

Seeking support for health related anxiety

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Novel Coronavirus

- ‘Health Anxiety’ in this context is not pathological rather a response to uncertainty.
- Although still worrisome and can lead to:
- Reassurance seeking, over-checking, chasing of thoughts and catastrophising.

Problem and emotion focused

Panic: when we judge a situation as potentially threatening or dangerous – fight or flight response (adrenaline)

- External – situation
- Internal – emotion/feelings/physical sensations e.g. shortness of breath
- Surges of anxiety – adrenaline rush
- Safety behaviours – sensitive to the situation – perceive the situation as potential threatening.

Over checking of thoughts (anxiety) can lead to worry

- Identify and recognise thoughts and thinking patterns. With a curious open-mind try to explore what thoughts are popping up in your head.

Distinguish the facts from the worry

- I live in Australia and the Novel Coronavirus is contained and being managed.
- Know the university is well informed and provides regular updates (and the university community is not panicked).
- The risk is low and unlikely to happen.

Difference between productive and unproductive worry

UNPRODUCTIVE WORRY:

Unproductive worry displays the following characteristics:

It imagines all sorts of unlikely outcomes.

It assumes that one bad outcome will cascade into a series of even worse outcomes.

It assumes that your worrisome thinking is valid and reflects the realistic truth.

It assumes that your negative feelings are accurate measures of the importance of the worry.

It demands that you have control over just about everything in your life.

PRODUCTIVE WORRY:

Is adaptive and functional:

It helps you solve a problem or resolve a situation.

It doesn't demand certainty.

It's not overwhelmed by emotion.

It turns a worry into a problem to be solved.

It explores appropriate ways of finding a solution to a problem.

It doesn't get stuck in evaluating unrealistic outcomes.

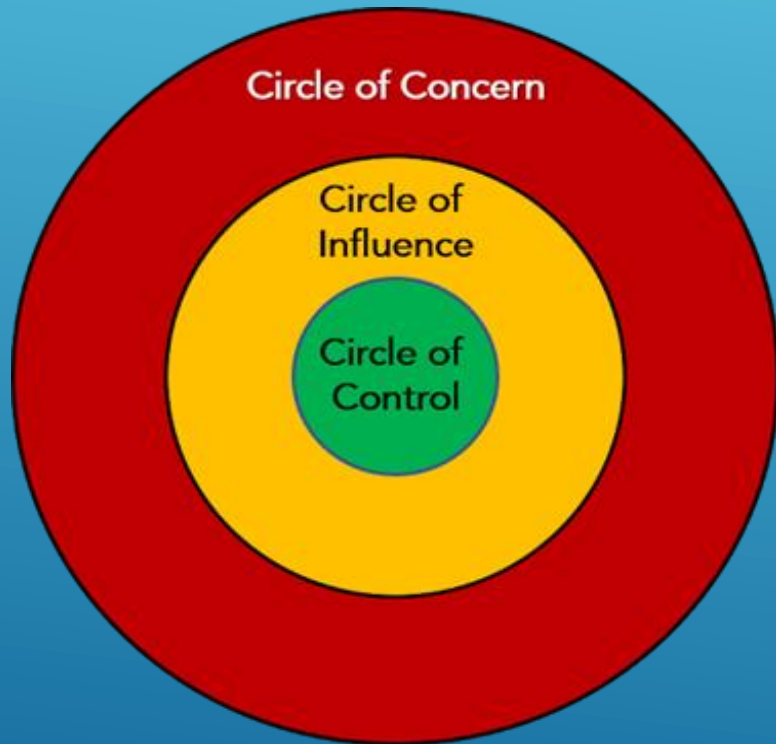
Put worry into perspective

- Only listen to legitimate sources of information.
- Identify anxious thoughts and identify alternate ways of thinking.
- Try naming the thought? I'm having the thought that....It can take the power out of the thought when you say it out loud and recognise it in isolation.
- Challenge the underlying assumptions and beliefs – reframe alternative ways of thinking.
- Avoid: Distorted, negatively biased thoughts or over generalisation.

Practical strategies

- Distinguish facts from natural human fears
- Its ok to be anxious and avoid constant checking
- Maintain contact with family and friends
- Remember to talk about other things or challenge the dominate narrative or alterative narratives
- Follow your usual health and wellbeing practices
- De arousal techniques

The circle of control



Focus your attention on what's within your control.

Acknowledge and accept what's not and instead focus on your goals, routine and enjoyable activities.

Outer circle: is the Circle of Concern and contains **all the things we are concerned about**.

Middle circle: is the Circle of Influence and contains all the **actions we can take to influence** people/events to address our concerns.

Inner circle: is the Circle of Control, as it contains all the **actions directly within our control that we can take to address our concerns**.

My concern:
impact of the novel coronavirus on my family, UON students,
staff any myself.

1. Factors within my direct control	2. Factors within my influence (but not direct control)	3. Factors outside my direct control or influence
Attaining updates Ensuring legitimate source of information Normalising fear/concerns Maintaining my usual health and wellbeing practices	What information people hear and their understanding of the events Challenge distorted facts	Stopping the virus Other people's reaction to their fears Distorted facts How people interpret events and possible impact.

How to address concerns from the university community about the coronavirus

- Quote legitimate information sources.
- Reassure perspective students, parents and staff that risks of contracting the virus in Australia are low.
- Validate real concern and that it is being addressed.
- That the University has made reasonable concessions about timetabling, start dates and will reassess as required.

Recognises personal impact

- Increase in workload and distressed calls
- Concern for family and loved ones back home
- Potential for racism in the community and on social media
- Normal for the above to impact on work and personal lives

Tips to maintain your usual well-being

Validate feeling of:

Impact, facts outside of your immediate control, concern comes from values linked to compassion and care,

Recognises:

Short term, doing your best, undertake self care measures: exercise connect with family/colleagues etc.



Student Central: Counselling and Wellbeing Advisers for students



University Medical Centre



EAP for staff



Report racism concerns to the University

University support