**Are anxious thoughts or feelings getting in your way?**

It’s natural to feel stressed, worried or afraid from time to time. Or tense or anxious in certain situations. But if these emotions are happening often or getting in the way of your day to day, then it may be time to think about what’s going on. And how you might manage these feelings.

You may be feeling anxiety, which is often a normal reaction to stress.

**Self-help strategies**

In-the-moment coping strategies can often help manage anxious thoughts or feelings. For example, exercises like 4-7-8 breathing can help calm your nerves. See this month’s video to learn how.

So can self-talk, such as reminding yourself of a similar situation you were in and how you got through it in the past. Try imagining yourself squashing the thought to help stop it. Or replace the stressful thought with a more positive one.

Nurturing your overall health can help you feel calm in times of anxious thoughts and stress, too. Eating nutritious foods, being active and getting enough sleep all increase well-being and reduce stress. So do practicing yoga and mindfulness, meditation, doing activities you enjoy and spending time in nature.

**When to seek help**

If your strong feelings persist and are becoming harder to cope with, consult with a medical or mental health professional for help. Notice if your feelings are leading you to change your day-to-day routines and behaviors. Too much worry and ongoing anxious feelings also may include — or lead to — physical and behavioral symptoms such as:

* Increased heart rate, headaches, chest pains, nausea
* Loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, inability to focus
* Withdrawing from friends and family
* Avoiding certain places or situations

A medical or mental health professional can help figure out what’s causing your anxiety. They can help you discern whether it’s a situational concern or a mental health condition. And they can help you take steps to manage it. Depending on your unique needs, they may recommend:

* “Talk therapy” (aka cognitive behavioral therapy) to help you proactively identify and change unhelpful thinking patterns
* Medication management, for example, anti-depressants or anti-anxiety drugs, to help reduce symptoms
* Self-help stress management and relaxation techniques like the ones mentioned above

The good news is, getting the right support tends to be very successful for helping people learn to live with and manage anxiety.

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