

Tip Sheet: Dealing with Uncertainty

It has been said that change is the only constant in life. The uncertainty accompanying change is natural; however, when you are in the midst of an ongoing challenge or facing a major transition, that lack of control can sometimes feel uncomfortable and even overwhelming. Arming yourself with coping tools and techniques can make dealing with life's curveballs feel much more manageable.

Stop expecting and start planning

Setting expectations while a situation is in flux can eventually bring about disappointment. Rather than envisioning a "perfect" outcome or anticipating future milestones, focus on what you can do right now. Taking a day-by-day approach can alleviate worry and stress. Even small accomplishments will add up quickly and help you feel like progress is being made.

It is also helpful to prepare for multiple scenarios by developing a Plan A, a Plan B and so on. Thinking through potential conclusions and knowing how you would like to react and respond can provide a tangible sense of comfort. You can apply your efforts to achieve your desired outcome while remaining flexible and ready to adapt as needed.

Focus on the things that are within your control

Though you may not be able to control much of what is happening, focus on finding positives whenever and wherever you can. Big shifts in perspective don't happen overnight – be patient and give yourself time to change your mindset. Choosing an optimistic attitude may seem difficult at first. However, when you start to embrace the good things that can come from change, staying positive gets easier, anxiety is reduced and you will feel better overall.

One of the most important areas you can control is taking good care of yourself, physically and mentally. Eating well, staying active and getting good quality sleep are essential during challenging times. Seeking emotional support from family, friends or professional counselors is also key to coping.

Learn some stress management techniques

Stress and anxiety take a toll on your mind, your emotions and your body. Find some activities or techniques that provide you with time to relax, regroup and rethink your strategy.

The following are good stress alleviators, even when you may be short on time.

- Taking a walk
- Going for a drive
- Talking with a friend
- Reading a book
- Listening to music
- Journaling
- Watching a movie
- Taking a warm bath
- Doing yoga
- Practicing meditation

Basic deep breathing for beginners

If all you have is a few minutes, take a moment to just be alone and breathe. Putting yourself on pause gives you the opportunity to slow down your thoughts, reset your attitude and emotions and look at things from a perspective of clarity.

Basic deep breathing doesn't take long and is an excellent way to feel immediate relief from stress or anxiety.

How to do it

- Sit or lie down.
- Slowly count to four while you breathe in through your nose.
- Hold your breath for a second.
- Count to four again while breathing out slowly through your mouth.
- Repeat several times or for as long as you'd like.

Find more information at www.1in5.info