

COPING WITH ANXIETY

When we're anxious we usually take very shallow breaths, cutting down on the oxygen level in our brain. This lack of oxygen will make you feel out of control, not able to solve the problems you might be facing. Breathing deeply will calm your brain and help you feel more relaxed.

When you feel anxiety coming on, change your breathing. Take a deep breath through your nose, hold it, and then let it go out through your mouth.

When you breathe in, you're gathering strength. When you breathe out, you will relax.

In my CBT anxiety class we learned to use coping statements while we do this Breathing. We repeat the same statement whenever we need to do our breathing. When we get tired of one statement, we try another one.

The following are some coping statements:

- I can ride this through - I don't need to let this get to me
- I have survived this before and I can survive this time, too.
- I will use my coping skills and allow this to pass.
- Anxiety will not hurt me, even if it does not feel good.

But I've found something that works even better....much better. By making my coping statement a Bible verse or part of a verse, I encourage myself – not only psychologically – but spiritually. I'm turning to God, trusting Him to help me get over my fears. In the process I draw closer to Him. Every time I breathe and repeat a coping verse to myself, I'm practising His presence.

BIBLICAL COPING STATEMENTS

You will want to find your own favourite verses to use, but here are a few to get you started:

- The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures, (Psalm 23:1-2)
- The LORD your God is with you,
he will quiet you with his love. (Zephaniah 3:17)
- The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. (Psalm 18:2)

- Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1Peter 5:7)
- “Be still, and know that I am God;” (Psalm 46:10)
- Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)
- ...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)
- I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)
- ...in God I trust; I will not be afraid.
What can mortal man do to me? (Psalm 56:4)
- “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- Remain in me, and I will remain in you. (John 15:4)
- “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)
- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)
- With God all things are possible... (Matthew 19:26)
- “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)
- [Nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God... (Romans 8:39)