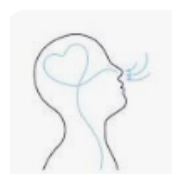# Top Tips to help with anxiety

1. Focus on your breathing

When you're having anxious thoughts try focusing on your breathing, concentrating on the feeling of your body as you breathe in and out. It can help you control the thought.

4-7-8 breathing technique

Close your mouth and quietly breath in through your nose, counting to four in your head. Hold your breath and count to seven. Breathe out through your mouth, making a whoosh sound while counting to eight. Repeat three more times for a total of four breath cycles.

2. Get moving

Exercise is a good way of dealing with anxiety.

Remember, activity doesn't have to be vigorous; try some gentle stretches, yoga, or seated exercises. Or just go for a walk. Going for a run, swimming, or taking part in a fitness class can give you something else to think about. It needs a bit of concentration, so takes your mind of the anxious thoughts. Any amount of exercise will help.

3. Challenge your thoughts

Anxiety can lead us to think about things over and over again in our brain. This is called 'rumination' and it's not helpful. When you catch yourself ruminating try to write down the thought and to challenge it. Is what you're worrying about likely to happen? Are you being realistic? Have you had similar thoughts which have not turned into reality? This can make it easier to challenge the thoughts and stop them from overwhelming you.

4. Get support for money worries

A common cause of anxiety is money. If you're worried about not being able to pay bills, are struggling to repay debt, or aren't sure if you can cover your family's living costs, seek help. Make sure you are claiming all the government supports that you're entitled to. You can also speak to an organisation such as Citizens Advice or StepChange.

Check out our advice on **how to cope with cost-of-living pressures** and **information on where to get practical support**.

5. Spend time in nature

We know that spending time in nature has a positive impact on our mental health. It can help us feel calmer and less stressed. This can be as simple as tending some flowers in a window box or going for a walk in the woods. Any amount of time doing this is good for us, but to really get the benefit, try to spend a significant period of time – maybe an hour or longer – when you can really connect with nature and immerse yourself.

6. Connect with people and talk about how you feel

Anxiety can feel very lonely. Connecting with other people can help a lot. Spend time with friends or meet other people through activities such as volunteering, sport or social clubs, or peer support groups. If you're able to talk to people about how you feel, it can help to reduce your anxiety. Sometimes saying what's worrying you out loud can take away its power over you.

7. Try to get some quality sleep or rest

Resting and having a good night's sleep is hard when your head is full of worries but there are some things that can help.

If anxious thoughts keep you awake, write them down in your diary. If sleep is still not coming, get up and have a drink (nothing with caffeine!) and wait until you're feeling more tired before going back to bed.

Limit screen time before bed time too – both adults and children.

Have a regular bedtime routine.

8. Try to eat a healthy diet

For many of us, feeling anxious might cause us to reach for sugary snacks, junk food or alcohol.

It's important that we don't turn to unhealthy foods or drinks as a way to cope as they will do more damage in the longer term. Adults should avoid smoking or vaping.

Eating healthy food regularly helps us to regulate our blood sugar and gives us the energy we need to live well. Remember caffeine in coffee, tea and fizzy drinks can affect your mood and cause sleep problems so it's best to have these in moderation and not too close to bedtime.