

# PANDEMIC “HOW TO” REFERENCE GUIDE



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## Chapter 1

### How to overcome anxiety during a Pandemic

A pandemic is not something that happens frequently but whenever it happens the ramifications can be brutal. One common effect affecting a majority of people during a global outbreak is anxiety.

- *Are you experiencing pandemic uneasiness?*
- *Do you feel uneasy about the future post the pandemic?*
- *Do you worry if you and the people you care about will survive or not?*

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions, you may be experiencing anxiety and that is normal! Worrying is a normal response to a crisis like a worldwide virus outbreak. However, some people worry much more than others and as such, may potentially become a problem which can affect their wellbeing if not properly dealt with.

The good news is that there are many ways of managing and overcoming anxiety in difficult situations. The goal is to maintain your mental health even in the most trying circumstances so you can come out on the other side ready to pick up your life and continue being great.

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To help you, here are some steps to take in order to overcome anxiety during a pandemic:

## **1. Accepting that there are certain things you can change and others that you can not**

In every situation, there are things that you can change and things you simply cannot change. Acceptance is the first step when dealing with anxiety. Accept that there are things that are beyond your control and influence. Accept that there are things that you can influence. Leave the things that you cannot control to those who can and focus on the things that are within your control.

By being realistic and focusing on the things you can control, you will be able to focus all your energy into things that will give you results instead of things that will waste your efforts and cause you more worry and stress.

Letting go is the most important step of dealing with anxiety, however, it is probably the most difficult to take. You just have to keep trying until you get it right. It takes some practice.

## **2. Stay in touch with people close to you and the rest of the world**

During a pandemic lockdown, people are asked to remain indoors and refrain from their usual activities that include social events and gatherings. Now humans are designed in such a way that they need social contact in order to live a healthy life. When you are on

lockdown and facing recurrent episodes of anxiety you have to boost your contact with other people. Stay connected and talk more, especially to people with a positive attitude.

When you are on lockdown you are prohibited from physical contact and interactions, but you are not prohibited from texting, phone calls, and video chats. So, if you are experiencing worry and overwhelming feelings of despair, pick up the phone and chat up some of your family members and friends.

You should be careful though on the type of people that you connect with. Staying connected with the right persons will help in maintaining a positive outlook on things. Connecting with pessimistic and negative people, on the other hand, will only worsen any existing anxiety.

### **3. Try to get out of your head by helping others**

Sometimes you can get rid of feelings of doom and worry by helping others. In times of a crisis, there are always many people in need of assistance. These could be the elderly, daycare schools for personnel actively involved in a crisis, volunteering in crisis management centers, homeless people, etc.

Helping people in need can give you a great sense of satisfaction and usefulness. It can occupy your time that you would have otherwise used for dark thoughts of doom. It is the perfect way to use your time and forget about your worries.

## **4. Plan your days**

For the most part, people who worry and suffer from anxiety during a pandemic are the people who sit around idle. When you have nothing to do you get bored and dwell on your thoughts which fuel anxiety.

The best way to enjoy your days during a lockdown is to plan. Know exactly what you are going to do when. Include a mixture of exciting activities and serious activities. Planning gives your days structure and it is that structure that will help you overcome anxiety.

## **5. Always keep things in perspective**

Keeping things in perspective is another recommended way of getting through a crisis like a pandemic. If you get the feeling that things will not get better try to look at the other scale of things as well, the other scale says things will get better. If your mind says you are not going to make it, listen to the other part of your mind that says, of course, you will make it.

## **6. Be careful on the internet**

The internet is the gasoline of negative vibrations and feelings of doom. You may go online with the intention of getting news update, but you can quickly find yourself down a rabbit hole of pessimistic posts and comments. These types of posts and comments can lead you down a very dark path that can be difficult to recover from.

It is important to stay informed, but it is more important to watch your steps on the internet. That is how you overcome anxiety linked to worldwide disasters like a virus pandemic.

## **7. Finally, know when to seek help**

Anxiety is a well-known mental condition. In some people, it can easily become a disorder that can cause more damage than you might think. There are signs that you should keep an eye out for and seek help when you notice them.

If you are becoming very irritable, overloaded with negative thoughts, unable to focus on anything and feeling completely hopeless, it is time to seek help. You can talk to someone you trust to get some help if you live alone or do not have anyone you can trust that way you should call a healthcare practitioner without delay.

## Chapter 2

### How to reassure your kids during a Pandemic

During a pandemic, the lives of many people are disrupted, and people of all age groups felt the effects, kids included. As a parent or guardian, you have to make sure your kids are alright. Making sure that your kids are alright goes further than just protecting them from contamination, you have to ensure that they have a peace of mind as well.

In times of a crisis, kids become uneasy and get stressed, too, especially if they do not fully understand what is happening. It is, therefore, essential to reassure your kids during a pandemic.

#### **1. Deal with your issues and control your anxiety first**

If you have ever been on a flight, you may have noticed that the safety instructions always say put your mask and life jacket first before helping children. There is a reason for that: you can run out of air or drown before you can finish helping your kids, putting at risk not only your life but also that of your kids.

Likewise, before you can assist your children wrap their heads around a pandemic, you need to gain control of your issues first. Kids can pick up and adopt the negative energy coming from their parents. If you feel anxious because of the pandemic, they too will share that anxiety.



Whatever emotions or energy you exude, your children can pick up on it as well, and it can affect them profoundly. So, work on your anxiety and deal with other emotions you may have about the pandemic. There are some ways of dealing with anxiety during an epidemic, look it up and help yourself first. Once you have helped yourself, you can then go ahead and help your children.

## **2. Educate yourself on the subject before talking to your kids**

To reassure kids, you need to make them understand the situation. Take time to educate yourself about the pandemic. Read reputable and reliable websites like the WHO or following simplified courses about the pandemic in question. Anticipate questions that your kids might ask and look for the answers in advance. When you have acquired enough knowledge, you can then engage your kids.

## **3. Talk to your kids**

You must know what your kids are thinking and how they feel about the whole crisis. To do so, you need to communicate with them. Gather your kids around and calmly explain what a pandemic is and what is causing it.

Explain to them how it can be stopped and make sure to use past pandemics as an example that pandemics can end. Let them ask any questions they may have on the subject and give them honest and truthful answers. If they ask something you do not know, let them know that you are going to find out and get back to them.

Take note of their fears and worries and explain to them why you think they should not worry. The idea is to make sure your kids know why specific measures are in place and that it will not last forever.

## **4. Update your kids**

Keeping your kids informed is part of the reassuring process. Every day make sure you update the kids on the situation. Even if things are not any better than the previous day, you should just go ahead and update them. The information is received and processed better when it is coming from you than when they come across it on the internet.

## **5. Allow room for your kids to stay in touch with friends and family**

If the pandemic requires people to stay indoors and not get outside the house, you should put some structures in place for your kids to stay connected to their friends and other members of the family.

Allow them the use of the internet and a phone where they can keep in touch with their friends at least once a day. This way they will know and be assured that the other people they care about are also fine and keeping well.

## 6. Make your kids feel safe

You should strive to make your kids feel safe. Cultivate a positivity culture and never stop letting them know that the pandemic is passing by, and everything will be fine. Make them understand that even if they were to get infected, you would be there to ensure that they are cared for and nursed back to health. Simply put, remove fear and worry from your household and replace them with optimism and hope.

## 7. If contact must be avoided with their grandparents

Elderly can sometimes be more prone to infections during a pandemic. It is therefore essential that physical contact between kids and their grandparents be avoided. Although this may have an impact on the emotional wellbeing of the children, it is important that the grandparents or the parents explain to the children the reasons for such actions.

If explained properly, the kids will understand. Something along these lines should work out well: *"Grandpapa and Grandma need to stay away from you for a while because need to take care of our health. We can still talk on the phone or video-chat. They still love you very much and will miss you!"*

## Chapter 3

### How to stay calm in the midst of chaos?

One of the main reasons why most people panic during times of uncertainty is because they pay too much attention to rumors, misinformation as well as being under informed. A pandemic is one of the many reasons people get caught up in a frenzy.

One good example is global crisis with the Corona virus that started in December 2019. Before even the corona virus was declared a pandemic, the whole world was stuck in the midst of uncertainty, stock markets crashed, fear led to a panic buying.

The normal response when something you do not have control over strikes is to panic. You get caught up in the fear of the pandemic affecting your region and start losing your grip on reality. The people who have the ability to keep calm in the midst of chaos tend to survive the craziness better than others. It all begins by listening before acting. Listen to expert advice, listen to verified news, and most importantly, learn to filter what you hear.

## **Things you can do to remain calm during a global outbreak:**

### **1. Do your research**

One of the main reasons people battle with stress and anxiety during a period of uncertainty comes from being under informed. Doing proper research will help you stay calm while everyone else is losing their grip on reality.

A few ways you can be sure you have done proper research and are well informed is by paying attention to your sources of information. For example, you can try sticking to reputable sources for up to date information concerning the pandemic. Only listen to professional advice when it comes to implementing precautionary measures.

### **2. Take professional advice seriously**

Most people may be infected simply because they are failing to take professional advice seriously. For example, if you are advised by experts to self-isolate or make use of certain sanitary products make sure you do just that.

Avoid taking things lightly. If you are advised to stay calm and avoid panic buying, make sure that is precisely what you do. There is always a good reason why professionals give the kind of advice they give with regards to their trade, particularly in dire conditions. Health professionals are not an exception.

### **3. Avoid panic buying**

Panic buying comes from paying attention to false rumors. That is why it is important to be selective when it comes to your sources of information concerning the pandemic. There are many reasons why you should avoid panic buying. One good and humane example is that of taking into consideration the rest of the population.

Keep in mind that there are a lot of people who are also affected by the pandemic and are in equal need of the same products as you. Another reason is that you may panic buy a lot of things that you won't really need and as a result strain your finances and prevent access to others who may have a greater need of such articles.

### **4. Talk about something else**

One way of ensuring your mind believes what you want it to believe is by dwelling on one subject over and over again. Talking about a bad event repeatedly and focusing on the number of affections and the consequences of the event only increases your stress levels.

One effective method of staying calm during a tragic event is by finding something else to talk about. Concentrate more on positive subjects that boost morale.

This does not mean you should ignore the fact that there is a crisis because that is impossible. You can stay up to date with the relevant information, however, do not overdo it.

You can allocate a few minutes a day to check on the latest headlines concerning the crisis and no more. You can check the news first thing in the morning and a few minutes during the day or in the evening. Make sure you concentrate on doing other activities afterward.

## **5. Make time for morale boosting activities**

The stress and anxiety that you battle with in a crisis like a pandemic can lead to certain illnesses that can be easily avoided. Impossible as it may be to believe, the stress and anxiety that you have because of the crisis is something that can be controlled. You can achieve this by intentionally setting aside fun or morale boosting activities that you and the rest of the family can do every day.

One good example is playing a game that everyone loves and sticking to it for considerable hours. You can also focus on practicing effective ways of continuing with your work if you are advised to work from home. Instead of dwelling on the fact that you are no longer able to go to the office you can focus on the many advantages that come with working from home.

## CHAPTER 4

### How to stay focused when working from home

Most people who have attempted working from home have found out one thing: It is hard to get things done at home! The people who have persisted with a home-office environment have gone on to find something else: working from home can be highly productive if you go about it the right way.

Working from home requires an ability to manage distractions and maintain focus. It can be hard during the first days, but if you remain structured, it will grow on you, and you will be able to produce results.

Some situations require that you work from home- Your child falling sick on a last-minute, with no one to look after her; the office space is undergoing repairs or improvements; or a general lockdown where no one is allowed to leave their homes.

Whatever your reason for working from home, here are some tips to help you remain productive:

#### **1. Take some time to create a working area**

You cannot just take your computer and sit on your bed. If you want to be productive while working from home, you need to prepare a proper workspace and create an ideal environment for productivity.



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Preferably it should be away from your bedroom because that is a place you mostly associate with rest.

If you have other people around the house, you should consider picking a place that they won't need as much while you are working. For most people, the kitchen or dining is the most logical place as it can leave the living room for the rest of the family.

When you have picked your working area, make sure you install everything you need to achieve your tasks. Some things you would most probably require include stationery, a power source, a comfortable chair, a phone, and a good background for video calls.

## **2. Plan your tasks and schedule**

Let's be honest- if you are working from home, you will not work the same schedule as at the office. For starters, you won't have to worry about the time spent for commuting, you won't have to worry about where to go for lunch, and most importantly you won't have colleagues coming to you with different agendas. That means you gain a lot of time, and if you plan well, you can be very productive and left with extra time for yourself without affecting your tasks. So, plan what you need to do and when you need to do it.

Do not forget to prioritize when you are planning. Unlike at the office where your manager or assistant prioritizes your work for you, at home, you should take care of that yourself. Make sure you put all of the essential tasks early in the morning before everyone is up. Push conference calls towards midday and then place the less

critical stuff late afternoon. This way, you will be able to complete the essential tasks while you are still fresh and full of energy in the morning.

### **3. Dress for work**

This one needs to be said: Get rid of your pajamas or "home clothes"! Your body and mind associate your home clothes with rest. You may experience focus issues if you attempt to work from home in your home clothes. So, wake up, shower and dress as if you are going to the actual office. Dressing up can also boost your self-confidence and stature, improving your productivity and creativity.

### **4. Remember to report back to your manager frequently**

Maintaining structure is what gets things done when working from home. There is nothing that gives you more structure than reporting what you do and getting feedback. When you are working from home, try to report on your tasks as frequently as possible. It will boost your productivity.

### **5. Take regular breaks**

It is important to take regular short breaks to avoid straining. Taking 5 to 10 minutes break to talk to members of the family or getting involved in a short activity with them will great help to refocus and re-energize after the break.

## 6. Avoid Distraction

Television is the number 1 enemy of productivity. Avoid keeping the television on while working. You must be ruthless with this rule! You can however use this to your advantage.

Set a goal to watch your favorite series or documentary once a specific task of your work is completed. On-demand tv and recording is widely accessible nowadays- so make the most of these facilities. Treat yourself with your favorite show once done with your work. This could be an effective incentive to your work.

## CHAPTER 5

### How to kick viruses and allergies out of your life

Viruses and allergies are a reason for concern for most people. Infections spread through personal contact from one infected person to another as well through the air. If you are continually battling with allergies or live with someone who is, then you know how annoying viruses and allergies can be. Luckily you can reduce the impact that they have and get rid of them by controlling your environment.

#### 1. Clean frequently

Continually cleaning your house as well as frequently touched surfaces with a disinfectant will help get rid of dust, pollen, and other allergy triggers. Make sure you allow the cleaned surfaces to air dry for the best disinfection. Use a damp cloth when cleaning to trap allergens. Getting rid of clutter can stop your allergies from worsening and viruses from spreading. Therefore, make sure your house remains tidy and always wear a mask when cleaning.

Wash your sheets in hot water at least once a week and keep your bathroom clean and free of mold. Get rid of carpets and rugs because they can trap allergens. You can buy smaller rugs that are washable and dry up quickly. Scented detergents and cleaners can also trigger allergies, so stick to using fragrance-free products.

## **2. Use air filters**

Air HEPA filters and other purifiers help remove allergens from the air inside your house. They can be installed in your air-conditioning system or your ventilation system. Using HEPA filters can help in getting rid of pollen, pet dander, dust mites, smoke, and bacteria.

## **3. Know your triggers**

Knowing your triggers can help you cope with allergies as well. You can lessen your allergy symptoms by reducing your exposure to specific triggers as well as avoiding them. If you are not yet sure about what you are allergic to, you can carry out allergy tests. Ask your health advisor about the best allergy tests for diagnosing your symptoms.

Skin prick tests are one of the most common tests allergists perform. Your allergist injects tiny amounts of common allergens to see if they provoke a reaction.

## **4. Allergy-proof your home**

Keeping your home free from allergy-triggers or viruses also includes using bedding materials that are a barrier against allergens, for instance, hypoallergenic bedding. Use hypoallergenic pillows and comforters to control allergies or reduce your allergy symptoms.

Avoid upholstered furniture and stick to metallic and wooden furniture. Keep your kitchen sink mold-free and scrub daily. Scrub and towel-dry the tub and shower area daily. Remove moldy shower curtains and keep your bathroom mats clean. Always fix leakages around the house.

Plants grown inside the house can also act as allergy triggers by collecting dust mites and mold spores. Get rid of dried house plants and reduce the number of plants you keep inside the house. Make sure you get rid of food leftovers and garbage as well.

## **5. Try home remedies**

You can also try reducing allergies by making use of home remedies such as bromelain, quercetin, and essential oils. Bromelain is effective at preventing allergies, and it works by improving breathing and reducing swelling.

Bromelain can be obtained in Pineapples. Quercetin aids in controlling your allergy symptoms by stabilizing the release of histamines. Histamine levels can also be reduced by taking 2 000 milligrams of vitamin C every day. Quercetin can be found in citrus fruits, broccoli, and green tea. Oils such as eucalyptus essential oil and peppermint essential oil can also help treat or reduce symptoms.

The anti-inflammatory effects that peppermint essential oil has can help reduce bronchial asthma. Eucalyptus oil works more effectively when added to your washing or laundry during allergy season.

## **6. Avoid physical contact**

Stop the spread of viruses by avoiding physical contact. If you are the one infected, make sure you use napkins or tissues when sneezing or coughing. Keep a reasonable distance between yourself and other non-infected people. Make sure you avoid shaking hands, constantly touching your face, nose, and mouth to prevent spreading the virus.

## **7. Practice social distancing**

Social distancing is an excellent way of controlling or slowing down the spread of a rapidly spreading disease. Practicing social distancing is a unique way of protecting yourself and other people.

## **8. Boost your immune system**

Your immune system is an incredible machine programmed to protect your body from foreign agents like viruses, bacteria, allergens. There are several ways of boosting your immune system, which range from taking supplements to having the right diet and maintaining healthy hygiene- avoiding smoking and drinking alcohol in moderation and exercising regularly.

## 9. Treat your allergies before your symptoms begin

You can reduce your allergy symptoms by using allergy shots. A health professional gives allergy shot at frequent intervals over three to five years. However, you will be receiving an injection twice a week in the first few months. You will then be required to go for treatment every few weeks according to your doctor's prescription.

Completing your allergy shots treatment can help get rid of your allergies completely. Allergy shots work by numbing you to your allergen source. They can help reduce symptoms such as itchy eyes and a runny nose.

## 10. Drink lots of water

Adequate hydration is the key to maintaining good health. We cannot overemphasize this fact enough. Drinking lots of water can help in reducing the risks of a viral infection or allergic symptoms. The fluid will help the body drain all toxins, clear up the respiratory passages, drain blocked sinuses, and thin any accumulated mucus.

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