



THE NEW

INDIAN EXPRESS

Anxiety? Knit it, Paint it away

We suggest activities that can help your brain release the 'feel-good' neurotransmitters. Also, ask for help from experts



Published: 04th May 2021 01:21 AM | Last Updated: 04th May 2021 10:17 AM

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Express News Service

HYDERABAD : Covid-19 has unleashed a mental health pandemic, too. Apart from doctors in hospitals, therapists have been reeling under a sharp spike in calls asking for help as people grapple with something they were not prepared for.

At such a time, it becomes necessary that besides asking for help, we look inwards and equip ourselves with resources that can help build resilience. No one can pour from an empty cup, and it's necessary to help ourselves before we can put ourselves there for others. We are listing a few activities here that can help bring some respite in the turbulence.

activities help?

- Cooking and knitting have been directly linked to relieving stress. When we do activities like knitting or crochet, we have to repeatedly create patterns. This is because while making something with our hands, signals get sent to the body to naturally release dopamine, the “feel-good chemical” our body produces to make us happy.
- These activities have also been linked to reducing arthritis and relieving chronic pain due to the movement involved.
- Such hobbies also help in calming the negative thoughts as one gets busy and fully engrossed in creating patterns.
- The important thing is doing these activities keep one occupied and also boost self-esteem as you realise you are able to create something beautiful with your hands.
- Activities like cooking help “strengthen the connections even from a distance.” When you cook using your friends’, your mothers’, or your grandmothers’ recipes, for example, you are connecting with them. This connection gives you the much-needed feeling of belonging and that the people you trust and value are with you despite the distance. This makes you feel safe and happy.

- Activities like cooking also have a performative aspect to them. It is something you end up doing for yourself with no external pressure and that helps calm anxiety.
- It also becomes something that you can control in the current situation where a lot of things are out of our control. Thus gives a

Painting

If the world upsets you right now, you can create your own on a canvas. Art therapy has been used for long to understand non-verbal emotions and relieve stress. The cheery burst of colours and the satisfaction of creating something new can give one a sense of accomplishment. It can help translate convoluted thoughts into art and give a glimpse into our own soul. It can help relieve stress and give a break from social media.

Cooking

It is a way to connect to nature when you are cooped up inside the house. Working with mother earth's produce and whipping up something special can be rewarding and give you a sense of accomplishment. It will also provide you an opportunity to be active and use your muscles. It's a great way of learning new things and using your creativity. Lastly, the satisfaction of eating a homemade meal gives a great mental health boost for everyone trying to eat healthy during the pandemic.

Reading

The word 'escape' might have a negative connotation, but in an anxiety-ridden world, escaping is a good idea. It can give you a breather from doomsurfing and make you feel refreshed. There is no better way to escape reality than reading a book. It's a portal to new worlds, both real (non-fiction) and imaginary (fiction). It is a good way to exercise your brain and light up your imagination. Studies have found that regular reading can help people escape memory-related illnesses later in life. In this era of shrinking attention span, finishing a book can restore your faith in your ability to concentrate on a particular task.

Knitting

Any activity that requires your entire attention has the power to ground you. It can help you disengage from your surroundings and put all your energy into creating something. Many knitters say that the rhythmic and repetitive movement of the needles is similar to meditation. It can help you practise mindfulness and get rid of anxiety. It also helps you discover a new world where you can exchange ideas with knitters from around the world. There are many active knitting communities online which can open new doors for networking and making friends.

Journaling

The distressing news and visuals around us during the pandemic can give rise to a long, negative train of thoughts. These jumbled-up thoughts can bring much psychological distress and a feeling of being trapped in the head. Writing these thoughts down in a journal can help us de-tangle them and understand the source of our agony. Seeing our thoughts in the written form gives us a better understanding of our mind. Such clarity can help us resolve our internal conflicts and makes room for thoughts that serve us positively. Recording our thoughts helps us go back to events in the past and understand how they shaped our personality.

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