



# Healthy Ways To Face Fears & Live With Uncertainty

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# The Numbers Don't Lie...

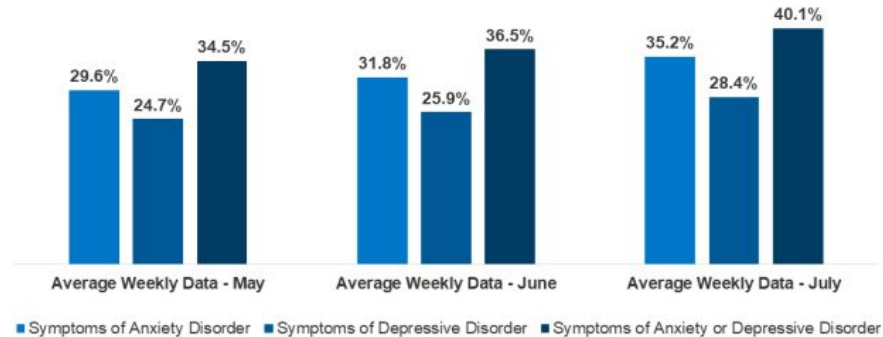
In a Kaiser Family Foundation Tracking Poll conducted in mid-July, 53% of adults in the United States reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted due to worry and stress over the coronavirus. Kaiser Family Foundation.

The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use:

<https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>

Figure 1






Average Share of Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety or Depressive Disorder During the COVID-19 Pandemic, May-July 2020



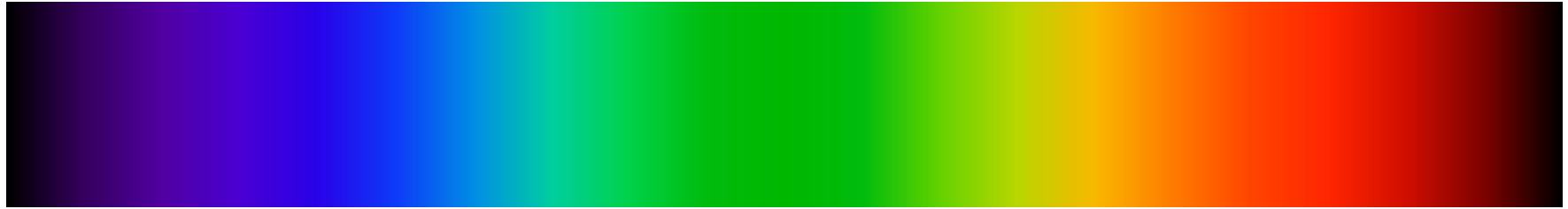
NOTES: These adults, ages 18+, have symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder that generally occur more than half the days or nearly every day. Data presented for 'symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder' also includes adults with symptoms of both anxiety and depressive disorder. Data presented for May is the average of the following weeks of data: May 7-12, May 14-19, May 21-26, May 28-June 2; for June, data is the average of June 4-9, June 11-16, June 18-23, and June 25-30; for July, data is the average of July 2-7, July 9-14, and July 16-21 (last week of published data).

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, 2020.

# Why Talk About Anxiety Right Now?

COVID -19	INTERRUPTED WORK + SCHOOL	POLITICAL TURMOIL + RACIAL UNREST	GROUNDED @ HOME	THWARTED PLANS
Unknowns	Added Pressure	Division + Discord	Cancelled athletic events	Traveling Vacations canceled
Potential for Sickness + Death	Crowded Sharing	Polarization	Church @ home	Family holidays limited
Masks – breathing, can't see smiles	“Home” schooling within Public School System	Fear	Shopping by Amazon	Changed in Entertainment
Distancing + Avoidance of People	Technology Increase (Fatigue)	Anger	Gyms close	\$\$ Financial Changes
	Less Personal Time	Media/Social Media		
				
Fear, Isolation, Uncertainty	Frustration, Decision Fatigue, Powerlessness	What's Real? More Fear, More Anger. Less Eye Contact. Color Emphasized.	Increased Substance Use, Loneliness, Escalates present problems	Tired Disappointed Lonely

# Spectrum of Anxiety



## Realistic Worry

OK to plan + prepare because it really could happen today



## Irrational Worry

Excessive thoughts and planning for something that is possible but is not likely



## Panic Attacks



**Obsession:** Fixating on the “what ifs...” to the point of exhaustion or not being able to focus on daily life



**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:** The feeling that you have to do a particular something so that a bad thing doesn't happen



**Agoraphobia:** Fear so great that a person only feels safe at home or a small # of places

# What is Anxiety? Where Does It Come From?

## Anxiety is feeling Fearful or Worried

- Some personalities are more prone to anxiety or worry, some less.
- Symptoms: increased heart rate, nervousness, watchfulness, sweaty palms, racing thoughts
- Anxiety will not hurt us. It may make us feel like we're having a heart attack, or come out of the blue, it will not hurt us. In fact, it's where our body is at its peak performance.
- The Bible says fear does not come from God.
- God knows fear is real and is difficult for us to handle, so the Bible speaks frequently about it. "Do not fear" is literally written 365 times in scripture
- Fear gets our eyes onto our circumstances or onto ourselves and off of God
- How to deal with Anxiety: Face it, Add in truth, Trust God
- Self Talk: when we're stressed, depressed or anxious, our thoughts typically run negative. If we stay in those thoughts our feelings tend to escalate negatively. Adding in truth is an essential part of dealing with anxiety.

# FEAR: Flee or Fixate?

Generally - people respond to fear in two extreme ways

## **Flee from Fear**

*avoid, distract or ignore*

## **Fixate on Fear**

*Try to out-plan, prepare for, and consider all the possibilities*



## **If you're an Avoider**

- The fear you run from is bigger than the fear you face. Fear grows when you don't face it.
- Learn how to deal with the fear 1st. Distract 2nd
- Getting comfortable in discomfort is a really important skill



## **If you're a Fixator**

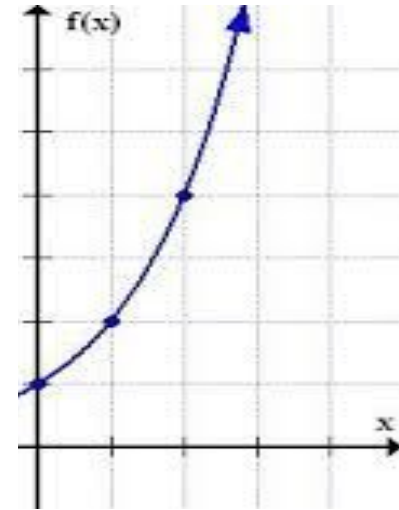
- While avoiders need to go toward their fear and face it, Fixators need to stop petting and feeding their fears. What you feed grows
- Focus on what is true, not just what is possible
- Be present in the now
- Choose to trust. Trust that you are stronger than you feel, that you are not alone, and that God is with you

# Possible vs Probable

Fear is best when it has a percentage of truth mixed in. It's the hook that keeps you engaged.

- Emotionally acknowledge that something is possible. It is possible that you can catch COVID and die. Dismissing it as not possible is lying to yourself. Face and accept the reality of the possible.
- Intellectually assess the probability of it happening. Look around you and make honest observations about what is happening. Use truth to combat the fear that the probability is higher than it actually is. Use appropriate amounts of effort to lower probability.

Effort



Prevention

There is an appropriate amount of effort that reduces probability.



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@Sir\_Mdee



**I've got 99 problems and 86 of them  
are just scenarios in my head that I'm  
stressed about for no logical reason at  
all.**

12:36 PM · 2020-12-13 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

**332** Retweets **17** Quote Tweets **1,040** Likes



# “What if?”



# “What is?”



# “Even if”

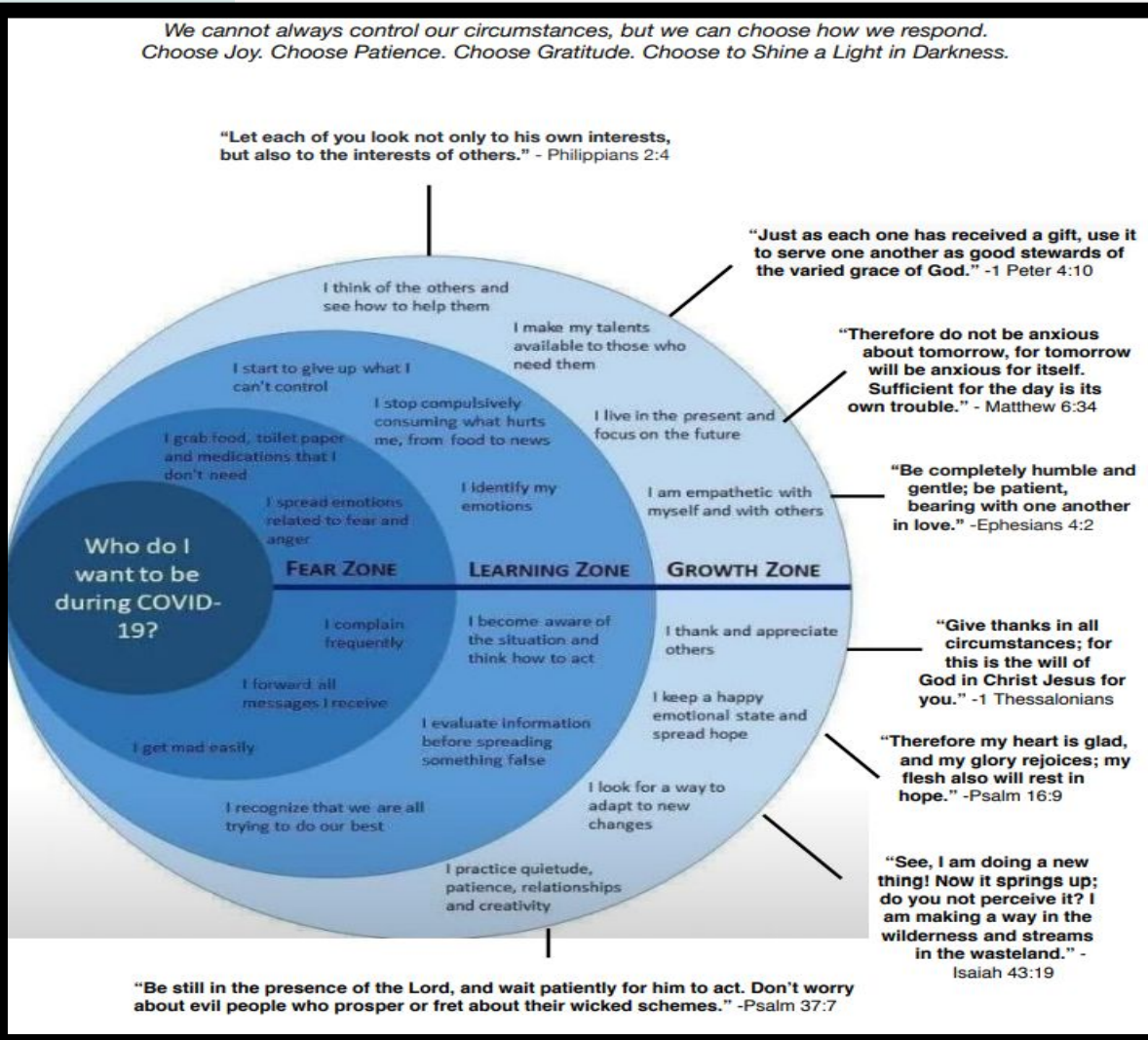


Spiral of Feelings:  
Overwhelmed,  
stuck, stressed

1. What can I do \_\_\_\_\_?  
*(List what you CAN do, then do what you can)*
2. What can't I do \_\_\_\_\_?  
*(List what you CANNOT do)*
3. Accept (*active choice*) what you cannot do.  
Release the unknowns and what you cannot do.  
Release out loud (*verbally or prayerfully*) or write it down. Then, remind yourself that you “let it go”
4. Get moving! Focus on doing something that needs to happen in your immediate life (*wash your dishes, grocery shop, clean out your car, check on your kids*)

Position of  
Faith + Trust.  
If something  
bad happens,  
you can and  
will handle it.

# Who do you want to be in times of trouble?



# How to help yourself get mentally & emotionally more healthy this week:

- Exercise! 30 minutes of sweating REALLY helps offset anxiety and clear your mind
- Watch out for negative thinking! Be in the now. While depression often focuses on the disappointments of the past, while anxiety stresses about the worries for the future. Be where you are.
- Regulate your breathing. When you are anxious you either hold your breath or breathe erratically. Remind yourself to breathe calmly. It will slow your heart and calm racing thoughts.
- Get in person! Isolation is a problem. Even if you have to be socially distanced, find creative ways to spend time talking. Talking through concerns gives you perspective and can help balance your thoughts.
- Choose cheerful media
- Quit caffeine! Caffeine is an upper -- it makes anxiety worse! There's no shame in decaf!

## Tell Yourself the Truth

*"This is just anxiety"*

*"It won't hurt me"*

*"It will be over soon"*

*"I can handle this"*

*"Just breathe..."*

# What if facing fear, truthful self talk & trusting God is not enough for you right now?



Talk with a Therapist, Christian Counselor, Church Elder or Pastoral Staff



Talk with your doctor about medication. Sometimes a light, consistent dose of an anti-anxiety medicine can take enough of the anxious edge off so that you can do the healthy things that will help you calm anxiety