

Feeling Anxious about Coronavirus

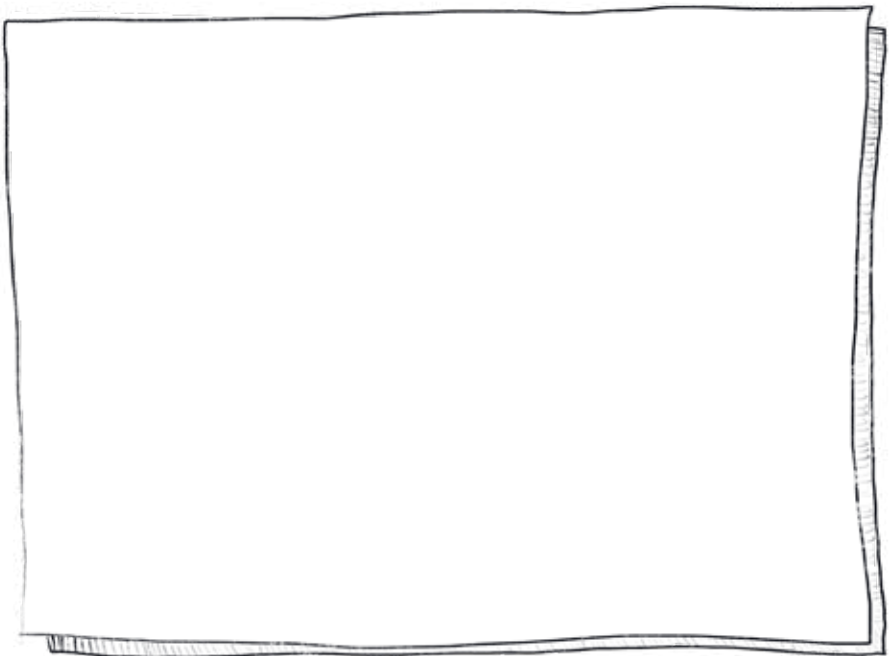


Feeling anxious is a normal feeling. We all feel anxious at times. Just now some people are feeling anxious about a new virus called coronavirus (sometimes called COVID-19). There is lots of information you can find about this.

Lots of things can make us feel anxious too. This will be different for different people.

We can get anxious when we are doing something for the first time, or if things don't work out the way we would like.

People use different words to talk about feeling anxious such as feeling uptight, worried or stressed. What words do you use?



Kate's story

Kate is feeling anxious because there are lots of changes in her life due to coronavirus. Kate can't go to her job at a charity shop. She hasn't been able to see her friend who goes to the local club. Kate usually visits her parents every weekend but hasn't been able to do this. Kate is worried that because her mum was ill recently she might get ill again with the virus.

Other changes which are difficult for Kate are that she has a new support worker and her support hours have changed.



What makes you feel anxious?

Tick the boxes if these things have made you anxious.

	TICK BOX
Will I be able to visit family again?	
Will I lose my place at college?	
What if I forget to wash my hands?	
What if someone comes too close to me when I'm out?	
What if my mum or dad gets ill?	
What if I get ill?	
Will I see my friends again?	

Are any other things making you anxious just now?

Worries

When we are anxious, we often think or say things to ourselves inside our mind. These are sometimes called worries or anxious thoughts. In this booklet we call this worries.

These worries sometimes go around and around in our mind and can be difficult to stop.

This can happen to anyone. The problem is, that if you spend a lot of time worrying it can make your anxiety even worse.

Often one worry leads to another and it can be hard to think about anything else. This means we can't concentrate on what we are doing.



Kate's worries:

Kate has been getting caught up in lots of worries about her work. The shop where she works is shut because of coronavirus. Kate is worried that it won't open again. She is worried that she might lose her job. The more she thinks about this the more anxious she becomes. She worries that if she loses her job then she might not be able to get another one. These thoughts get stuck in her mind.



What are your worries? You can write these below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a hand-drawn, slightly irregular border. It is intended for the reader to write down their own worries. The box is white and occupies the lower half of the page.

Anxiety in the body

We can notice changes in our body when we feel anxious. Some changes are below:

Tick the changes you feel in your body

	TICK BOX
Heart beating fast	
Stomach churning/feeling sick	
Legs shaking	
Feeling hot and sweaty	
Wanting to go to the toilet more often	
Tense shoulders	

When **you** are anxious what changes do you notice in your body?



When Kate feels anxious, she notices her stomach churning. Her shoulders feel tight and tense. Sometimes if Kate gets really anxious her legs get shaky and she has to sit down. Then Kate worries that people might notice that she is anxious and this makes her feel worse.

Some things you can do to stay calm.

Here are some ideas for staying calm.

Some ideas are:

- ➔ Calm thinking.
- ➔ Relaxing your body.
- ➔ Taking your mind off of worries.
- ➔ Staying in touch with others, when you can't visit.
- ➔ Being kind to yourself and others



Calm Thinking

One of the things you can do to feel less anxious is to practice calm thinking. The more you practice the easier it will be.

Looking at things differently

If we **stop** and **notice** that we are worrying we can try and see things differently.

Stop, Notice and Think Different.

Kate's Story

When Kate has an anxious thought like 'What if I lose my job?', she has been trying to stop and look at the situation differently. Kate reminds herself that 'It's okay, things will be back to normal soon'. This is a calm thought and helps her feel less anxious.

Other *calm thoughts* that can help us when we are anxious are:

'This won't last forever'

'I'm not alone – others have these changes too'

'I can get through this'

'I have my support workers to help me with problems'



Relax your body.



- ➔ Sit on a chair
- ➔ Take a few slow, easy breaths
- ➔ Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, if this feels comfortable.
- ➔ You can count these breaths 1 – 2 - 3
- ➔ Let your shoulders relax
- ➔ Try and let your muscles go soft and relaxed

Sometimes relaxing activities can help you relax your body.

This might be having a bath or listening to relaxing music.

What relaxing activities do you enjoy?

If you would like to find out more about relaxation you can watch the short relaxation film included in this resource pack.

Do something to take your mind off of worries.

Another way to feel less anxious is to do something take your mind off your worries. This is sometimes called distraction. You can choose something to do when you feel anxious.

Kates' story:

Kate is only going out once a day, so she has been trying to find new things she can do at home, like dancing to her favourite music and watching her favourite programmes. Her support worker helped her find an exercise class online. After lunch she goes for a walk outside to get some exercise.



Some other good ideas for things to do are:

- ➔ Cooking lunch
- ➔ Listening to the radio
- ➔ Watching DVDs
- ➔ Getting things done around the house
- ➔ Artwork
- ➔ Phoning someone for a chat

Talking to others and keeping in touch.


Having a chat to others can help take our mind off of worries too. Even when you can't visit others, you can stay in touch by phone or computer. Arrange a call at the same time every week. If you need help with this ask your support worker to help.

Be kind to yourself.

Sometimes we forget to treat ourselves well. It really helps to be kind to ourselves when feeling anxious.

This might involve some of the ideas above, like calm thoughts or slow breathing. Other small things might help.

Notice if you are being too hard on yourself and try these kind thoughts:



It's okay,
I am doing
my best

This is not
my fault

It's okay to
feel like this,
everyone
gets anxious

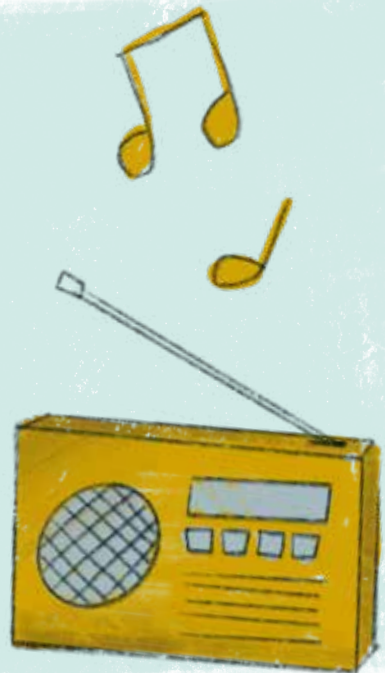
Being kind to others feels good too.

We all feel good about helping other people. This can be doing something small like phoning a friend to let them know you are thinking about them. Or you could send a card to someone you care about. Other ideas are:



Kates' story:

Instead of getting stressed about all the changes Kate has been finding other things to do instead. She has been taking her mind off of her worries by doing things that she enjoys like dancing and keep fit. Whenever she worries about losing her job she practices her calm thoughts.



Make a plan and practice

Use this page to build a plan that works for you, write down things that might make you feel better when you are feeling anxious:







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