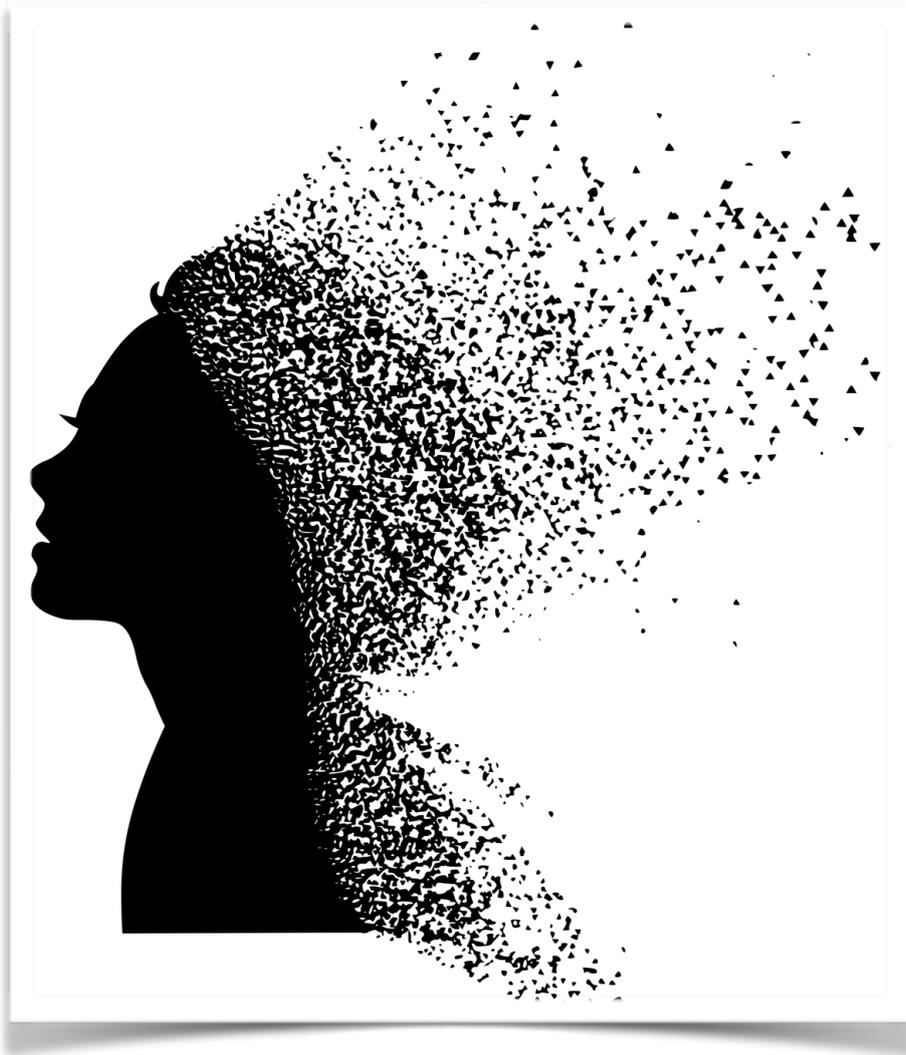


## Blue Shadow: Let's get talking about Anxiety



This week I'd like to get us talking about anxiety. With everything that's going on at the moment, feeling anxious is a lot more common in society than it was just a few weeks ago and it's likely to get worse the further we get into this.

### **What is anxiety?**

The Cambridge Dictionary defines anxiety as "*an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future*". I think it would be fair to say we're right in the middle of that!

Anxiety is a perfectly normal human response when we feel that we are under threat. It is part of our natural 'fight or flight' reaction to perceived danger, but if it goes on for a prolonged period of time it can lead to mental ill health. The current measures are likely to go on well beyond the initial three weeks. I've heard three months, six months or even longer suggested, but no one knows for sure.

Anxiety is a unique and personal experience for each of us. There are some things we can control and some things we can't. I'm anxious about health, family, friends, work, money, isolation, the

future... And I'm anxious about so many other people being anxious! It's easy to worry about all of them and I sometimes feel that I'm already living beyond my emotional means.

### **So what can we do?**

Well, talking about it is a really good place to start. When we're anxious, the last thing we want to do is cut ourselves off from loved ones, friends, colleagues and all of the things that are familiar to us. It can really help for someone to literally hold our hand or give us a hug but now, for many of us, that's just not possible.

The good news is that the lockdown is aimed at achieving physical isolation to stop the virus spreading, not social isolation. We can still talk to each other and that is so important. We have the technology, so let's make it work for us! Yes, I know it's not the same, and I'll always prefer the personal touch, but I've been involved in a number of online conversations recently, for both business and personal reasons and it works remarkably well. So whether we're using a phone, a tablet or software on our computer, we can stay connected.

We can also boost our resilience by establishing new routines, perhaps including some new, positive, coping mechanisms and focusing on self-care. Humour can really help too, so see if you can have a good laugh every day.

### **Let's work together**

Telling everyone you're fine, when you know you're not, can be exhausting. Just being able to talk honestly about how you are feeling, without the stigma, can make things seem so much better. So let's do that.

The concept of a wartime mentality actually makes me feel better because I associate it with people working together to benefit us all, and it gives me hope that we will be stronger when we get to the other side. So, in these extraordinary times, if you feel yourself going to pieces, talk to someone about it and hang in there. We will get through this!

Take care and be safe.

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*If you are experiencing severe symptoms it may be a good idea to speak to your GP. Alternatively there are a number of self-care options available. I list a few of these on my [website](#) as a starting point.*

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*Next time: Wellbeing...*