

Navigators
African American Network
AFAM Conference

For Our Good

Freedom
from
Anxiety





what to expect

Develop a greater understanding about anxiety, learn helpful skills and explore relaxation techniques. Be empowered to make healthy changes and experience the beginning of a journey to freedom from anxiety, stress and worry.

- _____ deeper understanding of anxiety
- _____ you with helpful skills to manage anxiety
- _____ practical strategies and come up with your own plan
- _____ an opportunity to invite God into your healing journey



enable a deeper understanding

Anxiety is a broad term used to capture a state of response from a variety of situations with varying levels of intensity. It is both a symptom and a disorder.

Anxiety affects your _____: physiological, behavioral and psychological.

(Dr. Edmund Bourne in “The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook”)

Physiological: bodily reactions such as rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, queasiness, dry mouth, or sweating.

Behavioral: decreased or inability to act, express self, and/or deal with certain everyday situations.

Psychological: subjective state of apprehensions and uneasiness. (in its extreme forms, a feeling of detachment from self and even a fear of dying or going crazy)

Anxiety is _____ the same as concern:

“It’s important to realize that there are many situations that come up in everyday life in which it is *appropriate* and *reasonable* to react with some anxiety (*concern*). If you didn’t feel *any* anxiety (*concern*) in response to everyday challenges involving potential *loss* or failure, something would be wrong.”- Dr. Edmund Bourne

Anxiety can be defined as _____

Anxiety vs. Anxiety Disorder

Anxiety disorders are distinguished from every day, normal anxiety in that they involve anxiety that is:

- 1) _____ (for example, panic attacks).
- 2) _____ (anxiety that may persist for months or longer instead of going away after a stressful situation has passed).
- 3) _____ that interfere with your life.



equip with skills

Anxiety is complex and varied in its symptoms and manifestation.

This makes it important to approach it with a _____.

A comprehensive approach to treating anxiety includes interventions (we will call them _____) addressing the different levels of contributing causes.

Top 4 skills best to practice at least 5-7 times a week (from The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook)

1. A deep relaxation technique (such as mediation, progressive muscle relaxation or visualization)
2. 30 min of vigorous exercise
3. Good nutritional habits (increase whole & unprocessed foods, decrease caffeine/sugar/stimulants)
4. Countering negative self-talk, using affirmations to counter lies

4 more valuable skills to pursue in your recovery (from Eliza Bruner):

5. 8-9 hours of sleep
6. Connect with God through honest prayers (acknowledging and expressing feelings)
7. Eliminate unhealthy habits (ie alcohol, drugs, porn, sex, toxic people, screen addictions) and minimize distractions (ie text/email notifications, social media, binge watching Netflix)
8. Connect regularly face to face with a trusted friend; be transparent and ask for accountability



explain the strategy: commit to a strategy, focus on the reps, and be like a scientist

commit to a system:

Instead of knowing your goals, commit to the process.

focus on the reps:

Repetitions matter, put in consistent work and learn from your mistakes.

be like a scientist:

Learn from perceived “failures” and get back up quickly with a new strategy.

creating a plan

1. Choose **1 skill** (*see the section on “Equipping with skills”*) you want to develop:

Skill:

2. Identify potential obstacles:

3. Strategize a plan to apply the skill (including a strategy for overcoming potential obstacles):



explore an opportunity to invite God's response:

Invite God into the healing process, taking a journey through Psalm 27

quote from Dr. Timothy Lane

“Christian meditation involves filling the mind with truth from the Bible and using that as a basis upon which to talk to our personal God.”

Many of the Psalms (found in the Old Testament) are a beautiful and honest illustration of a real person with real struggles and anxieties relating to our very real God.

Most are written by King David, who had many ups and downs in his life.

He was a great man who loved the Lord but also experienced great hardship and made poor decisions (he ran from his son who tried to kill him, committed adultery, and arranged a murder).

From his life and his beautiful Psalms, we get to see how God can be approachable.

David sets a great example of how to reach out to God, be honest with Him and trust Him with emotions, *especially in the midst of anxiety.*

Journey through Psalm 27

“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” (vs 1)

Who is God to you? Take a few moments to praise God for how you have experienced Him in your life. (A stronghold is a place that has been fortified so as to protect it against attack)

“When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.” (vs 2-3)

Name the things that you are fearful of and/or worried about. Maybe you didn't even notice, until now, that certain anxious thoughts have been weighing heavy on your heart. Call attention to these anxious thoughts by naming them. (For example, your prayer here could start “Lord I am worried about...”)

“One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord.” (vs. 4-6)

“Imagine God’s temple as a core place, the remotest, deepest place inside your being. Envision a room that is incredibly inviting and warm. This is the safest place on the face of the earth, the sanctuary of God. Imagine this sanctuary as a comfortable room where only you and God go. Here there is peace, safety, security. This is your favorite place to go. This is a sound proof room. There are two overstuffed, incredibly comfortable chairs. There is a cozy fire burning. Coffee or tea are brewed in your favorite flavors. Here you and the One who loves you most sort through life.” –Vic Black, *The Navigators Prayer Ministry “Your Inner Sanctuary”*

Use this space/time to really picture in your mind **YOUR** inner sanctuary. You can also feel free to draw it or write a few key words about it.

“Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, ‘Seek his face!’ Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Savior.” (vs. 7-9)

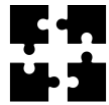
With your inner sanctuary pictured, invite God into this safe place. He is already present, but He does not force himself on you. You get to usher Him in and continue to share your heart. What is God doing in your safe place? Ask Him for a picture or a word.

“Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. Teach me your way, O’Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not turn me over to the desires of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.” (vs. 10-12)

Why am I anxious about these things, people or circumstances? What does that say about who I am believing God is? What does that say about myself? What lie am I believing?

“I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” (vs. 13-14)

Ask God for forgiveness. Ask God to replace the lie(s) with a truth(s). Ask God to show you who He is and who He says you are. Lastly, ask God for a picture of what His goodness looks like.



resources

- “The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook” by Dr. Bourne
- “Living Without Worry” by Timothy Lane, Christian Literature
- Online writings of James Clear, author of “Atomic Habits”
- Vic Black, The Navigators Prayer Ministry “Your Inner Sanctuary”
- The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA): adaa.org, “Find a therapist” link for assistance in finding therapists in your local area. 1-240-485-1001
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): nami.org, provides info and assistance for a full range of mental health difficulties, including anxiety. 1-800-950-6264
- Elizabeth Bruner, BSN, Endoscopy Nurse, Cleveland Clinic

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Notes