



UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY



Fear and anxiety in response to certain situations are a normal part of life and can even serve an adaptive function by keeping you alert. However, sometimes these feelings can become overwhelming and persistent and interfere with your ability to function. As such, it is important to understand and recognize your anxiety in order to begin working towards bringing yourself back to a calmer state.

What are some common signs and symptoms of anxiety?

THOUGHTS

- ✓ Speeding or slowing of thoughts
- ✓ Thoughts of impending doom
- ✓ “What if...” thinking

FEELINGS

- ✓ Excessive worry or fear
- ✓ Feeling detached
- ✓ Irritable
- ✓ Angry
- ✓ Sad
- ✓ Confused
- ✓ Scared

BEHAVIOURS

- ✓ Reduced attention
- ✓ Trouble concentrating
- ✓ Avoidance behaviours (avoiding anxiety-provoking situations)
- ✓ Engaging in unhealthy, risky, self-destructive behaviours

PHYSICAL REACTIONS

- ✓ Heart palpitations
- ✓ Hyperventilation
- ✓ Nausea
- ✓ Muscle Tension
- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Insomnia
- ✓ Numbness
- ✓ Sweating, chills or hot flashes

What can you do about it?

1. RECOGNIZE SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

The first step of coping with your anxiety is recognizing the symptoms of anxiety.

2. UNDERSTAND WHY YOU ARE FEELING THIS WAY

Associate your anxiety symptoms with thoughts, places and situations that increased your anxiety. Aim to understand this association rather than labelling and judging.

3. FACE YOUR ANXIETY

Learning to face and accept your anxiety in a non-judgmental way can help reduce the power anxiety has over you.

4. INTERVENTIONS

Learning about self-care strategies and incorporating them into your routine can help reduce your anxiety symptoms.

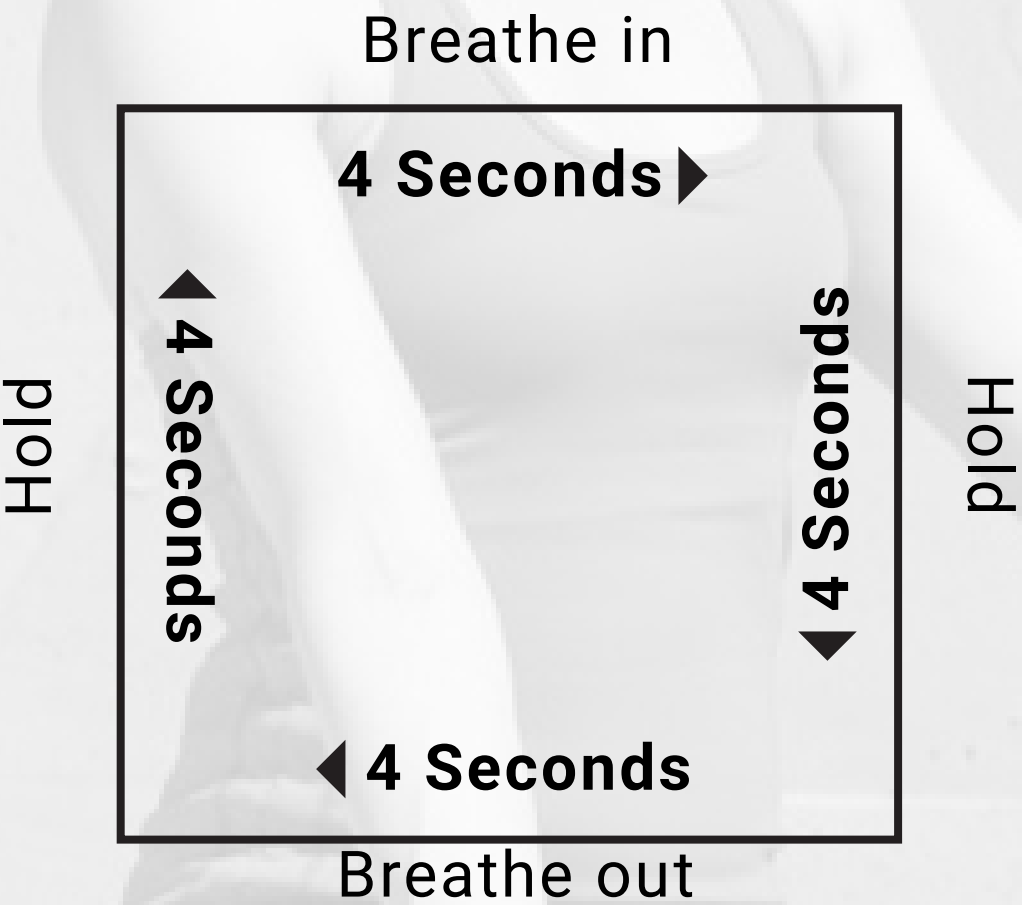
THE FOLLOWING SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES CAN HELP YOU COPE WITH ANXIETY.



Breathing Exercises

Breathing exercises that slow down and deepen the breathing can help relax your mind and body.

Box Breathing is one such exercise: inhale for 4 seconds, hold breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds and hold again for 4 seconds. Repeat!



Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is important for coping with anxiety-related symptoms.

Try setting a routine and practicing good sleep hygiene.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This technique can aid in alleviating disruptive anxiety-related symptoms by progressively tensing and relaxing different muscle groups throughout your body.

Begin by tightening any muscle in your body (for example, your fist) and holding this for 5 seconds; abruptly release this tension and feel the muscle relax. Continue doing this for different muscle groups and remember to breathe.

Physical Exercise

Remaining physically active is important for both your mental and physical health.

This activity does not have to be extremely strenuous.

Consider trying yoga, Tai Chi, aerobic exercises or even simply going for a walk/run.

Find an exercise that works best for you and set an achievable plan for yourself.

Eat Well-Balanced Meals

Healthy eating is important for one's overall physical and mental health.

Journaling

This is a great way to recognize and understand your anxiety by organizing your thoughts and feelings.

Once you have identified your stressors and reactions, you can create a plan to cope with them and reduce your anxiety.

Recognizing Personal Limitations

We all have limits. Recognizing and respecting our limits helps us cope and manage our anxiety.

Set more manageable goals and prioritize your well-being.

Accept that you cannot control everything. Try challenging your negative thoughts by thinking of alternative explanations.

Speak to a Professional.

Remember, Yorkville University/Toronto Film School CARES. Schedule an appointment to speak to a professional mental health and wellness counsellor for free.

You can schedule an appointment using the following links.

For Toronto Film School: tfs.janeapp.com

For Yorkville University: yorkvilleu-bc.janeapp.com

Learning to manage, cope and accept your anxiety can improve your mental health and wellbeing!

Remember: your anxiety does not define you.