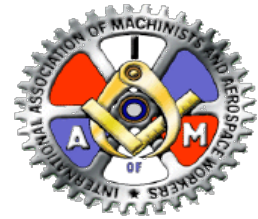




# HELPING HANDS



## Strategies to Cope with Corona Virus Anxiety

(Excerpts from Medical Xpress, March 10, 2020)

### 1. Practice tolerating uncertainty

Intolerance of uncertainty, which has been [increasing in the U.S.](#), makes people [vulnerable to anxiety](#). A [study during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic](#) showed that people who had a harder time accepting the uncertainty of the situation were more likely to experience elevated anxiety. The solution is to learn to gradually face uncertainty in [daily life](#) by easing back on certainty-seeking behaviors.

Start small: Don't text your friend immediately the next time you need an answer to a question. Go on a hike without planning, spontaneously find a new place to hike that you have never been too. As you build your tolerance-of-uncertainty muscle, work to reduce the number of times a day you look for updates on the outbreak.

### 2. Tackle the anxiety paradox

[Anxiety rises](#) proportionally to how much one tries to get rid of it. Or as Carl Jung put it, "[What you resist persists](#)." Struggling against anxiety can take many forms. People might try to distract themselves by drinking, eating or watching Netflix more than usual. They might repeatedly seek reassurance from friends, family or health experts. Or they might obsessively check news streams, hoping to calm their fears. Although these behaviors can help momentarily, they can [make anxiety worse](#) in the long run. Avoiding the experience of anxiety almost always backfires.

Accept anxiety as a part of human experience. When waves of coronavirus anxiety show up, notice and [describe the experience](#) to yourself or others [without judgment](#). Facing your anxiety in the moment will lead to less anxiety over time as you address your concerns one by one.

### 3. Transcend anxiety about death

Health threats trigger the fear that underlies all fears: [fear of death](#). When faced with reminders of one's own mortality, people might become consumed with health anxiety and hyper focused on any signs of illness. Self-diagnosing signs and symptoms based on internet sources can be dangerous – ask a professional about your fears of illness.

### 4. Don't underestimate human resiliency

Many people fear how they will manage if the virus shows up in town, at work or at school. Research shows that people tend to [overestimate how badly they'll be affected](#) by negative events and [underestimate how well they'll cope with](#) and adjust to difficult situations. Be mindful that you are more resilient than you think. It can help deal with your anxiety.

### 5. Don't get sucked into overestimating the threat

Coronavirus can be dangerous, with an estimated [1.4% to 2.3%](#) death rate. So, everyone should be serious about taking all the reasonable precautions against infection. To reduce anxiety, limit your exposure to coronavirus news. Anxiety makes everything seem more dire.

### 6. Strengthen self-care

Get [adequate sleep](#), [exercise regularly](#), [practice mindfulness](#), [employ relaxation techniques](#) when stressed.

### 7. Seek professional help if you need it

People who are vulnerable to anxiety and related disorders might find the coronavirus epidemic [particularly overwhelming](#). Consequently, they might experience anxiety symptoms that interfere with work, maintaining close relationships, socializing or taking care of themselves and others.

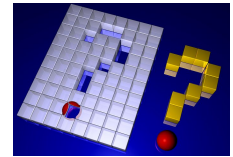
If this applies to you, please get professional help from your doctor or a mental health professional. [Cognitive behavioral therapy](#) and [certain medications](#) can successfully treat anxiety problems.

## Common Methods of Treating Anxiety

(excerpts from Anxiety Treatments: Know Your Options, www.anxiety.org)

The treatment options listed below require the assistance of mental health or medical providers or other licensed professionals.

- **Cognitive behavioral therapy:** CBT focuses on identifying, understanding, and changing thinking and behavior patterns related to anxiety.
- **Dialectical behavioral therapy:** DBT is a specific type of CBT. The term "dialectics" refers to a philosophical practice of examining multiple or often contradictory ideas, combining acceptance and change simultaneously. DBT places an emphasis on mindfulness, enabling people to recognize and attempt to understand thoughts as they occur.
- **Group Therapy:** Normalizing an individual's experience by relating to others who are having similar experiences. Peer support groups offer an opportunity to share experiences. In addition to fostering relationships between people with similar struggles, participating in a support group validates the shared experience of anxiety. A process group may be a good fit for people with social anxiety or generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). The theory behind these groups is that, as you develop friendships with others in the group, over time the sources of anxiety will emerge and can be addressed.
- **Hypnosis:** Hypnotherapists may be doctors, therapists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, or other licensed professionals. Hypnosis<sup>7</sup> helps people achieve a very relaxed state through breathing, guided imagery, or muscle-relaxing techniques and make them more amenable to suggestions. The hypnotherapist may use imagery or simple verbal suggestions to reduce the severity of anxiety symptoms. Some people may see positive results after one or two sessions. If hypnosis shows promising results, a hypnotherapist may also teach ways to practice self-hypnosis.



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

### IAM EAP Airline Chairmen

United Airlines Kathy Ferguson: 703-505-4321,

E-mail: kf.borabora@cox.net

American Airlines Chris Davis: 704-572-4859,

E-mail: chrisx1959@yahoo.com

Hawaiian Airlines Meki Pei, mobile 808-208-5950,

E-mail: mpei@iam141.org

### Sources for Credible Outbreak- Related Health Information

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027 1-800-  
CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)  
<https://www.cdc.gov>

#### World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Americas  
of the World Health Organiza-  
tion  
525 23rd Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

202-974-3000  
<http://www.who.int/en>

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