








## EMPLOYEE SERIES

### Tips for managing anxiety.

So anxiety is a normal response to a challenge, but it can become over-developed. Fear has helped us act quickly in response to danger. Now-days most of our 'dangers' are psychological, so we feel anxious. This triggers our fight/flight response, we experience an urge to take action (often to get away). When we have excessive anxiety, our brain is tricked into believing we are in danger. We increase our scanning of the environment, looking for danger, i.e. worrying.

-  **Disadvantages of anxiety.** Anxiety can become unhelpful when it is excessive, intrusive or persistent. It may feel uncontrollable and causes significant distress, or impairs your capacity to function at an optimal level. You may find yourself avoiding situations where you feel anxious, worrying or catastrophising a lot, or feel tense, wound up and edgy.
-  **Compassion.** We have a choice about how we experience our feelings. If we find the emotion uncomfortable we often try not to have it. Practice compassionately accepting what you feel – after all, uncomfortable as it might be, it is just a feeling that will eventually pass.
-  **Helpful thinking.** Start a Thought Diary to record thought processes and future based predictions. Check the evidence to see how many of these things actually happen. Identify the best outcome, worst outcome and most likely scenario and determine what you would do to cope in each scenario.
-  **Problem solving.** Focus on how you can effectively deal with a problem by identifying and defining the problem. Brainstorm ways of dealing with the problem and evaluate all possible solutions by examining the pros and cons for each option. Develop a plan of how best to deal with the situation. Then implement the plan, evaluate progress and be flexible towards making changes to achieve desired outcomes. A good plan will minimise the futile process of worrying.
-  **Mindfulness.** Notice your senses: what you see, hear, taste, smell and touch. Notice your breath, body sensations, thoughts and feelings. Practice being mindful of your breathing, noticing any time your mind wanders away from the breath, catching its wandering, and redirecting it back to the breath as your anchor to the present moment.
-  **Accept uncertainty.** Implement a scheduled worry time for a specific time period. Accept that uncertainty is an unavoidable part of life. Identify what you are able to change and accept that which you cannot.
-  **Look after your physical health.** Follow a healthy balanced diet and minimise caffeine, alcohol, sugar and sweeteners as they can increase anxiety. Get physically active to stimulate endorphins to feel good.