

## COPING WITH ANXIETY

When we're anxious we usually take very shallow breaths, cutting down on the oxygen level in our brain. This lack of oxygen will make you feel out of control, not able to solve the problems you might be facing. Breathing deeply will calm your brain and help you feel more relaxed.

When you feel anxiety coming on, change your breathing. Take a deep breath through your nose, hold it, and then let it go out through your mouth.

When you breathe in, you're gathering strength. When you breathe out, you will relax.

In my CBT anxiety class we learned to use coping statements while we do this breathing. We repeat the same statement whenever we need to do our breathing. When we get tired of one statement, we try another one.

The following are some coping statements:

- I can ride this through - I don't need to let this get to me
- I have survived this before and I can survive this time, too.
- I will use my coping skills and allow this to pass.
- Anxiety will not hurt me, even if it does not feel good.

But I've found something that works even better....much better. By making my coping statement a scripture verse or part of a verse, I encourage myself – not only psychologically – but spiritually. I'm turning to God, trusting Him to help me get over my fears. In the process I draw closer to Him. Every time I breathe and repeat a coping verse to myself, I'm practising His presence.

Browse through some scripture and find some that you could use as coping statements when you need them.