

# A FRIEND'S GUIDE TO ANXIETY

## UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORTING

Supporting a friend with anxiety can be challenging and may even seem scary at times. However, by gaining some knowledge and understanding their needs, you can become a reliable friend during their difficult moments.



### Educate Yourself

Take the time to read resources about anxiety. Engage in open, judgement-free conversations with your friend where you listen to how anxiety affects them.



### Practice Patience

Avoid pressuring your friend to go beyond their comfort zone. Respect their space and recognize that the difficulty to control worries is inherent to anxiety – it's not a choice they make.



### Listen & Show Support

Inquire about your friend's needs, listen attentively without rushing to respond. Acknowledge their feelings with kindness and offer your support without trying to fix their issues. Suggest professional assistance and commend their progress in handling difficult situations.



### Regular Check-ins

If your friend appears anxious during your time together, gently check in with a simple, "Hey, are you feeling anxious right now?" This serves as a gentle reminder that, as a friend, you value creating a safe space for them to share and normalize their feelings of anxiety.

*Just being there and open to understanding your friend's needs already makes you a great friend.*

## Take Care of Yourself Too

Establishing boundaries is crucial when supporting a friend with anxiety; remember, it's not your role to "solve" their problems.



### Set Boundaries

Set clear boundaries and avoid taking on too much. Set your limits and how much you can help. "I'm here to support you, but I can only talk until 8 PM so I have time to unwind before bed."



### Seek Support

When supporting your friend, it's important to respect their privacy. However, if you need guidance, you can seek advice from a trusted adult without revealing specific details about your friend's situation.



### Express Your Feelings

It is healthy to express your feelings about the friendship with a trusted individual and seek support when you need it too.

## Anxiety can sometimes act as a trigger, leading to a panic attack. Here are Simple Steps to Show Support During a Panic Attack

- ✓ Stay calm and offer reassurance
- ✓ Find a quiet place where they can concentrate on their breathing until they feel better.
- ✓ Encourage slow and deep breaths (square breathing).
- ✓ Shift their focus away from the activating event by engaging in structured or repetitive activities, such as counting aloud or observing and naming items around you.
- ✓ Ask them to describe what they can see, hear, feel, or smell.