

Coping with Anxiety, Loneliness, and Hopelessness

For Anxiety:

- Recognize anxiety is normal and healthy (thank your body)
- Stay with it instead of resisting it; let it be while you do what's meaningful
- Instead of forcing yourself to calm down, DESCRIBE what you notice and be an observer
- Practice doing small, brave things
- Tell yourself, "I can handle this feeling!"
- Resist solving for problems that don't exist

For Uncertainty (which fuels anxiety, hopelessness, and loneliness)

- Come back to the present moment (what do I notice in my body NOW? What do I notice around me NOW? Name 3 or 4 things)
- Recognize what you CAN control
- Worry Time

How to do Worry Time:

- For worries that keep grabbing your attention, even when you practice coming to the present moment
- Set aside 20-30 minutes
- Talk to a mirror or record or write down
- State what you're worried about "matter-of-factly" without problem solving
- If you come to the end of your list; repeat
- You MUST FILL THE ENTIRE TIME! (and do every day for at least a week)

For Loneliness and Hopelessness:

- You are entitled to "bad" feelings; they can be there
- Look for messages you may be giving self; adjust
- From "I'll never meet new people" and "I'll be alone forever"
- To "I have skills to make connections" and "This is temporary. How can I handle it?"
- Identify some things that are meaningful to you
- Connect (letters, texting, games, physically distant visits, online groups)
- Self-Compassion (Instead of berating yourself, talk to yourself as you would a friend)

General Healthy Habits:

We need to do these or we won't be able to effectively do what we need to for anxiety, loneliness, and hopelessness

- Avoiding alcohol/substances for coping
- Eating well
- Sleeping on a regular schedule (most important is getting up same time each day)
- Getting physical exercise (helps our brain repair, our memory, our ability to think)
- Maintaining a routine (a minimal routine)

When to Seek Help:

- When anxiety impacting areas of your functioning (social, work, family, educationally)
- Hopelessness and anxiousness dominate your day
- Not finding enjoyment in activities when you engage in them
- Not wanting to get out of bed
- Withdrawing socially
- Thoughts of suicide