

Managing uncertainty and anxiety caused by world events

While many of us experience anxiety on a day-to-day basis, it can feel unmanageable in times of uncertainty and can manifest itself in different ways. Some people feel an uncontrollable sense of dread or recurring worries about the future. Some have difficulty concentrating or an inability to relax. Others feel tense and have difficulty sleeping.

Following the current conflict in Ukraine there are many more feeling this way. We must remind people that it is okay, not to be okay. Especially in times like these.

By listening to our own body and mind and understand when we feel anxious, stressed or pushed to the limit can help you start to manage these feelings. There are many signs that we might be becoming overwhelmed by anxiety, some of which are:

- Having trouble staying focused and/or concentrating on work
- Having trouble falling asleep or feeling restless
- Shallow breathing, faster heartbeat
- Constantly checking social media or news sources for information on current affairs.

When faced with unprecedented events and conflict, there are a number of things you can do for yourself to begin the process of becoming less overwhelmed by them.

- 1.** Recognise and acknowledge your emotions regularly, rather than avoiding them. Try to separate what is in your control and what is out of your control. Attend to and action the things that you do have control over.
- 2.** Get enough sleep, eat regular nutritious meals, do some physical activity. Stay active and moving.
- 3.** Go to your favourite Park or nature area. If you are at work, trying reserving 15 - 20 minutes of your lunch break to take a “wellness walk” outside.
- 4.** Talk to someone you trust and spend time connecting with friends or family who make you happy, but try to avoid talking only about the current situation or world events. If you do, try to be constructive and productive in your discussions.
- 5.** People that pursue their interests and hobbies are less likely to experience stress and depression. Doing the things we love and enjoy can be necessary distractions.
- 6.** Try some breathing and mindfulness exercises to help you relax. It can be hard to clear your mind when you are impacted by current events but research has shown that people practising breathing techniques and yoga feel more positive day to day.

Social media has a lot to answer for regarding causing peoples anxiety so this is probably at this time one of the most important tips.

7. Take a break / Switch off from the news - or at least from untrusted sources

- Avoid excessively checking social media and the news
- Distract yourself from what's going on to give yourself a break
- Taking a break from *“doomscrolling”* will help you manage your emotions

Anxieties are often linked to lack of control, uncertainty is a key factor as to why many of us are experiencing heightened anxieties and stresses during rare world events or conflict. We all have different tolerances of uncertainty and it affects us all differently but either way, it is important to manage uncertainty to help alleviate associated stresses.

Work on things you CAN control

Focus on things that are within your control rather than worrying about things that are not.

Question your need for certainty overall

Certainty is something that brings us security in life, but when you think about it, how certain are most things? Do we ever have a job for life? Good health for life? Certainty of what tomorrow may bring? Constantly striving for certainty can only bring us worry and anxiety as nothing will ever really be truly certain.

Reach out and see how can Care first help

If you feel you may need some emotional or practical support, you can contact Care first on the Freephone number. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. Whilst our BACP accredited Counsellors are available 24/7 to provide support with emotional issues, our expertly trained Information Specialists are available 8am-8pm Monday-Friday to provide advice on any practical issues that may be causing you a stress or worry and help you feel more in control of a situation.

All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

If you would like to view the Webinar on **‘Managing uncertainty and anxiety caused by world events’** this is being delivered live on **Thursday 10th March at 12pm**, please use the below link to register for this session –

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4574951756421427984>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.