of information ... focus instead on reliable and reputable news articles which are researched and reviewed by broadcasters to ensure they are factual.

For a source of factual information, access safe websites, such as the Centre for Disease Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/>

I have always been in control of my life how can I regain some control?

Focus on those things you can control, your behaviour and response to the pandemic.

Follow the CDC and Local guidelines and the recommendations of the experts.

- Stay at home
- Practice social distancing
- Avoid non-essential travel
- Wash your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth

I am feeling so lonely and isolated. What can I do?

A successful stay at home plan includes:

- Maintain familiar routines whenever possible
- Continue regular sleep schedules
- Eat healthy food
- Continue to exercise
- Get dressed in the morning
- Take breaks throughout the day including for lunch
- If you have spare time, pick up a hobby or home project
- Get outside for a walk or a run
- Stay in touch with friends and loved ones by telephone and virtual meetings
- Stay in touch with, and satisfy, your own needs - physical, emotional, and spiritual

What if I cannot stop worrying?

It is important to seek professional help, when you need it, as sustained anxiety and stress can weaken the immune system.

Assistance is available to deal with most of the negative reactions to stress:

- Anxiety or panic attacks
- Sadness and feelings of despair
- Inability to sleep or insufficient sleep
- Constant worrying
- Lack of appetite or desire to eat well
- Negative feelings or thoughts about self or others

Hypnotherapy replaces anxious thoughts and behaviors with more helpful ways of coping.

When combined with Self-Hypnosis tools it provides a life-long solution for most stressful situation.

Private or Group Sessions are available remotely, using Zoom or other video sharing applications.

Stay safe and healthy ... this will pass!

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