

Coping with anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic



Access reliable information: It all starts with knowing the facts & being well informed. Remember not all sources of information are going to be reliable. Refrain from internet searches that take you to websites that do not provide factual, proven & evidence-based information. This is likely to add to misunderstanding as well as the propensity to worry & catastrophise. The Government of Western Australia Department of Health & World Health Organisation provide reliable & up to date information.

Keep things in perspective: In the current climate of uncertainty, it is very easy to let our worst fears & predictions take over. Keeping things in perspective helps us to counter our catastrophic thoughts & thereby ward against undue stress, worry, anxiety & fear. Consider the following:

- Are you assuming the worst?
- Are you assuming the worst will be absolutely terrible & catastrophic?
- Are you underestimating your ability to cope?



If you answered yes to any of the above it might be useful to consider the following & visiting our Therapy Worksheet section:

- Equipping yourself with the facts (see above)
- Applying defusion & mindfulness strategies to gain distance & space from worrying thoughts
- Applying disputation strategies to worrying thoughts
- Assessing the real likelihood of events to assist the disputation process
- Examining the difference between productive & unproductive worries
- [Worry postponement](#)

Take reasonable precautions: It might seem like it is impossible to know what are reasonable precautions. As stated earlier we need to be informed by the experts. The WA Health Department recommends:



- Wash your hands with soap or sanitiser regularly
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue or with your inner elbow
- Stay at home if you are sick
- Clean surfaces such as door knobs, keyboards & phones

Practice relaxation & meditation: These can be very helpful in reducing your levels of stress & anxiety. They can help to produce a quiet mind & hence a quiet body. Remember practice is essential to experiencing the benefits:

- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Mindfulness meditation



General lifestyle management: The following are essential ingredients for good mental health

- Maintain a structure & routine to your day: get up & go to bed at the same time; have a to do list
- Engage in pleasant & enjoyable activities i.e. walk the dog; have a coffee; watch a good movie; have a bath; read a good book
- Engage in activities that generate a sense of achievement i.e. go to work; get laundry done; cook dinner; exercise; cleaning; gardening
- Exercise regularly: go for a walk/run; use a skipping rope; do push-ups; sit ups; chin ups; squats; lunges; go for a swim
- Keep alcohol intake under control
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Get good sleep each night



Seek out support: Talk to trusted others about how you feel. Open up & express your feelings. Bottling things up can serve to worsen your fears & levels of anxiety.

For further tips go to [Australian Psychological Society](#); [Beyond Blue](#); [Department of Health](#)

If you feel you need professional support talk to your GP &/or make an appointment to see one of our Clinical Psychologists. Call (08) 9468 7512 or email using the [contact form](#).