

HELPING YOUR ANXIOUS FRIEND

WHAT TO KNOW

- Anxiety occurs when we believe that something bad is going to happen to someone or something that we care deeply about. **It can impact our thoughts, feelings, behaviors and even our bodies.**
- **Anxious thoughts** may lead to nightmares, confusion, overthinking, difficulty remembering things and procrastination.
- **Anxious feelings** may lead to struggles with panic, depressive thoughts, hopelessness, worry, anger and confusion.
- **Physical symptoms of anxiety** include sweating, insomnia, rapid heartbeat, headaches, trouble breathing or shortness of breath, stomach issues, restlessness, chest pain and muscle aches. These come from the body's natural response to a presented threat referred to as 'fight or flight' which causes the body to release hormones that fuel immediate action.
- **Stress or Anxiety?** Everyone experiences stress and anxiety at one time or another. Stress is a response to a threat in a situation. Anxiety is a reaction to the stress.
- Statistics show that **more than 18% of adults** in the US suffer from anxiety, that's **40 million people!**
- Anxiety can be situational, social or general. **Anxiety is NOT a result of lack of trust or knowledge in the Gospel.** It is a result of being human!

WHAT TO DO

- **Be Calming. Be Present.**
 - The ministry of presence and simply being a listening ear is by far the most helpful ministry you can offer.
 - Empathize, normalize and encourage your friend through prayer.
 - Remember: We are more alike than different! Seek to find commonality between the sufferer and yourself We ALL experience anxiety and stress in this broken world.
- **Stay humble!** Only God can bring peace of mind. Don't try to fix your friend. Admit your limitations and seek out advice.
- **Encourage your friend to reduce news intake or triggering situations.**
- **Offer to walk with your friend.** Being in creation can help remind them of the characteristics of God: His power, design, love and nearness.
- **Practice/model selfcare.** Encourage them by offering healthy foods, water and tea.
- **Model breathing exercises with them.** This calms the mind, flushes excess hormones and helps to restore rational thought. Offer 'breath prayers.' Help with grounding exercises.
- **Give Scripture to help your friend meditate.** Play calming, scripture-based songs.

- **Physicalize their Faith**

- Give them a stone or symbol to hold on to as they recall God's promises.

- Psalm 18:2 "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

- **Encourage them to do something they enjoy with you.** Things like art, cooking, gardening, hiking, serving or music can draw them out of themselves and to God. Psalm 34:8 "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!"

- **Encourage them to speak to a counselor and/or physician** who can support and provide loving accountability for the use of medication and their desire to uncover the source of anxiety.

- **Encourage them on all the small steps of growth.** God is on the move!

- **Encourage "thought journals"**

- Write down anxieties. They may seem enumerable at times, but they are numerable. Philippians 4:4-9

- What troubles are for today and how can we entrust ourselves to God? 1 Peter 2:23 "...but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

PASTORAL SUPPORT

Contact: Biblical Soul Care Pastor Isaac Van Epps at ivanepps@doxa.church.

RECOMMENDED COUNSELING CENTERS

Doxa Biblical Counseling: [INTAKE](#)

Fieldstone Counseling: Christ-centered, clinically informed biblical counseling center. [INTAKE](#)

RESOURCES

[A Small Book for the Anxious Heart](#), Book by [Edward T. Welch](#)

[How do you help the socially anxious connect at church?](#), Video presentation by [Dr. Todd Stryd Panic](#)

[attacks 1: A counseling case study](#), Podcast by [Dr. David Powlison](#)