

Lockdown Mindfulness

finding calm in chaos

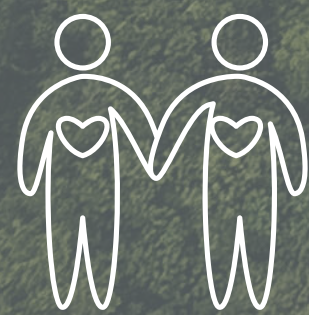
Everyone feels that scared or nervous feeling called 'anxiety' from time to time. It can make our heart race, we might feel sweaty, shaky or short of breath, but it usually passes once the situation is over. Did you know that anxiety can also cause changes in our behaviour? It can make us become overly careful or avoid things that trigger that uncomfortable feeling of panic we get when we're feeling anxious. When anxiety becomes a problem, situations that wouldn't ordinarily bother us too much can feel more intense or overwhelming and can interfere with our everyday lives and relationships.

Here are 6 strategies to help you calm down in a moment of anxiety

Breathe slowly and deeply. You can count slowly to five as you breathe in, and then five as you breathe out. If this is too much, try starting with shorter counts. If this works, gradually breathe out for one or two counts longer than you breathe in - this will help your body relax.



Sit with someone you trust and ask them for reassurance. Feeling that person nearby, hearing their voice, holding their hand or having a cuddle if possible, can be really soothing.



Do something that helps you to feel calmer. This could be running, walking, listening to music, painting, drawing or colouring-in, writing in a journal, watching a favourite film or reading a favourite book. Remember that it's OK to take time for yourself to calm the panic.



Think of a safe and relaxing place in your mind and explore it. It could be somewhere you already feel safe, like your bedroom, a grandparent's house, a favourite place in nature or somewhere you've been on holiday, or it could be an imaginary place like a new planet or an enchanted forest. Image what it would be like to look around this place - To help you with this, someone could ask you questions about what you're imagining.



Reassure yourself that the anxiety will pass and that you will be okay. Having a mantra or saying that you repeat to yourself - 'this will pass' 'it will be OK' 'calm yourself' - can help to calm the panic. It can be helpful to imagine your anxious feelings as a wave that you can ride or surf until it peaks, breaks and gets smaller.



Try using all five senses together. Connecting with what you can see, touch, hear, smell and taste can bring you closer to the present moment and reduce the intensity of your anxiety. Maybe think about five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.

