



A large part of anxiety comes from a sense of what we think we should be able to control, but can't. You or your employees may feel helpless about what will happen or what we can do to prevent further illness.

It's normal to feel on edge, helpless, sad, or anxious; for those of us who already struggle with our mental wellness, we might feel more depressed or less motivated to carry out our daily activities. **Remind yourself and your team that we are not helpless**, and that we can always choose our response. If they are struggling, here are some items to include in company communication or talks:

1. ***Separate what is in your control from what is not.*** There are things you can do, and it's helpful to focus on those. Wash your hands. Start some early spring cleaning and involve your whole family. Take your vitamins. Limit your consumption of news – protect your own mental energy.
2. ***Do what helps you feel a sense of safety.*** This will be different for everyone, and it's important not to compare yourself to others. It's ok if you've decided what makes you feel safe is to limit attendance of large social events, but make sure you separate when you are isolating based on potential for sickness versus isolating because it's part of depression.
3. ***Get outside in nature—even if you are avoiding crowds.*** Exercise also helps both your physical and mental health. Inclement weather? Find a free yoga video online or do some basic stretching and move around the house.
4. ***Challenge yourself to stay in the present.*** Perhaps your worry is compounding—you are not only thinking about what is currently happening, but also projecting into the future. When you find yourself worrying about something that hasn't happened, gently bring yourself back to the present moment. Notice the sights, sounds, tastes and other sensory experiences in your immediate moment and name them.

Notice “what is”, not “what if.” Engaging in mindfulness activities is one way to help stay grounded when things feel beyond your control.

5. ***Stay connected and reach out if you need more support.*** Talk to trusted friends about what you are feeling. If you are feeling particularly anxious or if you are struggling with your mental health, it's ok to reach out to a mental health professional for support. You don't have to be alone with your worry and it can be comforting to share what you are experiencing with those trained to help. Call our EAP at 866-660-9533 for someone to talk to, 24/7/365.