

# How to handle anxiety

At the moment, many people are worried about the corona virus. Below, we have collected some advice on what you can do if you find yourself feeling overwhelmed.

Fear and anxiety are natural reactions in crisis and disaster situations. They are, fundamentally, good reactions, as they can make you careful in the face of threats or potentially difficult situations, such as the ongoing corona/covid-19 outbreak. However, a lot of anxiety can be overwhelming.

Here's some advice for what to do to lower your stress levels.

- Do not bottle everything up. Speak to someone about your feelings and fears.
- Socialise with someone you trust and feel safe with, even if you do not want to talk about your feelings.
- Do not get wrapped up in the news feed or conversations about the current situation.
- Continue to do things that make you feel good, even if they do not feel as valuable as before.
- Stick to your routines or create new ones that fit the situation. It signals calm and security to your body.
- Activate yourself physically.
- Try to balance your thoughts and avoid thinking in "black or white".

## Accept your fears

Sara Hedrenius is the Red Cross's expert on crisis support. She says that the corona virus outbreak is causing extra anxiety because it is a threat that we cannot see and that makes it difficult to assess the risks involved. A lot of different information is currently circulating and people respond differently. Places that used to make us feel safe have started to make us scared.

"To be aware that the situation is complex and that risk analysis is difficult, can in itself be an important part of handling anxiety. It is natural to be worried. Accept it, and try to act as calmly and rationally as possible", she says.

## Be critical of your sources

For the safety of you and others, it is important to keep updated and follow the recommendations of the authorities.

"The amount of information we want and can handle differs from person to person. It is important to be critical of the sources behind the information and to only use reliable sources. We recommend, for example, [www.krisinformation.se](http://www.krisinformation.se)", says Hedrenius.

She also shares a few simple tips if you find the massive news outlet difficult to handle.

- Chose one or a few trusted sources that you follow every day. You can also ask someone close to you to inform you if something important has occurred.
- Limit the time you spend on news outlets and social media.
- Deactivate push notices on your phone.
- Avoid updating yourself right before bedtime.

The fact that we cannot see the corona virus with our own eyes and that it can be present at locations that we normally consider safe, can result in people underestimating the risks.

“It can, for example, result in people being careless with washing their hands. The most important thing right now is to take the authorities recommendations seriously in order to limit the spread of the virus. To keep updated and act actively will add to a sense of control that can dampen your anxiety”, says Hedrenieus.