

How To Help

It can sometimes be hard to help someone struggling with anxiety, but knowing the right things to say and do can make a world of difference for that person

How To Help Someone with Anxiety: 6 Things You Can Do

Anxiety can be difficult to calm, whether you are the one suffering, or a loved one is suffering. It is hard to watch someone struggle with anxiety, and it is even harder to struggle through it yourself.

The overwhelming fears and concerns that anxiety brings on can be distressing, so knowing what to do when it comes to helping someone with anxiety is an important part of being part of someone's support system.

Consider this a helpful guide to six of the best things you can do to support somebody dealing with anxiety.

Learn About Anxiety

[Learning about anxiety](#) is one of the most important aspects of helping someone who is struggling. Learning more about anxiety disorders can allow you to better understand the way they work and how they manifest, which can in turn help you help those around you.

Anxiety is complex and can be hard to diagnose, which is why it has been broken down into several categories. The most common of these include:

- **Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD):** GAD is characterized by symptoms that occur most of the time for at least six months, and people who have GAD generally worry about everyday things and activities such as work and school.
- **Social anxiety disorder:** Social anxiety disorder is also sometimes referred to as social phobia, and it is characterized by intense fears of being judged, rejected, or thought of in a negative way.
- **Panic disorder:** Panic disorder is characterized by repeated, unexpected panic attacks. A panic attack can be understood as a period of intense fear, anxiety, and discomfort.

Understanding that someone with anxiety likely has one of these disorders or a combination of them, can make it easier for you to spot signs and symptoms associated with those disorders.

Additionally, if the person is brave enough to share with you which disorder they struggle with or suspect that they are struggling with, you can then do some more research about that specific disorder for more tailored information.

Know How To Spot the Signs of an Anxiety Attack

Understanding the signs and symptoms of anxiety disorders can help you recognize when someone around you is in need of support, even if they do not ask for help.

Common symptoms include:

- Restlessness
- Rapid heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Headaches
- Difficulty controlling feelings of fear and worry
- Irritability
- Overthinking
- Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep

These are just some of the many ways that anxiety can manifest, but being on the lookout for these signs can help you stay aware.

Some symptoms of anxiety are physical symptoms, making it easier for you to notice them. Others, though, are behaviors or thought patterns.

If you do not know the person very well, these may be slightly more difficult to pick up on, but listening carefully when they speak and paying attention to what they are saying may help you identify the signs.

Listen To Them

Reaching out to someone who is struggling and just listening to what they have to say can be a huge help. Generally, a great way to approach this is by letting the person know that they are welcome to come to you for support whenever they need to and that you are happy to be there for them.

The same way that most of us just want someone who will listen and allow us to vent, people with anxiety sometimes need the same. For some people, just venting those anxious thoughts and getting them out of their mind can lessen the worry.

4. Offer Support Without Being Controlling

It is important to keep in mind that the best way to support someone is to [help them](#) help themselves as opposed to finding solutions for them. This can include offering to attend the first session of a therapy group with them or helping them come up with other beneficial ideas.

Guidance can be really helpful when someone is struggling, especially if that guidance still allows them to feel like they have some form of control over what they do next.

5. Know What Is Helpful

Someone who is struggling with anxiety sometimes needs to be encouraged to seek out methods of coping at home.

Some coping strategies include:

- Exercising regularly
- Practicing mindfulness and deep breathing
- Meditating
- Getting enough sleep
- Limiting alcohol and caffeine consumption
- [Taking supplements that can help ease feelings of anxiousness and stress](#)
- Limiting the time spent worrying without fighting the worry

Helping a person who is struggling learn about some of these strategies can put them on the right path, and you can even offer to join in on certain activities, like working out, meditating, or practicing mindfulness. Doing these things as a team can make the person feel less isolated by their disorder.

It all comes down to encouraging self-care as a means of helping the body and mind to be as balanced and well-equipped to handle anxiety as they can.

Caring for yourself can come in different shapes and sizes, but it can mean keeping up with your [skincare](#) routine if that is important to you, maintaining your vitamins or [supplements](#) schedule, and generally making sure you are getting rest and getting all the nutrients your body needs to do its best.

Self-care looks different for different people but making sure someone stays on top of their own self-care as a means of avoiding overwhelm is an excellent way to help them in the long-run.

6. Know What *Isn't* Helpful

There are certain responses to anxiety that are not helpful and should be avoided. These include:

- **Enabling the person** by attempting to modify your behavior or the environment in order to accommodate their anxiety. This is unhelpful because, though unintentional, it can cause their anxiety to worsen. Helping them avoid difficult or scary situations also means they are avoiding opportunities to overcome those fears.
- **Forcing confrontation** on the person who is struggling. In the same way that you should not help them avoid anxiety-inducing situations, you should also avoid forcing them into doing something scary or overwhelming. Pushing someone who is not ready for that challenge can do more harm than good.

Takeaway:

When it comes to incorporating these tips into your life when those around you are in need, it is important to keep in mind that you have to take care of yourself in order to help take care of others. Anxiety is a scary and powerful thing to suffer from, and those dealing with it need a strong support system that can help them along when they need it.

You can become a great source of support for someone with anxiety by doing things like committing to learning more about anxiety and anxiety disorders, offering support by listening and helping them come up with solutions, and learning certain strategies for approaching an anxious person.

Putting these tips into practice will allow your loved ones with anxiety to feel more comfortable when it comes to confiding in you about their struggles, or when a situation rolls around that overwhelms them.

Sources:

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