Coping with Anxiety

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What is anxiety?

- Normal
- Protective
- Threat focused
Fight or Flight
Physical symptoms

- Increased heart rate
- Increased muscle tension
- “Jelly legs”
- Tingling in the hands and feet
- Hyperventilation (over breathing)
- Dizziness
- Difficulty in breathing
- Wanting to use the toilet more often

Anxiety UK
• Feeling sick
• Tight band across the chest
• Tension headaches
• Hot flushes
• Increased perspiration
• Dry mouth
• Shaking
• Choking sensations
• Palpitations

Anxiety UK
Internal alarm system
Thoughts
What if it’s worse?

Feelings
Anxious
Frightened

Physical
Heart racing
Tight chest
Muscle tension

Behaviour
Avoid opening
Worry

Trigger/Event
Hospital letter arrives
Unhelpful coping strategies

• Avoidance
  • short-term relief / gain, long-term pain

• Excessive worry
  • trying to make the uncertain certain
Overestimate the threat,
Underestimate our ability to cope
Helpful coping strategies

• Physical Exercise
• Relaxation / Breathing / Visualisation
• Mindfulness – in the present moment
• Do something more interesting
• Talk to someone
• Soothing self-talk
  
  “Thoughts aren’t facts”
  “It’s just my alarm going off”
  “I’ve coped before so I can cope again”
Mindfulness - in the present moment
Resources

• www.franticworld.com
• www.friendlyfocusing.com
• www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk
• www.bemindful.co.uk
• www.mentalhealth.org.uk
• www.headspace.com
You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.

*Maya Angelou*