

2023

ANXIETY: Economic

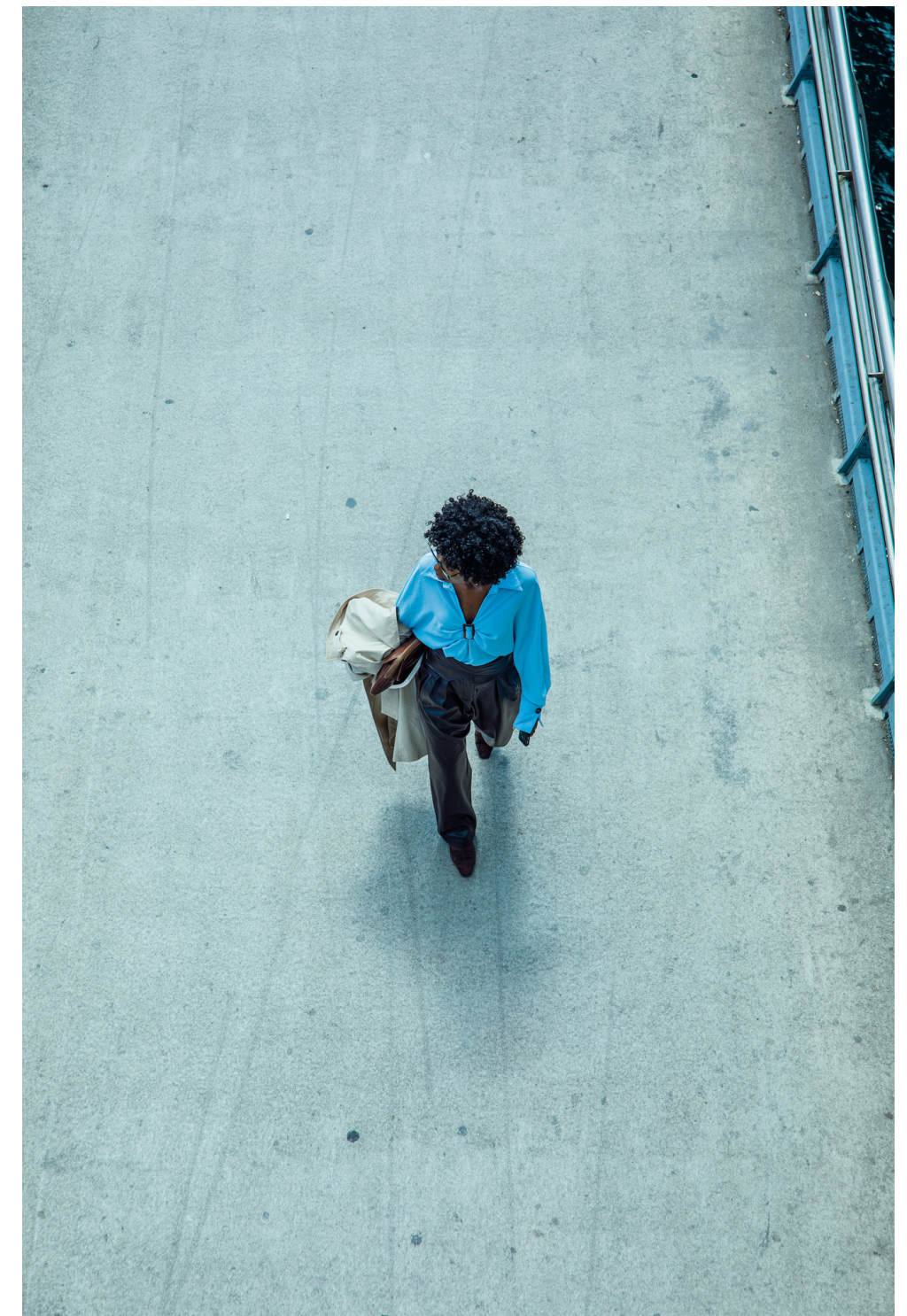
U N C E R T A I N T Y



Ongoing effects of the pandemic, rising inflation, and economic slowdowns have placed tremendous pressure on British Columbia's economy, as has been recognized by BC's Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, presenting challenges for both families and businesses. With economic uncertainty, individuals are understandably experiencing heightened anxiety about the future, especially when it comes to money, jobs, mortgage, credit card payments, shrinking retirement savings and home equity. Unfortunately, this anxiety manifests into sleepless nights, a lack of motivation, and in the practice of unhealthy behaviors like excessive drinking and smoking. As a result, there has been a rise in feelings of depression, irritability, anger, and fatigue among the public.

Dealing With Uncertainty

Dealing with uncertainty is an unavoidable part of daily life. As we cannot see the future, we can never be certain what exactly is going to happen day to day. Anxious people will often try to plan and prepare for everything as a way of avoiding or eliminating uncertainty. Some of their behaviors include: seeking excessive reassurance from others, list-making, double-checking, refusing to delegate tasks to others, procrastination, avoidance, or distraction. Learning to cope with and manage the anxiety of uncertainty takes a lot of hard work. It is an ongoing process. During times of extreme stress and uncertainty, people fall back on old behaviors - this is normal. But it is important to remember that there are useful tools that can be used to manage anxiety.



How to Manage the Anxiety of Uncertainty

- **Learn about anxiety.** Understand what is happening to you. Recognize that anxiety is normal and adaptive, but can become a problem when our body reacts as if there was real danger.
- **Practice relaxation.** Relaxation techniques include: breathing calmly, taking slow and gentle breaths, and progressive muscle relaxation where you alternately tense and relax muscles.
- **Challenge anxious thoughts.** When anxious, we see the world as threatening and dangerous. Try to reframe your thoughts in a clear and more objective way, without being overly negative or focusing only on the bad.
- **Face your uncertainty.** When dealing with financial uncertainty we need to plan or the fears and stressors are likely to overwhelm us, leading to anxiety and/or depression.
- **Be proactive about financial planning.** Create a budget, balance your chequebook, and evaluate your finances. Remember that you may not be able to control the economy but you can change how you handle your own life and finances.
- **Avoid isolation.** Do not allow your anxiety about finances to hurt your relationships. If you have been avoiding certain people, situations or places out of anxiety, start exposing yourself to something that is not too frightening and then work up to the things that cause greater anxiety.
- **Seek professional help.** Contact a trained professional to help guide and assist you in adopting tools to manage your anxiety.

According to Statistics Canada's Community Health Survey of Mental Health & Wellness:

- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health problems in Canada.
- People suffering from an anxiety disorder are subject to intense, prolonged feelings of fright & distress .
- Their continuous unease and fear can interfere with their relationships with family, friends & colleagues.
- Anxiety disorders affect behavior, thoughts, emotions & health.
- It is common for people to suffer from more than one anxiety disorder & for it to be accompanied by depression, eating disorders or substance abuse.
- Anxiety disorders can also coexist with physical disorders.

In the event that you are experiencing any of the forgoing thoughts and/or behaviors, contact your EFAP for confidential assistance.

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