



Fife College

# HOW TO AVOID AN ANXIETY ATTACK



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## Understand your triggers

A trigger is a cause or an event that may start you exhibiting symptoms of panic or anxiety

### Triggers may be:

- Working too much
- Negative people in your life
- Exam/assignment deadlines
- Anniversary of past trauma
- Places that make you feel panicky
- Large amounts of people in one place
- Relationship conflicts/arguments
- Having to give a presentation

For more information and advice see the Health and Wellbeing Adviser or the Guidance team  
[johnblakey@fife.ac.uk](mailto:johnblakey@fife.ac.uk)  
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### Think of anxiety like a bucket of water

The 'triggers' are what fills that bucket up – some may drip in very slowly, others may pour in rapidly. An anxiety attack is when the bucket is full and overflows, it becomes out of control quickly, but may have been filling up steadily for years!

### How to avoid your bucket from overflowing: Self-Care

1. Exercise regularly
2. Eat regularly and healthily
3. Manage your sleep and try to get 8 hours a night
4. Avoid negative and toxic people
5. Organise and plan ahead (e.g. don't leave assignments to the last minute)
6. Reduce caffeine and don't drink energy drinks
7. Have a therapeutic pastime (walking, talking to friends, keep a diary)

### What to do if your bucket overflows

#### Counting

1. Find a quiet place to sit
2. Close your eyes
3. Count to 10
4. Count to 20
5. Keep counting and concentrating on the counting.

#### Breathing exercise 1

1. Breathe in deeply for four seconds
2. Hold the breath for seven seconds
3. Release the breath slowly for eight seconds
4. Repeat

#### Relax

Relieving the stress in your muscles can reduce anxiety levels.

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes
2. Breathe slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth.
3. Make a tight fist and squeeze tightly.
4. Hold your squeezed fist for a few seconds and notice all the tension you feel in your hand.
5. Slowly open your fingers and be aware of how you feel.
6. Continue tensing and then releasing various muscle groups in your body

#### Breathing exercise 2

Breathe slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth, and notice:  
5 things you can see  
4 things you can touch  
3 things you can hear  
2 things you can smell  
1 emotion you can feel

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