



# **THE GLOVES ARE OFF: FACING THE FIGHT WITH YOUR ANXIETY**

**A WEBINAR FOR EMPLOYEES FROM YOUR  
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

March 8, 2023

# INTRODUCTION



# OBJECTIVES

- Define anxiety
- Describe the differences between worry and anxiety
- Review effects of anxiety on life and work
- Discover tools and practices to manage anxiety
- Understand the upside of anxiety

SECTION 1

# ANXIETY AND WORRY

# WHAT IS ANXIETY?

*“Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like increased blood pressure.”*

## Characteristics of anxiety

- Ruminating
- Negative thoughts
- Avoidance
- Physical symptoms:
  - Stomachache, sweaty palms, increased heart rate, headache, muscle tension, etc.
- Excessive, persistent worry
- Quick to anger
- Fear that is out of proportion to the situation

# WHAT IS WORRY?

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*Worry* and *anxiety* are often used interchangeably

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Both involve being concerned and uneasy

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Anxiety is disruptive to daily life; worry is not

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Worry that catastrophizes and lingers is likely anxiety

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Reach out to someone supportive; get professional help

# WORRY VS. ANXIETY

## Worry



Specific



Triggers problem solving



Caused by realistic concerns

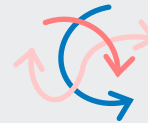


Manageable



Comes and goes

## Anxiety



Vague



Hinders problem-solving



Caused by unrealistic concerns



Unmanageable



Persists

# ANXIETY AT WORK

Examples of how anxiety may affect you at work.

Overthinking that leads to delays

Avoidance

Catastrophizing when given feedback or correction

Automatically responding negatively to new situations or changes



SECTION 2

# TOOLS FOR MANAGING ANXIETY

# TOOLS FOR MANAGING ANXIETY



Everyday  
ways



Daily work  
tips



5, 4, 3, 2, 1  
Grounding  
technique



Positive  
self-talk



Leaves on a stream  
exercise

# EVERYDAY WAYS TO FIGHT ANXIETY



Engage in physical activity



Avoid alcohol, drugs, and nicotine



Eliminate or reduce caffeine



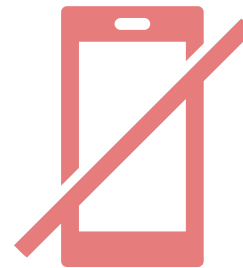
Prioritize sleep



Eat healthily



Socialize



Decrease exposure



Visit your doctor

# DAILY WORK TIPS



Acknowledge successes



Manage time appropriately



Ask for help, clarification, or tools when needed



Take breaks during the workday



Avoid toxic or negative talk and gossip



Identify 1-3 good things when you feel anxious

5

4

3

2

1

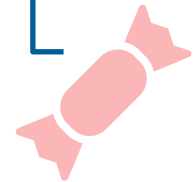
Things you can see

Things you can touch

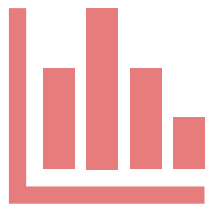
Things you can hear

Things you can smell

Thing you can taste



# THE 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE



*After noticing your senses, how would you rate yourself in terms of feeling calm?*

Rate on a scale of 1 to 5:

1

2

3

4

5

Not calm  
at all

Completely  
calm

# POSITIVE SELF-TALK

## Affirmation examples

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*“I feel anxious, but I am safe.”*

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*“I am capable.”*

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*“I can move past this moment.”*

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*“I have prepared, and I am ready.”*

## Tips

- ▶ Write down your affirmations
- ▶ Keep them with you
- ▶ Pick one (if you have several) to repeat mentally to calm yourself

# LEAVES ON A STREAM EXERCISE







***What did it feel like to release a thought onto a leaf and watch it float downstream?***

# THE UPSIDE OF STRESS AND ANXIETY



**Alerts us  
to real danger**

**Note the difference:**

Helpful anxiety allows you to prepare for possible danger, whereas irrational or disordered anxiety can cause you to avoid the situation



Helps us realize we need to break a task into smaller steps



Increases our motivation and performance

# TREATMENT



**Treatment for overwhelming anxiety that is disruptive to your work, relationships, or daily functioning may include:**

- Counseling
  - The Employee Assistance Program can help you begin to address your anxiety
- Medications
- Support groups
- Stress management techniques

# RESOURCES

## Books

- ***Rewire Your Anxious Brain: How to Use the Neuroscience of a Fear to End Anxiety, Panic, and Worry (1st Ed.)***
  - C. Pittman and E. Karle, 2015
- ***Taming the Anxious Mind: A Guide to Relief Stress & Anxiety***
  - H. Schreiber-Pan, 2019
- ***Unwinding Anxiety: New Science Shows How to Break the Cycles of Worry and Fear to Heal Your Mind***
  - J. Brewer, 2021

## Online Articles

- Anxiety disorders
  - [nimh.nih.gov/health/to\\_pics/anxiety-disorders](https://nimh.nih.gov/health/to_pics/anxiety-disorders)
- What Anxiety Does to Us at Work
  - [hbr.org/2019/05/what-anxiety-does-to-us-at-work](https://hbr.org/2019/05/what-anxiety-does-to-us-at-work)

## Videos

- Leaves on a Stream
  - [youtube.com/watch?v=r1C8hwj5LXw](https://youtube.com/watch?v=r1C8hwj5LXw)
- The 5-4-3-2-1 Method: A Grounding Exercise to Manage Anxiety
  - [youtube.com/watch?v=30VMIEmA114](https://youtube.com/watch?v=30VMIEmA114)

# THANK YOU



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