

How to Manage Stress and Anxiety



Since Covid-19 began, you may have felt fear, loneliness, and even changes in your behavior not present before. Without a doubt, many of us have experienced stress and anxiety during these difficult times.

Now is a good time to reflect on how we can better manage these feelings. This tip sheet provides you with information on managing stress and anxiety, the importance of seeking support, and provides free resources and information.

What is stress?

- Stress is the physical or mental response to an external cause, such as having too much to do or having an illness.
- A stressor can be a one-time or short-term event, or it can happen repeatedly over a long period of time.
- Typically, stress goes away once the situation is resolved, or the moment passes.
- In some cases, stress can be positive as it can motivate you.
- It can also be negative and make you lose sleep, for example.

What is anxiety?

- Anxiety is the body's reaction to stress and can happen even if there is no real threat.
- It often includes a persistent feeling of apprehension or fear that won't go away and interferes with the way you lead your life.
- It is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.
- It can make us worry a lot more.
- Anxiety can make us feel tense.

What happens when stress and anxiety continue for long periods?

We all go through difficult times when we may feel stressed or anxious. But long-term stress and anxiety can impact our mental health as well as our physical health.

You may have symptoms like:

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| ✓ Excessive worry | ✓ Headaches or body aches | ✓ Loss of sleep |
| ✓ Restlessness | ✓ High blood pressure | ✓ Tiredness or exhaustion |
| ✓ Tension | | |

Tips and Strategies to Reduce Stress and Anxiety

Below we share some techniques and strategies that can help you manage stress and anxiety, which can help improve your daily life. Remember that you may need to try several things to find what works for you.

- Exercise and make sure you eat healthy
- Have a good daily routine and make sure you get enough sleep
- Avoid excessive caffeine intake, such as soft drinks, sodas, and coffee
- Identify your negative thoughts and change how you frame them
- Reach out to your friends or family to help you cope positively
- Write down your thoughts in a journal
- Download an app that has relaxation and mindfulness exercises (such as deep breathing or visualization)

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

You may be at risk of developing an anxiety disorder if you feel you can't control your stress and your symptoms: 1) interfere with your daily life, 2) keep you from getting things done or 3) seem to be always there.

Generalized anxiety disorder develops slowly, often beginning during adolescence or early adulthood. People with this disorder may:

- Worry too much about everyday things
- Have trouble controlling your worries or nervousness
- Be aware that they care much more than they should
- Feel restless or have trouble relaxing
- Have trouble concentrating
- Be easily surprised
- Have trouble sleeping or staying asleep
- Feel tired all the time
- Have headaches, muscle or stomach aches, or unexplained discomfort
- Have trouble swallowing
- Have a tremor or tics (nervous movement)
- Feel irritable or nervous
- Sweat a lot, feel dizzy or short of breath
- Need to go to the bathroom often

The good news is that generalized anxiety disorder, like other mental health challenges, can be treated.

If you need support, don't wait, reach out!

Making the decision to ask for help is not always easy. Many people hope the problem will just go away on its own or think they are weak in asking for help.

Acknowledging a problem and seeking help is a sign of strength and courage. It is the first and most important step on the road to recovery.

There are tools that can help you recover, including therapy, group support, self-assessment, medication, wellness plans, and many other options. Learn more about coping with tough times, getting support, and resources by visiting:

<https://up2riverside.org/resources/resources-for-farmworkers/>.



Adapted from "I'm So Stressed Out!" and "Generalized Anxiety Disorder: When Worry Gets Out of Control!"

If you or someone you care about is in crisis and needs immediate help, **call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline immediately at: (800) 273-8255 (TALK). This is a toll-free line available 24 hours.**

If you need to be connected to mental health services in Riverside County, call the CARES Line at (800) 499-3008.

If emergency medical care is needed, call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room of the nearest hospital.

Up2Riverside.org