

Maintain

Go back to basics and work on maintaining your mental health where it currently is. This isn't the time to push yourself into positions where you feel uncomfortable.

Some interventions that you may be trying right now, it would be worth putting on hold.

Maintaining your mental health should be a collaborative process, if you have one, talk to your mental health professional if you feel your current behavior is dangerous.

The 'what if' questions

A big part of anxiety is about asking the 'what if' questions. The anxiety is often about us not being able to tolerate those questions.

When we're anxious we often overestimate the level of threat and underestimate our ability to cope.

We can help to maintain our mental health by making some of those uncertainties a bit more 'certain' and problem solving can help with that.

Be aware of social media during this time. It is more important to focus on positive interactions and avoid things that add to our feelings or worry or sadness.

Problem Solving

Stay focused on current worries – let go of some of the hypothetical worries, they haven't happened yet and may never happen, deal with them if they become current.

Distraction techniques help to shift focus. Writing worries down can get them out of our head, especially if you aren't sleeping. From there we can think of possible solutions, write those down, any wild or wonderful ideas and out of these you may find some that work for you.

Look at your worries gauge them as short, medium or long term, you can then see which to address first. Tackle short term first, if possible let go of the longer term worries.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Many people with OCD have specific routines; these can be connected with hand washing and given the latest advice could spiral out of control.

Discuss your worries with your health care professional if you have one. If you don't then, follow the current guidelines of the happy birthday song twice or 20 seconds.

Your current rituals have kept you safe up until now – there is no need to add or take away from them. Now is not the time to push yourself, now is the time to maintain balance.

Generalised Anxiety Disorder

The uncertainty around the current situation will be causing additional anxiety.

Create several contingency plans connected with your area of uncertainty. As the situation is ever evolving having more than one plan can help you feel better prepared and you can revisit as those plans become unworkable.

Remember focus on maintaining your current mental health. Speak to a medical professional if you are struggling to control your anxieties.

Depression

Many of us are worried that our depression will spiral if we have to self-isolate. It is important to let ourselves feel our emotions. Being isolated and stuck inside can cause low mood in anyone.

Plan some meaningful activities to do in the house, wire that book, learn a language and listen to a long forgotten piece of music.

Stick to existing routines where possible, go to bed and get up at normal times. If you don't have a routine, create one.

Try not to slip into negative behaviors. If you have one use your garden, plan calls with friends and focus on self-care.



SAMARITANS

Call free on 116 123

Experiencing increased levels of anxiety is understandable, especially with the speed at which advice and reports are changing. For those of us with mental illness, the anxieties and worries can start to take over and make day to day life really difficult. Use this time to really focus on upping our self-care and making sure we are looking after ourselves in the very best way we can.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your line manager or the Employee Assistance Provider