

Let's Talk



Gaining Control of Your Life

A Self Help Workbook for Managing Anxiety

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Making life better

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NHS Foundation Trust **NHS**

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Updated and amended by Alison Sedgwick-Taylor for use in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire.

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Disclaimer

The authors have made every effort to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information in this workbook. However, it is not intended to be a substitute for medical advice or treatment. Any person with a condition requiring medical attention should consult a qualified medical practitioner or suitable therapist. Evidence suggests that self-help material is most effective when you are supported by an appropriately qualified clinician. We strongly advise that when using this workbook you stay in touch with your named clinician. If for any reason you are unable to reach them and you are feeling concerned about your mental health we recommend that you go to see your Doctor. Other agencies that can help you are listed at the back of the Workbook.

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How to use this workbook

Anxiety is a very common problem – at any one time 10% of people will be suffering from an anxiety disorder – and yet very few seek help. In picking up this workbook you have taken an important step towards managing your anxiety.

HELPFUL HINT

All the techniques in this self-help guide need practice – don't expect instant results. Stick with it and your anxiety symptoms should decrease


How to use this workbook

The workbook is separated into 8 parts. There will be many opportunities for you to write down your thoughts and feelings. This is a very important part of the process and will really help to make a difference.

- Part 1 Deciding to change
- Part 2 The facts about anxiety
- Part 3 Ways of coping with anxiety
- Part 4 How to manage unhelpful thoughts
- Part 5 How to manage unhelpful behaviour
- Part 6 Life skills
- Part 7 More life skills
- Part 8 Staying well

The programme is designed to build your knowledge and confidence week by week. At the start of each section there will be a detailed description of what will be covered and a summary at the end. To get the most out of the programme we suggest you read the entire workbook first to familiarise yourself with its contents. Then work through the book section by section. We advise you spend no less than a week practicing the techniques presented in each new section.

The techniques in this guide come from “cognitive behavioural therapy”. This is a type of therapy used by psychologists and others to help people manage all sorts of problems. The “cognitive” part deals with how we think, and how this can increase anxiety. The “behaviour” part deals with how we can reduce anxiety by changing what we do.



“ I have learnt a lot about anxiety and myself from following this programme. Give it a go - it may help make you feel more in control of your life.

John, 45 years old ”



Deciding to change?

If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got.

The steps to change are as follows:

- Recognise that there is a problem
- Believe that by changing your thinking and behaviour, you can change your life for the better
- Accept that it took you a long time to learn to be anxious and give yourself time to change
- Start by setting realistic goals to help you manage your anxiety

We understand that you cannot change things until you know more about the problem. This is why we encourage you to keep a detailed diary of your thoughts and feelings. We want you to learn more about the way you think and behave. By recognising patterns in your behaviour you can be clear about what needs to change.

Exercise 1

The aim of this exercise is twofold. It will help to motivate you and help you to set some broad goals:

Question 1

Imagine your life 6 months from now and that nothing has changed. You have not taken steps to address your problems. Write down how you would feel, what would you be doing, what impact would there be on your life?

Question 2

Now write below all the things you can start doing now to change your life, for example, join a gym, talk about your feelings to a friend, start a hobby or course, do this programme, etc

Question 3

Imagine your life 6 months from now and that you have done everything in Question 2. How would you feel, what would you be doing, what impact would there be on your life?

Use this exercise to keep you motivated. Focus on taking a few small steps at a time. Building up the small changes add up to a happier, more positive you.

What do I want to change?

Setting Goals

The first and most important part of any self-help program is to set SMART goals.

SMART stands for:

- S** Specific-make your goal specific enough so you know exactly what you are working towards. Make it involve the presence and not the absence of something
- M** Measurable-how much, by when, with whom? This way, you know when you have achieved it
- A** Achievable-make it realistic. Start small and build up
- R** Rewarding-make your goal enjoyable, rewarding and meaningful to you
- T** Time-limited-by when are you going to achieve it?

You may have made all sorts of previous attempts to change, but unless you have a clear plan and stick to it, change will be very difficult. *Write down at least three (and no more than five) goals to work on during this programme.*

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3

Goal 4

Goal 5

Find out whether you are anxious and depressed.

Visit our website to find out more about your scores. (www.talk2gether.nhs.uk)

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Please tick	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	0	1	2	3
Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
Trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
Being so restless that it is hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3
GAD7 Anxiety Total score				

Anxiety Scores **None** 0 - 5 **Mild** 6 - 10 **Moderate** 11 - 14 **Severe** 15 and above

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Please tick	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
Trouble falling/staying asleep, sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
Feeling bad about yourself – or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0	1	2	3
Moving or speaking so slowly that other people have noticed or moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way	0	1	2	3
PHQ9 Depression Total Score				

Depression Score **None** 0 - 4 **Mild** 5 - 9 **Moderate** 10 - 14 **Severe** 15 and above

Summary

- Make a decision to change and set your goals
- Give yourself the time you need to change
- It's not about making enormous changes in your life, the small steps add up
- Practice is the key to any successful self-help program. The more you do the techniques the more they will become a natural part of your life



The facts about anxiety

Anxiety and fear are natural human emotions. Although the reasons why people feel anxiety can vary, there are common symptoms which most people feel when anxious.

INFORMATION POINT

For lots more
helpful information
please visit
www.talk2gether.nhs.uk
for managing
depression and
anxiety

Anxiety is a normal reaction

Anxiety is normal. It is the natural response to danger or stress, and helps us survive by preparing our bodies to deal with the threat. Anxiety acts as the trigger for our bodies to release adrenaline. Adrenaline makes the body work faster and harder so that it can cope with danger by either fighting or running away. This is known as the “fight or flight” response.

Tick any of the symptoms that apply to you.

Physical symptom

- ☐ Tense muscles
- ☐ Erratic breathing
- ☐ Dry mouth
- ☐ Dizzy spells
- ☐ Racing heart
- ☐ Stiff jaw
- ☐ Knots/butterflies in stomach
- ☐ Frequent need to go to the toilet
- ☐ Diarrhoea
- ☐ Tight throat
- ☐ Racing heart
- ☐ Hard to swallow
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Shaky hands
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Feeling sick in stomach
- ☐ Tired all the time

Emotional symptoms

- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Angry outbursts
- ☐ Feeling anxious
- ☐ Irrational fears
- ☐ Panic attacks
- ☐ Difficulty making decisions
- ☐ Feeling bad about yourself

- ☐ Not feeling good enough
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Loss of confidence
- ☐ Teary
- ☐ Fear of criticism
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating
- ☐ Forgetful
- ☐ Feeling under pressure
- ☐ Feeling confused
- ☐ Feeling of hopelessness

Behavioural symptoms

- ☐ Avoiding situations
- ☐ Increased smoking
- ☐ Increased alcohol drinking
- ☐ Increased or decreased eating
- ☐ Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- ☐ Nail biting
- ☐ Not wanting to go out socially
- ☐ Blushing
- ☐ Obsessive actions e.g. checking locks
- ☐ Talking too much
- ☐ Not taking as much care with your appearance

HELPFUL HINT

Anxiety is a natural response to threat. When our responses persist over time, or are out of proportion, we need to learn how to manage our anxiety and stress

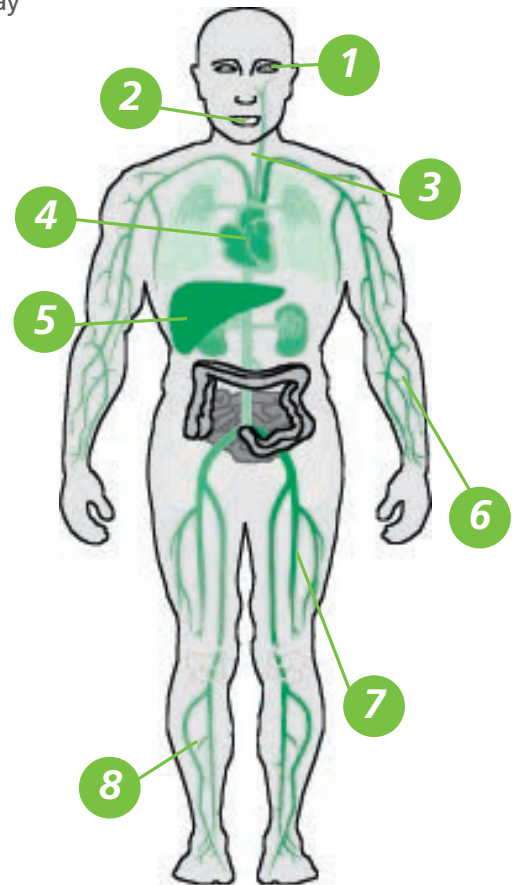
How your body changes when you are anxious

Adrenaline affects many different parts of the body, getting the body into a state of readiness to deal with threat. It is adrenaline that produces many of the uncomfortable physical feelings that are associated with anxiety, such as 'butterflies' in the stomach, tense muscles, rapid heartbeat and sweating. When adrenaline is released, our senses also become more acute, and our thinking changes – for example, we may become overly aware of danger, ignore evidence that could reassure us and under estimate our ability to cope.

What happens to my body?

Increased adrenaline affects the body in a number of ways which causes physical symptoms of anxiety. When you become anxious you may experience some, or all, of these symptoms.

- 1** Increased adrenaline makes vision sharper
After effects = visual disturbance e.g. blurring
- 2** Body stops producing saliva
Dry mouth, difficulty swallowing
- 3** Airways widen to let in more oxygen
Breathlessness, dizziness
- 4** Heart pumps harder to send oxygen to muscles
Heart beats faster, palpitations
- 5** Liver releases stored energy. Blood and energy is diverted away from skin to muscles
Stomach feels funny e.g. "knotted" tummy, "butterflies". Nausea and sickness, diarrhoea
- 6** Skin sweats to cool hot working muscles
Sweating
- 7** Blood in skin is diverted to muscles
Pale skin
- 8** Muscles in use, tense, ready to act faster
Tension, aches and pains in muscles, "shaky" feeling



Helpful and unhelpful anxiety

The 'fight or flight' response is automatic. As soon as you sense a threat, this response occurs. This was very useful in prehistoric times as there were many dangers such as wild animals, and prehistoric man needed to react to these quickly. This response helped us to be ready to run away or fight immediately after sensing a threat, and so helped us to survive.

Of course, today we don't have to worry about wild animals attacking us. But there are other dangers which mean we still need this response. For example, if you are crossing a road and see a car coming quickly towards you, the 'fight or flight' response occurs. Adrenaline is released into your bloodstream, which prepares your body to jump out of the way. This is obviously a very helpful response.

We also get anxious about all sorts of other things – for example, taking a driving test or speaking in public. These situations can trigger the same reaction, even though there may be no physical danger. A moderate amount of anxiety may still be helpful in these sorts of situations as it can make us more alert and focused and so improve our performance. However, if the anxiety is out of proportion to the situation or if it goes on for too long then it can become a problem.

When this happens we can feel physically uncomfortable because the body's reaction makes us ready to fight, but there is no danger to fight. So the tendency is to 'run away' or escape from the situation as this helps us to feel better. Unfortunately, this means that when we are faced with the same situation again we will try to avoid it, as experience has shown that this will make us feel better. But this means that we never learn to deal with the situation. It is much better to face your fears and learn to control the symptoms of anxiety.

(Some ways of controlling anxiety symptoms are described in Part Three).

Why me?

Everyone experiences anxiety and has anxious thoughts, but it is more of a problem for some people than for others. This may be due to a variety of reasons:

Personality

Some individuals may be more vulnerable to developing problems with anxiety because of their personality, for example: people who are self-critical and have very high standards; those who are always on the go (possibly looking after others) and never rest; those with low self-confidence who imagine others will judge them harshly; those who like to be 100% in control 100% of the time; and negative thinkers who always imagine the worst. If we learn about these tendencies in ourselves it can help us to manage them and the anxiety that can result from them.

Family history

It is thought that humans may be born with certain fears – such as fears of snakes, strangers, heights and so on. These are useful because the child that draws back from the edge of a cliff, or runs away from a snake is more likely to survive. As we grow older, we learn not to over-react to these triggers, although some people continue to have these fears into adulthood. Some people think that these fears are genetically inherited, and so may be passed on through families. But it is also possible for anxiety to be learnt. What is important is that it is possible to overcome fears and worries, even when there is a long history of them.

Life stresses

Events in our lives, both present and past, can increase our chances of developing anxiety-related problems. Obvious stressful events, either short or long-term – losing a job, sitting an examination, long-term physical illness, or financial worries – can all cause anxiety-related problems. However, the events do not have to be negative. Moving house, or the birth of a child, can be just as stressful as negative events. Anxiety can also be triggered by past events which have not been resolved.

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anxiety

Coping skills

People have different ways of coping with problems, for instance, by keeping busy and distracting themselves or avoiding the problem or fear. Unhelpful methods include avoidance, smoking, and using drugs or alcohol. These are often more readily available, and most people resort to them at one time or another. Unfortunately, although they can bring short term relief, they can actually increase the problem. [In Part Three we will look at more helpful ways of coping].

Social support

It helps to have someone with whom you can talk. Having good quality social support can help protect us against the ongoing stresses of life. A good network of friends, workmates or family will help protect against developing emotional problems in the face of stress. People who lack this type of support or who do not use the support they have, may find it more difficult to cope with anxiety.

Types of anxiety

Anxiety affects people differently. The following are the most common forms of anxiety and you may recognise yourself in the descriptions:

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

People with GAD are constantly tense and anxious. They feel vaguely uneasy or apprehensive most of the time and tend to overreact even to mild stresses. They worry about all kinds of things, often feeling worried about worrying. This leads to persistent symptoms of anxiety, such as aches and tense muscles, sweating, upset stomach, rapid heartbeat, dry mouth and shortness of breath. People with GAD may also be unable to sleep and may be easily startled, impatient, irritable and easily distracted. Their constant worry leaves them physically and emotionally drained.

Phobias

In contrast to the vague uneasiness of GAD, the fears in phobic disorders are more specific. People with phobias react with intense fear to things that most people don't find particularly worrying. The sufferer usually realises their fear is irrational but still becomes anxious when faced with the source of their fear.

There are three types of phobias. The first, simple phobias, is a fear of a particular object, animal or situation. Irrational fears of snakes, spiders, heights, darkness or enclosed spaces are examples of simple phobias. The second type of phobia is agoraphobia. This is a fear of unfamiliar settings, and may involve fear of open spaces, crowds and travelling. Sometimes a person with agoraphobia is afraid to

leave the familiar setting of the home, and so becomes effectively housebound. The third type of phobia is social phobia or 'social anxiety' (see below).

Social anxiety

People who suffer from social anxiety become anxious when in public or in social situations. They may feel that others are watching them or being critical of them in some way. People with social anxiety are often afraid they will not be able to talk fluently or think straight, and become extremely anxious whenever they have to talk to others. Some common fears of socially anxious people are eating or drinking in public, talking to strangers, or going to pubs, shops and parties.

Social anxiety is maintained largely by avoidance. Socially anxious people avoid the situations that cause them stress, but this restricts their lives and makes them feel that social situations will always cause anxiety. Social anxiety is also maintained by a 'fear of fear'.



Health anxiety

People with health anxiety are extra sensitive to their bodily sensations and preoccupied with the fear of becoming ill. This leads them to interpret changed bodily sensations as evidence that they are ill. The symptoms may be real, but don't necessarily mean the person is ill – they may be natural reactions to stress. Someone who suffers from health anxiety over-interprets symptoms and worries that something is seriously wrong, for instance if they have a headache they may fear that they have a brain tumour. These thoughts cause even more worry and stress, making the physical symptoms worse and the person even more anxious.

Health anxiety is maintained in the long term by the unhelpful coping strategies used, such as treating ourselves as if we are ill, monitoring and checking symptoms, asking for reassurance from others, avoiding things associated with illness, and researching illnesses (searching on the internet, reading magazine articles on health etc.) These things may help in the short term by making the person feel better, but the feeling does not last and the problem increases in the long term.

Panic disorder

In panic disorder there are sudden and alarming attacks of anxiety symptoms. Along with feelings of nausea, dizziness, difficulty breathing, heart palpitations, chest pain etc. there is often a feeling of dread or doom, intense apprehension or terror. Some people also experience feelings of 'not being with it' – feeling outside of the body, or of the world not being real – and fears of going crazy, losing control or even dying.

Attacks usually last several minutes and can occur quite frequently. There may be a 'trigger situation' that starts an attack, but panic attacks can also occur for what seems like no reason at all. Panic disorder is maintained by the sufferer jumping to conclusions when experiencing an attack, such as "I'm going to faint!" or "I'm dying!" (although sufferers may not always notice they're doing this). This starts a vicious cycle of increased anxiety leading to increased symptoms, which makes the person even more anxious. People with panic disorder also tend to avoid situations where they believe an attack could be embarrassing, or places where they have had an attack before. This also maintains the problem.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

People who suffer from OCD feel they have to carry out certain acts or focus on certain thoughts or images in order to avoid anxiety. Common 'rituals' include checking repeatedly that something has been cleaned, a switch turned off or a door locked; avoiding certain objects; counting; washing excessively; or avoiding certain thoughts. These rituals can take hours, sometimes most of the day. Sometimes an act must be performed extremely slowly, such as eating, or a sequence of actions must be carried out in a particular order.

Rituals may be triggered by a perceived threat which leads to a worrying thought or image, and the person then develops a ritual to reassure themselves. This starts as a natural reaction – for example, an advert warning of the dangers of not wearing a seat belt could cause a mother to have images of her own children being injured in a car crash, and so she checks that they are putting their belts on when they get into the car. This is a natural and healthy response, but it would become a problem if she checked this repeatedly throughout the journey, developed rituals based on her fear, or if she was constantly picturing her children being injured in a car accident.

OCD is maintained by the sufferer either avoiding situations that cause anxiety or performing rituals to protect themselves from the perceived threat. The person with OCD needs to learn that whatever rituals they do, they can't get rid of the risk of something terrible happening; and that the probability of something terrible happening is actually extremely small anyway. Therefore performing rituals or avoiding certain situations does not actually protect the sufferer from what they fear. People with OCD also need to learn that there are other, more helpful ways to manage feelings of anxiety.



What keeps anxiety going?

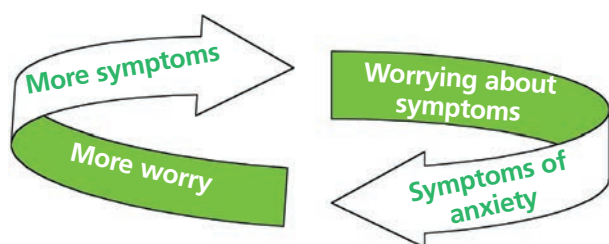
Our responses to anxiety (i.e. what we think and what we do when we feel anxious) can actually maintain it as a problem. Vicious cycles are often created that mean the anxiety either persists or gets worse.

Fear of fear

Although the bodily feelings associated with anxiety are harmless, they can be unpleasant and quite frightening. When we experience anxiety symptoms we may worry that we are ill or that something bad is going to happen. This worry makes us even more anxious, which increases the physical symptoms of anxiety. This causes a vicious cycle which makes anxiety worse and stops it going away.

We may also worry about becoming anxious and getting anxiety symptoms. We may say unhelpful things to ourselves such as "What if I faint?", "What if I lose control?", or "This always makes me feel dreadful".

Worrying about becoming anxious can actually bring on anxiety, and can make the anxiety symptoms appear. This leads to an increase in anxiety and so the symptoms also increase. This is the vicious cycle, known as the 'fear of fear' cycle.

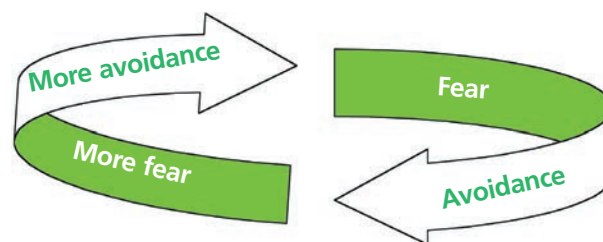


Avoiding situations that provoke anxiety

It is perfectly natural, when we find a situation distressing, that we will try to avoid that situation in the future. But when anxiety is a problem in our life we may find ourselves avoiding places, activities and thoughts which are not real dangers. For example, going to supermarkets, going to work, making eye contact, being alone, remembering certain images, using public transport. These are all important and necessary parts of everyday life, and avoiding them can be very restrictive to us and to others.

Avoiding something may seem to bring relief in the short term, but it does not help in the long term:

- The relief is only temporary
- It makes the situation harder to face in the future
- Gradually we grow to avoid more things
- It starts a vicious cycle:



Loss of confidence

Over time, anxiety can reduce confidence. It makes it harder to do things that were once easy, and so we may try to avoid doing these things altogether because we are afraid of failing. Loss of confidence also makes us feel bad. If our confidence is low, we may think that others are judging us negatively (e.g. thinking that we are a failure or odd) and we are probably also judging ourselves negatively.

Confidence can be regained by learning how to cope with small challenges first and managing setbacks. Try to not use alcohol to boost confidence as it does not work long term.

*Try NOT
to use
alcohol to
manage
anxiety*



Ways of thinking

You may have noticed that how we think plays an important part in fear, avoidance, and loss of confidence. Thinking negatively when we are feeling anxious can make things seem worse than they really are, which makes the anxiety more difficult to control. There are a number of ways of thinking that can be unhelpful and can make anxiety worse. Which ones do you use?

Jumping to negative conclusions

For example, you may think someone is reacting negatively to you when this may not really be the case, e.g. *"My friend hasn't phoned me – she must be really fed up with me"*. Or you may convince yourself that things will turn out badly, e.g. *"They won't like me, so why even try to join in?"* This type of thinking is often not realistic or factual and just makes you feel bad about yourself.

Catastrophising

Thinking the worst, exaggerating the impact of events and convincing yourself that it will be intolerable, e.g. *"It's the end!, If I start to get anxious, I will collapse, It must be a life threatening condition"* etc.

All-or-nothing thinking

Seeing things in black and white, e.g. thinking *"I will always feel this awful"*, instead of *"I feel bad right now, but it will get better."* A common form of black-and-white thinking is expecting perfection from ourselves, e.g. *"If I don't succeed in this job I'm a total failure."* No one is perfect, and no one should expect themselves, or anyone else, to be.

Personalising

Blaming yourself for anything unpleasant, and taking too much responsibility for things that aren't under our control, such as other people's feelings or behaviour. For example, if someone doesn't say "hello" we may think we have done something wrong or upset them, but they may have been preoccupied, or they might just have forgotten to wear their glasses!

Selective thinking

Ignoring the positive and focusing on the negative. People who think in this way tend to reject their achievements, compliments and other positive experiences by insisting that they 'don't count' for some reason, e.g. *"He only gave me that compliment because he knows I feel bad at the moment."* Failing to recognise your good points and personal strengths means you have less self-confidence, which makes it harder to cope with stress.

Over-generalisation

Expecting that because something has gone wrong once or twice, that it will always do so. An example is thinking after an unpleasant experience, *"I'm never doing that again, it's far too difficult"*, or *"I tried this before, I always get it wrong"*. This type of thinking also lowers self-confidence and makes it unlikely that you will try to overcome your anxiety.

Self put-downs

Undervaluing yourself and putting yourself down. This type of thinking is often due to an extreme over-reaction to a situation, such as making a mistake. For example, *"I'm so stupid/weak/useless"* and *"I don't deserve any better"*.

Self-monitoring

Everyone experiences anxiety differently. You will need to find out:

What triggers your anxiety?

What bodily symptoms do you suffer from?

Which thought patterns do you have?

Before you can manage your anxiety, you need to know and understand your problem. It can be helpful to keep a record of when you are anxious, noting how you feel, what you are thinking and what you do.

By rating how you feel on a scale of 1–10 you can estimate how anxious certain situations make you feel and how helpful your coping strategies are. Use an "Anxiety diary" to help you monitor yourself.

INFORMATION POINT

For lots more helpful information please visit www.talk2gether.nhs.uk for managing depression and anxiety

Anxiety diary

When you encounter a situation that makes you feel anxious fill in your diary. Try to do this as soon as possible as it's easy to forget exactly what you were thinking or feeling unless you write it down straight away. You should write down the situation you were in when you felt anxious, how anxious you felt (on the scale), any thoughts or physical feelings you noticed, what you did to cope, and then rate how you felt after you used a coping strategy. See example on the following page.

Using this diary may not be easy at first. It takes some practice to get used to identifying the triggers of your anxiety and pinpointing your thoughts. However, it will become easier with time. Remember the bodily sensations described in Part One, and the

ways of thinking described in Part Two and see if you experience any of these when you get anxious.

Keep the diary for one or two weeks and then look back at your entries. You should be able to see what triggers your anxiety, what your bodily sensations and anxious thoughts are when you are stressed, and which coping strategies work best for you. Try to identify helpful coping strategies, such as talking to a friend, and unhelpful ones, such as avoiding the situation by leaving or cancelling. But don't worry if you don't seem to have any helpful coping strategies, or you don't have any that work that well – the other parts of this section will describe some things you can do to cope with your anxiety.

Anxiety monitoring diary

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	Calm			Moderately anxious						Severe anxiety		
Date & Time	Situation	Anxiety Rating (0-10)	Thoughts	Physical Feelings	What did you do to cope	Anxiety Rating (0-10)						
10th May 11.30am	Invited a friend over for coffee	8	I feel really anxious She'll see what a mess the house is. She'll think I'm useless. I am a failure	Tense, shaky	Cancelled the coffee	3						
21st May 8.45pm	Had headache	9	It's a tumour. Saw myself lying in a hospital bed dying	Tense muscles . Pain in head got worse	Called my friend to talk it over. She helped me see that my fears were exaggerated	2						

Summary

- Anxiety is a normal, healthy reaction that happens to everyone during times of danger, or in stressful situations. It becomes a problem if it is particularly intense or continues to be experienced long after the stress is over. If your anxiety is having a significant impact on your everyday life, you need to learn how to manage it
- A person's vulnerability to anxiety is determined by a number of different factors. Reflect on your own situation and try to see what could be causing your anxiety
- There are several different types of anxiety, and people will experience anxiety differently. However, whatever the cause or symptoms of your anxiety, you can learn to manage it by using the techniques in this workbook
- Often a healthy or normal response to stress develops into a problem when a person gets into a vicious cycle that keeps the anxiety going
- Once you can recognise the cycles that maintain your worries, fears and phobias, you can start thinking about how to break them
- Running away from a distressing situation is a natural reaction, and comforting in the short-term. However, it prevents you from learning how to cope. Unless you face your fear(s), you will never get the chance to see that you can cope with it
- The way we think about ourselves and about situations often makes our anxiety worse. Try to recognise ways of thinking you have which might be unhelpful

Homework

Finish reading The Facts about Anxiety.

Begin self-monitoring using the diary at the end of this section. Make at least one entry everyday. Start to look at your anxiety triggers and how they make you think and feel. Are there any patterns?

Anxiety monitoring diary



Date & time	Situation	Anxiety rating (0-10)	Thoughts	Physical feelings	What did you do to cope	Anxiety rating (0-10)



Ways of coping with anxiety

There is no “cure” for anxiety – a certain amount is both normal and useful – so don’t expect to never feel anxious again. However, you can learn to control excessive anxiety by using the techniques described in these chapters.

How to manage physical feelings

It may seem strange to talk about “learning” to relax and breathe. But there are helpful and unhelpful ways of breathing, and the unhelpful ways can cause unpleasant physical sensations and make anxiety worse.

Controlled breathing

When people are anxious, their breathing is shallow and quick. This is a normal response to stress and provides our muscles with oxygen to burn during activity. It is called hyperventilation, and happens to us whenever we are tense or anxious or doing exercise.

This may not be a problem if it only goes on for a short while. However, continued rapid breathing causes oxygen levels in the blood to rise too high and carbon dioxide levels to fall, causing an imbalance. This can cause quite frightening feelings such as trembling, dizziness, chest pains, tingling in the hands and feet and feeling as though you are unable to catch your breath.

These feelings can be quite alarming and can often make us even more anxious. But there is no need to worry – these unpleasant feelings are quite harmless.

You can learn to correct your breathing by using one of the following techniques. These will help you to stop breathing too fast, and so control the unpleasant feelings that come with rapid breathing.

Exercise 1: Controlled breathing

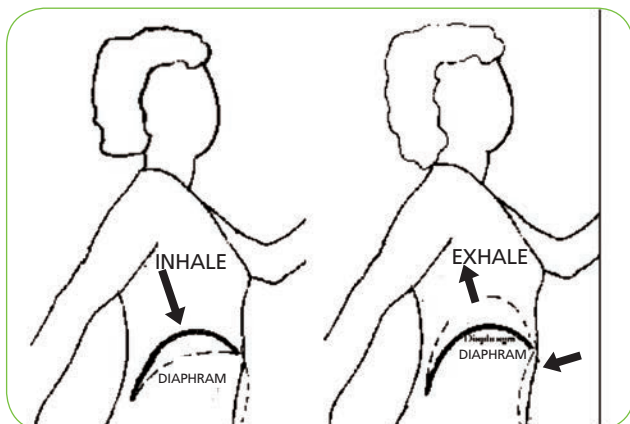
Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.

Breathe in through your nose, filling your lungs completely so that your stomach comes out. Try to keep the movement of your upper chest to a minimum.

Slowly and evenly breathe out through your nose. Allow your stomach muscles to relax.

Repeat, and try to get a rhythm going. About 8–12 complete breaths a minute would be relaxed breathing.

Don't take lots of deep breaths quickly, as this can make you feel dizzy and uncomfortable.



INFORMATION POINT

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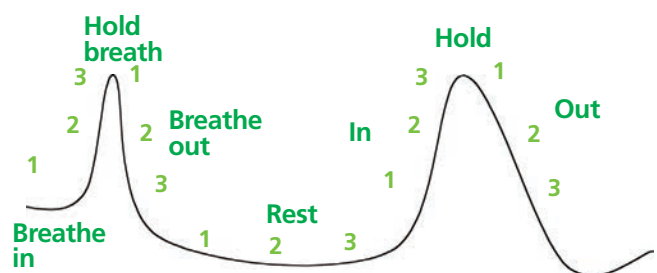
If you have a history of difficulties with your breathing e.g. asthma or COPD please seek the advice of your Doctor before trying these exercises

Exercise 2: The “Castle breathing technique”

This exercise can be used for 2–3 minutes at a time, for general relaxation, distraction, or to help you sleep. It is particularly helpful when you are about to enter a stressful situation when it can be used to relax and calm yourself.

- Breathe in for two counts (counting at a pace that is slow, but comfortable for you)
- Hold the breath for two counts
- Breathe out for two counts
- Rest for two counts
- Count the same number for the in-breath, the hold, the breath out, and the rest period before breathing in again

Your breathing pattern should look like this:



As you get more practiced you can either count slightly slower, or count “1, 2, 3”. Always keep the counting even and steady. You can also do this breathing exercise by counting in time to your footsteps when you are out and about.

Exercise 3: Mindful breathing

Whilst sitting comfortably notice all of your thoughts going through your mind. Just observe these thoughts as if they are separate from you. Let these thoughts float through your mind as if they were clouds, not judging them or following the train of thought. To help you do this, focus your awareness and attention on your breathing. Do not force your breathing in any particular way, just notice it happening, particularly the air entering your nose.

What to do in an emergency

There may be times when you feel panicky and don't feel confident enough to control your breathing by using one of the exercises. At times like these there is a quick way to get your breathing under control, called the "re-breathing technique". It involves breathing in the air you have just breathed out. This air is richer in carbon dioxide, so by breathing it in you can quickly replace the carbon dioxide you have been breathing out. The balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood will then return to normal.

How to "re-breathe"

- Try to keep your elbows on a level with or above your shoulders. This makes it difficult to over breathe
- Cup your hands over your nose and mouth
- Breathe in, through your nose if possible
- Breathe out hard through your mouth
- Breathe in your own exhaled air
- Do this slowly and calmly and without holding your breath. Repeat four or five times (no more)

Relaxation

Whenever you use any of the following relaxation techniques please record it in your relaxation diary – see back of this workbook.

One of the symptoms of stress or anxiety is that the muscles in the body become tense. This can cause headaches, a stiff neck, chest pains, and many unpleasant bodily sensations that can make us even more anxious and tense.

To control bodily tension it is important to learn to relax. Relaxation, like controlled breathing, is a skill. Once the body is relaxed, the mind tends to be relaxed too.

How to learn to relax

The following exercises are designed to help you learn to relax step by step. You may find it helpful to record the instructions onto a tape in a slow, gentle voice, so that you can listen and follow them when you want to relax. The exercises will help you to recognise the difference between how tense and relaxed muscles feel. By practising tensing and relaxing your muscles you will soon be able to notice when you are tense and will be able to relax at will.

Relaxation guidelines

- Regular practice is essential. If possible, set aside a regular time to practice every day – then you can develop a routine which you can stick to
- Make sure you choose somewhere quiet to practice, where you will not be disturbed
- Start the exercise by lying down in a comfortable position. It is easier to relax while lying down. Later, when you are more practised, you can try the exercises while sitting or standing. However, if you tend to fall asleep while doing the exercise lying down you may prefer to sit in a comfortable chair that has a good support for your head and shoulders instead
- Make sure you are wearing comfortable clothes, and that the room isn't too hot or cold
- Don't try to practice relaxation if you are hungry or have just eaten
- Don't tense your muscles too hard, or you may make them ache
- Don't tense any part of the body that is painful or injured
- Keep a record of how you are doing with your relaxation practice. Rate how tense you feel on a scale of 1 to 10 before (1 being totally relaxed, 10 being very tense), and again when you have completed your relaxation
- Do not expect too much of yourself at the start. Remember that this is a skill and skills have to be learnt and practised before they are mastered



Exercise 1: Progressive muscle relaxation

It will be difficult to read the instructions and relax at the same time, so you may find it useful to record it onto a CD, try to memorise it or get a friend to read it out to you.

Progressive muscle relaxation means that the muscles are relaxed one after the other, starting with the hands and arms and ending with the feet and leg muscles.

At each stage you should concentrate on noticing the feelings in the part of the body you are working on. Tense the muscles tightly (but not too hard) and really concentrate on the feeling of tension. Hold this for five seconds, then release for ten to fifteen seconds, letting the muscles go as relaxed as possible. Try to learn the difference between tight and relaxed muscles by concentrating on the feeling in the muscle as it goes from tight to loose.

The exercise involves doing this for all the parts of your body:

Hands and arms:

- Clench your fists, feel the tightness in your hands and arms, slowly relax them. See how far they can relax, but do not push or strain. Relax and let everything go. **Repeat**

Shoulders and neck:

- Drop your chin to your chest. Hunch your shoulders tightly, bringing them up and in. Circle your shoulders then let them drop. Relax. **Repeat**

Face:

- Concentrate on tensing your face bit by bit, first pull your eyebrows together, then screw your eyes up tight, and then bite your teeth together. Gradually ease off and relax. **Repeat**

Chest and abdomen:

- Tense your stomach muscles, by pulling your tummy in tightly, slowly breathe out letting go of your stomach muscles and relax. **Repeat**

Thighs and lower back:

- Keeping the rest of your upper body relaxed; squeeze your thighs and buttocks together. Relax. Push your heels down hard against the floor, feel the tightness in your thighs, gradually let go. **Repeat**

Calves:

- Point your toes down towards the ground, feel the tension in your legs gradually let the tightness go. Then pull your toe up towards your face. Again, gradually relax. **Repeat**

Whole body:

- Concentrate on your whole body, scanning for any tension. Relax any muscles that feel tense. Breathe slowly, calmly and evenly, letting every feeling of stress or tension go with each breath out. Allow your breathing to deepen your feeling of relaxation

Mind:

- Finally relax your mind. Think of something really soothing and restful: for example, lying by a gentle river, under a warm sun and blue sky. Picture a scene that works best for you. Breathe slowly through your nose, filling your lungs completely. Feel yourself getting heavier and heavier

Remember: Do not get up and rush about straight away

- Getting up too quickly might make you feel dizzy, or make you tense up again straight away. Continue resting for a minute or two, then when you are ready get up, move slowly and stretch gently. Try to keep the relaxed feeling for as long as possible. Do whatever activity you had planned in a slow, calm way

As you get better at this exercise you can practice it while sitting or standing, or move from a quiet environment, such as your bedroom, to one that is not so peaceful. In this way you will learn to relax in a variety of situations and stand a better chance of coping in 'real life'.

Exercise 2: "Cued relaxation"

Once you learn the difference between tension and relaxation, you will be able to tell quickly when a part of your body feels tense. You can then move onto "Cued Relaxation" which will help you to relax when you choose.

When you start to feel your body getting tense, this should be your cue to do the following:

- Relax the area of your body that feels tense. Tense the muscles as much as you can, then let go, and think about that muscle relaxing
- Drop your shoulders down. This will change your posture to a more relaxed one
- Repeat a sound or word that you find is relaxing. You could use the word "calm", "relax", or 'heavy'
- Think of a calming image. Picture a relaxing place and imagine you are there
- Breathe through your nose and become aware of your breathing. Breathe out picturing your calm image or place. Breathe easily, and naturally

Cued relaxation can also be used to monitor and control tension levels throughout the day. It may be useful to develop the habit of stopping for a relaxation break regularly on a particular cue, for example, when you stop for a cup of tea or visit the loo.

Troubleshooting for relaxation techniques

It is likely that you will experience a few problems when you first try the exercises. It is helpful to recognise these and know what to do about them.

Muscle cramps

If you find any part of your body getting cramp when you are tensing up, you can overcome this by either not tensing up so much, or tensing for a shorter amount of time. Remember that although cramp is painful, it is not dangerous.

Wanting to laugh

You may well feel self-conscious or feel like laughing when you first try these exercises. This is because you are not used to them and they seem strange to you. After a while they will become more familiar and not so funny.

Unable to concentrate

If you have difficulty finishing the exercises without your mind wandering, don't worry. The best way to make unwanted thoughts go away is by not dwelling on them. Accept that they will come into your mind from time to time – you won't get rid of them by trying to concentrate on not thinking about them! Instead get your mind to slowly drift back to the exercise and the particular part of your body you are relaxing. With practice you will be able to concentrate on the exercises for longer.

It feels strange

As you are not used to the exercises, it is perfectly natural that they cause strange feelings. Accept that it will take practice to become comfortable with them. However do make sure that you are not hyperventilating (breathing too quickly), or standing up and moving about too soon. Also remember not to practice when you are full or hungry.

Falling asleep

The aim of these exercises isn't to get you to sleep, as you can't learn to relax if you're asleep. If you find yourself dozing off while doing the exercises it may be better to do them sitting down. If you do want something to help you sleep, go over the relaxation exercises in your mind while you are in bed or keep a relaxation CD just for that purpose.

Unable to relax

Don't try too hard. You may not feel much benefit when you first do the exercises, but this will come with practice. If you try too hard to relax you will only create more tension. Let the sensations happen when they happen. Make sure that your surroundings are as relaxing as possible – warm and comfortable with no distractions.

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Summary

- Stress causes physical tension in the muscles, which produces a lot of the uncomfortable sensations associated with anxiety
- Everyone breathes faster when under stress. Hyperventilation occurs if you over-breathe. When this happens it produces physical sensations that are unpleasant and can be frightening
- Relaxation and breathing exercises can help control the unpleasant feelings caused by anxiety. But remember that breathing and relaxing properly are skills that need to be learnt and practised to give the full effect
- You can use cues to remind yourself to check to see if you are tense and to relax. These cues can be the feeling of tension itself or you can develop your own set of cues. Your cues can remind you to take a relaxation break
- Don't worry about not being able to relax when you start the exercises – this will only make you tenser
- Once the body is relaxed, the mind can relax too

Homework

- Continue to self monitor, using your anxiety diary
- Practice controlled breathing techniques until you feel comfortable with them. Try to practice everyday and when you feel anxious
- Set aside some time each day to practice the relaxation techniques and use the relaxation diary at the end of this workbook to chart your progress through this program

Anxiety monitoring diary



Date & time	Situation	Anxiety rating (0-10)	Thoughts	Physical feelings	What did you do to cope	Anxiety rating (0-10)



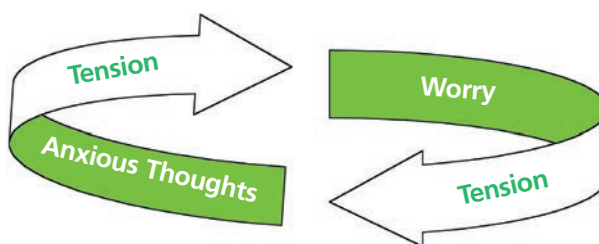
How to manage unhelpful thoughts

Some people find they can relax their bodies but keep thinking about upsetting things. They can't seem to "switch off" from worrying thoughts.

Worrying is a vicious cycle, worrying itself produces more physical symptoms of anxiety which leads to more worry and tension.

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Upsetting thoughts keep anxiety going, and the physical symptoms keep the worrying thoughts going. This vicious cycle can be interrupted in three ways:

1. **Challenging** – which helps to identify, challenge and answer our worries and anxious thoughts.
2. **Distraction** – this focuses our attention elsewhere, breaking the cycle.
3. **Mindfulness** – This can be a very effective way of helping you to develop a new relationship with your thoughts. By accepting your thoughts and sensations and not fighting with them, you can learn to feel more at peace with yourself.

Challenging and controlling worrying thoughts

Write down below some of your common anxious thoughts:

Try to make a note of your thoughts every time you feel anxious. No thought is too small or silly to write down, even if it is “*Here I go again*”, or “*My neck aches*” – they all add to your feelings of anxiety and tension. Once you start to recognise your thoughts you can look at them and answer them in a way that will make you feel better.

There are 3 things you need to do to control worrying thoughts:



Catching your worrying thoughts

When we are feeling anxious it is difficult to recognise irrational or unhelpful thoughts. They come and go very quickly, so you might not even be aware you are thinking them.

Catching worrying thoughts may be difficult at first because we are not used to it, but it gets easier with practice. Try to write down your thoughts as soon as you feel yourself getting anxious. Or think of a situation that upset you and try to remember exactly what went through your mind just before you got anxious. Put these thoughts into words and write them in your Anxiety Diary.

Challenging your worrying thoughts

When you are familiar with the kinds of things you say to yourself when under stress, you can begin to challenge these thoughts, and find more helpful ways of thinking.

Questions to ask yourself to help challenge your thoughts

- What's the evidence for and against your thought? For example, just because you fear that something dreadful is going to happen, it doesn't mean this is true. Also, look for evidence that shows that the thought isn't true, (e.g. remembering your past experience in the same situation)
- Is there an alternative explanation? It's unlikely what you've thought is the only way of seeing things. How else could you see the situation? Try to think of as many alternative explanations as possible
- If a friend was in this situation and had this thought, what would I tell him/her? It is often easier to spot irrational thinking in others than in ourselves. Imagine a friend was thinking your thought – would you still agree with it?
- What's the worst that could happen? How likely is it to happen? Even if it did happen, could I live through it? If your worries are irrational then it's highly unlikely that what you're worrying about will actually happen.

Exercise

Apply the challenges to something you have worried about in recent days. Write down your thought.

What is the evidence for this thought?

What is the evidence against your thought?

If a friend was in this situation and had this thought, what would I tell him/her?

What's the worst that could happen? How likely is it to happen? Even if it did happen, could I live through it?

Challenging your thoughts will not be easy at first, and you might find it useful to get someone to help you. As you practise you will find you can answer the questions faster, and challenging your thoughts will become more automatic.

Changing your worrying thoughts to be more realistic

Once you have identified and challenged your worrying thoughts you may be able to recognise how illogical your thinking can be. Worrying thoughts are usually pessimistic, irrational and untrue. When our thinking becomes more balanced we begin to feel better about ourselves.

Think of an alternative, more positive way of seeing the situation. Use the list of questions opposite and on the previous page to ask yourself questions about your thoughts and then replace them with less worrying thoughts.

Here are a few examples:

"I'm going to collapse, faint, make a fool of myself"

These feelings are just anxiety. Nothing catastrophic will happen. I am thinking catastrophically.

"I can't stand it"

I can stand it. It may be difficult but I can put up with it. It'll be good for me.

"I'm going to get anxious and upset in front of everyone and look stupid"

I probably feel more anxious than I look. Anyway, even if it does show, people are a lot more understanding than I think. What's wrong with showing emotion anyway?

"Nobody likes me – they're just talking to me to be polite"

There are people who like me. I've had friends in the past and will do again in the future. They wouldn't be talking to me at all if they really disliked me.

"What's the point in trying"

If I don't try, I won't know. I have to try things to get better at them. Nobody is expecting me to do it perfectly

Helpful 'self-statements'

Some people find it useful to make a list of statements they can say to themselves when they are having anxious thoughts. These will be very similar to the kinds of 'alternative thoughts' mentioned on the previous page. Here are a few examples:

Some helpful 'self-statements'

- *The catastrophe I am fearing is unlikely to happen*
- *In the long run, does this really matter?*
- *I can bear anything for a while*
- *This unpleasant situation will soon be over*
- *One step at a time*
- *I'll be fine if I just relax*
- *I've got through worse things than this – I'll be fine*
- *If this doesn't work it's not the end of the world*
- *I'm doing really well. I might be anxious, but I'm here, facing it. That's something to be proud of*

Troubleshooting for thought challenging

"I can't 'catch' my worrying thoughts."

Write down your thoughts, as you have them if you can. As soon as you notice yourself getting tense, ask yourself *"What's going through my mind?"* If your thoughts are in the form of questions: *"Are they thinking I'm stupid?"* write them down in statement form: *"They think I'm stupid"* It is easier to argue with statements than questions.

"I can't remember my challenging questions/self-statements when I need them."

Write down your challenging questions/self-statements in full. They will have more impact, be easier to recall later and you will find you are challenging your thoughts more effectively. You may want to write them on a card and carry them around with you so you can quickly read them when you're feeling anxious.

"It's not working."

Practice. Again, this is a skill; do not expect great results immediately. Eventually, rational responses to worrying thoughts will be as automatic as you find the anxiety response is now.

Don't be put off if you have both "good" and "bad" days – this is perfectly normal. Sometimes we find we are just too tired, anxious or upset to challenge our thoughts. Try and go back to them later when you feel calmer and work out why it was harder for you at that occasion. But don't let it add to your worries

Distraction

When we are stressed, worried, or feeling tense it is difficult not to think about it. But the more we think and worry about being anxious, the more anxious we will get. If we can think about something neutral or pleasant we can shift our attention away from unhelpful thoughts and worries. We can do this by first deciding not to think about our anxiety, and then helping ourselves not to think about them – by filling our mind with something else. This is called distraction.

Try to use thought challenging, breathing and relaxation techniques first to manage your anxiety. However, there may be times when you have left it a bit late to use these techniques effectively or are already too anxious to concentrate properly. This is when distraction techniques can be useful.

There are many ways to distract ourselves, but there are three basic distraction techniques which you can tailor to suit your needs and situation:

- **Physical Exercise:** Simply keeping active when we are stressed can distract us away from our thoughts. You could try exercising, which is particularly helpful as it uses up the adrenaline that makes you feel tense. If your physical task requires mental effort all the better – as this makes the effect of the distraction even more powerful.
- **Refocusing:** By concentrating on other things around us, we can refocus our minds and distract ourselves from our thoughts. Try listening to other people's conversations, count the number of red things you can see, read the contents on a tin in the supermarket. Anything that engages your attention will do. It doesn't have to be sophisticated, but it helps to have a specific focus – guess the jobs people have, for example. The more detailed the task you give yourself, the more distracting it will be.
- **Mental Activity:** This means doing something that requires some creativity or mental effort – for example, doing a crossword, reciting a poem to yourself, or calculating the price of goods in the supermarket. Some people make up mental games for themselves such as making words out of the letters on car number plates or thinking of an animal beginning with each letter of the alphabet. You could also try concentrating on an imaginary scene to take your mind away from worrying thoughts. The more colourful and detailed you make your scene, the more distracting you will find it.

Distraction tips

- Choose a distraction technique that is suitable for you and the situation from which you need to be distracted. You can't go and walk the dog if you get anxious when sitting on the bus – but you could count the number of blue things you can see, or play a mental game
- Practise the distraction techniques when you have built up your own collection. That way you will find them easier to turn to when you need them the most
- There are some situations where distraction is not suitable, for example, if you need to pay attention to what is going on around you, you can't really use mental distraction. In these situations you can use breathing and relaxation techniques
- Although distraction can be a useful tool in anxiety management, do not use it to avoid situations

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is about developing a new relationship with your thoughts and feelings and can be a great way to manage anxiety and depression. It is a technique to be mastered over time. There are 3 steps to this Mindfulness exercise:

1. While you sit comfortably, notice all of the thoughts going through your mind. Just observe those thoughts, as if they were separate from you. Let these thoughts float through your mind as if they were clouds, not judging your thoughts or following a train of thought – just 'being'.
2. Now focus your awareness and attention onto your breathing. If your attention wanders from the breath, be pleased you have noticed it and come back to the feeling of air through your nose.
3. Finally, open your mind to pay attention to your body and your experience in your body. Scan through your body from your head to your toe and focus on how you are feeling in your body. Notice any physical discomfort. Spend the remaining time experiencing your body as a whole and feeling more grounded.

You can also extend this exercise to daily routines such as cleaning your teeth or eating. For example, focus your attention on the experience of cleaning your teeth or the taste of the food in your mouth. This can help you to manage stressful or negative thoughts, and can make you feel more relaxed.

Summary

- Worrying thoughts trigger and maintain anxiety. Everyone has worrying thoughts, but they become a problem if they are not easily dismissed
- We can break the cycle of anxiety that worrying thoughts lead to by using distraction techniques e.g. physical exercise, mental games, or start learning mindfulness
- We can also challenge our worries. We can ask ourselves how real our fears actually are, and find a more rational response to them
- For any of these techniques to work well you need to practice them

Homework

- Continue practicing controlled breathing and relaxation daily
- Continue self monitoring but use the new form over the page to start monitoring and challenge your negative thoughts
- Practise challenging your negative thoughts as often as you can, to get familiar with the techniques
- Practise distraction or mindfulness techniques whenever necessary

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Negative thoughts monitoring diary

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INFORMATION POINT

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How to manage unhelpful behaviour

There are three parts that make up anxiety:

1
Physical feelings
(heart racing, chest pains, sweating, dizziness)

2
Thoughts
(Something awful is going to happen)

3
Behaviour
(avoiding places or people that make us anxious)

We have already looked at how to control the physical symptoms with breathing and relaxation, and how to manage unhelpful thoughts with challenging and distraction. Now we will look into managing the behavioural aspect – dealing with how we behave when we are anxious.

Avoiding a situation that causes us anxiety can be perfectly understandable, but can also strengthen our fears. You can learn here how to face your fears.

When learning to face our fears, it is important that we take things at our own pace. This is why “Graded Practice” is useful – it allows us to learn how to face the fear in small manageable stages. By learning to do easier things first, we can build our confidence and then move on to harder tasks.

Graded practice

Below, make a list of all the things that make you anxious, and/or things you avoid. Consider this in detail. If social situations cause your anxiety, be specific – how many people in a room make you anxious? Does it depend on where you are – the pub, shopping, in your own home? Do you know any of the people around you? Do you feel anxious if you have to go to a social event, or does just the thought of socialising cause you anxiety? Make each item on the list as specific as possible – then you will know exactly what it is you have to practise and when you have achieved this.

Now arrange your list in order of how difficult each fear is to face using the second column, starting with the least anxiety provoking. This is your 'anxiety hierarchy'. For example, if you tend to get anxious around other people, particularly where food or drink is involved, your list may look like the following example.

Your anxiety hierarchy

Date & Time	Rating
Example 1. Meeting new people at a social gathering, with drink and food 2. Going to a small gathering with no food 3. Going to the pub with a large group of friends for a drink 4. Eating out at a cafe with close friend 5. Having a friend over for coffee 6. Talking to a friend on the telephone.	8 7 6 5 3 2

What to do next

- Start with the easiest item on your list. This is your first target
- Practise doing the first item. Do this several times, until you can do it without feeling so anxious. Repeat this a few times to show yourself that you can now manage your anxiety while doing this item
- Move onto the next item on your list, and practise as before

Tips for graded practice:

- Use your coping strategies – distraction, relaxation, mindfulness, controlled breathing etc. – to help you stay calm while doing graded practice
- It is very important to do the task until the anxiety you have has dropped or is much less intense than it was. If you stop when you are still feeling anxious you will only strengthen your belief that you can't cope with the situation
- Practice needs to be regular and frequent. Practice every day if possible. Don't leave long gaps between practice sessions – if you do it is easy to forget what you have achieved and you can learn to fear the situation again, which makes facing it harder
- Make sure you set yourself realistic goals. Don't try for too much too soon
- If you reach a task that is too hard, try breaking it down and practising small parts of it
- You may think that you do not avoid anything, but if you examine your behaviour you will probably find that you are doing things that count as avoidance without realising it. For example, putting things off, not facing problems, not accepting invitations, and so on
- Don't be put off by feeling anxious. Be sure to allow sufficient time to practice, and remember that you are learning something that needs to be mastered, and you are bound to feel anxious if you try something difficult
- Don't belittle your successes. Encourage yourself when you achieve a target, as you would encourage someone else who was learning something new

Don't expect your anxiety to disappear completely. You should be aiming for a reduction in anxiety, because you are now managing it successfully. If you can achieve this, you can go onto the next item on your anxiety hierarchy list.

Homework

- Continue practising your coping techniques: controlled breathing, relaxation, challenging your thoughts, self-monitoring, mindfulness and distraction
- Begin graded practice by doing the first item on your 'anxiety hierarchy'. Use the coping strategies that you have learnt to help control your anxiety whilst you practice. When doing the first item becomes manageable, move onto the second and so on

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Negative thoughts monitoring diary

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Life skills

If anxiety has been part of your life for some time, your self-confidence may have started to suffer. You may have started saying to yourself:

- *I have failed*
- *What is wrong with me?*
- *Nobody cares about my feelings*
- *I'll never be normal again*

In this section we will give you some ideas on how you can increase your confidence by learning to be kinder to yourself, more assertive, manage your time more effectively and begin to find ways of solving other problems. All these techniques combined can help to improve your confidence.

Assertiveness

Assertiveness is a great way to express our needs whilst being respectful to others.

In our relationships our behaviour can be:

Passive

By being passive we are saying to other people that we are not as important as they are. We let the other person's needs, and rights take priority over our own. We often fail to communicate our own needs. Passive behaviour can lead to people feeling like a victim.

Aggressive

Aggressive behaviour can be honest or dishonest, intended or unintended, active or passive, direct or indirect – but it always communicates an impression of superiority. It is saying that my needs, wants and rights are more important than yours. The aggressive person attempts to overpower the other person by not allowing him/her a choice.

Assertive

Assertiveness is active, honest and direct. It communicates an impression of respect – for yourself as well as for the other person. It says that my wants, needs and rights are just as important as yours. Assertive behaviour requires good listening and negotiating skills, so that the other person feels that their point of view is being heard and respected, even if you don't agree with it. This should lead to open, honest relationships and success without resentment.

Exercise: Being assertive – how to do it

There are three steps to assertiveness. It is important that you practice all three:

1. Actively listen to what is being said and then show the other person that you understand them. In this way, you can demonstrate understanding for their point of view, even if you don't agree with it. By listening you are respecting their right to express themselves and letting them know that they matter.
2. Say what you THINK and what you FEEL. This enables you to directly state your thoughts or feelings without apology. Own your feelings by using 'I' statements.
3. Say what you want to happen. This is very important so that you say in a clear and straightforward way what action or outcome you want without hesitancy, apology or aggression.

Compare the following examples of aggressive, passive and assertive behaviour.

Passive example:

Tom: *"Mary what's wrong, you look upset?"*

Mary: *"Nothing."*

Tom: *"Come on, I know something is up, what is it?"*

Mary: *"Well if you can't work it out, I'm not going to tell you."*

Mary doesn't speak to Tom for the rest of the evening and Tom wonders what he has done wrong this time. In this example nobody gets their needs met!

Aggressive example:

Tom walks in the door on Saturday evening.

Mary: *"About time you got home! I've been busy all day. You're so lazy and don't think of anyone but yourself!"*

Tom: *"Back off. I'm tired too! You are the lazy one! If you're going to hassle me I'm going back out again!"*

Tom storms back out the door and Mary is left fuming. In this example Mary doesn't own her feelings. She, isn't using 'I' statements; and as a result Tom feels attacked and defends himself, which leads to the argument.

Assertive example:

Mary: *"Tom, I need to have a talk to you about the way the housework is split and I want you to spend more time with Andrew. He misses you."*

Tom: *"Is there a problem?"*

Mary: *"I feel upset and angry when you play football all day Saturday and I stay home and clean the house. I don't have anytime for myself anymore. I would like some help. I would really appreciate it if you could clear up the breakfast and agree to do the hoovering on Sundays. Then I can go out on Sunday to the car boot sale."*

Tom: *"OK, I am not going to stay in on Saturdays but I'll try and help a bit more. I never knew you wanted my help before. Maybe Andrew is old enough to come to the Club."*

In this example Mary states exactly how she feels by using 'I' statements. She states the problem and the desired outcome clearly. Tom hears that she is angry and upset but does not feel attacked. He also has an idea of how he can help fix the problem.

Assertiveness exercise

Write down areas in which you know you could be more assertive, this may be at home, at work or with friends.

What thoughts or feelings may stop you being assertive?

Now decide on a plan of how you could overcome these obstacles and be more assertive in at least one area of your life

Understanding your behaviour

Some reasons why we may be unassertive

We worry about the possible negative consequences of being assertive:

- The other person may get angry
- The other person will not like us
- The other person will think we are selfish
- We have been praised for being agreeable/ accommodating/unassertive in the past
- We have not learnt assertive skills
- We are not accepting our personal rights
- We believe that if we are 'nice' to others, they will be 'nice' to us

What are the consequences of being unassertive?

- We avoid conflict in the short term
- In the long term we lose self-respect and the respect of others
- We feel hurt whenever our assumptions are not held by others
- Suppression of feelings like anger, frustration and humiliation result in physical tension and stress
- Our self-confidence decreases

Why be assertive?

- We keep our self respect and the respect of others
- Our relationships are more real and satisfying when others know we are honest
- Others know where they stand with us when we let them know our thoughts, feelings and needs
- We increase control over our own life by making our own choices
- We strengthen our own judgement when we act on it, allowing us to be independent of the judgement of others
- We feel more confident

Saying 'No'

Remind yourself every now and then that:

- You have the right to say no, without feeling guilty
- It is OK for the other person to say no to you
- Saying yes when you mean no may reduce your feelings of self worth
- It's better to say no at the time than to let somebody down later
- Saying yes to extra work or obligations causes you stress
- Taking on too much can mean that other people in your life don't get enough attention
- It might not be such a big deal for the other person to get a 'no' response
- Being respected and respecting yourself is more important than being liked
- Everything you say yes to is a no to something else

- Try saying 'no' in a casual or impersonal situation, where you might otherwise drift into saying yes
- Be firm but polite
- Give a reason for your no response if you feel it's appropriate, but not as an excuse

Helpful tips

- If you need time to think, say "I'll get back to you" and make sure that you do
- Ask for more information. How long will it take? Is there anyone else who can help you?
- Use body language to show that by saying no you are not being hostile. Show that you mean what you say and are not going to be manipulated
- Stay calm and relaxed – drop your shoulders and breathe deeply, keep your voice slow and calm
- Think it through – by listening to the other person you might actually realise that you want to say yes after all
- Don't be manipulated, but it is alright to change your mind if you want to

Exercise

Think of a situation where you would like to say 'No' but usually say 'Yes.' Write this situation down below:

How does it feel to say 'Yes' when you want to say 'No'?

How would you say 'No' to this situation when asked again?

Assertiveness and saying No takes practice but the more you try it and discover that it works, the more you will use it.

Summary

Assertive behaviour is active, honest and direct. It gives an impression of respect – for oneself as well as for the other person. It says that my wants, needs and rights are just as important as yours – not more so or less so. The consequences of being assertive are that:

- We maintain our self respect and the respect of others
- Our personal relationships are more real and satisfying when others know we are honest
- Others know where they stand with us
- We increase control over our own life by making our own choices
- We feel more confident and our self-esteem increases

Saying 'No'

Remind yourself every now and then that:

- You have the right to say no, without feeling guilty
- It is OK for the other person to say no to you
- It's better to say no at the time than to let somebody down later
- Saying yes to extra work or obligations causes you stress
- It might not be such a big deal for the other person to get a no response
- Everything you say yes to is a no to something else

INFORMATION POINT

For lots more helpful information please visit
www.talk2gether.nhs.uk
 for managing depression and anxiety

Homework

- Continue practising your coping techniques: controlled breathing, relaxation, challenging your thoughts, self-monitoring, distraction and graded practice
- Over the next few weeks practise being assertive in a variety of situations. Start off with something easy, like saying no to a stranger and build the confidence to use it in more difficult situations.

Negative thoughts monitoring diary

[illegible]



More Life skills

Time management

Problem Solving

Building Self Confidence

Life Style

Its easier to do these techniques if you are being compassionate to yourself. Try to not be critical or judgemental, and instead be kind and supportive to yourself as you make these changes to your life. Given what you have been feeling, you are doing really well.

Time Management

Your time is valuable so be clear how you want to use it. To help you be in control of your time, here are some useful tips:

Assess how you use time.

- In order to manage time effectively, you need to know how you currently use your time. For two days, log all your activities and how long each task takes. Reflect on how your time could be better managed

Plan.

- Take ten minutes per day to plan Make a list of all the tasks (major and trivial) and cross off when they have been completed. When planning your day allow time for interruptions and unforeseen delays. Remember to plan time for pleasure, leisure and relaxation as well!

Prioritise all jobs needing to be tackled.

- Without setting priorities as to which job is the most important, it is very easy to feel exhausted and overwhelmed as we rush from one job to the next

Prioritise all the jobs on your list into four categories:

- A Absolutely essential**
- B Better done today**
- C Could wait**
- D Delegate**

Tackle the high priority tasks first. If a job does not have to be done today, leave it for another more convenient time.

Learn to say No

- (see previous weeks notes)

Do not be a perfectionist.

- Looking for perfection in yourself or others only invites disappointment and will increase demands on your time and cause stress for all concerned. Remember that you can make a mistake and that "good enough" is good enough

Do not put off decisions.

- Unresolved problems and unfinished business are a source of tension and use up your energy unnecessarily. If you have time and all the facts you need, tackle the business now

For a quick way to remember these time management strategies think of:

The 5 Ps of time management

Do

P Plan

P Prioritise

P Pass

Do not be a

P Perfectionist

or a

P Procrastinator

Problem solving

Problems big and small occur throughout our daily lives. Most of them can be solved and usually we resolve them automatically without being aware of what we have done. Sometimes problems can seem overwhelming and this is where using a problem solving plan can be helpful.

The 4 stages of problem solving:

1. Define the problem

- What is the problem?
- When is it a problem?
- Where is it a problem?
- Why is it a problem?
- With whom is it a problem?
- How often is it a problem?
- What is the result of the problem?

2. Look for solutions

- Consider all possible solutions and list
- Ask yourself what would someone else do if they were you?
- What would you advise a friend to do if it was happening to them?
- List the pros and cons of the solutions
- Choose a solution

3. Act now

- Put the solution into practice
- If you do not try, you will never know if you could be successful

4. Did it work?

- How successful were you? Don't look for 100% perfection as that may not be achievable
- If you have achieved something you have been partially successful and need to recognise that

In effective problem solving or decision making it is also important to consider the following factors:

- **Behaviour.** How do you normally behave? Don't assume that because you have always done things in a certain way that you cannot try something different
- **Thoughts and attitudes.** Do you have any negative or destructive attitudes, either towards the people concerned or towards yourself or the problem itself?
- **Feelings.** Even though you may be feeling physically or emotionally uncomfortable it does not mean life has to go on hold or that you cannot solve the problem. Use your deep breathing exercises and relaxation techniques and don't forget to congratulate yourself once you have achieved a solution

Think about a problem that has been on your mind for a while but have delayed tackling. It can be anything which is worrying you. Now with this problem in mind have a look at the following problem solving exercise sheet and fill it in.

Problem solving exercise

1. Define the problem

- What is the problem?

- Where does the problem occur?

- When does the problem occur?

- With whom is the problem better? Who makes the problem worse?

- How does the problem make you feel? What is your worst fear?

2. Think of solutions

- Think of 3 - 5 alternatives:

3. Evaluate the solutions

- Think of the consequences of each solution:

4. Select the best solution

- Select the best one and the one you can start working with:

5. Plan

- Think carefully how you can put the solution into action. Jot down a few ideas:

6. Implementation

- Put your plan into action

7. Review

- Check the plan is OK and continue the plan until completion

8. Reward yourself

- Remember to reward yourself even if it is only to recognise that you have achieved something worthwhile

Increasing your self-confidence

You have now learnt many different ways to help increase your confidence through being assertive and learning to say no, through managing your time better and through problem solving. Below are further tips for building confidence:

Guiding principles of self-confidence

- We gain confidence by achieving small goals
- Practise techniques
- Behave as if you are more confident than you feel
- Be flexible in your behaviour
- Learn from your mistakes
- Speak encouragingly to yourself
- Be kind to yourself
- Watch out for the double standards: unfairly strict to you and generous to others
- Do the best you can, but don't berate yourself for not being perfect
- Spend time with people who make you feel good

Exercise

Take time now to think about all the information we have covered in this section. Decide on the changes that you could make now to improve your confidence:



Lifestyle

Your day-to-day lifestyle can be adapted in order to reduce stress. Try these modifications:

Watch what you eat.

- Food is where we get our energy from and so it is important to have a balanced diet. Make sure you eat three meals a day – skipping breakfast or other meals makes the blood sugar level unstable and can make symptoms of anxiety worse. Try to eat foods that are high in fibre (cereals, potatoes, rice, pasta, wholemeal bread) and eat fewer foods that are high in fat (cakes, pastry, fried food, butter and margarine) or sugar (sweets, cakes, fizzy drinks)

High fat and high sugar foods may give you a burst of energy but this disappears very quickly, leaving you feeling tired and often low. High fibre foods are metabolised more slowly and release sugar (energy) into the blood at a steadier rate. This gives you energy for longer and avoids the fluctuations in blood sugar level that can increase anxiety. Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. You should also include high protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs, beans or pulses

Cut down on tea, coffee and coca cola.

- These all contain caffeine, a stimulant that mimics symptoms of anxiety. A general guideline is that you should drink no more than 5 cups of tea and/or coffee a day; otherwise the caffeine can increase your feelings of anxiety. If you can stop drinking tea, coffee and cola altogether, so much the better, but be prepared for some brief withdrawal symptoms which may last a few days

Cut down on smoking.

- Nicotine is also a stimulant and will increase anxiety symptoms. Smoking may seem to relax you but after a few minutes it actually has the opposite effect and increases tension

Take regular exercise.

- Exercise is a very useful way of reducing feelings of stress and tension. Try to get into the habit of taking some regular exercise. A healthy adult needs to be aiming for two and a half hours of moderate intensity exercise per week. Start with small and realistic exercise goals and build up if you are able.

Small lifestyle changes can have a big impact on anxiety

Top Tips

- Use the relaxation techniques before you go to bed to aid a good night's sleep
- Set aside time each day for yourself. Use this time for relaxation or to do something you enjoy. Even if you have a very busy life, finding half an hour each day to do something pleasurable or relaxing is an important part of managing your anxiety
- Recognise your strengths and achievements. Praise yourself for your strengths and weaknesses. Understand that nobody is, or should expect themselves to be, perfect
- Don't let stress build up. Talk to friends and seek advice from those around you
- Slow down. Rushing around causes adrenaline to be released in the body, which increases feelings of anxiety. If it's not essential that you rush, slow down. You will feel more relaxed and achieve more
- Face your fears. Don't avoid things or situations that cause you stress. You will never know that you have the strength and strategies to cope unless you confront your fears

INFORMATION POINT

If you feel you are at risk of harming yourself, contact your GP or the Samaritans on 116 123 or email Jo@samaritans.org

Summary

The 5 Ps of time management:

- Do Plan, Prioritise, Pass. Do not be a Perfectionist or a Procrastinator

Problem solving in brief:

- Identify the problem
- What/When/Why is it a problem and with whom
- Plan solution
- Plan carrying out of the solutions
- Evaluate your solutions
- Congratulate yourself

Building your confidence

- Treat yourself well
- Keep things in perspective
- Set realistic goals and start achieving them

Homework

- Continue keeping diaries
- Use the problem solving techniques to tackle problems you may have. Use the exercise sheet as a guide
- Consider how your current lifestyle differs from the recommendations. Decide on at least 3 areas of your life to change and begin to do it
- Review your progress. Remember how you were at the start of the program and pinpoint your achievements. Congratulate yourself and identify any areas that are still problematic for you. Make a decision to work on these over time rather than avoid them



Negative thoughts monitoring diary

	0 Calm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Severe anxiety	
Moderately anxious												
Date & time	Situation	Emotion: specify & rate (0-10)			Thoughts			Rational response			Anxiety rating (0-10)	



Bad days, setbacks and relapse

The illness/cure approach cannot be applied to anxiety – it implies that the aim is to be anxiety-free for the rest of your life. This is not realistic as moderate anxiety is a natural response to stress and so is a normal part of everyday life. It is far more useful to aim for being able to control and cope with anxiety as it occurs. It only becomes a relapse if there is a return to constant or excessive anxiety that you feel you are not able to control.

Relapse prevention gives you the skills to anticipate and cope with difficult or stressful situations. It also includes continuing to practise facing feared situations and using the coping strategies you have learnt.

How to begin

It is important that you don't see every set-back or disappointment as a failure; this will knock your confidence. Instead, look on your setbacks as opportunities to learn.

Identifying a relapse

Every recovery programme will have its ups and downs; everyone has good and bad days. But if you do feel that you are relapsing, answer the following questions to see if you really are, or if it is just a "down" day:

Are your symptoms of anxiety as intense as they were when they first occurred?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are your symptoms increasingly disrupting your day-to-day routine?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you experiencing anxiety as often as you were before you started your self-help programme?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answer "yes" to any of the above questions, you may be experiencing the beginnings of a relapse. Don't worry; there are ways of preventing this stage reaching a complete relapse.

There are several reasons why people relapse. Firstly, as mentioned before, we are vulnerable to relapse when we have minor setbacks and see them as failures. Sometimes there are also other factors that play a part, such as not coping with outside stresses, or not practising your coping techniques regularly or often enough.

*Sometimes,
when anxiety has
been a problem we
can misconstrue
normal life stress as
a sign of a
relapse*

Preventing a relapse

If you think you may be starting to relapse, ask yourself the following questions:

- **What caused you to feel increased anxiety?** Take a few minutes to pinpoint the trigger for the anxiety. It may help, if you can't find the underlying trigger, to fill in the anxiety diary for a week or two, and see if that helps. You may be feeling under the weather, or be worried about work or a relationship – any new stresses could cause you to have increased anxiety symptoms
- **Look at your lifestyle.** Is your lifestyle healthy? Are you getting enough exercise, rest and eating well? Are you smoking too much, or drinking too much tea, coffee or other stimulants? Alcohol can also increase the symptoms of anxiety. Keep taking time each day to practice your relaxation and breathing techniques. If your coping strategies are rusty, you won't be able to deal with anxiety as well
- **Take your time.** Don't try to take on too much all at once. If you have been fine for a while and then suddenly experience anxiety, you may be trying to take too big a step, or move on without enough preparation. If you don't feel ready for a challenge, then don't take it unless it is essential. If you do, be sure that you are well equipped with coping strategies
- **Don't worry.** There is absolutely no reason why one experience of increased anxiety should be the start of a relapse. Don't exaggerate the problem. If you do experience anxiety don't see it as a relapse – look on it as a learning experience

Coping with a setback

You probably experienced the occasional setback while you were practising your coping strategies, when it became more difficult to face your fears and your anxiety temporarily increased. There may also be times in the future when you find it more difficult to face your fears.

What to do when a setback occurs

- **Don't assume you will end up as anxious as you were before you started the self-help programme.** This is just a temporary setback. You are in a better position now because you have learnt ways of coping with anxiety
- **Restrict the setback.** Don't assume it will automatically spread to similar situations
- **Remember your coping strategies.** Think about the ways you have learnt to cope with anxiety and what has worked best for you. Practice your coping strategy in a non-stressful situation e.g. at home
- **Enter the setback situation.** Go back to the setback situation as soon as possible and try to notice the very first signs of anxiety coming on. As soon as you notice this, use your coping strategies
- **Stay there until your anxiety has reduced.** If you leave too soon it will only strengthen your fear
- **If it doesn't work.** Try a slightly easier situation. Try 'graded practice' where situations are approached gradually
- **If it does work.** Go back to the setback situation a few times, using your coping strategy to control your anxiety. Once you have managed your anxiety successfully a few times the situation should no longer be a problem

Negative emotions

Negative emotions, such as sadness, depression, grief, anger, boredom, loneliness, disappointment and frustration can make us more vulnerable to relapse. When we feel these things we tend to avoid difficult or stressful situations, which could make our anxiety about these situations worse.

We can tackle this by recognising and anticipating negative emotions before they start to effect our behaviour. They may be connected to negative thinking, or any number of life stresses such as arguments with friends or a partner, or money worries. Try to recognise when you get these negative emotions and be aware that you may be more vulnerable to anxiety at these times.

Positive risks

A good way to prevent relapse is to take positive risks. This means putting yourself in situations which may cause you anxiety. There is a risk that you may get anxious, but entering feared situations and coping successfully leads to positive outcomes – you will feel good about yourself, your independence will increase and you will have a better quality of life in the long term. Keep using your coping strategies to deal with everyday anxieties and you will feel more confident that you are able to cope with stressful situations.



Top Tips

- Always remember that fear is a normal and healthy reaction that will not harm you
- Don't try to fight your fear or run away. If you wait, your fear will pass. Use it as an opportunity to use your relaxation and breathing techniques
- Don't avoid situations that make you anxious. If you do, you will never know how well you could cope, and you will start a vicious cycle of avoiding more and more things
- Try all of the coping strategies at first. No two people experience anxiety in the same way, so you must develop a programme that is right for you
- Learn the difference between being tense and relaxed. The easiest way of doing this is simply to tense one set of muscles – for example in the arms or legs – then quickly let them go limp. Dwell on the contrast
- Don't try to push yourself. Set a pace and programme that is right for you and stick to it
- Arm yourself with different distraction techniques, and practise thought-challenging. With time, you should find it easier to use these strategies when you experience anxiety
- Practise what you have learnt every day
- Plan for the future with problem solving and "Troubleshooting for the Future" so that you are prepared for upcoming situations
- Be easy on yourself. Don't be over critical of your weaknesses – instead focus on your strengths. In particular while you are on the programme you should be patient with yourself. Remember you are learning new skills and this will take time and practice, but the benefits will be worth it
- If you have a setback, try not to be negative and imagine that you are going back to where you were. Everyone has good and bad days, learn from your experiences
- Keep monitoring your levels of anxiety and or depression and seek help if you are getting worse.

INFORMATION POINT

For lots more helpful information please visit www.talk2gether.nhs.uk for managing depression and anxiety

Homework

- Try to anticipate any difficult situations that you will have to face in the next two weeks. These may be unusual, one-off situations or just everyday things that make you anxious. For each situation, identify a coping strategy you could use and plan what you will do when faced with this situation. This should make you feel more in control
- Write a list of things you would like to achieve in the future (e.g. further lifestyle changes). Make these realistic, and also give yourself a realistic time limit in which you will try to achieve each goal
- Reward yourself for your achievements! You have now reached the end of the 8 part programme and should be feeling more in control of your anxiety. Give yourself a 'reward' for all your hard work. Reward yourself again when you achieve any of your future goals
- Continue using the coping techniques you have learnt to keep anxiety under control in the future



Further reading and helpful contacts

Anxiety and worry

Overcoming Social Anxiety and Shyness. Butler, G. (2009) Robinson: London

Feel the Fear and do it Anyway. Jeffers, S. (2007) Vermillion: London

Overcoming Anxiety. Kennerly, H. (2009) Robinson: London

Overcoming Worry. Meares, K. & Freeston, M. (2008) Robinson: London

Overcoming Panic and Agoraphobia. Silcove, D. (2009) Robinson: London

Overcoming Health Anxiety. Willson, D. & Veale, D. (2009) Robinson: London

Relationships with others

Overcoming relationship problems. Crowe, M. (2005) Robinson: London

The Selfish Pig's Guide to Caring. Mariott, H. (2003) Polperro Heritage Press: Worcestershire

Low mood and depression

Understanding Depression by Dr Kwame McKenzie. Family Doctor Series in association with BMA, available from Lloyds Chemists, Boots and Tesco stores

Overcoming Depression. Gilbert, P. (2009) Robinson: London

Postnatal Depression: Facing the Paradox of Loss, Happiness and Motherhood. Nicholson, P. (2001) Wiley: Chichester

Overcoming Mood Swings. Scott, J. (2010) Robinson: London

Mind Over Mood. Padesky, C. & Greenberger, D. (1995) Guildford Press: London

The Mindful Way Through Depression: freeing yourself from chronic unhappiness (with accompanying Meditation CD). Williams, M., Teasdale, M., Segal, Z. & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2007) Guildford Press: London

Stress and emotional well being

5 Steps to Emotional Wellbeing, Let's Talk,
²gether NHS Foundation Trust, 2011.
Visit: www.talk2gether.nhs.uk

Understanding Stress by Professor Greg Wilkinson.
Family Doctor Series in association with BMA,
available from Lloyds Chemists, Boots and Tesco
stores

Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy. Burns, D.
(2000) Avon Books: New York

Manage Your Mind: The Mental Fitness Guide.
Butler, G. & T. Hope (2007) Oxford University Press:
Oxford

The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook.
Davis, M. & Robbins-Eshelman, E. (2008) New
Harbinger Publications: California

Overcoming anger and irritability. Davies, W. (2009)
Robinson: London

Overcoming Low Self-Esteem. Fennell, M. (2009)
Robinson: London

How to assert yourself. Lindenfield, G. (1992)
Thorsons: London

Assertion Training: How to be who you really are.
Rees, S., Graham, R. & Kowalski, R. (1991)
Routledge: London

**Overcoming Body Image Problems including Body
Dysmorphic Disorder.** Willson, R., Veale, D. & Clarke,
A. (2009) Robinson: London

Helpful contacts

Gloucestershire & Herefordshire Section 1: Health

Let's Talk, ²gether NHS Foundation Trust
*Improving Access to Psychological Therapies provides
talking therapies for Anxiety, Stress and Depression*
Open: Mon to Fri: 9am to 5pm
Tel: 0800 073 2200
Email: 2gnft.Talk2gether@nhs.net
Website: www.talk2gether.nhs.uk

Community Health Trainers, Gloucestershire
*Community Health Trainers offer support, information
and guidance to people who want to make changes to
their lifestyle whatever their faith or culture*
Email: info@independencetrust.co.uk
Website: www.independencetrust.co.uk
Telephone: 0345 8638323

Gloucester Health Access Centre
*For walk-in & registered patients and those who are not
registered with a GP in the county*
Eastgate House, 121-131 Eastgate Street, Gloucester
GL1 1PX
Tel: 01452 336290
Open: 8.00am to 8.00pm
(including Sundays & Bank Holidays)
Website: www.asapglos.nhs.uk
Tel: 111 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
Website: www.nhs.uk/symptom-checker

Herefordshire GP Access Centre
*For walk-in & registered patients and those who are not
registered with a GP in the county*
Asda Building, Belmont Road, Hereford, HR2 7JE
Tel: 0330 123 9309 (out of hours GP number)
8am - 8pm, 7 days a week & every day of the year.
Website: www.herefordshiregpaccesscentre.nhs.uk

Section 2: Counselling & support

Gloucestershire Counselling Service
Tel: 01453 766310
Website: www.gloscounselling.org.uk

Listening Post Counselling
Open: Mon: 9.30am to 4.30pm & some evenings
Tel: 01452 383820
Email: lpstcounselling@listeningpost.org.uk

Relate
*Confidential counselling service for couples experiencing
relationship problems*
National booking line: 0300 100 1234
Tel: 01242 523215
Website: www.relate.org.uk

Samaritans

Tel: 01452 306333 / 01242 515777 (Gloucester)
01432 269 000 (Hereford)
116 123 (National)
Website: www.samaritans.org

Share

Young peoples counselling service
Open: Thursday evenings, 6pm to 9pm
Tel: 07928 775015
Email: shareypcs@yahoo.com

ISIS Women's Centre

Offers support, guidance and practical help in Gloucestershire to women offenders and those who are at risk of offending
Open: Mon to Fri: 9am to 5pm (24 hr answerphone)
Tel: 01452 397690
Website: www.isiswomenscentre.com
Email: info@isiswomenscentre.com

Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service

Free and confidential service to help men and women affected by domestic abuse throughout Gloucestershire
Open: Helpline manned Mon to Fri: 10am to 4pm
In emergency dial 999
Tel: 0845 602 9035 (Confidential Helpline)
Website: www.gdass.org.uk
Email: gdass.admin@gdass.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

Promotes the well-being of bereaved people and enables anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss
Tel: 01432 359469
0844 477 9400 (National Helpline)
Website: www.cruse.org.uk
Herefordshire
Tel: 01432 359 469
Email: herefordshire@cruse.org.uk
Gloucestershire
Tel: 01242 252518
Email: gloucestershire@cruse.org.uk

Herefordshire Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre

A free and confidential service supporting women survivors of rape and sexual abuse
Tel: 01432 344777
Website: www.hrsasc.org.uk
Email: isva@hrsasc.org.uk

West Mercia Women's Aid

Offering support for woman and children affected by domestic abuse
Tel: 0800 783 1359 (24 hour support line)
01432 356146 (general enquiries)
Email: info@westmerciawomensaid.org

Men's Advice Line

Advice and support for men in abusive relationships
Tel: 0808 801 0327

Marches Counselling Service

Registered charity
Tel: 01432 279906
Website: www.marchescounselling.org
Email: marches.counselling@gmail.com

Herefordshire Mind Recovery & Wellbeing Service

Community based services available to Herefordshire who have experience of mental distress
Tel: 01432 271643 or 278569
Email: info@herefordshire-mind.org.uk

Marriage Care

Supporting marriage, relationships and family life
Tel: 0800 389 3801
Website: www.marriagecare.org.uk

CLD Youth Counselling Trust

Young people's counselling service
Tel: 01432 269245
Website: www.thecldtrust.org

West Mercia Constabulary non-emergency line

For non-emergency and general enquiries.
Open 24 hours a day
Tel: 101
Website: www.westmercia.police.uk

FDS (Family Drug Support)

Offering support to families, friends and carers who are affected by a family member's substance misuse
Tel: 01981 251155
Email: support@familydrugsupport.com
Website: www.familydrugsupport.com

The Haven

Breast Cancer Support Centre
Tel: 01432 361061
Email: herefordreception@thehaven.org.uk
Website: <http://www.thehaven.org.uk>

Herefordshire Carers Support

Providing practical support and advice to the carer community in the county
Tel: 01432 356068
Email: help@herefordshirecarerssupport.org
Website: www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org

Section 3: Cultural support and services

Churches in Hereford Diocese Action Team (CHAT)

In Hereford the Churches in Hereford Diocese Action Team (CHAT) is working all year to ensure that there is hot food available seven days a week from one of the churches in the City

Tel: 01432 373300

Email: diooffice@hereford.anglican.org

Website: www.hereford.anglican.org

All Nations Community Centre

African Caribbean Community

61-63 Chase Lane, Eastern Avenue, Gloucester, GL4 6PH.

Tel: 01452 414254

GARAS

Gloucestershire action for refugees and asylum seekers

111 Barton Street, Gloucester GL1 4HR

Tel: 01452 550528

Email: info@garas.org.uk

Gloucestershire African Caribbean Association

213 Barton Street Gloucester GL1 4HY

Mrs Pauline Reynolds – Manager

Tel: 01452 387754 (Mon to Fri: 9.00am to 5.00pm)

Email: glosaca_1@hotmail.com

Gloucestershire Chinese Women's Guild

Voluntary Agencies Unit

1st Floor 75-81 Eastgate Street Gloucester GL1 1PN

Mrs Mew Ning Chan-Edmead – Chairperson

Tel: 01452 332088 or 01452 382886

Email: mewningchan@gcwg.org.uk

Gymnation

Registered charity providing health and fitness facilities and other activities for people of all nationalities in Gloucester – its ethos is to try to encourage healthy lifestyles for its members, helping them to gain confidence and increase their physical and mental wellbeing

Tel: 01452 525044 (Mon to Fri: 9am to 11.45am; weekend mornings 9am to 12pm; Mon to Fri 4.30pm to 9pm)

Email: imran@_thefriendshipcafe.com

Gloucestershire Polish Community Portal

Tel: 01242 231811

Email: gpc@inbox.com

Website: www.poloniagloucester.co.uk

The Friendship Cafe

Interfaith charity which arranges a number of wellbeing activities in the Barton & Tredworth Area of Gloucester

109-113 Barton Street Gloucester GL1 4HR

Tel: 01452 308127

Email: imran@thefriendshipcafe.com

Traveller Service

Principal Traveller Services Officer – Paul Kenyon,
Gloucestershire County Council

Tel: 01452 426397

Jo Rogers - Herefordshire Council's Traveller
Liaison Officer

Tel: 01432 261759

Email: info@herefordshire.gov.uk

Marches Counselling Service

(registered charity)

Tel: 01432 279906

Mob: 07527579488

Email: www.marchescounselling.org

MIRA - Herefordshire Council

*The Migration and Integration in Rural Areas Project.
Offering support, guidance and signposting to newcomers to the county*

Tel: 01432 260633

Email: diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk

Herefordshire Language Network

Translation and interpretation service

Herefordshire Council

Tel: 01432 260216

Email: diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk

Section 4: Benefits

Benefits & Welfare Take up

Gloucester City Council Herbert Warehouse
Gloucester GL1 2EQ

Tel: 01452 396979

Open: 8.45am to 5pm

Email: benefits@gloucester.gov.uk

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) & Attendance Allowance (AA) Unit

Disability Living Allowance

(if born on or before 08/04/1948): 0345 6056055

Disability Living Allowance

(if born after 08/04/1948): 0345 712 3456

Attendance Allowance: 0345 6056055

Jobcentre Plus

All new claims: 0800 055 6688

Queries about existing claims: For queries about existing claims, please visit www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus to find the relevant number.

Budgeting Loans: 0345 603 6967

Jobcentre Plus: 0345 606 0234

Please see index for local branch phone numbers

Website: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Housing and Council Tax Benefits

Herefordshire Council Benefits PO Box 224
Hereford HR1 2XW

Tel: 01432 260333

Email: benefits@herefordshire.gov.uk

Welfare Benefits Herefordshire Council

Welfare and Financial Assessment Team
St Nicholas House Hereford HR4 0DD

Tel: 01432 383444

Email: welfarerights@herefordshire.gov.uk

Pension Service

Tel: 0800 731 7898 (8am to 6pm, Mon to Fri)

Website: www.thepensionservice.gov.uk
(with online enquiry form)

ABLE Information and Advice

provides support for individuals with an illness or disability with accessing benefits, leisure and employment

Tel: 01432 277770 9:00am - 5:00pm Mon to Fri

Website: www.ablehereford.com

Department for Work and Pensions

Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment

Tel: 0800 917 2222

Attendance Allowance

Tel: 0345 605 6055

Website: www.dwp.gov.uk

Section 5: Other useful organisations

Age UK Gloucestershire

Tel: 01452 422660

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Cheltenham Borough Council

Tel: 01242 262626

Email: enquiries@cheltenham.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

General and specialist advice service

Tel: 03444 111 444

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Gay-Glos

Tel: 01452 306800

Email: help@gay-glos.org

Website: www.gay-glos.org

Gloucester Citizens Advice Bureau

General and specialist advice service

Tel: 01452 527202

Gloucestershire County Council

Tel: 01452 425000

Email: customerservices@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Gloucester City Council

Tel: 01452 396396

Email: heretohelp@gloucester.gov.uk

The Terence Higgins Trust

Terence Higgins Trust is the leading and largest HIV and sexual health charity in the UK

Tel: 0808 802 1221

Email: info@ttht.org.uk

Age UK Gloucestershire

Tel General Enquiries: 01452 422660

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire

40 Saint Martin's Street Hereford HR2 7SG

Tel: 01432 351 774 (Local office)

0800 008 6077 (General Enquiries)

Email: office@ageukhw.org.uk

Herefordshire Council

Brockington 35 Hafod Road Hereford HR1 1SH

Tel: (01432) 260000

Email: info@herefordshire.gov.uk

Opening Hours 8:30am-5:15pm Mon to Thurs
8:30am-4:45pm Fri

Section 6: Housing

Gloucester City Homes

Tel: 01452 424344 Customer Services

Email: customer.services@gch.co.uk

Two Rivers Housing

Tel: 0800 316 0897

Email: customerservices@2rh.org.uk

Shelter

Housing advice centre

Tel: 0808 800 444

Website: www.shelter.org.uk

Herefordshire Housing

Herefordshire Housing is a not-for-profit Registered Provider, which provides affordable homes throughout Herefordshire

Tel: 0300 777 4321

Website: www.hhl.org.uk

Home Point

Affordable Housing in Hereford

Tel: 01432 260300

Email: info@home-point.info

INFORMATION POINT

For lots more
helpful information
please visit
www.talk2gether.nhs.uk
for managing
depression and
anxiety

For contact details of the other district councils
please visit these County Council websites:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk or
www.herefordshire.gov.uk

For details of all other organisations please go to:
www.guide-information.org.uk

Relaxation monitoring diary

Whenever you do the relaxation exercises, make a note of it in this diary.
It will help you to monitor your progress.

	0 Calm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Severe anxiety	
	Moderately anxious											
Date, time & place	Deep or rapid relaxation	Stress level BEFORE (0-10)	Stress level AFTER (0-10)	Comments								

Relaxation monitoring diary

Whenever you do the relaxation exercises, make a note of it in this diary.
It will help you to monitor your progress.

0
Calm

1

2

3

4
Moderately anxious

5

6

7

8

9

10
Severe anxiety

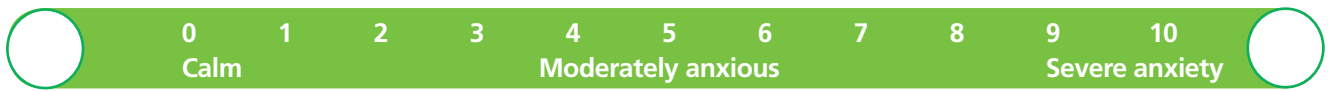
Date, time & place	Deep or rapid relaxation	Stress level BEFORE (0-10)	Stress level AFTER (0-10)	Comments

Anxiety monitoring diary



Date & time	Situation	Anxiety rating (0-10)	Thoughts	Physical feelings	What did you do to cope	Anxiety rating (0-10)

Anxiety monitoring diary



Date & time	Situation	Anxiety rating (0-10)	Thoughts	Physical feelings	What did you do to cope	Anxiety rating (0-10)

Negative thoughts monitoring diary

[illegible]

Negative thoughts monitoring diary

[illegible]

Find out whether you are anxious and depressed.

Visit our website to find out more about your scores. (www.talk2gether.nhs.uk)

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Please tick	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	0	1	2	3
Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
Trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
Being so restless that it is hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3
GAD7 Anxiety Total score				

Anxiety Scores **None** 0 - 5 **Mild** 6 - 10 **Moderate** 11 - 14 **Severe** 15 and above

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Please tick	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
Trouble falling/staying asleep, sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
Feeling bad about yourself – or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0	1	2	3
Moving or speaking so slowly that other people have noticed or moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way	0	1	2	3
PHQ9 Depression Total Score				

Depression Score **None** 0 - 4 **Mild** 5 - 9 **Moderate** 10 - 14 **Severe** 15 and above

You have now completed the programme. Complete the questionnaires above again to see how you are feeling. Come back to these questionnaires in the future to keep an eye on your progress. Remember, that if your anxiety is increasing or mood dropping, you may need to work harder with the techniques. Seek help if the mood change persists.

INFORMATION POINT

*If you feel you
are at risk of
harming yourself,
contact your GP
or the Samaritans
on 116 123 or email
Jo@samaritans.org*

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Let's Talk



“ This workbook has helped me get over my anxiety and get back to normal. I had the help of my GP and Paul, a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner from Let's Talk who was kind and supportive. My physical health is still not the best but I am not as scared anymore. Thanks for all the help. ”

Brian, 73 years old

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Rikenel, Montpellier
Gloucester, GL1 1LY

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2gether NHS Foundation Trust
Benet Building, Ruckhall Lane,
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Hereford, HR2 9RP

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Email: 2gnft.Talk2gether@nhs.net
Website: www.talk2gether.nhs.uk
Trust website: www.2gether.nhs.uk

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