



Managing COVID-19 Vaccine Anxiety

Anxiety is something we all experience at times. It is a feeling that occurs when we are faced with a situation that we perceive as threatening. Anxiety triggers our 'fight or flight' response which results in a number of changes in our body that help to keep us safe. However, in the absence of real danger, we can sometimes experience symptoms of anxiety that can be unhelpful. Some people find these symptoms to be uncomfortable or distressing, therefore it can be useful to develop ways of managing this anxiety response. A new situation which is not uncommon for people to feel worried about is receiving their COVID-19 vaccine. This poster includes some suggestions on coping with COVID-19 vaccine anxiety which may be helpful.

Controlling Our Breathing

Anxiety can cause our breathing rates to increase. Gaining control over our breathing and slowing it down can sometimes help. To do this, try taking a deep breath in through your nose and hold for a few seconds. Gently breathe out through your mouth. Try doing this for 3-5 minutes.

Support

Talking to friends and family about our worries can help us to feel less distressed and can assist others in understanding how we are feeling. It is likely that other people will be feeling uncertain about receiving their vaccine too.

Reliable Sources

Searching for information on the vaccine may help to reduce some of our worries. However, it is important that the information we are reading has come from reliable sources such as GOV.UK or the NHS. Misinformation can be easily spread on social media and may originate from less credible sources.

Challenge Negative Thoughts

It can be useful to notice any negative thoughts that come to mind and to challenge these with alternatives. For example, replacing a worrying thought about possible vaccine side effects with "I may feel run-down, but it shouldn't last long, or I might feel completely fine. Either way, I will be more protected from COVID-19 afterwards."

On the day

Reason: It can be helpful to focus on the reasons we are choosing to be vaccinated, such as protecting ourselves and our loved ones from COVID-19.

Self-care: Prioritising self-care is really important. Arranging enjoyable activities during the lead up to and after getting the vaccine can help take our mind off things.

Talk: Talking to the clinician about your concerns may be useful as they can explain what to expect and offer you some reassurance. This may help calm your nerves.

