

# Tips to manage anxiety during times of uncertainty



## What this fact sheet covers:

- Tips to manage anxiety
- Where to get help for anxiety

Feeling anxious in certain situations can help us avoid danger, it's how we've evolved to keep ourselves safe. Even if you're not typically an anxious person, it's common to feel some anxiety during periods of change or uncertainty.

Here are some practical ways that you can keep feelings of anxiety at bay if you are starting to feel overwhelmed.

## **Channel your anxiety into action: Get informed, plan and prepare**

Follow practical advice from trusted sources and make a plan for what you need to do to look after yourself (and your family) over the next few weeks.

## **Limit or avoid unhelpful media and misinformation**

We might think we are staying informed but if watching TV, listening to radio, scrolling through social media is making you more anxious then limit your exposure.

## **Cut down or stop the behaviours that are fuelling your anxiety**

Notice when your anxiety increases. If it's related to certain things you are doing (like

searching on Google, panic buying, or talking about your concerns with particular people) then limit or stop these.

## **Be aware of negative thoughts and don't give them too much power**

Just because we're thinking something, doesn't always mean it's true. When you notice yourself worrying a lot, take a step back, and try to let worries pass by without focussing on them too much.

## **Stay focused on the here and now - take each day step by step**

Try to focus on the here and now- not the past and not the future. Live in the moment and take one day at a time.

## **Look after your body - get enough sleep, exercise and eat well**

Make sure you are getting enough sleep, exercising, eating well and avoiding unhealthy habits (like smoking and drinking too much). You will be looking after your mind and your immune system too!



## Stay connected with others, so you're not socially isolated or lonely

Try to stay connected to supportive people in your life so you feel less isolated and lonely. You might need try new ways of connecting that you haven't before.

## Help other people, be kind and compassionate

When we help other people, it can also make us feel better. We are all in this together so let's try our best to be kind and compassionate to each other.

## Remember to breathe – take slow, deep breaths to induce the calming response

When you feel overwhelmed take a few slow, deep breaths to help you calm down. If there are other things that help you relax (e.g. a walk, or listening to music) you could try these too.

## If you feel like you are not coping, seek professional advice

After trying these tips, if you're still feeling really overwhelmed you might want to think about getting in touch with a mental health professional. It's okay to ask for help and there are a lot of options so you can choose what suits you best.

## Who can provide help for anxiety?

As well as your GP, there are other health professionals who can help with anxiety, including psychologists and school counsellors. A detailed list can be found at:

[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/anxiety/seeking-help](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/anxiety/seeking-help)

There are also a number of free digital tools and available on the Black Dog website, such as:

- [MyCompass](#) - an online self-help program for people experiencing mild-to-moderate anxiety and depression.
- [BiteBack](#) - an online positive psychology program for young Australians between 13-16 years old.
- [iBobbly](#) - a self-help app for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15+
- [Online Clinic](#) - an anonymous assessment tool for common mental health conditions that provides you with a personalised report to discuss with your GP.

## Key points to remember

- Anxiety is the most common mental health condition in Australia.
- It's important to seek help to manage severe anxiety. There are many effective treatments for anxiety, and you can feel better.
- Focus on what you can control, such as practicing good hygiene and implementing physical distancing measures as instructed.

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