

7 WAYS TO MANAGE ANXIETY

- **COUNTING**

Counting can be a beneficial coping mechanism when we are feeling intense anxiety in the moment. It does not necessary matter how we are counting, what we are counting or how long we are counting for. Counting helps us to become fully present in the moment and helps to quiet our minds from the anxious thoughts that we are currently experiencing. There are a ton of different counting methods out there that people use to help calm anxiety. One of the most common methods is the 3X3 Method. The 3X3 Method states to calm anxiety in the moment we can name an object, take a slow deep breath three times in a row.

Watch the Ted Talk here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad7HqXEc2Sc>

- **DEEP BREATHING**

Taking deep, long breaths in the moment when we are feeling intense symptoms as a result of anxiety can be helpful in the moment. For example, if we hate going to the dentist, than while were in the dentist chair our palms might be sweaty, our hearts might be racing, we may even feel an urge to use the restroom as a result of our anxiety. If we practice taking in long deep breaths in the moment we are able to calm the negative physical and mental symptoms as a result of the anxiety.

- **MINDFULNESS**

To be mindful is to be fully present in the moment. Anxiety can often get in the way of being able to be fully present in the moment due to intrusive, anxious thoughts flooding our minds. Focusing on our five senses can be helpful when attempting to be mindful and attempting to be fully present in the moment. We can practice being mindful during ordinary activities throughout our day. For example, when we are eating we can sit down without any distractions to be able to focus completely on what we are eating. We can take notice of our food looks, how our food smells and we may even choose to eat with our hands to experience how our food feels. We can take notice of how our food tastes and the flavors within our meal and really pay attention to chewing our food.

- **EXERCISE**

Exercise can both an activity that can be done in the present moment when we are feeling intense anxiety and as an activity that can be proactive about our anxiety to prevent feeling intense anxiety. If we are feeling intense anxiety in the moment, it can be helpful to get our bodies moving and just take a short walk outside. If we know that we struggle with intense anxiety, it can be helpful to incorporate exercise into our daily or weekly self care routine to help quiet our minds on the daily or weekly basis.

- **NUTRITION**

What we fuel our body with impacts how we are feeling. How we are feeling has the potential to impact how we are thinking and behaving. Therefore, our diet can significantly impact our anxiety and our overall quality of life. There are some foods and beverages that our helpful for our mental health and others that could be harming our mental health. Caffeine is a stimulant and has the potential to increase our heart rate and prevent us from relaxing to be able to fall asleep which could increase our overall anxiety. Caffeine is also a diuretic which causes us to use the bathroom more frequently and can cause dehydration. Mild dehydration can cause

symptoms of depression. Alcohol also is a diuretic which causes dehydration and is a depressant, therefore many individuals will feel symptoms of depression following a night of drinking. Sugar behaves in a similar way by quickly lifting us up and then quickly bringing us down while our bodies attempt to remove the sugar from our bloodstream.

- **MEDITATION**

Meditation is the act of quieting our minds and is practiced all throughout the world to create a sense of calm and inner harmony. By quieting our minds we are able to participate in a heightened state of awareness which is helpful for us to gain self awareness and to gain insight into our own beliefs and relationships. Meditation can look different for many different people, the goal is to quiet our minds free from any thoughts and when a thought comes, we let it go and refocus on the quiet. Any activity that helps quiet our minds and free us from thoughts is an act of meditation. For some it can be music, for others it might be exercise and listening to guided meditations before bed. Meditation has been shown to have numerous benefits on an individual's psychological well being.

- **SELF CARE**

Self Care is any act that makes us recognize that we are making time to take care of ourselves. Some days self care may be going to the gym, eating healthy and getting a massage and on other days self care might be ordering pizza, watching Netflix and taking a nap. The most important things to note with self care are that it does not matter what we are actually doing for ourselves or how much time we are actually spending on ourselves. The part that matters is continuing to remain consistent and flexible in our self care routine to make sure that we are making ourselves a priority and meeting our own needs on a daily basis. The more that we make ourselves a priority, the more we feel like a priority. For example, we had planned to work out for an hour when we woke up, however we ended up waking up late and no longer have time. It will be tempting to not engage in any self care, however we will feel better if we take the time to engage in a one minute plank because we will still feel like we made ourselves a priority that day and took time for ourselves.

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