

Managing Anxiety

1. Accept that you feel anxious or worried or afraid or even at times, panicked. Accept that it's normal to have this feeling at times. This doesn't mean that you are accepting that it has to have any control over you, just that it "is" and it's normal to feel that way.
2. Understand what this feeling of anxiety actually means to you. What is it that you are worried/anxious/fearful about? It may be that you don't fully understand what's going on, or what to do next. "What's going to happen to me?" is a common question people have in times of crisis. You may not know what is coming around the corner, and the uncertainty is stressful. Most people, on some level, fear what they don't know or understand. A very normal reaction to have! And that leads to the next point.....
3. What questions does this bring to mind? What is it that you want to know? There are always unknowns, so here we are again with understanding that there are some things we don't know right now, cannot know, will have to wait on, or may never know. You may even be feeling so overwhelmed that you cannot think of the questions you may have. At this point it's critical to reduce your anxiety with some strategies, such as breathing exercises*, meditation, talking to a trusted person, writing out your thoughts, or any number of self-care techniques that help you feel more calm and in control of the feelings you are experiencing.

* Breathing exercises to help you feel more relaxed and calm

Belly Breathing - try this lying down. Put your hand on your stomach and breathe in slowly through your nose making your stomach rise... feel it with your hand. Exhale slowly through your mouth. You may wish to push all the air out at the end of your exhale. Do this for a few minutes while your body relaxes.

Breath Focus - When you breathe, focus on your body and how it feels as you inhale and exhale. Notice how your chest and belly feel as the breath goes in. Notice where you feel tense or tight in your muscles. Sink into your breath and let it calm you and notice how your muscles relax. This will take up to several minutes, so be patient with yourself and just breathe.

Box Breathing - start by getting all the air out of your lungs with a slow exhale. Now begin: Inhale while you slowly count to four, hold your breath for the slow count of four, and exhale again while you again slowly count to four. Do this up to 2 more times.

4. It may be important to find out some information in order to move forward. So now you have to track it down. Figure out what you need to know and get an idea of A) where you would go for that information or to find out how to start tracking it down or who to ask and, B) what is the first thing you need to do from there. Ask your questions and start following where it leads. Know that you are taking action to improve your situation. Understand that not everyone has all the answers you need right now, or that it comes together in pieces and from different places. Be patient with yourself and with the process, and continue to practice self-care to give yourself the calm you need to feel in control of your feelings.

Helpful websites for getting other ideas:

<https://www.neurocorecenters.com/blog/how-to-manage-anxiety-during-a-crisis>
<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/5-best-ways-to-deal-with-stress-during-a-crisis/>
<https://aliciacarkpsyd.com/managing-anxiety-in-a-crisis/>