

Dealing with Anxiety



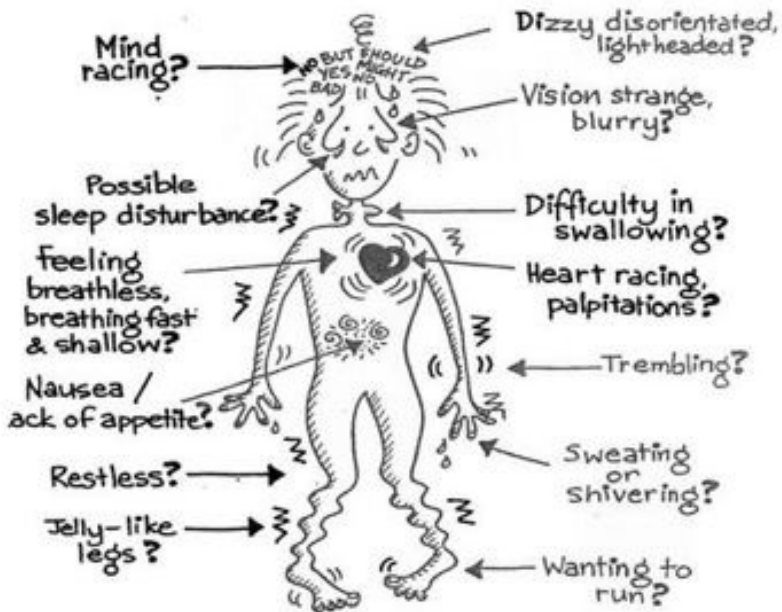
**St Vincent's
Hospice**

the little hospice with the big heart

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is the body's way of responding to being in danger. Adrenaline is rushed into our bloodstream to enable us to run away or fight. This happens whether the danger is real, or whether we believe the danger is there when there is none. It is the body's alarm and survival mechanism. Primitive man would not have survived for long without this life-saving response. It works so well, that it often kicks in when it is not needed - when the danger is in our heads rather than in reality. We think we are in danger, so that is enough to trigger the system to go, go, go! People who get anxious tend to get into scanning mode - where they are constantly on the lookout for danger, hyper-alert to any of the signals, and make it more likely that the alarm system will be activated.

How Anxiety Affects our Bodies



Everyone has some anxiety, this is normal in our day to day lives. When it becomes overwhelming and affects our day to day lives and our wellbeing, then we need to look at managing this.

What can we do to Manage Anxiety?

- Identify and acknowledge the worry.
- Challenge the unhelpful beliefs about worry. (Thought Record Sheet - see over)
- Develop problem solving skills.
- Increase tolerance of uncertainty and the associated discomfort of anxiety.
- Learn attention training or mindfulness skills - see resources below
- Use STOPP skill to incorporate all these techniques - see resources below
- Reduce worry by learning to set worry zones or postpone worry.
- Learn to differentiate between different kinds of worry using The Worry Tree.

Resources

- [STOPP - CBT in a Nutshell \(YouTube.com\)](#)
- [Dropping Anchor- guided mindfulness practice \(YouTube.com\)](#)

The Worry Tree



Thought Record Sheet

Situation	Emotions / Moods (rate 0 – 100%)	Physical sensations	Unhelpful Thoughts / Images	Alternative / realistic thought More balanced perspective	What I did / What I could do / Diffusion technique / What's the best response? Re-rate Emotion 0-100%
<p>What happened?</p> <p>Where?</p> <p>When?</p> <p>Who with?</p> <p>How?</p>	<p>What emotion did I feel at that time?</p> <p>What else?</p> <p>How intense was it?</p>	<p>What did I notice in my body?</p> <p>Where did I feel it?</p>	<p>What went through my mind?</p> <p>What disturbed me?</p> <p>What did those thoughts/images/memories mean to me, or say about me or the situation?</p> <p>What am I responding to?</p> <p>What 'button' is this pressing for me?</p> <p>What would be the worst thing about that, or that could happen?</p>	<p>STOP! Take a breath - Is this fact or opinion?</p> <p>What would someone else say about this situation?</p> <p>What's the bigger picture?</p> <p>Is there another way of seeing it?</p> <p>What advice would I give someone else?</p> <p>Is my reaction in proportion to the actual event?</p> <p>Is this really as important as it seems?</p>	<p>What could I do differently?</p> <p>What would be more effective?</p> <p>Do what works!</p> <p>Act wisely</p> <p>What will be most helpful for me or the situation?</p> <p>What will the consequences be?</p>