



SELF-MANAGEMENT OF ANXIETY— (and Stress)

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Wellness points



- Question: What is the difference between anxiety & stress?
- Question: What are the 5 parts to the Apple Technique?
- Question: Which of these techniques do you think you will use? Why?
- Any topic you would like to learn about?

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Thank you for participating!

What Is Stress?

- Stress is a physiological reaction which occurs when there is a need to make extreme and/or prolonged physiological and behavioral adjustments in order to cope with the environment.
- The feeling of being stressed is the result of the release of stress hormones.
- The purpose of the stress hormones is to physically prepare the organism for “battle”-- for a confrontation with an uncertain environment.
- Stress is a response to an *external* cause

Examples of Stress

- Driving through a treacherous snowstorm: **Imminent danger**
 - Muscle tension
 - Rapid breathing
 - Focused attention
- Juggling competing responsibilities throughout the day: **Physical and mental demands**
 - Muscle tension
 - Inability to relax
 - Difficulty focusing

What Is Anxiety?

- A feeling of:
 - Worry
 - Nervousness
 - Unease
- Anxiety can be experienced on cognitive, emotional and physical levels.
 - Cognitive: Presence of negative or disturbing thoughts.
 - Emotional: Feeling scared or out-of-control.
 - Physical: Sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, tension in muscles.
- Anxiety is a person's reaction to stress.
- Its origin is *internal*.

What is Anxiety Cont.

- Unlike stress, anxiety persists even though there is no imminent danger or immediate call to action.
- Anxiety arises when:
 - We interpret an event as threatening, even though there is no immediate danger.
 - We project into the future and experience anxiety as a result.

Examples of Anxiety

- Thinking about having to give a speech:
 - Cognitive: Convinced you can't give the speech.
 - Emotional: Afraid of being embarrassed.
 - Physical: Butterflies in the stomach.
- Thinking about when the social isolation will end:
 - Cognitive: This is terrible. It better end soon.
 - Emotional: I am scared and apprehensive about what is to come.
 - Physical: I am "keyed-up" and can't sleep. OR I can't get out of bed.

Comparing & Contrasting Stress & Anxiety

Stress

- Stress is a bodily response to an external event.
- Stress reactions can be triggered when the body/mind is triggered.
- The stress reaction is automatic, not immediately under self-control.

Anxiety

- Anxiety locates in the mind. It is an internal process.
- Anxiety focuses on the mind worrying, trying to forecast and control the future.
- The bodily response to anxiety resembles the bodily response to stress.

Wellness points



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Self-Management of Anxiety—General Principles

Self-Management of Anxiety—General Principles

- **Get the facts:** Stay informed with the latest information.
 - [Ohio COVID-19 Update](#), [Center for Disease Control-COVID-19](#)
- **Keep things in perspective:**
 - Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you spend watching or listening to upsetting media coverage.
 - Remember to take a break from watching the news and focus on the things that are positive in your life and things you have control over.
- **Stay healthy:**
 - Wash your hands!
 - Practice social distancing.
 - Don't touch your face.

Self-Management of Anxiety—General Principles Cont.

- **Keep connected:**
 - Maintaining social networks can help maintain a sense of normalcy and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress.
- **Seek additional help:**
 - Individuals who feel an overwhelming worry or anxiety can seek additional professional mental health support. Contact your EAP with MCMS, or your primary care physician.
- **Laugh:**
 - Covid-19 and MASH
 - Humorous Videos

Self-Management of Anxiety—Specific Techniques

Distraction Techniques: When feeling overwhelmed, out of control—Focus on

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can touch
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 long, deep breath inhaled

Distraction Techniques - Focus on the world around you --

- Count the number of bricks in the wall, or the number of ceiling tiles above you.
- Count passing cars.
- Count backwards from one hundred.

Distraction Techniques--Concentration

- Name as many words as possible beginning with the letters in your name.
- Subtract backwards from 100 in increments of seven.
- Memorize a poem, prayer or religious verse.
- Play a game which requires concentration.
 - Card game
 - Video game
 - Crossword puzzle

Relaxation Techniques—Breathing Exercise

- Find a quiet environment and sit comfortably with your eyes closed.
- Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Focus on your chest expanding as you inhale.
- Hold this breath in for 2 seconds.
- Breathe out through your mouth for 6 seconds.
- Focus on your body softening as your breath leaves your body.
- Repeat this routine as and when you are feeling anxious.
- Try to get into the habit of practicing five minutes of breathing daily, perhaps in the morning as you get ready for the day.

Relaxation Technique—Body Relaxation

- Repeat each exercise 5 times. Take your time. This process should take 10-15 minutes.

Feet - Scrunch up your toes.

Legs - Tighten your calf muscles by stretching your toes upwards. Squeeze your thigh muscles.

Bum - clench your buttocks together!

Hands - Clench your fists.

Arms - Keep your hand in a fist and tense your arm muscles as if you showing off your muscles.

Relaxation Technique—Body Relaxation Cont.

Stomach - Pull your tummy in as tight as comfortably possible.

Chest - Take a long, breath.

Shoulders - Raise your shoulders up in a big shrug.

Mouth - Open your mouth wide and stretch out your jaw.

Head - Close your eyes tightly and raise your eyebrows as far as you can.

The Apple Technique

Acknowledge: Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.

Pause: Don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Pause and breathe.

Pull back: Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are not statements or facts.

Let go: Let go of the thought or feeling. It will pass. You don't have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble or cloud.

Explore: Explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then shift your focus of attention to something else - on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry or do something else - mindfully with your full attention.

Wellness points



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QUESTIONS?

Use chat room---

More personal: Send an email to:

eap@moorecounseling.com



Contact us!

If you need assistance or want additional information about this topic or how your EAP can help, please contact Moore Counseling & Mediation Services, Inc. Employee Assistance Program at:

(216)404-1900 /

Email us at eap@moorecounseling.com

or visit our website at

www.moorecounseling.com



“And The People Stayed Home”—Kitty O’Meara

And the people stayed home.
And read books and listened, and
rested and exercised,
and made art and played games,
and learned new ways of being and
were still.

And listened more deeply.
Some meditated, some prayed,
some danced.
Some met their shadows.
And the people began to think
differently.

And the people healed.
And, in the absence of people living
in ignorant, dangerous, mindless
and heartless ways, the earth
began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and
the people joined together again,
they grieved their losses, and made
new choices,
and dreamed new images,
and created new ways to live and
heal the earth fully,
as they had been healed.

Pandemic---Lynn Unger

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.
And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and
beautiful.

(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.
Promise this world your love--
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.