

## What to Do When Someone Shares With You They Have Anxiety



### Resource Description

Share this document with the chapter to provide your members an opportunity to learn more about the appropriate response and reactions for when someone discloses they have anxiety.

You can share this on OmegaOne or just at a chapter meeting. This could also be passed out prior to a program about mental health.

### Getting Started

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common types of mental conditions and as the number continues to rise it's important to remember that anxiety is normal and healthy until it interferes with someone's life.

#### #1: Don't Compare Your Anxiety

- Comparing your anxiety to someone else's is not helpful. Your reply that you had a panic attack when you realize how much the new iPhone costs is not the same as what your friend that experiences the often paralyzing and illogical anxiety that your friend faces when they have to interact with people in a new social setting.
- People with anxiety disorders can experience anxiety over things that others might not and it can disrupt their way of life. **Instead, say, "I'm here for you."** Showing your friend that you care and letting them know that you can listen without judgment goes a long way to support them.

#### #2: Don't Give Unsolicited Advice

- While your recommendations may be coming from a place of caring, don't give advice about how someone should manage their anxiety. Everyone has different techniques to manage their anxiety and while running might work for someone, meditation might work for someone else.
- Leave it to the professionals to give advice on techniques for managing anxiety. **Instead, ask, "What can I do to help?"** Likely, your friend already has some things that you can do or say to help them with their anxiety. Then make sure when they ask you to do something that you follow through and do it no matter how silly the request may be.

### #3: Don't Try to Fix It

- If you are always asking your friend if they are okay or seeking a status update on their wellbeing, this could put pressure on them to feel like they need to be better now. If you notice your friend is experiencing anxiety, **ask if they would like to go for a walk or find a quieter place to sit.** This can get their mind off the panicking and force them to think about something else which can be very helpful.

### #4: It's Okay to Express Your Concern

- If you are worried about an increase in your friend's anxiety, let them know you are concerned. Tell them that you are worried about their change in behavior. When doing so, focus on the specific things you have witnessed with these changes. For example, if they used to spend a lot of time with friends or they used to enjoy going to sporting events but they have not been doing this anymore. Point this out and urge them to consider getting help. If this feels overwhelming for them, ask how you can help them find a professional to talk to or offer to walk them to counseling services on campus.

## Sources Used

[What to Say \(and Not to Say\) to Someone with Anxiety](#)