

# How to deal with anxiety, stress when the world feels overwhelming

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Anxieties are heightened around the world as Russia continues its attacks on Ukraine. Those who continuously monitor the European situation, as well as the ongoing political strife in the U.S. and the global pandemic,

can feel anxious or in despair.

"We've been hit by COVID-19 for two years, and we're already beaten down and exhausted," says Dr. Robert Bright, a Mayo Clinic psychiatrist. "Now with this terrible war in Europe—that's just overwhelming. We need to really reach out to the people we love and who we care about and support them and get their support during this time."

While it's important to stay informed, Dr. Bright recommends limiting exposure to the media.

"We need to know what's going on, but I think obsessively watching it all 16 hours of the day that you're up and going over and over it, it is not going to change it. It's going to have a negative toll on your mental health."

Dr. Bright recommends finding ways to help that are meaningful to you. Connect with other like-minded people, reach out and talk to friends and neighbors, help through humanitarian efforts and focus on the things that you can control. Attend to [self-care](#) by getting enough sleep, eating a [healthy diet](#), practicing gratitude. There are some excellent online sites and [smartphone apps](#) for guided mindfulness-based meditation to help focus on the [present moment](#), quiet the mind and reduce stress.

"Let the people you trust know if you are struggling and seek professional counseling or consultation if depression and anxiety are overwhelming you," he says. "It is not a sign of weakness to need help when things are overwhelming."

Dr. Bright adds, "It can be really helpful to seek out help from a professional at times, and to be able to recognize when in fact you are really struggling."

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