



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# Managing Anxiety



## LEARN ABOUT ANXIETY

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are facing challenges and stress. Anxiety is a normal reaction to stressful situations and is how our mind and body prepare us to handle that stress. Understanding how anxiety affects us is an important first step in managing our anxious responses.

When we feel anxious, we often notice physical symptoms, such as body pains or sweaty palms. We may feel nervous or irritable. The Anxiety Profile shown below describes how anxiety shows up in our bodies, thoughts, behaviours and moods.

## THE ANXIETY PROFILE

(adapted from *Mind Over Mood*, First Edition)

### ■ MOODS

- Anxiety can make us feel nervous, cranky, anxious and/or panicky

### ■ PHYSICAL REACTIONS

- Sweaty palms
- Body pain
- Racing heart
- Flushed cheeks
- Feeling dizzy

### ■ BEHAVIOURS

- Avoiding situations where anxiety might occur
- Leaving situations when anxiety begins to occur
- Trying to do things perfectly or trying to control events to prevent danger
- Being mean or passive aggressive towards others (lateral violence)

### ■ THOUGHTS

- Feeling like danger is everywhere
- Feeling like you can't cope
- Feeling like no help is available
- Worrying and focusing on worst-case scenarios



## TECHNIQUES FOR COPING WITH ANXIETY

- Relax your body and mind. Try taking three deep breaths – when we give our bodies permission to calm down, our brain no longer thinks that we are in danger.
- Change the ways you think and talk to yourself about stressful events. Focus on your resiliency in dealing with stressful events in the past.
- If you feel overwhelmed by a situation, try sitting with the discomfort for a short period of time. This will help you gain confidence that you can manage the anxiety. If you are feeling anxious about a large task or problem, see if you can break the task into smaller pieces and work through them bit by bit.
- Practice ways of caring for yourself that promote wellness and increase your ability to handle stress.