Keep calm and work on



You're facing a tough week at work. You have tight deadlines, your workload is massive, a co-worker is getting on your nerves and your boss has just asked you to make a big presentation to senior management – tomorrow! Your stomach is in knots, your heart is pounding and you can't concentrate. You're feeling tense, nervous, irritable and worried about everything. You are experiencing anxiety.

A normal reaction

We all experience anxiety from time to time. It's a normal physiological reaction to stressful situations. In the workplace, anxiety can affect our productivity, performance and relationships with clients and colleagues. It's important that we develop strategies to stay calm and work on. Try the following:

- ***Take breaks***. A few minutes spent walking around the block or quietly drinking a cup of tea can help clear your head and calm your body.
- ***Set boundaries.*** Try not to bring work home with you or check your work email or voice mail after hours.
- ***Set realistic expectations.*** Being upfront about deadlines and working at a manageable pace can save you hours of anxiety.
- **Know your triggers**. Pay attention to situations that cause you anxiety. Whether it's speaking in meetings, noisy surroundings or last minute requests, when you know what is likely to make you uneasy, you can better anticipate your reactions and find effective coping strategies.
- ***Take care of yourself.*** *Your body is better able to cope with stressful situations when you are eating* healthy foods, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep and engaging in social activities outside of work. During stressful periods, it's also wise to limit caffeine, sugar and alcohol intake.
- ***Share your anxieties.*** Talk to trusted friends, family members and colleagues. People who care about you can provide perspective, support, and sound advice.
- ***Ignore negativity and gossip.*** Gossiping and venting with coworkers may provide temporary relief but over time increases everyone's stress and anxiety and creates a toxic environment.
- **Breathe.** When we start to feel anxious, we tend to **breathe** shallowly. This makes our **anxiety** worse. Try to take a few moments to breathe deeply and slowly.
- ***Take advantage of employer resources and benefits.*** *Find out what your employer offers – from assistance programs,* discounts to gyms or skill-building courses.

Lastly, if anxiety becomes part of your everyday life, seek professional help. Contact your family doctor or assistance program for resources and support.