



# Wellbeing

## Anxiety

### It's not the sum of everything.

There are bound to be things in life that make us anxious – finances, relationships, work, visits to the dentist, speaking in front of a huge crowd of people, or the COVID-19 pandemic we are currently going through. Anxiety can have what feels like a vice-like grip on us and seems to sit somewhere inside our chests and around our hearts; it plays out in our bodies.

We become anxious when the challenges and crises impacting us are beyond our control. Right now, anxiety levels are high for vast numbers of us because of the Coronavirus pandemic. There's so much happening that we can't predict, manage or control.

Anxiety is also contagious. We pick it up from what is happening around us like antennae pick up radio waves, and we offload our own anxiety onto others.

#### What can we do about all of this?

Firstly, it's important to acknowledge that 'anxious' is how we are feeling. If we deny it, we simply bury it rather than make our anxiety disappear.

Secondly, we can do things that help us to experience a sense of peace. Just as anxiety is contagious, peace is too. Lowering the tone of our voice, breathing more slowly, doing things at a slightly slower pace, saying things that encourage others - all of this lowers our anxiety levels and the anxiety of others around us.

Thirdly, holding things in perspective really helps. What we are feeling anxious about, this current pandemic experience, is not the sum of everything in our lives. There is so much more – the people we love, creation around us, [all the things that bring us joy](#) - and remembering this is so helpful. The graffiti artist Banksy produced a piece of art consisting of the words 'Everything looks better in a circle' and then drew a circle around those words! Simple but effective. We can take the same approach to what is making us feel anxious too – by putting a boundary around it and recognising that it is a part of our life, not the whole of it.

Doing these three things will help build hope in us; they will give us the courage to be honest with ourselves, bring greater strength at our core, and a renewed outlook that will enable us to keep moving forward.

This month, following feedback from you, our focus is going to be on understanding anxiety and the practical ways and tips we can use to manage our anxiety. We hope you find these useful.