



## Easing Anxiety in Anxious Times

### A Ten-Step Plan for Mental Wellness

# 1. **Get enough** (and better) **sleep**. Most people need 7-8 hours. Every night. Unplug from technology an hour (or more) before bedtime. Don't sleep with your phone nearby. Try to go to bed and get up at a regular time.

# 2. **Eat healthy foods**. Replace caffeine, alcohol, and fast food with fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins. Food affects mood. Small changes can make a big difference.

# 3. **Exercise regularly**. To boost your energy, help you remain calmer and more focused, lower the symptoms of anxiety and depression, and get better sleep, exercise (even a simple walk) is powerful medicine.

# 4. **Be mindful**. The past is gone. The future is not yet here. Enjoy the gift of this moment, which is why we call it the present. Dwell on what is right, not what's wrong. Be thankful for all the good in your life.

# 5. **Do things you love**. Listen to music, garden, paint, or hang out with your cat or dog. Do things that put a skip in your step and a smile on your face.

# 6. **Cultivate spirituality**. Faith has a positive impact on mood and mental health. It generates optimism, enriches relationships, creates support systems, and improves the quality of life.

# 7. **Limit technology**. This is a biggie. Watch less TV, limit social media, and spend fewer hours on the phone. You'll feel better. A lot better.

# 8. **Invest in relationships.** Good relationships keep us happier and healthier. Stay close to your friends, especially those who are particularly anxious or isolated right now.

# 9. **Get help if you need it.** Asking for help is not a sign of weakness; it's a sign of humanity. We are meant for community. We need each other.

# 10. **Be kind to yourself.** Flight attendants tell you to “put your own oxygen mask on first” in an emergency. You can't help others if you're gasping for air. Make your mental health a priority. Be good to yourself!

- Information Source: Executive Director of Mental Health of Erie County, NY