

10 Tips for Managing Anxiety in Uncertainty

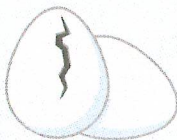
Developed by Erin Hunter, Ph.D., interim director, and Susan Balto and Emma Share, social work interns, at University Center for the Child and Family (UCCF).

How can you effectively deal with anxiety, stress, and uncertainty? Following these tips can help!

1 You don't have to be perfect.

With extra demands on time and energy, we are likely to feel stretched and make "mistakes" along the way.

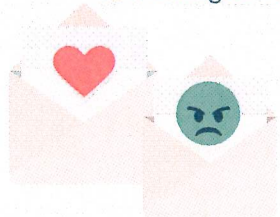
- It's okay!
- We're all doing what we can.
- We will get through this.



2 Make room for all the feelings.

All feelings are valid. We don't always need to act on them but it's important to let yourself and others feel what they feel. Think of feelings as messages from the body:

- Some highlight what is important or a problem.
- Others are like junk mail we can let go of.
- Regularly sort through your feel-mail so you know which ones need a response.



3 Adjust your expectations.

- Get rid of "shoulds."
- Lower expectations for yourself and loved ones.
- Be patient and flexible.
- Give yourself room to adjust to changes and practice self compassion.



4 Routines can be comforting.

Keeping routines can help decrease anxiety, helping things feel more normal. Try to:

- Set and keep routines for predictability.
- Make sure routines are not "aspirational" and actually fit the personalities and needs of you and your loved ones.
- Be flexible with it when need be.



5 Create an imaginary scapegoat.

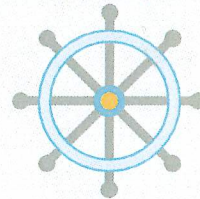
During stressful times, tensions can run high. Create an imaginary roommate to blame for difficult things.

For example: "Messy Martin left his Legos on the floor again!" or "Messy Martin left his dishes in the sink." Bond as a team to pick up after Messy Martin.

6 Focus on what you can control.

Some things are out of your control. Identify and focus on what is within your control. For example:

- Taking care of yourself.
- Doing things important and meaningful to you.
- Limiting time spent on news and social media, etc.
- Keeping up routines.



7 One thing at a time.

Multi-tasking strains our brains and increases stress. Focus and boundaries are helpful. One task at a time. One day at a time.

For example, If working remotely with kids at home, try to separate work time from family time.



8 Look for silver linings.

While things may be stressful and challenging, hard times help us appreciate "normal" things that we might not otherwise notice.

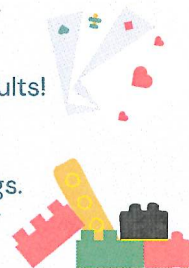
Hard times can also help us identify what is important and meaningful in our lives. Look for small positives and outcomes that wouldn't have happened otherwise.



9 Don't forget to play!

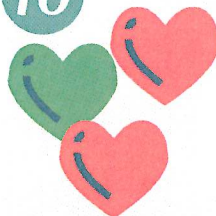
Playing is good for kids, and adults! Engage in free play every day.

Play helps kids understand and work through hard things. Let yourself be playful too—with kids or on your own.



10 Be kind and patient.

Be kind toward yourself and those around you. Focus on the common threads between us. Showing empathy for others can help you feel more in control, and reduce stress and anxiety. It benefits you as much as others!



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