

Dealing with world events – Information for CITB Apprentices

Following the recent invasion of the Ukraine by Russia, it may have left you feeling a range of emotions such as anger, shock, fear and worry.

As a result, your mental health can be seriously impacted. With access to live reporting of the conflict on our television screens and social media, it may be difficult protect our mental wellbeing from additional distress, uncertainty and sense of hopelessness that this type of crisis brings.

CITB recognise that the present circumstances in Ukraine may be causing a great deal of stress and anxiety for many people including our apprentices.

How you might be feeling?

While many people experience anxiety on a day-to-day basis, with the added burden of this crisis, it can feel unmanageable during times of uncertainty and can display itself in many ways. Some people may feel an uncontrollable sense of dread or constant worry about the future. Some may have difficulty concentrating or not able to relax. Others may feel tense and have difficulty sleeping.

Following the current conflict in Ukraine there are many more feeling this way. Remember that this is quite normal and it's okay, not to be okay. Especially during times like these.

By listening to your own body and mind and noticing when you feel anxious, stressed or pushed to the limit can help you to start managing these feelings.

There are many signs that you are becoming overwhelmed by anxiety, some of which are:

- Having trouble staying focused and/or concentrating on work
- Having trouble falling asleep or feeling restless
- Shallow breathing, faster heartbeat
- Constantly checking social media or news sources for information on current affairs.

When world events such as conflict happen, there are several things you can do for yourself to begin the process of becoming less overwhelmed by them.

1. Recognise and acknowledge your emotions regularly, rather than avoiding them. Try to separate what is in your control and what is out of your control. Attend to and action the things that you do have control over.
2. Get enough sleep, eat regular nutritious meals, do some physical activity. Stay active and moving.
3. Get some physical exercise. If you are at work, trying reserving 15 - 20 minutes of your lunch break to take a “wellness walk” outside.
4. Talk to someone you trust and spend time connecting with friends or family who make you happy but try to avoid talking only about the current situation or world events. If you do, try to be constructive and productive in your discussions.
5. People that pursue their interests and hobbies are less likely to experience stress and depression. Doing the things, we love and enjoy can be necessary distractions.

6. Try some breathing and mindfulness exercises to help you relax. It can be hard to clear your mind when you are impacted by current events, but research has shown that people practising breathing techniques and yoga feel more positive day to day. Managing uncertainty and anxiety caused by world events social media has a lot to answer for regarding causing peoples anxiety so this is probably at this time one of the most important tips.
7. Take a break / Switch off from the news - or at least from untrusted sources
 - Avoid excessively checking social media and the news
 - Distract yourself from what's going on to give yourself a break
 - Taking a break from "doomscrolling" will help you manage your emotions.

Anxieties are often linked to lack of control; uncertainty is a key factor as to why you are experiencing heightened anxieties and stresses during rare world events or conflict. We all have different tolerances of uncertainty, and it affects us all differently but either way, it is important to manage these uncertainties to help reduce these additional stresses.

Find out more about what's happening

The news you see or read isn't always going to be accurate. Something you see or read on social media might be trying to get your attention by scaring you. Or it might only be showing one side of a story.

When you see something online or in the news that makes you upset, angry or scared, there are things you can do:

- Don't react straight away. Sometimes headlines or stories are designed to make you have a reaction, so make sure that you've read the information in the article or check that you've heard what's been said properly.
- Be careful of 'fake news'. This is news and stories on the internet that aren't true. There are lots of places online that aren't that reliable or accurate and it's important to find trustworthy news sources, such as Newsround (which also has useful information on how to spot 'fake news')
- Look for evidence. Ask yourself whether the news you're looking at has facts to confirm what it's saying and whether it's got all of the information
- Think about why the news exists. Some news and sites will try and convince you about something. Look for lots of different views so you can decide for yourself
- Get a second opinion. This could be from different sites or an adult you trust.

[War in the Ukraine: What do all the words mean?](#)

Help and Support

If what you have seen in the news or social media is upsetting and causing you to feel by something you've seen in the news you can always speak to your CITB Apprenticeship Officer or a counselling support partner such as <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/> or the <https://www.constructionindustryhelpline.com/> who offer a range of mental health support initiatives.