

Coping with anxiety during the lockdown

Counselling and
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Coping with anxiety during the lockdown

- The lockdown has presented numerous challenges, worry and uncertainty to many people from different walks of life.
- Some of the lockdown regulations that have been imposed restrict our movement and physical social connections.
- There is uncertainty about the future, our studies, our jobs, our families, our health and safety which has created a strain on our mental health.
- However, feeling a little anxious about this unprecedented situation and disease is normal and is to be expected.

What is anxiety?

- Some of us have experienced constant feelings of excessive worry during the lockdown as a result of the uncertainty and the perceived threat of COVID-19.
- Anxiety is characterized by strong feelings of worry and fear that interfere with a person's daily functioning.
- Some anxiety is normal and necessary for survival. Some anxiety also allows the mind and body to function optimally, but excessive anxiety is detrimental to a person's physical and mental well-being.



Sense of loss and the lockdown

- Research indicates that the lockdown can be compared to grief as it has created a sense of loss for many people such as loss of security, loss of routine and loss of freedom of movement amongst others. Stress levels have increased during the lockdown and various challenges have been encountered such as financial stress and pressure, depression, poor family relations and feelings of suicide (as shown in the next illustration by SA Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)).



Coping during the lockdown: Some tips

With anxiety on the rise, it is therefore important to devise tips on how one can cope.

1. Set a daily routine:

Stick to a daily routine and set up daily goals you want to achieve. Do not procrastinate. Also, follow a healthy sleeping and eating habit.

2. Stay socially connected:

Social distancing can bring about feelings of loneliness particularly among people who live alone. Connect with family, friends, colleagues and study mates by using technology such as social media, SMS and other means. Use the time to cheer others and showing that you care.

Some tips (continued)

3. Limit your time on news coverage of the outbreak:

Restrict media and social media coverage of the disease so that you do not become overwhelmed. Also, obtain information about the outbreak from news sources that are credible.

4. Take your mind off by doing physical activities:

Keeping yourself busy, physically and creatively will assist in lifting your mood and taking your mind off from thinking about the disease. Do active activities you enjoy such as exercising, baking, listening to music, painting to keep yourself busy.

5. Have a positive mindset:

Focus on things that you can control. Anxiety thrives when you are feeling out of control. Celebrate your daily achievements, no matter how small. Be kind to yourself when things go wrong. Reassure yourself a number of times that this too shall pass.

Tips (continued)

6. Try relaxation techniques:

To relax your mind when you are feeling anxious, try relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, deep breathing and others. These will help to bring your body and mind into a relaxed mode.

7. Seek help when you need it:

Monitor your emotions constantly and seek professional help if you feel overwhelmed, anxious and unable to cope. Contact Counselling and Career Development here:

- Durban, Richards Bay, and Wild Coast:
hendrs@unisa.ac.za, chettct@unisa.ac.za or thusibb@unisa.ac.za
- Pietermaritzburg and Newcastle:
mokoetg@unisa.ac.za
- Counselling and Career Development national e-mail:
counselling@unisa.ac.za

STAY HOME!!! STAY SAFE!!!

Still anxious? Reassure yourself

- I am always important, no matter what
- I've dealt with harder situations and I know it will get better
- This hurts, so I need to be extra kind towards myself
- This is tough, but so am I
- Not everything will go my way, but I will try to be flexible
- It's not that great right now, but it's not the worst thing either
- Everything will get better, sooner or later
- If I stay strong, I know I will get through it

Further Covid-19 resources

- Unisa Covid-19 resources and messages: [https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/Coronavirus-\(COVID%E2%80%93update](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/Coronavirus-(COVID%E2%80%93update)
- Emergency Hotline: 0800 029 999
- WhatsApp Support Line: 0600 123 456
- COVID-19 Corona Virus South African Resource Portal: <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>
- The *SA Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)* offers online resources related to your mental health and COVID-19. Learn more about managing stress and anxiety as well as living with a mental illness on their website at <http://www.sadag.org/>.
- The Psychological Society of South Africa General Public Information Resource contains useful links related to COVID-19 and working from home: <http://psytalk.psyssa.com/general-public/>.
- Find information about reporting and receiving assistance related to gender-based violence here: <http://gbv.org.za/>.



Developed by:

Bongi Thusi
Student Counsellor
KZN Region

Contact us

Visit our website for more resources to help you

<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Learner-support-&-regions/Counselling-and-career-development/Downloads-and-podcasts>

We are available by e-mail:

- Send an e-mail to counselling@unisa.ac.za should you need to discuss any needs you may have in terms of further support.
- Contact Counselling and Career Development at a [regional centre closest to you](#).

