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Managing Post-Pandemic Anxiety: An Interview with Risa Williams

Dulcie Yamanaka · Monday, June 21st, 2021

During these long months of stress, anxiety, and uncertainty- quarantine has been nothing but normal. For the past year, people (including myself) are trying to keep their heads above the water as we survive this new normal.

As an Asian American woman living through this pandemic, taking one step outside into the world has never felt weirder. Concerning thoughts such as “I can’t leave this house without pepper spray in my pocket,” or “I really hope no one verbally abuses me while I’m walking my dog,” floods my mind. Negative thoughts like this replay in my head and makes it hard for me to get out of this endless loop.

But like I said, this is the new normal. And since I can’t force my environment to change, it’s up to me to welcome this new way of living and adjust to this routine. I picked up new hobbies, threw out everything that no longer sparked joy, and read more books to keep my mind occupied.



Risa Williams

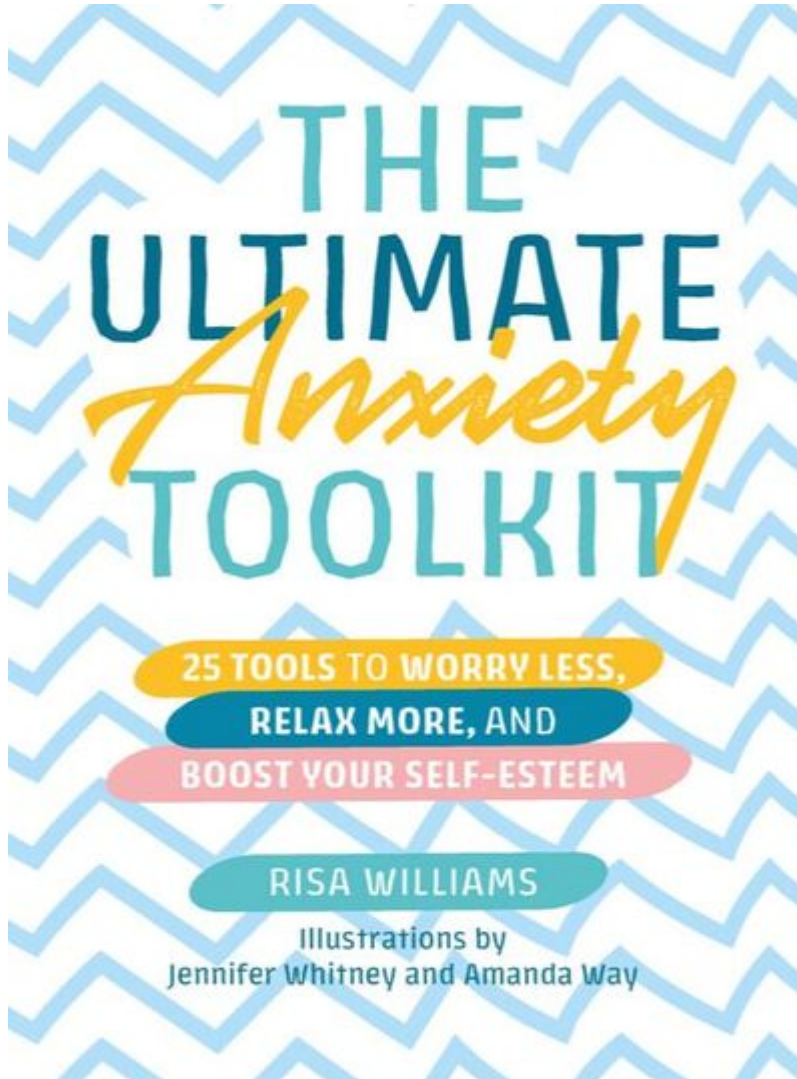
One of the books that really tapped into my emotions during this pandemic is *The Ultimate Anxiety Toolkit* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers) written by Risa Williams. Williams is a [licensed therapist and coach](#) who specializes in anxiety and stress reduction tools. In *The Ultimate Anxiety Toolkit*, she provides easy-to-use strategies to help readers manage everyday anxiety and stress. Williams provides 25 tools based on cognitive behavioral therapy, narrative therapy, mindfulness, and positive psychology to help readers feel more empowered to change their anxious thinking patterns.

With the pandemic passing its one-year mark, *The Ultimate Anxiety Toolkit* could not have come at a better time. “The national percentage of people experiencing anxiety shot way up to 62% of Americans last March (it had previously been something more like 32%). And that was last March, I can’t imagine what it must be now,” Williams says. “My intention in getting the book published was to try to help more people, as I was observing more and more people seeking therapy for anxiety and stress, and that trend has only continued.”

Having experienced many forms of anxiety growing up, Williams enjoys helping others navigate their anxiety “because I can really relate.” If she had known how to manage her stress and anxiety sooner she “would have started by teaching my high school self to talk to myself with kindness more, rather than criticism.”

As more hate crimes take place, more and more Asians all across the country struggle with how to deal with the chaos emotionally and mentally. As an Asian writer and therapist, Williams understands the anxiety that many Asians are feeling overwhelmed with right now. “Because of recent hate crimes, many people are feeling more scared and anxious right now, and they’re reaching out to therapists when they might not have before,” Williams says. “I am hoping that more people are realizing how important it is to take care of yourself emotionally during this time and how essential it is to make self-care more of a daily priority.”

Her book provides simple tools for readers to help guide them toward a positive direction that can lead to a completely different outcome. Spending some time to “meditate, relax, listen to music, connect with family, go for a walk, take a nap,” is important to do every day to help manage our stress levels. “It’s important right now to deliberately slow down more and take things one day at a time,” Williams says, “and give yourself a lot of encouragement along the way. Be kinder in the words you choose to say to yourself more frequently and see how this affects you, emotionally, over time.”



The Ultimate Anxiety Toolkit: 25 Tools to Worry Less, Relax More and Boost Your Self-Esteem
by Risa Williams

Jessica Kingsley Publishers,
www.jkp.com
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[Purchase on Amazon.](#)

The Ultimate Anxiety Toolkit by Risa Williams

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