

6 Takeaways

from More Feet on the Ground's Anxiety Workshop



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The More Feet on the Ground Campaign

An initiative created by Brock University in partnership with Niagara College and local mental health service providers that aims to address gaps in mental health information in postsecondary schools across Ontario.

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What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or uneasiness, often caused by a person's perception of potential danger or misfortune. Although uncomfortable, anxiety is a normal and necessary part of life. Anxiety serves a purpose in our lives; it is part of our internal protective system that triggers us to act to protect ourselves.

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Healthy vs. Unhealthy

Even though we need anxiety to survive, too much anxiety or disproportionate anxiety can become a mental illness. Anxiety disorders are characterized by an intense worry or fear that affects a person's ability to function. Anxiety disorders also include unprovoked anxious reactions, as well as reactions that are disproportionate to the situation.

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Types of Disorders Anxiety disorders is a broad category of illnesses all characterized by intense anxiety including Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Specific Phobias, Panic Disorder and several others. In the past, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder were also included, but have now been separated into their own categories amongst similar or related conditions.

SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

Anxiety includes mental, emotional, and physical symptoms that build and feed off one another. These symptoms can include:

Feelings of apprehension or dread

Trouble concentrating

Feeling tense and jumpy

Anticipating the worst

Irritability

Restlessness

Pounding heart

Sweating

Stomach upset or dizziness

Shortness of breath

Muscle tension

Headaches

Fatigue

MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Begin to feel the chest and belly rise and fall.

Inhale. Exhale.

Continue with your natural breath, feeling the air move through you.

On the next inhale, feel the belly rise, ribs expand, and chest lift.

Focus on the movement of your chest, ribs and belly as you exhale.

Take a few breaths and think "belly, ribs, chest...chest, ribs, belly".

Continue to breathe, think of your breath as a wave. Rolling in, pausing, rolling out.

Focus on the cycle of the breath, feel the calmness, fluidity, ease and steadiness. When you are ready, return to the task at hand.



LIVING WITH ANXIETY

Learn about anxiety

Understanding what is happening to your body and mind is the first step to managing symptoms.

Explore how to calm down

“Calming down” means something different to all of us - find what works for you!

Challenge anxious thoughts

Focus on what you can control within your life and reframe negative thoughts.

Set small goals

“Coping” implies process and patience. Setting small, reachable goals can help you move forward.

Seek support

Ask for help when you can no longer manage on your own.

Practice what works for you

When you find a positive coping strategy that works for you, practice using it! Real change takes time.

Want to know more? Take our **FREE ONLINE TRAINING** at:

morefeetontheground.ca

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK

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Treatment Options Luckily there is a wide array of treatment options for people experiencing anxiety. Medication can help the brain regulate anxious feelings, psychotherapy helps people gain the skills and mindset they need to cope with anxiety, and alternative options such as relaxation techniques or acupuncture are said to complement treatment.

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Causes and Triggers

“Cause” refers to the underlying root of the anxiety disorder, whereas “trigger” refers to the factor that influences the onset of the anxious reaction. Although the cause of Anxiety Disorders is unknown, we do know that brain chemistry, genetics and environment can be contributing factors. Triggers can be different for everyone, however common triggers include small spaces or large groups of people. Remember, anxiety is real, uncomfortable and sometimes debilitating; be respectful to those that are struggling.

SUPPORT SOMEONE

Acknowledge changes

Let the person know you have noticed a change in them; ask if they are struggling.

Practice active listening

Spend time talking about the person about their experiences.

Suggest additional support

Inform the person about the options for support.

Collaborate with friends and family

Anxiety can be isolating. Work together to ensure the person is well connected and no one burns out.

Promote self-care

Encourage healthy eating, exercise and proper sleep.

Encourage personal growth

Act as a safe place for the person to challenge their thoughts and try out new ways to cope.

**BUT DON'T FORGET...
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!**

Resources:

For more information and additional resources, please visit www.morefeetontheground.ca