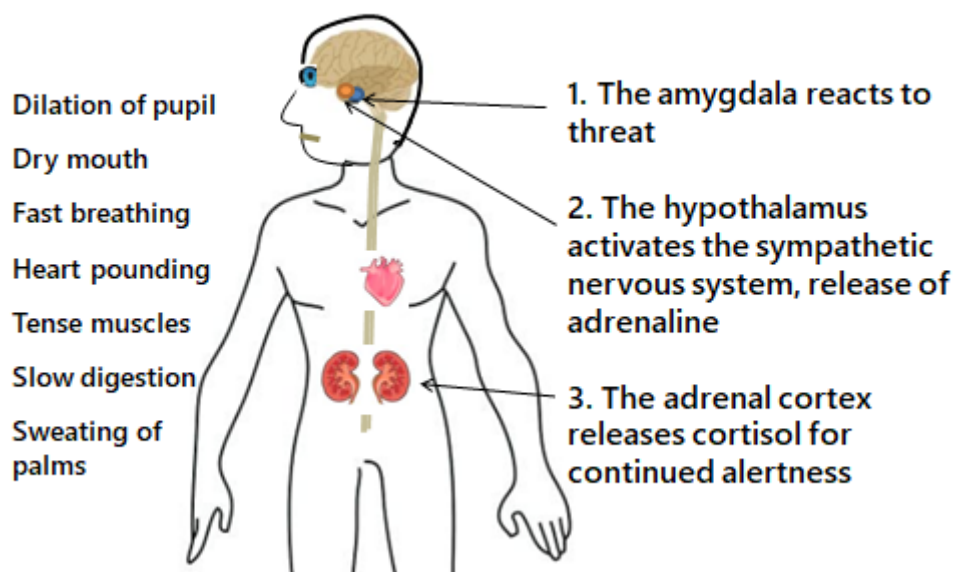


Coronavirus, anxiety and how not to join the panic pandemic

Carrying on from my email.....I am referring to it as a brain based reaction to help you see that firstly,.....it is a normal reaction! This virus is a potential threat and the brain is preparing for it with a fight or flight response. It is a survival mechanism that is designed to keep us safe. In the wilderness, if you were faced with a scary lion, this system would kick into action.....however, wrong messages about a virus on your phone can also elicit the same reaction as the brain is not good a differentiating a real threat from a social threat – where a fight or flight response is then unhelpful.

The fight or flight response



Some of the symptoms you might experience are that if you become too anxious you can start to mimic the physical sensations (feeling hot, heart racing, sweating, shortness of breath/ shallow breathing and sometimes hyperventilating) which can be confused with symptoms of the virus itself!

We can do lots of things to try and calm this normal reaction.....there is a threat...but we can deal with it in a pragmatic way and we must remind our bodies and our brains that we can manage..... Here are some tips:

- Think about the sources of information that you read and follow advice that is only reputable advice – not circulars on Facebook!
- Minimise how much time you check your mobile and come across this information
- Keep perspective, keeping in touch with family to keep ourselves happy – do Skype calls so you and your children can keep in touch with friends.

- Keeping things as normal as possible – do usual things, bake, cook, watch movies together, walks, puzzles, games, reading.....
- Don't over check yourself, or websites with scary information and try hard not to follow panic buying - maintain perspective!
- We are intolerant of uncertainty and this makes anxiety worse – its then not the illness, it's the uncertainty, which gets worse with all the checking. No one comes off Google checking symptoms and coming away feeling better!

And finally.....

- Fight/flight is reduced by exercise and gets rid of adrenaline (the panicky hormone). Go for a walk. Pause and take 5 deep breaths.....

We are in this as a community, we are in this together and we need to look out for each other and show some compassion to those who are more prone to anxiety. Let's all try and keep some normality in this abnormal situation.

If you are feeling particularly anxious, please do feel free to come in and see me, I can certainly help with practical strategies for managing anxiety. I am also circulating a really helpful, straightforward guide that you can share with family and friends.

Keep well.....

Tej



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