

Coronavirus & Your Anxiety



Simple, practical tips to help you manage your anxiety during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Anxiety is a normal response to a major life disruption such as the coronavirus pandemic. Your body and mind are alert to a very real danger and you're probably feeling a lack of control. This can cause you to become very emotionally reactive, or all over the place.

Additionally, you've likely been stripped of your normal ways of calming down and staying stable. Activities like contact with other people, socialising around food and coffee, going to the gym, out to a concert, going to church and going to work or university are likely impossible given the current restrictions.

Please use these tips in the context of your own unique circumstances and stresses.

Be kind to yourself

As human beings, we're not invincible and it's ok to be feeling anxious or fearful in these times. Ironically, the more you try to deny your anxiety or keep it at bay, the bigger it may seem. Instead, show kindness to yourself. Acknowledge your feelings without any shame and take steps to learn how to live with them and manage them.

Keep on connecting

Your anxiety means that you need comfort. So, seek comfort, particularly by connecting with others. Keep in touch by phone or video conferencing. The more that you connect with others, the more your internal levels of alarm will drop.

Find your rhythm

Anxiety is an experience felt by the whole of you – your body, your mind, your spirit. When you feel all over the place, rhythms or routines will help you find balance again. The sleep-wake rhythm is, for example, fundamental to your wellbeing.

What about the rhythm of your day helps you to feel alive and motivated? Is it getting up in the morning and getting dressed? Regular exercise? Eating fresh and healthy food? Prayer? Reading scripture? Completion of tasks? Develop your rhythms in this time of disorientation.

Work out your agitation

Agitation is a classic accompaniment to anxiety. Stress and fear generate adrenaline, and adrenaline needs an outlet. Use your hands and your body. Get outside and walk or run. If this is difficult bake a cake, play an instrument, paint, draw, or do some gardening. Your hands will bring your agitated body healing.

Limit your exposure

If you want to have some perspective on this situation we are living through, get your information from credible sources such as the [Australian Government Department of Health](#) or the [World Health Organisation](#). Even when accessing information from credible sources, however, ensure you minimise your media and social media exposure. Give your nervous system a break from overwhelming excess information!

Just breathe

Pull yourself back from getting lost in fruitless worries about future, worst-case scenarios, because your panicking mind will want to get a sense of control by finding problems to try and solve. When you find the sense of panic or agitation rising, breathe. It sounds too simple, but practice through the day, taking ten, long, slow deep breaths in and out. This will really calm your system and bring back the clarity of thought you need to address the real problems you are facing day-to-day. Just keep doing what you can do in the situation you find yourself in, such as washing your hands and keeping your distance.

Your feelings are valid!

Be kind to yourself. Did we say this before? Your feelings are absolutely valid and express some of the truth of the impact of this situation for you. Listen to them. Use them to remember to care for yourself and calm yourself. Listen to music, keep a coronavirus journal, run a warm bath, phone a friend, read a book, work out ways to still have fun.

Anglicare Assistance

Anglicare Counselling

1300 651 728

anglicare.org.au/what-we-offer/counselling/

Other Counselling & Helplines

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

kidshelpline.com.au

Lifeline

13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue

1800 512 348

coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au

Further information

Australian Government: [COVID-19 information](#)

Health Direct: [COVID-19 Symptom Checker](#)

World Health Organisation: [Coronavirus Disease](#)

Smart Traveller: [Travel information for Australians](#)

This Way Up: [Free online courses](#) from the Clinical Research Unit for Anxiety and Depression (a joint project of St Vincent's Hospital and the University of NSW)

The Conversation: [7 science-based strategies to cope with coronavirus anxiety](#)