

AlongNow

How to Accompany a Person Living With Anxiety

Professional Human Companionship • Educational Guide

Anxiety can involve persistent worry, tension, fear, restlessness, difficulty concentrating, physical discomfort, or avoidance. A companion can help make the moment calmer and more manageable without acting as a therapist.

Understand the Person, Not Just the Label

When someone is anxious, too many questions, surprises, choices, or rapid conversation may increase overload. Predictability, calm communication, and permission to slow down can help.

Helpful Companion Practices

- Speak calmly and at an unhurried pace. Ask one question at a time.
- Ask what would make the setting more comfortable: quieter surroundings, a short walk, water, fewer people, or simply sitting together.
- Help the person focus on the immediate next step rather than solving everything at once.
- Respect boundaries and ask before touching or hugging.
- If anxiety repeatedly disrupts daily life, encourage appropriate professional support.

What to Avoid

- Do not say “there’s nothing to worry about” or argue the person out of their feelings.
- Do not force exposure to feared situations or use surprise challenges.
- Do not provide medical or medication advice.

A Helpful Phrase

“We don’t have to solve everything now. What would make the next ten minutes easier?”

Safety and Scope

AlongNow companionship is non-clinical. A companion should not diagnose, provide psychotherapy, prescribe or change medication, or replace professional medical or mental-health care. If the person appears to be in immediate danger, has suicidal thoughts, or may harm themselves or someone else, contact appropriate emergency/crisis services. In the United States, call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline; call 911 for an immediate life-threatening emergency.

Educational basis: National Institute of Mental Health guidance on depression, autism and ADHD; National Institute on Aging principles for dementia care and communication. This AlongNow guide is educational and is not medical advice.

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