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SELF CARE

for ANXIETY

None of the following information is meant to be a substitute for seeking professional help when you feel it is needed. That said there are evidenced based things we can do to help ourselves and our loved ones deal with life's ups and downs.





MINDFULNESS

There is much research and scientific evidence showing the value of getting our mind to be in the current moment more and spending less time ruminating about past events and worrying about future potential events. The basic point of this is to emphasize the parasympathetic nervous system which allows us to digest and rest, and to de-emphasize the sympathetic nervous which prepares us for fight or flight. The following is a very simple Breathing exercise taught to our brave special forces to do when they are under extreme duress to manage the stress and allow them to maximize performance at critical times. You can do this at any time including with eyes open if needed.





BOX BREATHING

1. Pay attention to inhalation through the nose to the count of four.
2. Hold that inhalation inside to the count of four.
3. Blow the air out through pursed lips to count of four.
4. Count to four before starting to inhale again.
5. You can repeat several times to your tolerance and anxiousness at the time.

If your mind wanders, do not be upset, it is natural. Just be kind to yourself and return to this activity again and again. This breathing exercise is exercise for your brain's relaxation center and can be helpful during stressful events. In addition in the same way weight lifting builds your muscles doing the breathing exercises when not in stressful situations helps build some resistance to events. Remember results of weight lifting and breathing exercises are both dose dependent, more activity more results. That said any activity is an improvement over doing nothing.





MORE STRESS RELIEF ACTIVITIES

Any or all of these can be very helpful:

- 1.** Spend a few minutes each day journaling a list of people and things that you are grateful for.
- 2.** Reach out to those you love and communicate more frequently to build resilience on both sides.
- 3.** Spend time in nature walking, listening to birds, walking your dog, listening to water flow.
- 4.** Think of those who may need help and reach out to help in any way you can.
- 5.** Read positive uplifting materials.
- 6.** You want to have all important public health information, but AVOID overdosing on repetitive negative media reports.
- 7.** Increasing physical activity from your baseline is very helpful in improving your mood and decreasing anxiety. The more vigorous and the more frequently you do this the better. Remember to only do this to your physical level of tolerance. Running, brisk walking, weight lifting, putting on pleasant music and vigorously move your body. Any increase is good.



NUTRITIONAL STRATEGIES TO EASE ANXIETY

- 1.** Drink lots of water to stay well hydrated. Cut back on caffeine and alcohol consumption.
- 2.** Eat more complex carbs and avoid simple carbs. This will stabilize blood sugar levels.
- 3.** Eat a diet including lots of whole grains and vegetables.
- 4.** Do not skip meals. Doing so causes destabilization of blood sugar levels and increases anxiety.
- 5.** Try to consume foods which strengthen the Gut-Brain Axis where 95% of our neurotransmitters are located.





Complex carbs are in fruits, whole grains, vegetables, nuts, and seeds.

Simple carbs are in most processed foods, juices, soda, and manufactured foods in general. As indicated above, fluctuating blood sugar levels increase anxiety levels.

The Gut-Brain Axis attention is VERY important because 95% of our Serotonin and Dopamine receptors are in our Gut. Often when we are treated with medication for Anxiety and/or Depression the medication may be focused on increasing one of these brain transmitters. By consuming foods like Greek yogurt, kefir, pickles, sauerKraut and kimchi we can help maximize our Microbiome health and keep this function at peak performance. A study shows decreased Social Anxiety levels with increased Probiotic consumption.

It appears that increased Anxiety levels in general seem to correlate to when our bodies have low ability to perform its critical antioxidant functions.





The following nutrients are important parts of an Antioxidant Diet.

MAGNESIUM

If magnesium is low Anxiety levels tend to be higher. Foods rich in Magnesium include Leafy Greens, Legumes, Nuts, Seeds, whole Grains.

ZINC

Oysters, cashews, liver, beef, egg yolks

OMEGA 3/ Fatty Acids

Fatty fish, Chia and Flax seeds, Avocados and Almonds

ASPARAGUS

The Chinese use an abstract of this for anxiety

VITAMIN B

Avocados and Almonds

The above foods help increase the release of NeuroTransmitters like Serotonin and Dopamine mentioned above.

Many Beans, fruits like apples and berries, nuts and vegetables, and spices including turmeric, and ginger are very helpful.



For more resources:

YOUTUBE:

Tara Brach PhD meditations and lecture videos

Rick Hanson PhD meditations and lecture videos

WEBSITES:

Greatergood.berkeley.edu

[Harvard Health Blog](#)

Harvard Health - oshercenter.org

Meet Dr. Dwight Bryan

Physician at WeCare tlc health center in Perrysburg, Ohio.

Graduated Medical School from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1983.

37 years experience as a Board Certified Family Physician.

4 years as a Family Physician in the United States Navy at Naval Hospital San Diego.

5 years as Medical Director of Mercy Medical Group, Toledo Ohio 1995-2000.

Graduate of the inaugural class of University of Tennessee Physician Executive MBA program.

Studied at the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute with Mike Roizen, MD.

Attended the Benson Henry Mind Body Medicine Institute affiliated with Harvard Medical School and The Center for Mind Body Medicine of Washington DC, Directed by James Gordon, MD.