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FINDING PEACE IN THE STORM

Understanding Anxiety,
Panic Attacks, and Ways to Cope



A2
[MIND]
MATTERS

MENTAL HEALTH
NEWS LETTER

A2 LIONS CLUB



Dear Lions of A2

Welcome to our May issue of Mind Matters.

This month, we focus on a topic that touches many lives, often quietly and invisibly anxiety and panic attacks. In today's fast-moving world, many people carry worries, fears, and emotional pressure behind a smile. For some, these feelings can grow so intense that they affect daily life, relationships, sleep, and overall well-being.

Anxiety is not weakness, and panic attacks are not something to be ashamed of. They are real experiences that deserve understanding, compassion, and support. By learning more about them, we can begin to replace fear with awareness and judgment with kindness.

In this issue, we explore what anxiety and panic attacks can feel like, what may trigger them, and practical ways to cope when they arise. Most importantly, we remind one another that no one has to face these struggles alone. Support, hope, and healing are possible.

Let this issue be a gentle reminder to pause, breathe, and care for both yourself and those around you.

With care, 

"Sharmmila Rajkumar"

Meet^{the} Editor



Let's inspire, encourage, and lift each other up - one story at a time!

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Finding Calm in the Storm



Understanding Anxiety, Panic Attacks, and How to Cope Anxiety is something many people experience at some point in life. It can appear as constant worry, fear about the future, overthinking, restlessness, or a feeling that something is wrong even when everything seems fine. For some, anxiety comes and goes. For others, it can become so intense that it affects daily life, sleep, work, relationships, and peace of mind.

Panic attacks can be even more frightening. They often come suddenly and can feel overwhelming. A person may experience a racing heart, shortness of breath, dizziness, sweating, shaking, chest tightness, nausea, or a sense of losing control. Some people even feel as though they are having a heart attack. Although panic attacks are usually not dangerous in themselves, they can feel very real and terrifying.

One of the hardest things about anxiety and panic attacks is that they are often invisible. A person may look completely fine on the outside while struggling deeply inside. This is why understanding and compassion are so important. Anxiety is not attention-seeking. It is not weakness. It is not a lack of faith, strength, or courage. It is a real mental and physical experience that deserves care and support.



What Anxiety Can Feel Like

Anxiety does not look the same for everyone. For one person, it may be constant worry about family, health, money, or work. For another, it may be fear of going into crowded places, speaking in public, driving, or being away from home. Some people feel anxious in their bodies first, with headaches, stomach pain, muscle tension, or exhaustion. Others feel it in their thoughts, with racing fears and an inability to relax. Sometimes anxiety builds slowly. At other times, it appears without warning. Panic attacks can happen during stressful moments, but they can also happen when someone is resting, travelling, shopping, or even trying to sleep.





• Why Do Panic Attacks Happen? •

Panic attacks happen when the body's alarm system reacts strongly, even when there is no immediate danger. The body moves into "fight or flight" mode. Heartbeat increases. Breathing changes. Muscles tense. The brain becomes alert. This is meant to protect us in a real emergency, but with anxiety, that alarm can be triggered too easily. Stress, trauma, grief, major life changes, lack of sleep, health worries, too much caffeine, or long periods of emotional pressure can all play a role. For some people, there is no clear trigger at all, which can make the experience even more confusing.

• How to Cope in the Moment •

When anxiety or a panic attack strikes, the goal is not to fight it with fear. The goal is to help the body and mind feel safe again. Start with your breathing. Try breathing in slowly through your nose for four counts, holding for four, and breathing out gently for four. Slow breathing can help calm the body's alarm response. Ground yourself in the present moment. Look around and name five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. This can help bring your mind away from fear and back into the present.

Remind yourself gently:

"This is anxiety. This will pass. I am safe right now." Simple words can be powerful when fear is rising. If possible, sit down in a quiet place. Loosen tight clothing. Sip water. Place your feet firmly on the ground. Some people find comfort in holding a cold object, touching a soft fabric, or focusing on one calm point in the room.

Healthy Ways to Manage Anxiety Over Time

Coping with anxiety is not only about surviving difficult moments. It is also about caring for your mental health daily. Good sleep, regular meals, movement, fresh air, and reducing caffeine can all help. So can talking to someone you trust. Many people struggle in silence because they feel embarrassed or think they should "just get over it." But healing often begins when we speak openly and ask for support. Journaling can also help. Writing down thoughts, fears, or triggers may help identify patterns. Relaxation practices such as prayer, meditation, stretching, gentle exercise, or listening to calming music may bring comfort as well. Professional support matters too. A doctor, counsellor, therapist, or mental health professional can help a person understand what they are experiencing and find the right support. No one should feel ashamed to seek help. Reaching out is a sign of strength.

How We Can Support Others

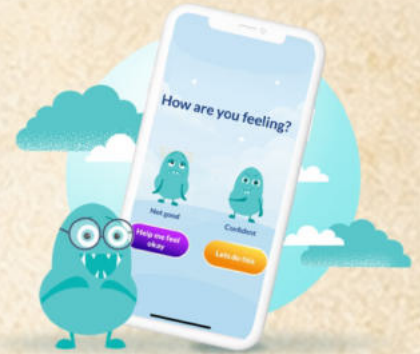
If someone you know is dealing with anxiety or panic attacks, your calm presence can make a big difference. Do not dismiss their feelings by saying, "Just relax" or "It's all in your head." Instead, offer reassurance. Speak gently. Stay with them if they want company. Encourage slow breathing. Remind them that they are not alone. Sometimes the kindest thing we can do is simply listen without judgment.

A Final Thought

Anxiety and panic attacks can feel frightening, exhausting, and isolating. But they do not define a person, and they do not mean someone is broken. With understanding, practical coping tools, and support, people can learn to manage anxiety and find calm again.

This month, let us choose compassion over judgment, patience over pressure, and support over silence. A calm word, a listening ear, or a simple check-in could mean more than we realize. Because even in the middle of the storm, hope is still there.





This month's featured app is Rootd: Panic Attacks & Anxiety. Rootd is designed to support people who experience anxiety and panic attacks, offering tools such as a panic button, guided breathing, lessons, journaling, visualizations, sleep support, and an emergency contact feature. It is available on iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, and iMessage, and is free to download with in-app purchases.



Rootd is a fitting choice for this month's theme because it focuses on both immediate support during a panic attack and longer-term coping tools for anxiety. It has also been recognized as an Apple Editors' Choice and is highly rated on the Canadian App Store.

Did You Know?

A panic attack can feel like a medical emergency, but it is often the body's stress response going into overdrive. Anxiety is real, common, and treatable.

Reminder:

Mental health apps are a helpful support tool, but they do not replace professional care when needed.



Available on iOS and Android (Free)

Small tools. Big impact. One step toward renewal.



5-Minute CALM ACTIVITY

Ground and Breathe

When anxiety rises, this quick exercise can help bring the mind and body back to the present moment.

Grounding



Sit comfortably and place both feet on the ground.

1

Breathing



Breathe Slowly
Take a slow breath in through your nose for 4 counts.
Hold for 4 counts.
Breathe out slowly for 4 counts.
Repeat this 4 times.

2

Awareness



Notice Your Surroundings
Look around and quietly name:
5 things you can see
4 things you can feel
3 things you can hear
2 things you can smell
1 thing you can focus on right now

3

Reassurance



Say a Calm Reminder
Repeat gently to yourself:
"I am safe. This feeling will pass. I can get through this."

4

Why it helps:

This activity helps slow breathing, reduce panic, and gently bring attention away from fear and back to the present moment.

Did You Know?

Many people living with anxiety look completely fine on the outside while struggling deeply within. A little kindness, patience, and understanding can make a big difference.



CLOSING MESSAGE

Immediate Help in a Crisis

- Talk suicide Canada
- ☎ 1-833-456-4566 (24/7)
- 💬 Text: 45645 (4pm-12am ET)
- 🌐 talksuicide.ca

- 9-8-8; Suicide Crisis Helpline
- ☎ Call or Text: 988
(24/7, free and Confidential)
- 🌐 Nationwide access

Mental health Support Lines

- Wellness Together Canada
wellnesstogether.ca
- ☎ 1-866-585-0445
(Talk to a counsellor, 24/7)

- Text: "WELLNESS" to 741741
Connexontorio (for mental health,
addiction, and gambling)
- ☎ 1-866-531-2600 (24/7)
- 🌐 connexontorio.ca

Support for specific Groups

- Kids Help Phone
- ☎ 1-800-668-6868 (24/7, for youth)
- 💬 Text: "CONNECT" to 686868
- 🌐 kidshelpphone.ca

- Hope for wellness (for indigenous
peoples)
- ☎ 1-855-242-3310 (24/7)
- 💬 chat:hopeforwellness.ca

- LGBT Youthline
- ☎ 1-800-268-9688
- 💬 text:647-694-4275
- 🌐 youthline.ca

Anxiety and panic attacks can feel overwhelming, but no one should have to face them alone. With understanding, support, and the right coping tools, it is possible to find calm even in difficult moments. This month, let us remind ourselves and others that it is okay to pause, to breathe, and to ask for help when needed. A little kindness, patience, and reassurance can make a meaningful difference in someone's life. Let us continue to build a community where mental health is spoken about openly, support is offered freely, and hope is always within reach.

Therapy and Community Services

- BounceBack Ontario
- 📄 Self-guided CBT program for anxiety and depression
- 🌐 bouncebackontario.ca

- ☎ 211 Ontario
- 🌐 Dial 2-1-1
211 ontario.ca
for finding mental health, housing,
food and community programs