

ICE BREAKER  
QUESTION

What is one change  
that the pandemic has  
brought into your life?

**MOVING THROUGH CRISIS TOGETHER:  
FINDING MEANING AND RESILIENCE IN ANXIETY  
AND GRIEF**

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Enlighten Mental Health 2020



## KEY QUESTIONS

- Why you might be experiencing anxiety or grief without knowing it.
- How can I find meaning from this and step forward with resilience?
- What steps can I take to support and be supported by the body of Christ through these times?

# ANXIETY

“**Anxiety** is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.” (APA)

# REACTIONS TO STRESS AND ANXIETY

(MAYO CLINIC, N.D.; LEONARD, 2018)

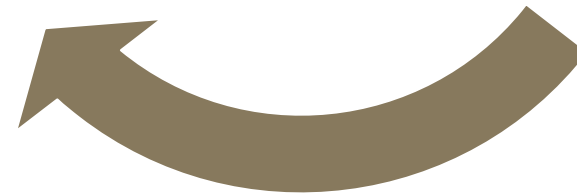
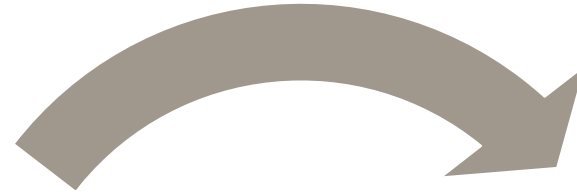
On Your Body	On Your Mood	On Your Behavior
Headache	Anxiety/Worry	Overeating or undereating
Muscle tension or pain	Restlessness	Angry outbursts
Chest pain or breathing problems	Lack of motivation or focus	Drug or alcohol misuse
Fatigue	Feeling overwhelmed	Tobacco use
Check in sex drive	Irritability or anger	Social withdrawal
Stomach upset	Sadness or depression	Exercising less often
Sleep problems		
Impaired immune function		
Heart pounding		

## OF & UF

(BOWEN, 1978; MILLER, 2010;  
BROWN, 2020)

Over  
Functioning

Under  
Functioning



# OVER- VS. UNDER-FUNCTIONING

(BOWEN, 1978; MILLER, 2010; BROWN, 2020; SMITH, 2019)

- Overfunctioners: manages tension by being over responsible for self and others. Difficult to recognize because the outcomes are often celebrated by society.
  - Seems to have it together, detail oriented, reliable, overly focused on another's problems, offering frequent advice to others, doing things for others, mind reading, feeling anger when not appreciated/UFs don't change
- Underfunctioners: manages tension by shutting down and being under responsible for self. Can appear to be nonchalant or stress-free.
  - Relies on others for advice on making decisions, communicates sense of distress or need, self-sabotaging, zoning out to TV/video games, making unwise decisions, appearing unmotivated

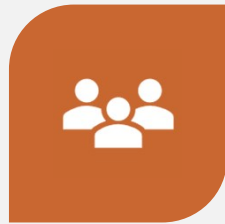
# WHAT CAN WE DO?

(BRENÉ BROWN, UNLOCKING US, 2020)



**NAME THE  
ANXIETY**

(MILLER & SPRANG, 2017;  
LIEBERMAN ET AL., 2007)



**NORMALIZE  
THE ANXIETY**



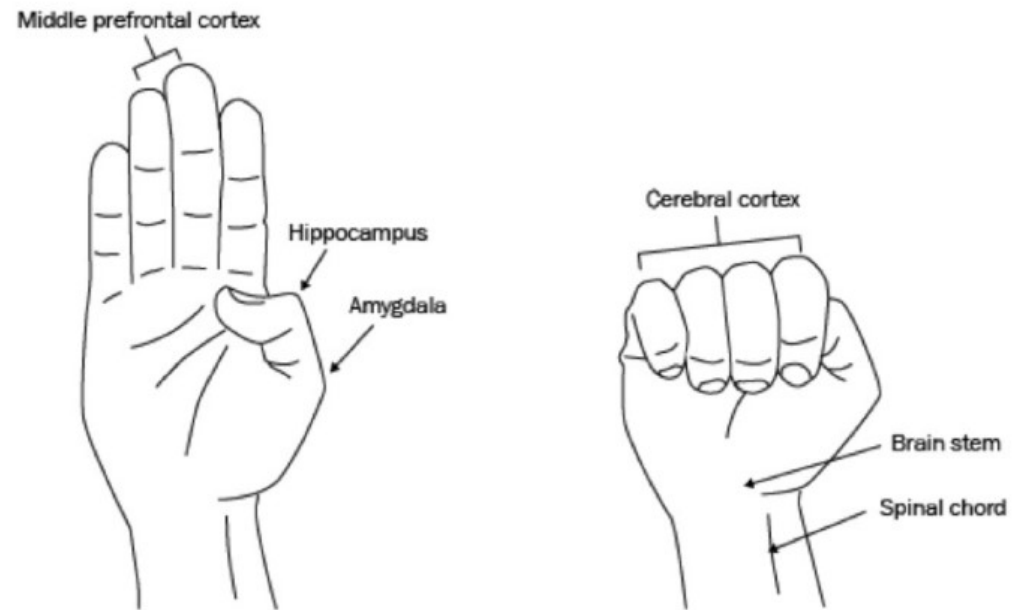
**PUT IT INTO  
PERSPECTIVE**



**REALITY  
CHECK**



HAND  
MODEL  
OF THE  
BRAIN  
(SIEGEL)



*Hand model courtesy of Dan Siegel*

# GRIEF

Grief is “the normal process of reacting to a loss.”  
(Shiel, W. C., Jr.)

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF LOSSES

(MITCHELL & ANDERSON, 1983)

## **Material:**

object or familiar surroundings to which one had important attachment

## **Relationship:**

ending opportunities to relate with particular human

## **Intrapsychic (identity):**

losing emotionally important image of oneself, abandonment of plans, dying of a dream

## **Functional:**

when we lose some of the functioning of our bodies

## **Role:**

loss of a specific social role or of one's accustomed place in a social network (singleness, retirement, "patient" role)

## **Systemic:**

when an individual changes or someone leaves a family, the system must adapt to that loss

## WHAT YOU FEEL

- Mood: shock and disbelief, sadness, guilt, anger, fear (anxious, helpless, insecure, panic attacks), depression, despair, apathy,
- Body: fatigue, nausea, lowered immunity, weight loss or gain, aches and pains, insomnia
- Behavior: inability to connect with others, addictions, passing to next generation

## MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF

1. The pain will go away faster if you ignore it
2. It's important to be strong in the face of loss
3. If you don't cry, it means you aren't sorry about the loss
4. Grieving should last about a year
5. Moving on with your life means forgetting about your loss

# STAGES OF GRIEF

(KÜBLER-ROSS & KESSLER; HOLLAND, 2018; BERINATO; 2020)

01

Denial

02

Anger

03

Bargaining

04

Depression

05

Acceptance

# STAGES OF GRIEF

(KÜBLER-ROSS & KESSLER)

01  
Denial

02  
Anger

03  
Depression

04  
Bargaining

05  
Acceptance

06  
Finding  
Meaning

## FINDING MEANING

(KESSLER, 2019; BRODY, 2019)

- “Loss is simply what happens to you in life. Meaning is what *you* make happen.” (Kessler)
- Meaning can come from different places (e.g., faith, contributions, memories)
- Meaning does not erase grief. It merely assuages the grief and helps people move forward.
- Suffering “is what our mind does to us,” and it can be mitigated by finding meaning in what we’ve lost



## WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY?

- Most people are resilient. When we embrace the grief, we let grief run its course and it helps us to move on.
- However, things could stand in the way:
  - Intolerance to pain/fear of pain
  - Need for control
  - Lack of external encouragement, including situations
  - Minimizing personal loss (i.e., loss of others is much greater)
  - Guilt (e.g., “What will happen if I can’t function?”)
  - Spiritualizing/shame (e.g., “If I only had more faith”)

## WHAT CAN WE DO? – SELF CARE

- Acknowledge your pain. “When you name it, you feel it and it moves through you. Emotions need motion.” (Berinato, 2020; Kessler)
- Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions.
- Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you.
- Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.
- Recognize the difference between grief and depression.

## WHAT CAN WE DO? – SEEK SUPPORT

- Seek out face-to-face support from people who care about you
- Accept that many people feel awkward when trying to comfort someone who's grieving
- Draw comfort from faith and/or faith community
- Join support group
- Talk to therapist ([PsychologyToday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com))

A small green plant with two leaves growing out of a crack in dark, porous volcanic rock. The plant is the central focus, with its stem and leaves clearly visible against the dark, textured background of the rock. The lighting highlights the vibrant green of the leaves and the intricate details of the rock's surface.

MOVING TOWARDS RESILIENCE

# A MODEL FOR RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

(ERIKSSON)



**REGULATION**



**RIGHT  
THINKING**



**RELATIONSHIP**



**RESPITE AND  
REST**



**MEANING  
(PURPOSE)**

- **Regulation:** Physical and emotional regulation through noticing and calming the bodies, recognizing emotional states; becoming present in the moment through Christian integrated mindfulness, grounding yourself in your senses
- **Right Thinking:** Attending thoughts and assumptions, replacing them with more helpful thoughts
- **Relationship:** Attending caring relationships, scheduling in time for a quick phone call or meet up
- **Respite & Rest:** Intentionally finding rest, doing relaxing activities, scheduling in time for this
- **Meaning:** Allowing meaning to shape crises, gratitude (e.g., gratitude walk or journal), checking in with our purpose



PRACTICAL  
TIPS FOR  
SELF-CARE



TOGETHER IN  
COMMUNITY

“SUFFERING  
WITH”  
(CHO, 2019)

- Overcoming our fears of being abandoned, looked down upon, or scorned for our weaknesses in order to vulnerably seek help from others in humility
- “To be humble takes courage, courage to become vulnerable and be seen as vulnerable. Similarly, trust needs to be learned and it cannot be learned in isolation. For one to overcome distrust, he or she needs to be in relationships. After all, one cannot know what trust is and what it takes when standing alone. Humility and trust connect, whereas pride and distrust separate.”



# COMPARATIVE SUFFERING

(BROWN, 2020)

- We shame ourselves for feeling emotions and feel that we don't have the right to feel pain in comparison to others
- We need to give ourselves the permission to feel
- Empathy and emotions are not “zero-sum” games
- Empathy for ourselves creates more empathy for others
- “Empathy is the antidote to shame” (Brown, 2020)

VERBALIZING  
TOGETHER  
(LIEBERMAN, 2007)

- “Naming” it with one another
  - Ask, don’t tell
  - Private conversations
- Checking in with each other
- Being in community and being able to have someone to walk through these moments with is a powerful experience

## WORST THINGS TO SAY/DO

(KESSLER, N.D.)

- Trying to “fix” the other person. Even with good intentions, it could lead to more grief and feelings of guilt.
- Rationalizing or trying to explain the loss: “There is a reason for everything.”
- Being judgmental: “You brought this on yourself/they brought this on themselves.” “Are you over it yet?”
- Minimizing the loss: “Well at least you can still...”
- Over identifying: “I know how you feel.”
- Being uncomfortable with their feelings: “Be strong.”

## BEST THINGS TO SAY/DO

(KESSLER, N.D.)

- Recognize the loss that they experienced: “I am so sorry for your loss.”
- Be supportive: “I wish I had the right words, just know I care.” “I’m just a phone call away.” “We all need help at times like this, I am here for you.”
- Be about their feelings: “I don’t know how you feel, but I am here to help in any way I can.”
- Give a hug instead of saying something.
- Do not be time limited.
- Just being present with them.

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

- Be compassionate towards others
- Checking in before meetings
- Calling close community members (e.g., small group, friends) and sharing/being present
- Give permission to feel and check motive before “exhortation”
- Encourage self-care for self and others
- Be sensitive to the rest/respice that ministry members need in new circumstances

TAKEAWAY

What is one practical that you can apply to anxiety or grief, either for yourself or your community?

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