***A Formula for Managing Anxiety***

***Access support –***Part of changing your own problem is to openly acknowledge it with people in your life who will be a strong support to you. This produces a form of caring accountability. Many people talk with trusted friends, see a counselor or join a support group. The main ingredient here is to open up vs. keeping yourself isolated, since it is within isolation that problems grow and we become hopeless.

***Making an ongoing personal commitment to yourself*** - Once again, realizing that practicing “staying power” with yourself is one of the most important elements to managing your anxiety over time. In alcoholics anonymous, individuals come quickly to realize it is a lot easier for many people to quit than it is to stay quit over time.

***Breaking out of your comfort zone*** *–* It is impossible to create permanent, long-lasting personal change and remain comfortable all at the same time. The best changes come when we allow ourselves to enter into the unknown with purpose and faith.

***A defined vision*** *–* We learn from the field of sports that defining an exact vision of how we would like things to be different, then creating measurable steps between how things are now and this desired outcome is powerful and effective. It is critical to define how your own life will be lived *without* anxiety, how you will act, how you will communicate and how you will believe about yourself and the world around you.

***A Balanced Approach:*** The best approach to managing anxiety is a balanced approach which includes focusing on all of the following areas of your life:

***Mental –*** Increasing self-talk that is positive, comforting and calming. It is a way of strengthening your own confidence in the face of fears, worries or concerns , meanwhile decreasing negative self-talk, especially eliminating the tendency to doubt ourselves.

***Social –*** Spend time in supportive, caring relationships in which you can trust, be open about your anxiety and be held accountable for change in positive ways.

***Spiritual –*** Pursue and practice your spiritual beliefs and practices on a regular basis including prayer, reading and meditation***.***

***Creative –*** Engage in whatever creative form of expression that fits your personality and passions. See [*Multiple Intelligences*](http://www.arborfamilycounseling.com/article2a.htm) for determining your ways of thinking creatively. For example, spend time playing the piano, drawing, sculpting, writing poetry, dancing, doing something physical or playing. This creative form of expression is a form of nonverbal healing and is powerful.

***Physical –*** Engage in activities to purposely calm yourself. This may include breathing exercises (see *Breathing Exercises* in Solutions and Strategies), a regular exercise of deep relaxation, regular aerobic exercise or nutritional improvements.

***Family –*** Spend time connecting with your family or other loved ones. Time spent with others in healthy and caring ways lends tremendously to our health.

***Medical –*** Some people may have to be reviewed for medication in their quest to manage their anxiety. If you wonder if this is true, then give us a call at the EAP and we will assist you in setting up a medical review.

Even though you learn about ***managing*** your anxiety, many questions may still remain. If you have any questions about yourself or someone you care about, please give us a call. If you are suffering from an anxiety disorder, treatment is available.