

Book review



Finding calm: Managing fear and anxiety in an uncertain world

Category: Book Reviews

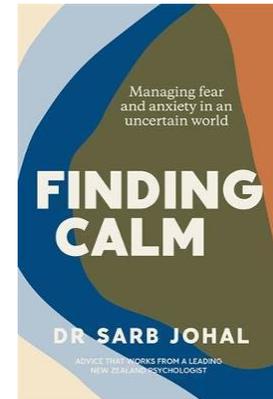
Author: Sarb Johal

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It is said our brains are incredibly powerful machines, but unfortunately come without a user manual. If they did, we would probably never have to muddle through the labyrinth of complex, counterproductive, or confusing thoughts and emotions we all sometimes experience. Luckily though, there are numerous resources we can tap into on our quest to better understand and manage our wondrous and endlessly fascinating minds. *Finding Calm* by Dr Sarb Johal is one such invaluable resource.

With a rapidly changing and unpredictable world shaped by an ongoing pandemic, skyrocketing cost of living, and climate change, it's little wonder most of us have been feeling anxious, stressed, or in serious distress in the past few years. As a clinical psychologist who helped develop psychosocial responses to recent national and global crises, including COVID-19, Dr Johal draws from a wealth of knowledge and experience and pours it into a relevant read that couldn't have been published at a more opportune time. Packed with explanations of why our brains do what they do, and what we can do about it to regulate fear and anxiety and build up resilience, *Finding Calm* is a book many will be finding helpful in the current climate.

Broken up into sixteen chapters, each chapter is peppered with easily skimmable sections and handy bullet-point summaries at the end. The advice Dr Johal gives throughout is gentle and empathetic; grounded in research and clinical psychology but 'translated' to common sense, accessible language and reinforced by exercises and techniques anyone can build into their routine.

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The insights, observations, and sage advice in this book feel evergreen, but what makes them even more beneficial is their timeliness and relevance to how COVID-19 has shaped our lives. For example, there are dedicated chapters to sorting fact from fiction and navigating the black hole of conspiracy theories, managing Zoom fatigue, supporting children and teenagers through change (including advice on homeschooling), and the anticipatory grief we may feel when our future feels uncertain. Overall, *Finding Calm* makes good on the promise to guide the reader towards a sense of calm during what's been, and continues to be, a turbulent and unsettling time.

Written by Tihana Babic, Communications and Marketing Project Lead at the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand

Disclaimer: Please note these reviews are not intended as endorsements or recommendations from the Mental Health Foundation. This feature introduces resources that may be useful for individuals with an interest in mental health and wellbeing topics.