Preparing yourself for a stressful situation

Thursday 27 August, 2015

Stressed about an interview? Got a family engagement you're dreading? Nervous about an exam?

Worrying about a potentially stressful situation that's on the horizon can cause a lot of unnecessary stress and anxiety - issues that appear to be becoming more prevalent in an increasingly busy world.

Whether it's work, school or family related, we're hearing through both the media and our membership about the rise in people struggling with stress and anxiety.

The results of our recent survey of 152 BACP members revealed that 79% of respondents have witnessed an increase in seeing clients with anxiety in recent years.

There are, however, coping mechanisms that can be used to help relieve these feelings of stress and anxiety.

We asked our members who took part in our recent survey to share advice on how people could prepare themselves ahead of a stressful situation:

'Sit stand up straight, put your shoulders back, breathe deeply and remind yourself that it is completely natural to feel anxious in the circumstances. Tell yourself that whatever happens you'll handle it.'

'Take time to sit still, relax the body and listen to your breathing and feel fully engaged in the present moment. Remind yourself of the positive features you bring to the situation and of the behaviour and actions you will employ to get the best outcome.'

'Be as prepared as possible; think of the best/worst case scenario and what to do. Have perspective - will this matter so much 6 months or a year from now?'

'Make two lists: one for the things you can control about the situation and one about the things you can't. Now you can see your concerns more clearly and usually you will find that the 'can control' list is longer than the 'can't control' list.'

'Think about all the times you have coped in the past and what you did. Anxiety is very normal for us all but it can also lead to avoidance and preoccupation with physical symptoms. What is the worst thing that can happen? Act on the things you can control.'

'Stay in the present. Run through some scenarios beforehand. Keep a healthy internal monologue throughout the event and in the run up to it.'

'Make a plan for dealing with the event you are afraid of. Identify what you would do if it happens and what you can do to avoid it happening and then follow the plan.'

'Create some coping statements you can say to yourself every time you start to worry, such as: 'I have done this before and survived - this feels really uncomfortable but I'm not in any danger, I will be OK.''

'Breathing exercises, if you're already in the habit of doing them, can help people feel calmer. Guided imagery, especially imagining yourself in the situation and coping well with it, can also be helpful.'

BACP member, Madeleine Bocker, added:

'They talk of good stress and bad stress: good stress can motivate you like rocket fuel, while bad stress - which can be brought on by many things such as boredom, anxiety and being overworked - can become a real problem.

'It s important to determine what the anxiety you are feeling is about: with short term anxiety, such as the feeling you may get before an exam, an interview or even a family gathering, there are skills you can teach yourself to help you feel calmer and more relaxed, such as relaxation techniques, breathing exercises and mindfulness.

'Long term anxiety, however, suggests there's a more deep-rooted issue that needs dealing with.

Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Health :: Men's Interest ::

Related Keywords:

Mental Health :: BACP :: Stress :: Anxiety ::

Scan Me:

'If you're feeling stressed or anxious a lot of the time, then it may be beneficial to seek the help of a registered BACP counsellor who can guide you in helping to better manage those feelings and find its root cause.'

Therapy can be accessed privately, or through local charities and voluntary organisations, as well as for free through your GP. BACP's public website, It's Good To Talk, features a 'Find a Therapist' directory where you can locate private counsellors in your area.

If you require further information or would like to speak with one of our many expert spokespeople, please contact the BACP Media Team on 01455 206 393 or media@bacp.co.uk.

Company Contact:

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

T. 01455883342
E. media@bacp.co.uk
W. https://www.bacp.co.uk

View Online

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.bacp.pressat.co.uk