

Managing Fear and Anxiety

What to Expect

- Adult Fears
- Anxiety
- Fear and Anxiety During a Pandemic
- Understanding the Power of Thoughts
- Mindfulness/Acceptance
- Practice Breathing
- Suggestions
- Additional Soothing Techniques
- Conversations Starters
- Supporting Employees' Return to Work

What to Expect Continued

- Concerns about offering support
- How to intervene
- How managers can help
- Summary
- Take care of yourself

Learning Points

- Acknowledge and understand fears
- Embrace the power of our minds/thoughts and re-direct ourselves
- Examine our anxiety by addressing root thoughts and feelings
- Develop bodily awareness through mindfulness
- Utilize thought substitution, breathing, self-soothing, and other coping strategies/tools
- How to support employees' return to work

Adults Fears

- Public Speaking
- Flying
- Dentist
- Spiders
- Failure
- Losing sense of security
- Enclosed spaces
- Financial fears
- What are your fears ?

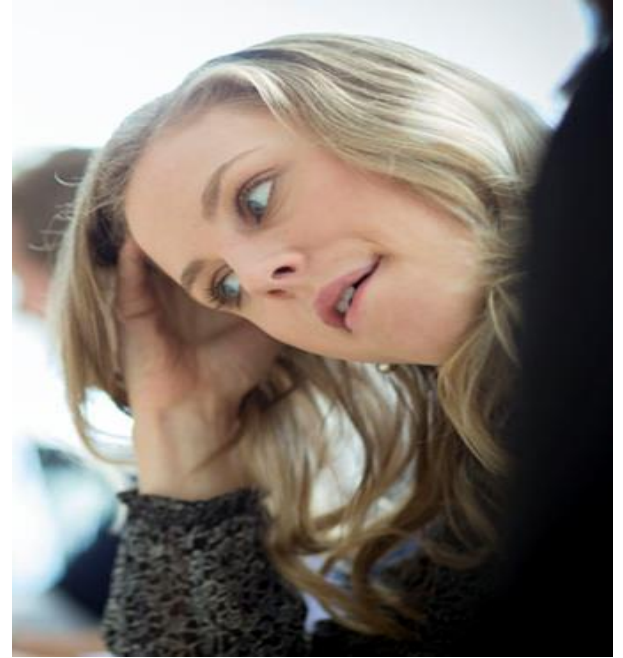


Anxiety

- Worry turns to anxiety, anxiety to fear
- Belief that danger is lurking
- History of Panic disorders, Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Fear and anxiety are normal adaptations that protect us from dangerous situations – we can learn to overcome them
- Global fear and anxiety

Fears and Anxiety During a Pandemic

- Fear of the unknown is unprecedented
- Anxiety about returning to work
- Our history and past resiliency matter
- Emotions are exacerbated by uncertainty
- Social isolation can intensify our feelings



Acknowledging negative thoughts can take away their power

*How you perceive a situation affects your reaction more than the
situation itself*

Understanding the Power of your Thoughts

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – helps people conquer worry and self-doubt

1. Identify Negative Thoughts

- What were you thinking when you started to feel anxious?

2. Challenge Negative Thoughts

- Question the evidence for your anxious thoughts and analyze unhelpful beliefs
- What is the realistic chance that your negative thoughts will become reality?

3. Replace Negative Thoughts With Realistic Ones

- How did you make it through this situation before? What was the outcome?

Mindfulness/Acceptance

- Pay attention to the present moment
- Find the positive moment... no matter what
- Acknowledge your thoughts/feelings and accept them without judgment
- Taming – do not try to eliminate negative thoughts but examine them and understand their influence on you
- Pay attention to breathing and other physical sensations
- Be sure to pay attention to credible facts ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))
- Focus on being rational/logical –Keep in mind that most things we fear won't happen
- Reframe negative situations more positively – what good could come from this?

Practice Breathing Exercise

- Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose lasting 5 seconds
- Hold for a few seconds
- Breath out slowly through your mouth
- Repeat 10 times
- Repeat many times during the day
- Add mental imagery of a safe, comforting place

Suggestions

- Talk to someone or yourself to address your frustrations
- Write about your anxiety, including irrational thoughts. Write encouraging helpful thoughts
- Ask questions like “how might I get through this?”
- Negative feelings will come: acknowledge them as valid, then re-direct them
- Allow them to exist and pass through as if you’re watching them march by in a parade
- Pick a focal point to focus on to help isolate your thoughts
- Give yourself some compassion – stop beating yourself up
- Change your situation/take a break/change your scenery and go outdoors if possible
- Get help – reach out to friends, family, professional support resources

Additional Soothing Techniques

- Deep Breathing: focus on counting your breaths
- Meditation
- Exercise or stretching
- Positive Affirmations:
 - “I have made it through this situation before, I will get through it again”
- Aromatherapy: Sandalwood, Lavender, Vanilla, Chamomile
- Guided meditation
 - Walk through a scene

Apps / Movies / Other

Headspace

- Calm
- Happify
- 10% Happier

Feel Good Movies

- Forrest Gump
- Driving Ms. Daisy
- Remember the titans
- Pursuit of Happiness



Conversation Starters

- How are you?
- How are things going?
- Can we get together to chat about things in general?
- It would be good to have regular meetings so I can check in with you on how you feel about the current situation.
- I notice how [hard you're working/what long hours you're doing/how often you stay late] let's talk about it.
- On a scale of 1-10 (1 is low) how comfortable are you about returning to work?

Supporting Employees' Return to Work

How Managers can help:

- Spend time identifying individual needs and motivators.
- Structure work so that there are tasks that motivate them positively. Use their unique strengths to build self-confidence and increase self-esteem
- Remember to give plenty of reinforcing feedback and praise about their re-adjustment and work performance
- Identify and manage small problems to avoid them becoming larger problems or crises.
- Create reasonable expectations and work assignments/schedules
- Encourage employees to take breaks and de-stress
- Be available
- Be a role model of good mental health

Common Concerns about Offering Support

- What if I say the wrong thing and make the situation worse?
- I'm not qualified to deal with this.
- I don't want to interfere, it's a personal matter, I'll only get in the way.
- Won't they just get over it if I leave them alone?

How to Intervene Effectively

- Educate yourself on mental health issues ahead of time- the more you know, the more effective you will be
- Listen, allow the employee to speak openly and give your undivided attention
- Offer your support so they feel safe and cared for
- Encourage the employee to seek help
- Offer information on the EAP and any other organizational benefits that might assist them
- Be willing to look at possible changes to work assignments and work schedule

How Managers Can Help

- Know your employees in order to be able to
- identify changes in behavior
- Observe and document any changes
- Approach employee and discuss observations
- Offer support, information and resources
- Encourage employee to seek help



Summary

- Know your teams: recognize what is typical and what is out of the ordinary
- Be aware, observant and involved
- Take action if you have concerns
- Be positive and encouraging
- Stay informed on policies and benefits
- Master Emotional Intelligence skills
- Seek support

Take Care of Yourself

Managers have a big responsibility, it is easy to get so caught up in all that's going on and neglect yourself:

- Recognize your own signs of burnout
- Practice self-care (eat right, exercise, get enough sleep, manage your stress)
- Engage in activities you enjoy and that energize you outside of work
- Don't go it alone, seek help from your manager, mentor, HR or EAP
- Seek support from family and loved ones

Quotes

THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT CAN HAPPEN RIGHT NOW IN THIS PANDEMIC IS THAT WE FEEL OUR COLLECTIVITY — THAT WE'RE HERE TO HELP EACH OTHER MOVE THROUGH THIS

Tara Brach

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- Short term counseling and support for all employees and immediate family members (if eligible).
- Provided at no cost to you by your employer.
- Easily accessible, voluntary, and confidential in accordance with the law-service that can provide support for personal or work-related issues.
- Staffed by experienced professionals.

Call us TODAY!



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Thank you for coming!

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