

Feeling Anxious about Coronavirus

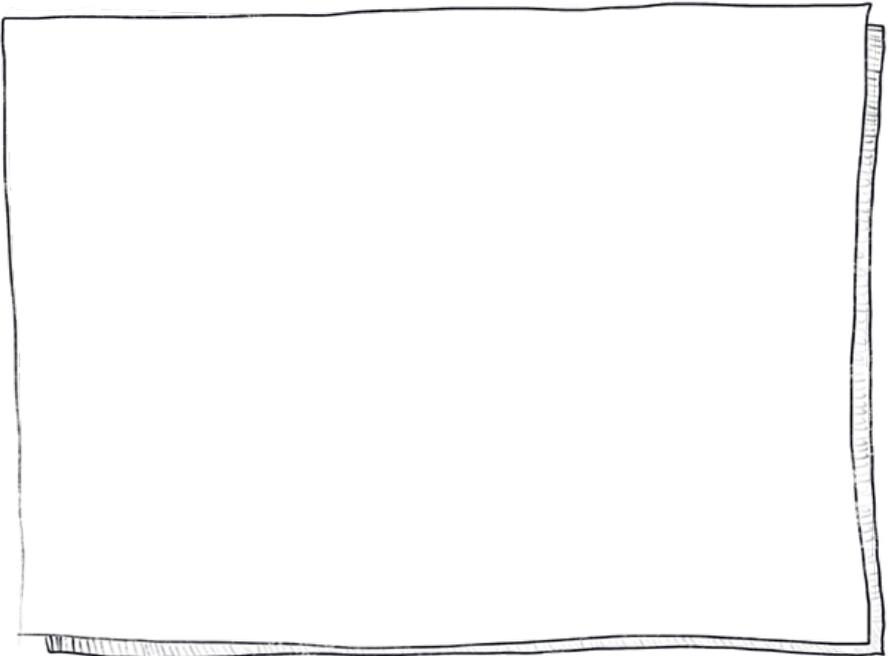


Feeling anxious is a normal feeling. We all feel anxious at times. Just now some people are feeling anxious about a new virus called coronavirus (sometimes called COVID-19). There is lots of information you can find about this.

Lots of other 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 has a job at a charity shop, but she hasn't been at work since the start of the virus. Her local club has been closed, so they have been doing video calls on the computer instead. This means that Kate can see her friends, but she finds it more difficult to talk on the computer. Kate is glad she can visit her parents again, but she worries that if they get ill she will have to stop her visits.



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?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will I lose my place at college?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What if I forget to wash my hands?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What if someone comes too close to me when I'm out?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What if my mom or dad gets ill?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What if I get ill?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will I see my friends again?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will I be safe when I go out?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the rules change again?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What if I have to get tested?	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 these 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 job in the charity shop. She hasn't been to work even when the shop's been open, as she doesn't feel safe. She worries that she might lose her job. The more she thinks about this, the more anxious she gets. She worries that if she loses her job then she might not be able to find another one. These thoughts get stuck in her mind. Kate also worries about the future and all the things that might go wrong. She worries that things might never get back to normal.



What are your worries? You can write these below.

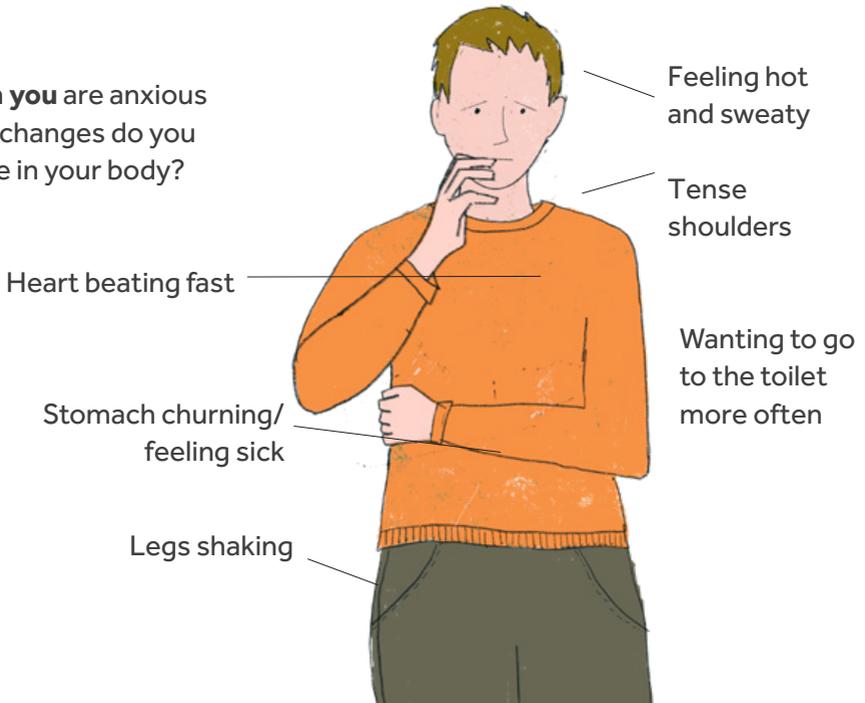
Anxiety in the body

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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stomach churning/feeling sick	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legs shaking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling hot and sweaty	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wanting to go to the toilet more often	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tense shoulders	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Kate's 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. If Kate focusses on what she is doing now, it takes her mind off worries about the future.



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.

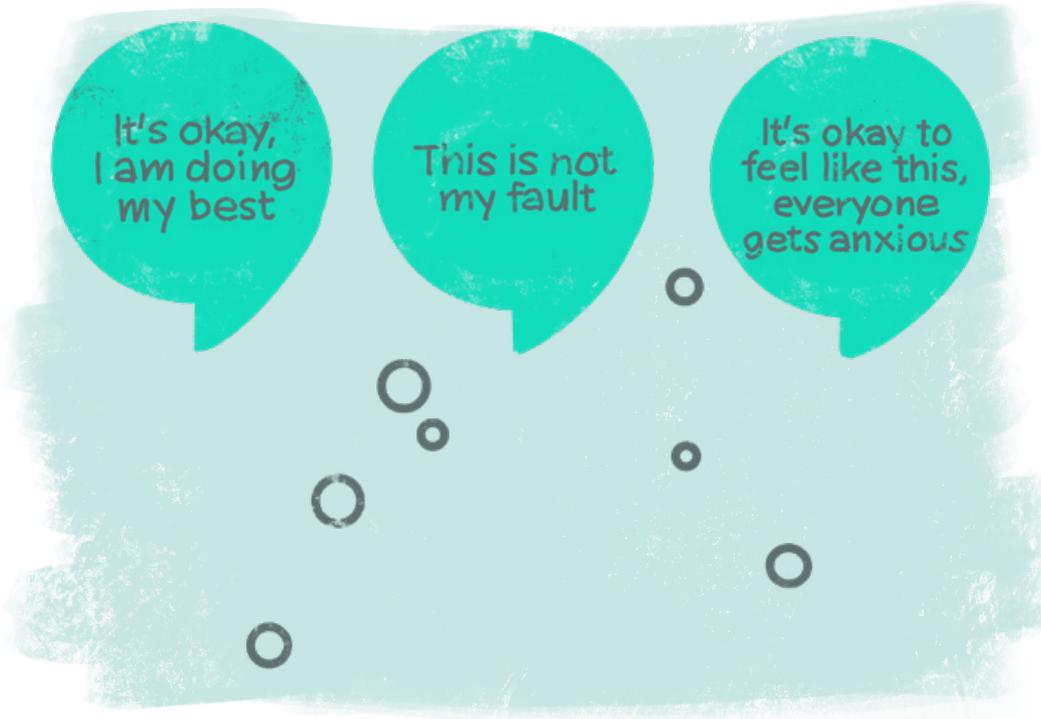
Having a chat to others can help take our mind off of worries too. Even when you can't visit others, you can stay in touch by phone or computer. Arrange a call at the same time every week. If you need help with this you can ask a friend or a worker to help.

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:



Kate's 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 keeping 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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