

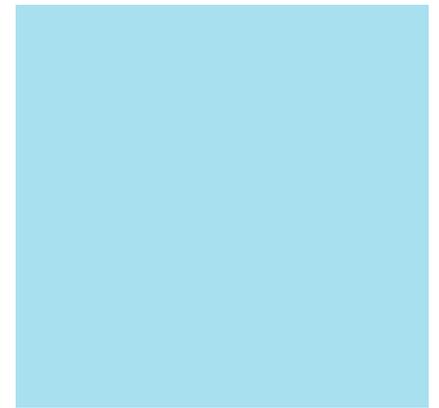
# Working to Overcome



Anxiety



With all of us in mind



With all of us in mind

## Acknowledgements and background

1st Edition: January 2003

Revised Edition: August 2004

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: February 2015

The development of this anxiety self help book was funded jointly by the University of Huddersfield and South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

The first edition was developed by Mike Lucock, Rachael Noble, Emma Pallister, Carrie Horsefield, Kath Padgett, Alison Westley and Chris Atha with advice from service user representatives.

We would like to thank Malcolm Saville, Antony Rowntree and staff and service users of Depression Anxiety Self Help (DASH), based in Huddersfield, for their help and support.

Thanks also to Wajid Khan for his work on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

The first edition of this book was used in a published study investigating its effectiveness in helping people with anxiety problems while they were waiting for psychological therapy:

Lucock, M., Padgett, K., Noble, R., Westley, A., Atha, C., Horsefield, C., and Leach, C. (2008). Controlled clinical trial of a self-help for anxiety intervention for patients waiting for psychological therapy. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 36, 541-551.

The book was also evaluated by service users from a community based self-help group:

Lucock, M.P., Mirza, M., & Sharma, I. (2007) Service users' views of a self-help book for anxiety. *Journal of Mental Health*, 16 (5), 635 - 646.

Among the recommendations of this study was the importance of professional support in making use of the book. This is consistent with the increasing acknowledgement of the importance of guidance in self-help interventions for people with mental health problems.

For feedback or queries about this book, please contact Professor Mike Lucock on [mike.lucock@swyt.nhs.uk](mailto:mike.lucock@swyt.nhs.uk) or [m.lucock@hud.ac.uk](mailto:m.lucock@hud.ac.uk)

## Aims of The Pack

- To help you understand that anxiety is normal and we all feel anxious at times. Therefore the aim is not to get rid of anxiety, as this would be unrealistic. The aim is to help reduce your anxiety and help you cope with and manage your anxious feelings.
- Information about anxiety is provided to help you increase your understanding of what anxiety is and how it affects you.
- This book will give you practical tasks such as relaxation, distraction, recognising and challenging unhelpful thoughts, to try out and will help you deal with your anxiety.

This book will enable you to make changes to your life that will reduce stress and help you overcome your fears.

### **Tips on how to use this book**

- At first you may feel quite daunted by the size of this book. Try to just focus on one section at a time. This will help to break it down into more manageable chunks.
- This book is split into six sections. Feel free to go over sections more than once. Only move on when you feel ready.
- This book is your property so you may underline or highlight things in the book that you find particularly helpful. Feel free to photocopy the worksheets, if you feel this would be helpful.
- Key points have been highlighted at the end of each section to help emphasize main areas.
- After each section there is a worksheets section containing diaries, tasks and quizzes for you to try out. We recommend that you try your best to complete the tasks at the end of each section. Remember the more you put in the more you will get out.
- This book has been designed for a wide audience so everything in it will not be relevant to you personally. Focus on the parts that are more relevant to you.
- Recognise that some things, such as graded exposure and challenging your unhelpful thinking will take a long time (months) to work on.
- At any time in the future, if you feel that your stress and anxiety levels are increasing try referring to the sections of the book that you found useful.
- If you find that after working hard at this book you still don't feel any better, do not think that you have failed. It may just be that a different approach would be more suitable for you or you may find it more helpful sometime in the future. You may want to visit your GP or another health professional about accessing more support to help you through your problems.

## How Can This Material Help You?

It is important to become familiar with your own cycle of physical symptoms, thoughts, moods, behaviour and environment in order to help you break the cycle of anxiety. By working through the material in this book you will be able to develop new skills and ways of coping, enabling you to achieve some of these changes. You will learn about the importance of maintaining a healthy balance of pressure and activities that reduce pressure.

The more work you put into managing your anxiety, the more you will get out of it. There is no magic cure for anxiety, and it is up to you to do your best to help manage your stress levels and symptoms. In this book there are tasks for you to complete to help you understand more about your anxiety. At first it may be very difficult to overcome your anxiety, but by carefully working through the following sections you will learn about more helpful ways of coping with and managing your anxiety.

You may find it easier to work through the book when you are feeling interested and curious. If you try working through the book when feeling anxious or down you may find it difficult to retain the information you are reading. It can be very difficult to learn new skills when in an anxious or depressed state so don't put too much pressure on yourself. When you feel it is getting too difficult for you, take a break from it and return to it when you are feeling more curious. Working through this book is not an easy task and it may take a while to get used to it. Hopefully you will find that your work pays off so in the future you are more able to dealing with stress and anxiety problems so they are less likely to have a negative impact on your life.

You cannot expect to ever be completely free of anxiety because it is a normal part of us all. If it has become a problem, however, you can learn to deal with it more effectively.

Consider sharing this book with a partner, family member or friend who will be supportive. We all need the help and support of others .



## **Section 1**

Introduction to Anxiety



## **Section 2**

Physical Effects of Anxiety



## **Section 3**

Recognising Anxious Thinking



## **Section 4**

Dealing with Anxious Thinking



## **Section 5**

Effects of Anxiety on Mood & Behaviour



## **Section 6**

Dealing with Setback & Final Thoughts

## What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a term used to describe uncomfortable feelings of nervousness, worry, and tension, which we all feel from time to time. Anxiety can affect anyone, whatever their age, gender etc. It affects our thoughts, physical reactions, moods and behaviours. Anxiety can also cause us to feel panicky and frightened and prevent us from doing things. Too much stress in our lives can result in higher levels of anxiety.

Anxiety is also a perfectly normal response to threat, and in some situations that are really threatening it can be helpful in preparing us for action. Some degree of anxiety can improve our performance in certain situations such as job interviews, taking exams, sporting events, performing well at work or helping us to pay our bills on time. However, if anxiety occurs too often, is too severe and begins to interfere with our life, then it has become a problem.

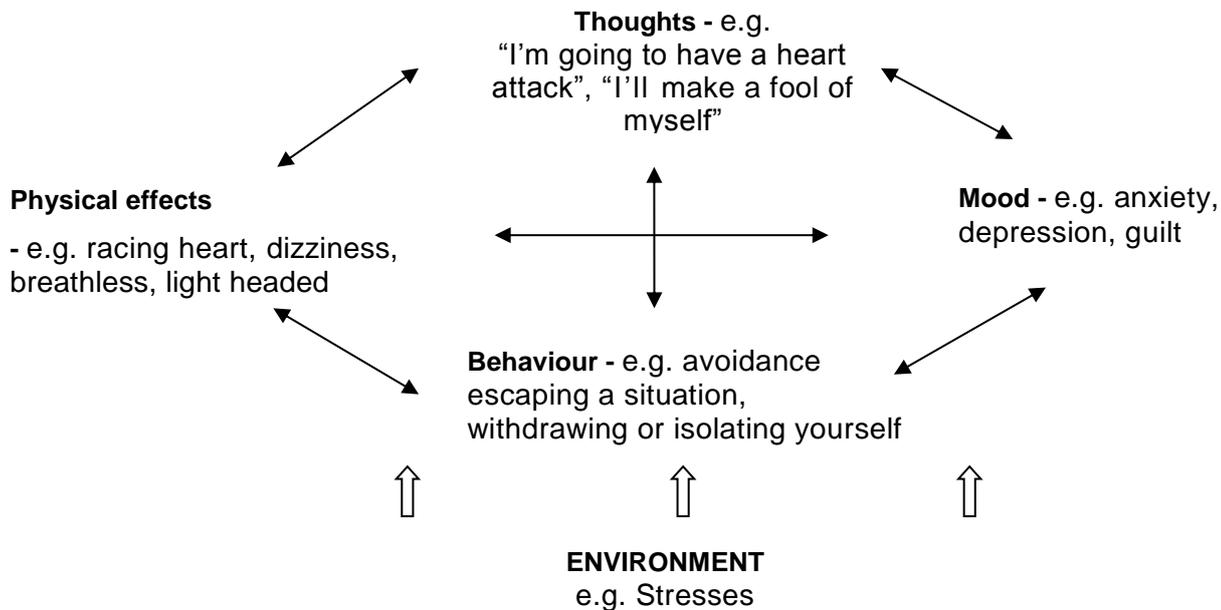
We know from research that at any one time, there are many people experiencing anxiety that is a problem to them. Anxiety can either be very general; affecting many areas of our lives, or it may be more specific to certain situations such as crowded places, talking to people or travelling on buses. It could even occur as a specific phobia such as a fear of lifts or a fear of spiders.

How does anxiety affect us? Anxiety affects us in four main ways:

1. **Physical effects** – when we are anxious we will feel many physical symptoms of anxiety, such as a pounding heart, a churning stomach, or breathing difficulties. Long-term stress also affects us physically.
2. **Thoughts** – when we are anxious we tend to worry and have negative thoughts like “What if I make a fool of myself”, or “What if I suffocate / faint /have a heart attack”. As well as thoughts, we may experience images or pictures in our mind such as an image of a car crash or someone criticising us.
3. **Mood** – anxiety itself is a type of mood. Anxiety and prolonged stress can also affect our moods in other ways. For example, if we experience anxiety that restricts our lives over a long period of time, we may feel guilty, down and depressed.
4. **Behaviour** - anxiety also affects our behaviour, changing the things we feel able to do. This can result in avoidance of many things, such as going into a supermarket or going to the dentist. When we can't avoid things we may do things to make us feel safe, such as always having someone with us, or carrying tablets that we don't really need.

We will look at how to deal with problems in these four areas in the following sections. Although we look at these areas in separate sections, it is important to realise that they affect one another. For example, our thoughts about something affects our feelings and our feelings affect us physically. This is an important part of understanding anxiety and we will say a lot more about this throughout the book.

The diagram below shows how these four areas (**thoughts, mood, behaviour, physical**) all link together and affect each other. It shows how every aspect of a person's life influences all the others. For example, changes in our thoughts influence our physical reactions which influence our mood and behaviour. It also shows that the **environment** (stresses, stressful situations) can cause anxiety and problems in these four areas.



Adapted from Greenberger, D., and Padesky, C.A., 1995. *Mind Over Mood*. London: The Guilford Press.

**The next section describes various ways in which anxiety can develop.**

### How does anxiety develop into a problem?

There are many different reasons why anxiety develops into a problem, and these vary from person to person. Examples of common reasons leading to increased anxiety are included below – you may be able to think of additional ones.

#### **Increased anxiety can develop:**

- After a long or intense period of stress and worry.
- As a result of unpleasant or stressful life events. These may include the death of a loved one, serious illness (yours or someone close to you), the breakup of a relationship or losing or changing jobs.
- Following unhelpful/negative thinking, such as "I can't do this" "I'm going to faint".
- When you lack confidence and self esteem.
- After being involved in an incident that we experience as threatening. This may result in us feeling anxious the next time we are in similar circumstances. For example following a car accident, you may feel anxious driving.
- Following a bout of depression where you lose confidence, though you can be anxious and depressed at the same time.

## Coping Styles

Some people may feel that they have never coped very well with stress and may describe themselves as a 'born worrier'. They may have experienced anxiety problems for a long time and in a variety of situations, although some situations may cause more anxiety than others.

For other people, there may seem to be no obvious event linked with their recent increase in anxiety. These people may feel that their anxiety has come out of the blue. On closer inspection however, anxiety may result from a gradual build up of pressure related to minor events and life stresses.

Some people have always coped well, and anxiety may have only recently developed into a problem. This may have followed a difficult and stressful time in their life. For these people, anxiety can seem a very big problem because they had always seen themselves as strong and able to cope with things. It may be the first time they have really struggled to cope. All these coping styles are common and can be worked on.

**Example:** Here is an example of the type of anxiety problem that has followed a stressful time in their life:

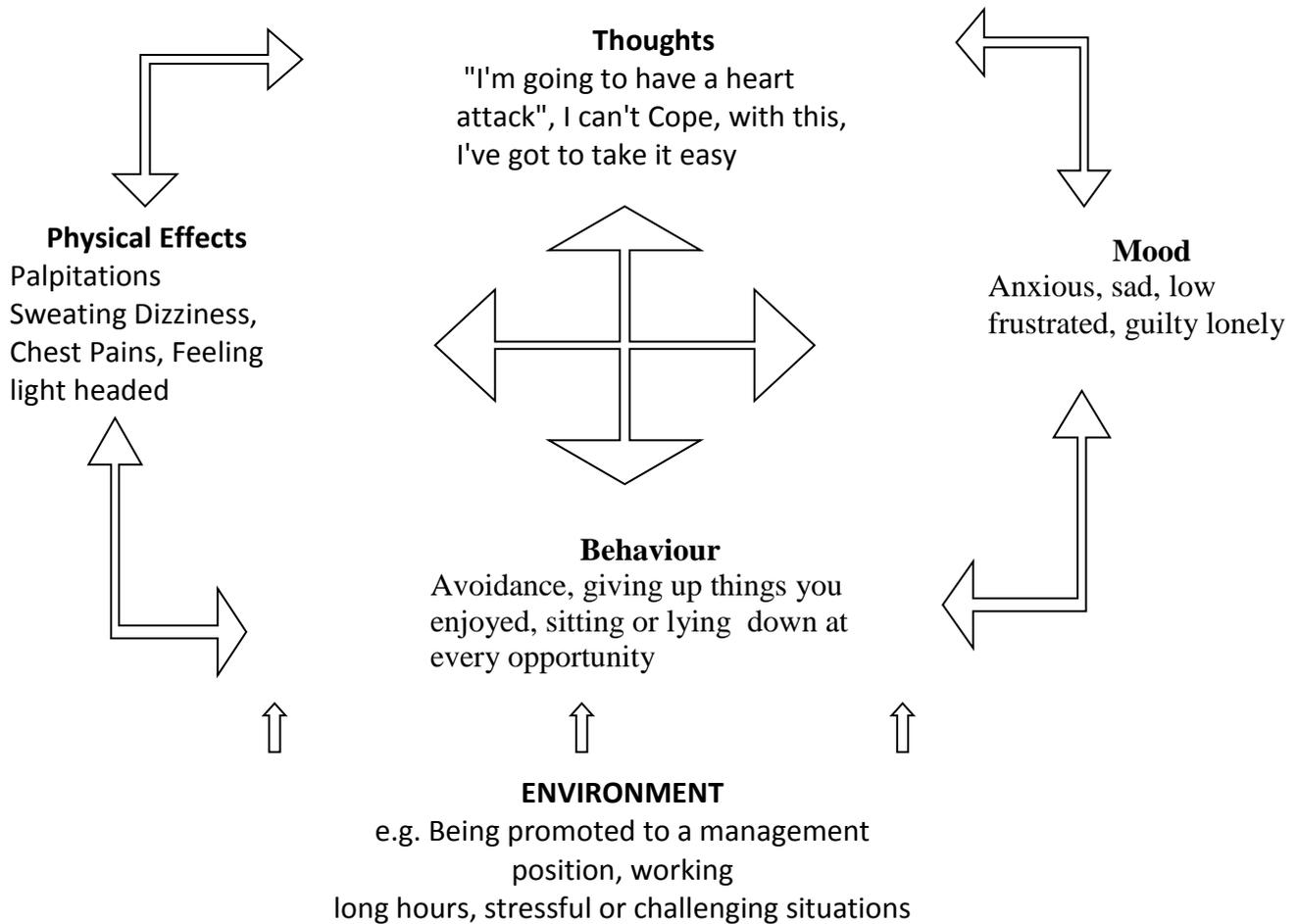
*Bob, aged 53, no previous history of anxiety problems. Happily married with a teenage daughter. He has recently been promoted to a management position in the car industry, which has put him under a lot of stress due to his long hours. He had always felt he was good at coping with work and was a hard worker. Two months ago Bob noticed he was having palpitations and dizziness as he rushed from one meeting to another. He began worrying he had a serious physical problem which put more stress on him. Despite the fact that his GP confirmed that Bob was physically fit, he still suffered from the following symptoms:*

- Physical:** palpitations, sweating, dizziness, and chest pains.
- Thinking:** "I'm going to have a heart attack" "I can't cope with this, I've got to take it easy."
- Behaviour:** Avoiding strenuous activity, making excuses at work not to attend meetings he feels may cause him stress, moving slowly, taking regular rests and sitting or lying down, ensuring he always has his mobile and his car nearby (so he can get help easily).  
anxiety, low, and frustrated.
- Mood:** Begins to feel guilty that he is not doing his job well enough.



## Section 1: Introduction to Anxiety

The diagram below shows how Bob's thinking, behaviours, moods and physical reactions all affect each other.

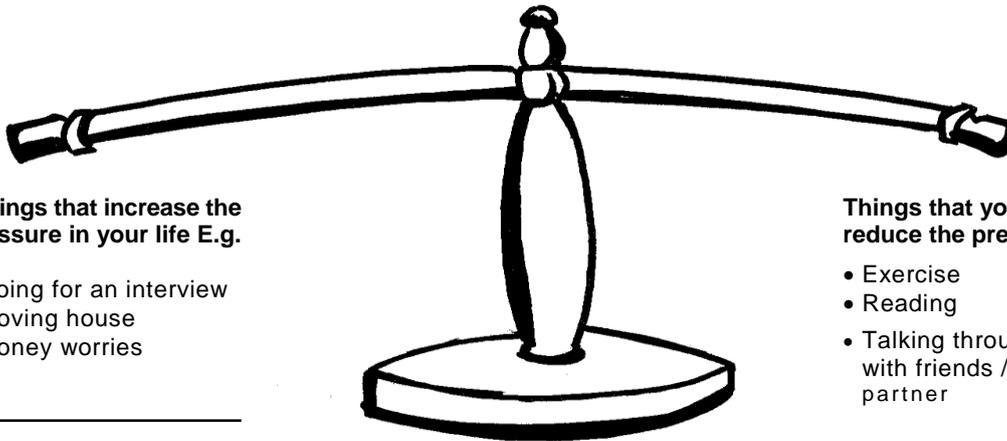


### How do I get an even balance between pressure and activities that reduce pressure?

Anxiety levels can increase when our perceived ability to cope is outweighed by the pressures placed upon us. It is important to maintain a healthy balance between pressure and activities that reduce pressure. The build up of pressure can be due to any number of things. The impact of events will vary from person to person.

Some things you may have identified as pressures in your life could be more difficult to change, for example, low income, poor housing. However, working through this exercise may help you come up with activities that might ease some of these pressures and thereby reducing some of your anxieties. We all have our own methods of coping with life's pressures, some healthier than others.

Use the space below to write down the things that may increase the pressure in your life and the things that you do to reduce the pressure.



**Things that increase the pressure in your life E.g.**

- Going for an interview
- Moving house
- Money worries

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**Things that you do to reduce the pressure**

- Exercise
- Reading
- Talking through problems with friends / family / partner

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Take a closer look at your responses in the above boxes and ask yourself the questions below.

1. Do you have an even balance of pressures and activities that reduce pressure?

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2. If not, what could you do to even out the balance?

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If possible, try to make any changes necessary to even out the balance between pressures and activities that reduce pressure.

### **Why does anxiety persist?**

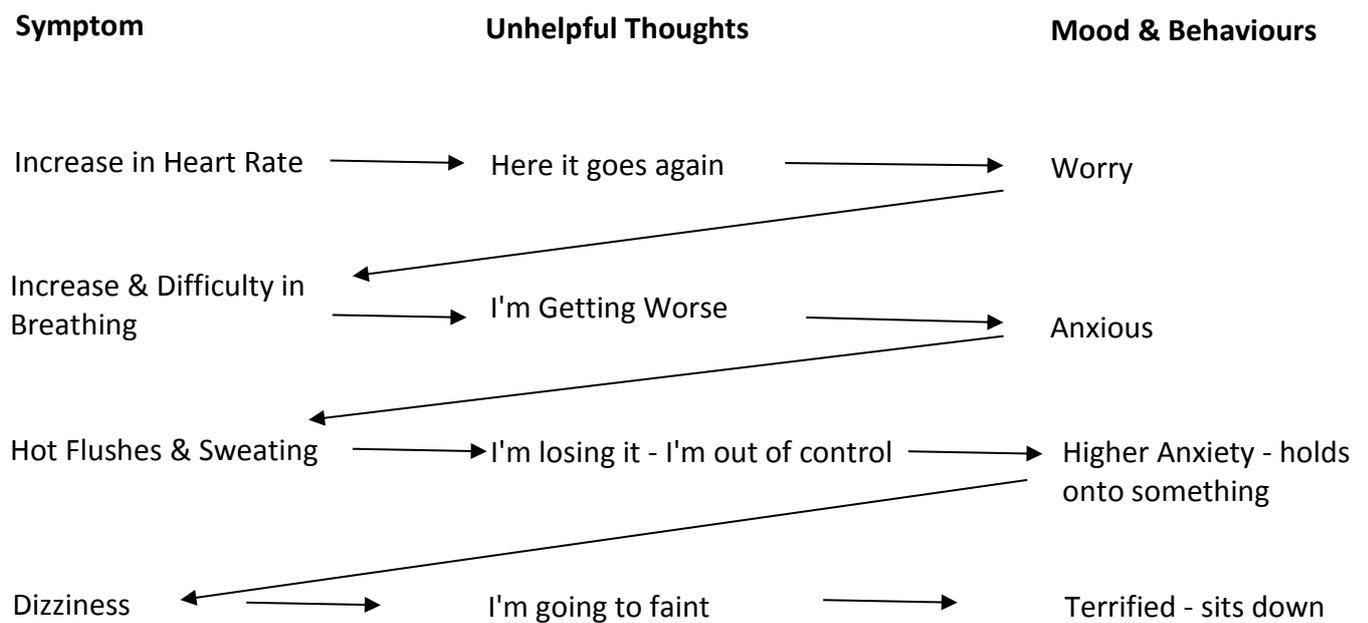
Although anxiety itself is a normal response to threat, there are a number of ways in which it can become a long-term problem. Again, these differ from person to person. Below are some examples of how anxiety is fuelled and can leak into other areas of our lives.

#### **1. Fear of Fear**

Anxiety can develop into a cycle involving physical symptoms, unhelpful thoughts, moods and behaviours, that is hard to break. When in an anxiety provoking situation you become more aware of the physical symptoms of anxiety that you experience. You then have unhelpful thoughts about these symptoms that change your mood resulting in increased worrying. For example, if your heart is racing, you may fear that you are about to have a heart attack. This worrying will actually make the physical symptoms worse, which is likely to make you have more unhelpful thoughts making you worry more, and so the cycle continues. Sometimes this cycle can even lead to a panic attack (see page 2.4).

The fear of fear diagram below gives an example of how symptoms, thoughts, moods and behaviours interact in a cycle of increasing anxiety. Your own anxiety may involve different physical symptoms, thoughts, moods and behaviours. By working through this book you will increase your understanding of what these are for you and how you can break this cycle.

**Fear of fear diagram**



**2. Anxiety can become a habit.**

Once we become anxious over a long period of time, the feelings of anxiety often remain, even though there may seem to be no present cause for it. This is because it can become a habit to feel tense and to worry and to expect difficulties. It can also become a habit to avoid the things we think will make us anxious. The more we avoid things, the harder it becomes to face them (avoidance will be discussed in more detail on page 5.1). Our bodies can get into the habit of being tense and to reacting anxiously to all kinds of situations. An example of this is when we have a habit of clenching our teeth or breathing in a tense, shallow way.

**3. Anticipation**

Once you have felt anxious in a situation, you begin to feel anxious before going into similar situations. For example, we may begin to feel anxious before we are about to enter a crowded place. Gradually this increased expectation of anxiety can make you feel anxious before more and more situations, potentially affecting many areas of your life. Our thoughts about entering an anxious situation can lead to feelings of anxiety.

**4. Association**

Once you have experienced anxiety in a particular situation you associate this feeling with other similar settings. For example, if you have felt anxious on a crowded bus, you then begin to feel anxious on all buses or even all forms of transport. Similarly, if you feel anxious whilst away from home, you begin to feel anxious every time you leave the house.

## 5. Preoccupation and Hypersensitivity

Once you have suffered from the uncomfortable feelings of panic and worry, you become more aware of the physical symptoms of anxiety. You become preoccupied and hypersensitive to changes such as breathing and heart rate. As a result of the discomfort you feel when anxious, any slight change can be exaggerated causing you to over-react and worry. This in turn makes the symptoms worse. This can be a problem especially for people who are self-conscious about their anxiety and those who worry that their symptoms mean they have a serious physical problem.

Experiencing anxiety over a long period of time, can also lead to changes in **mood and behaviour** such as tiredness, increased irritability, avoidance, and over and under activity (see section 5).

### **An introduction to panic attacks**

Panic is a feeling of intense anxiety or fear over a short period of time. A panic attack is characterised by physical symptoms, such as rapid heartbeat, dizziness, increased body temperature, breathing difficulties or nausea. People who experience panic attacks misinterpret their bodily sensations. Misinterpreting means thinking about their physical sensations in a threatening way. Common examples are misinterpreting rapid heartbeat as a heart attack, dizziness as fainting or disorientation as going crazy.

The vicious cycle of physical symptoms, thoughts and mood/behaviour interact and escalate *very* rapidly. You will find more information about panic attacks and how to cope with them in the next section of this book.

### **How do I relax?**

Lots of people find it *very* difficult to relax. Sometimes we get into bad habits of feeling tense such as stiffness and tension in the neck and shoulder area or grinding of teeth. Like any other skill, relaxation can be learned, but it does take time and effort each day to practice it.

Make yourself comfortable on a supportive chair, or lie on a bed, or on a mat or rug on the floor. Take time out and try to breathe in a relaxed and slow manner taking full breaths

We ask you to monitor your own progress by completing a daily relaxation diary located in section 1 worksheets. Further copies can be found in section 6 worksheets.

**Time management**

Effective time management can help to reduce anxiety by helping us to be more realistic in what we plan to achieve. It helps to organise our time to suit our own individual needs. Everyone's week is made up of different activities, occupying various amounts of time.



The following exercises might help you to organise your weeks to find the most suitable times for you to work on this book.

Use the space below to list all the activities that make up an average week for you. It could include activities such as watching television, working, travelling, sleeping, visiting friends/family, shopping etc. You might find it useful to write down how much time you spend **ON** each of these activities.

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For a lot of people completing this book will seem like a very daunting task. Effective time management will help you to allocate certain times that you could spend on this book. Breaking the book down into more manageable chunks like this can help to make it less daunting. Now, write down times during a typical week that you could spend working on this self help book.

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Use this in conjunction with the 'Task and time diary' in section 1 worksheets if you find it useful. If you already have an effective way of arranging suitable times to work on this book, please feel free to continue using that method.

## Key Points

- Anxiety is a perfectly normal response to threat
- Excessive anxiety affects us in four main ways - Physically and affects our thoughts, mood and behaviour
- There are many possible causes of anxiety, and these may vary from person to person
- Anxiety levels can increase when our perceived ability to cope is outweighed by the pressures placed upon us
- Anxiety can become a problem through unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaviour such as, fear of fear, anticipation, association, preoccupation and hypersensitivity, and avoidance
- Panic is a feeling of intense anxiety or fear
- Achieving a better balance between pressure and activities that reduce your pressure will reduce your stress and anxiety
- Relaxation is an important skill to learn through practice
- This material will help you to break the cycle and manage your anxiety more appropriately

## Worksheets

This part of section 1 contains a few worksheets and tasks that you can complete to help you get a better understanding of how anxiety affects you and what you could do to help you manage the anxiety better.

### **Please tick when you have completed the following tasks**

*(Most tasks can be found in Section 1 worksheets)*

- Complete the Section 1 quiz
- Use the 'Task and time diary' if you find it useful
- Practice relaxation using the relaxation CD/Tape provided
- Monitor your relaxation progress using the 'Relaxation diary'
- Complete the 'Physical symptoms of anxiety diagram'

## Quiz – Introduction to anxiety

The following questions are for you to check your own understanding of the 'introduction to anxiety' section. Remember that this book is for you to keep, so you can re-read and look back over sections as often as you wish.

1. Anxiety is a perfectly normal response to \_\_\_\_\_ and can even be helpful because:

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2. What are the main ways in which anxiety affects us?

- Physical
- T \_\_\_\_\_
- M \_\_\_\_\_
- B \_\_\_\_\_

3. Give two examples of how anxiety can develop into a problem

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

4. It is important to maintain a healthy balance between p\_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_

5. What are some of the reasons anxiety remains?

- Fear of fear
- H \_\_\_\_\_
- A \_\_\_\_\_
- A \_\_\_\_\_
- P \_\_\_\_\_ and H \_\_\_\_\_

6. What physical symptoms is a panic attack characterised by?

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## Section 1

### Quiz Answers:

1. Threat - It prepares us for action or It can improve our performance in certain situations.

2. Thoughts - Mood - Behaviour

3. Any two of the following:

1) After a long or intense period of stress and worry.

2) As a result of unpleasant or stressful life events.

These may include, the death of a loved one, serious illness (yours or someone close to you), the breakup of a relationship, or losing or changing jobs.

3) Following a sequence of unhelpful/negative thinking, such as "I can't do this" "I'm going to faint".

4) When you lack confidence and self esteem.

5) After being involved in an incident that we experience as threatening. This may result in us feeling anxious the next time we are in similar circumstances. For example following a car accident, you may feel anxious driving.

6) Following a bout of depression where you lose confidence, though you can be anxious and depressed at the same time. 4. Pressure and activities that reduce pressure 5. Habit - Anticipation - Association - Preoccupation and Hypersensitivity

6. Physical symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, dizziness, increased body temperature, breathing difficulties or nausea.

**Task and time diary**

**Instructions**

This diary is provided to help you to manage your time more effectively. You can use it to write down the tasks that you need to do, and when and where you intend to complete them. You can also use it to consider any difficulties or problems that may prevent you from completing the tasks, and ways in which you may be able to overcome them.

One aim of this diary is to help you to be more realistic in what you plan to achieve. Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by the number of things we need to do. This diary can help you to break down the tasks and allocate times to work on them. Planning in this way can help you to space tasks more evenly into your available time and can make you feel more in control. Organising tasks into manageable and achievable chunks can also help you to feel a sense of completion. Likewise, it can ensure that you schedule time for yourself: time for relaxation, and time for reflection.

It may be useful to plan each week with the help of others, for example your partner, parents, or friends. They may be able to help you set yourself realistic aims, and they may also be able to help you to overcome any difficulties you could face, for example, by agreeing to be quiet while you do relaxation.

Remember that this diary can be used in the way that you find most helpful. If you already have an effective way of arranging when or where to complete the tasks in this book, please feel free to carry on using that method.

Use the example at the top of the time management diary to help you to complete it. If you need more space to write there are some full page versions of the diary in section 6 worksheets.

	<b>What task(s) do I need to do?</b>	<b>When should I do the task(s)?</b>	<b>Where should I do the task(s)?</b>	<b>What (if any) difficulties might arise?</b>	<b>How can I overcome these difficulties?</b>
<b>Example:</b>	Relaxation	7.30 - 8.00pm	Bedroom	Kids might disturb me	Ask partner to look after them
<b>Mon</b>					
<b>Tue</b>					
<b>Wed</b>					
<b>Thur</b>					
<b>Fri</b>					
<b>Sat</b>					
<b>Sun</b>					

**Relaxation diary**

**Instructions**

This exercise is designed to help you evaluate how useful relaxation is for you. Before practising relaxation using the CD provided, record today's date and circle the number that best reflects how you feel before relaxation. Then jot down anything that may explain your feelings. After that, practice relaxation using the CD provided. Then, circle the number that best reflects how you feel after relaxation. **EXAMPLE: Relaxation diary**

Day	Date	Anxiety level before relaxation		Anxiety level after relaxation	
		Calm	Tense	Calm	Tense
1	01.01.02	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 8 9 1 0		0 1 0 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:- Busy day at work, woke up late, rushed around			

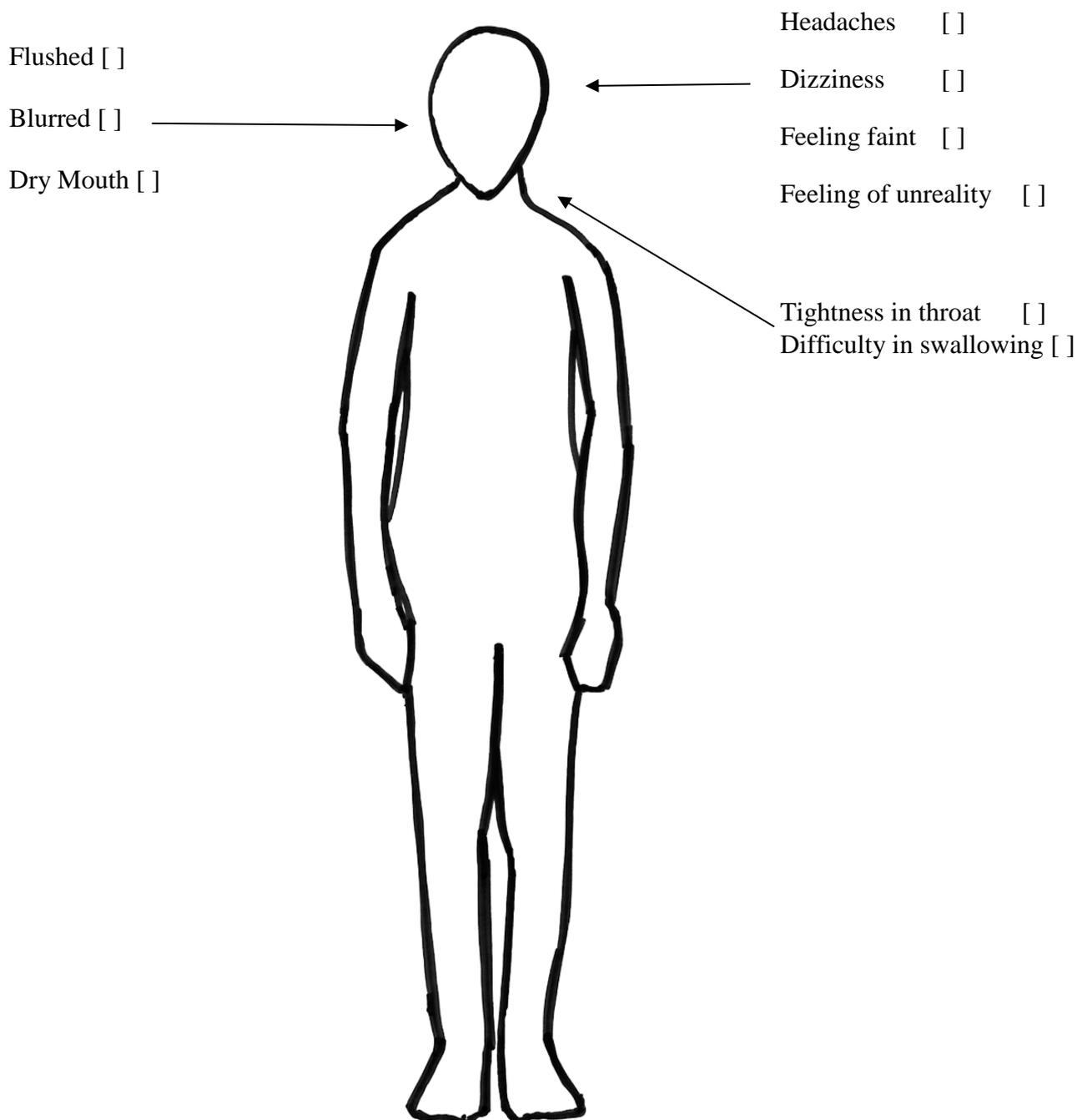
Day	Date	Anxiety level before relaxation		Anxiety level after relaxation	
		Calm	Tense	Calm	Tense
1		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
2		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
3		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
4		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
5		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
6		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
7		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			

## Physical symptoms of anxiety diagram

### Instructions

Use the diagram below to think about and write down the physical symptoms that **YOU** experience when in situations that you feel anxious in. There are a few symptoms of anxiety listed below to help to start you off. Please tick any of those listed that apply to you and add as many of your own physical symptoms as you can think of.

This exercise should help you to think about and identify the physical symptoms of anxiety that you personally experience.



### How does anxiety affect us physically?

When we are anxious our whole body becomes aroused and prepares itself for action. This automatic response (to a real or imagined threat) is often known as the 'fight or flight' response. When in this aroused state many natural bodily changes occur. These changes are designed to allow us to either fight or to run away if faced with threat or danger, for example crossing a road when a bus is approaching. Therefore this is normal and useful to our basic survival. It can become unhelpful when we react in this way to imagined threat, for example going shopping in a supermarket.

When we are anxious, our body releases a hormone called adrenaline into our blood stream. Below are a few examples of what adrenaline can cause:

- Our heartbeat can increase so that more oxygen can be supplied to the muscles.
- Our rate of breathing can increase so that we have more oxygen to prepare us for action (i.e. to 'fight or flight').
- Sweating occurs because the body requires an efficient cooling system.
- Our senses such as hearing and sight sharpen and become more sensitive. As a result any slight change is exaggerated.
- Our blood is diverted away from our digestive system to our muscles, so we may experience 'butterflies' in our stomach.
- We may over breathe (hyperventilate) which can lead to feelings of dizziness and tingling in our fingers. When we hyperventilate we feel as though we are having breathing difficulties, when actually we are getting too much oxygen. This hyperventilation can in itself make the other symptoms worse.

Although these bodily changes are normal, they may feel uncomfortable and frightening if this automatic 'fight or flight' response occurs in an inappropriate situation (i.e. when there is no physical necessity for these bodily changes).

There are many different physical symptoms of anxiety, all of which can be unpleasant. Although they are not dangerous, they can make us feel *very* tired. If we imagine the many physical changes happening in our body, it is not surprising that we feel tired. After a period of prolonged anxiety, we can feel exhausted.

Sometimes we can misinterpret physical symptoms of anxiety as meaning that something is seriously wrong. For example, we may think that a feeling of pain in our chest is a sign of us having a heart attack. These misinterpretations in our thinking can lead to what is known as a panic attack (this is explained more on page 2.4). This shows how our thoughts affect the way we feel and this affects us physically.

## Section 2: Physical Effects of Anxiety

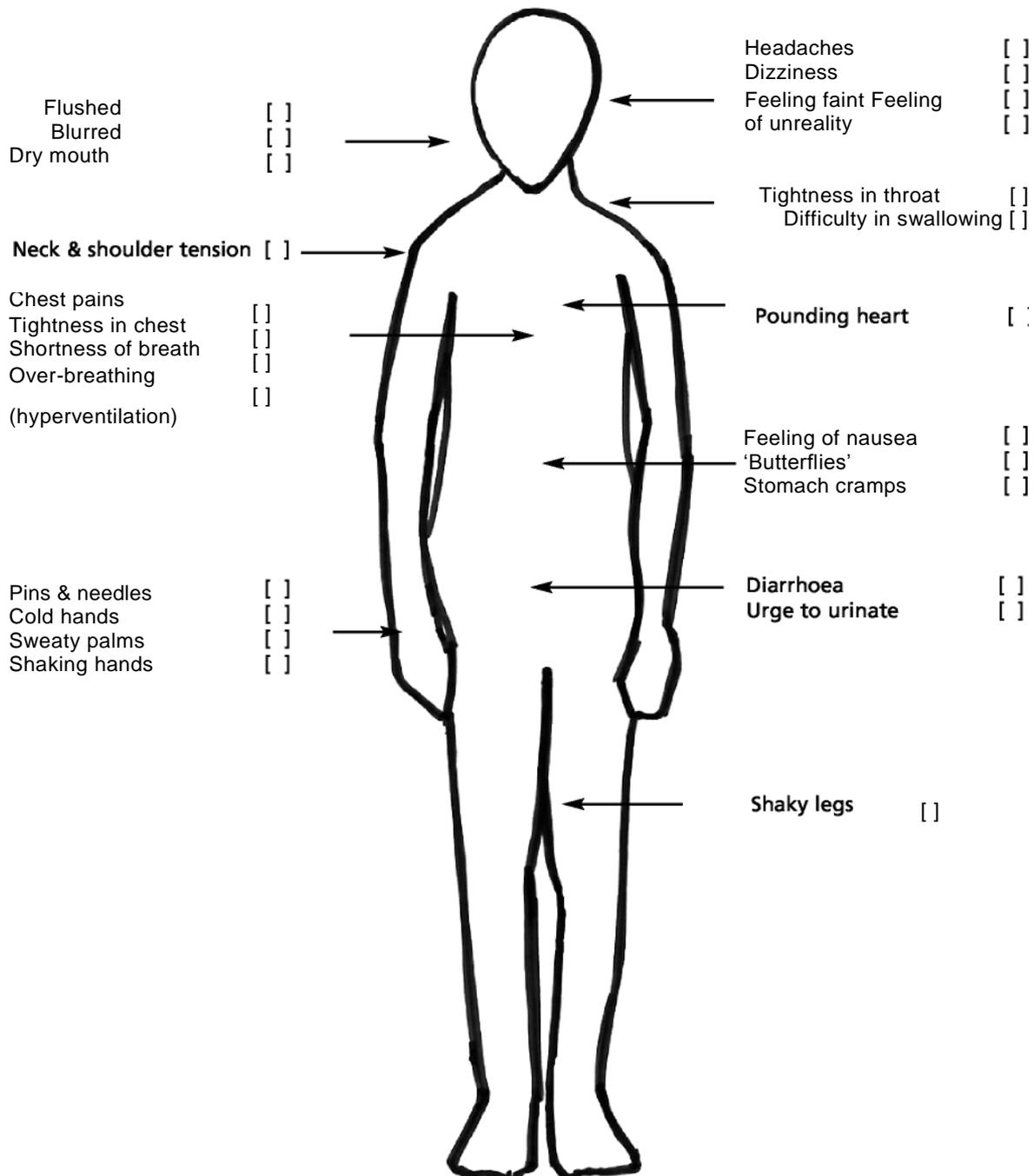
It is sometimes difficult to know if symptoms are due to anxiety or some other physical problem. One thing to look out for is whether the symptoms are worse when you are anxious and not so bad when you are more relaxed. If this is the case, it suggests these symptoms are related to anxiety. The 'Anxiety patterns/triggers diary' (found in section 2 worksheets) may help you with this.

As well as causing immediate physical symptoms of arousal, anxiety can lead to more long-term complaints such as sleeping difficulties or irritability.

The human body diagram (overleaf) shows some of the more immediate physical symptoms of anxiety, experienced when our body becomes aroused and prepares itself for action ('fight or flight' response).



## Section 2: Physical Effects of Anxiety



This diagram shows some examples of the physical symptoms of anxiety.

Above are just some of the physical symptoms that we can experience when in a situation that provokes anxiety. You should tick all that apply to you when you are in a situation you find anxious, and add any more of your own. It may also be helpful for you to highlight those that are particularly uncomfortable or distressing.

For some people, an increase in the symptoms above can also lead to the experience of a panic attack.

### **What are the main features of panic attacks?**

At times we can become so anxious that we feel a sense of panic. In these situations we feel suddenly **overwhelmed** and **out of control**. We may fear that something terrible is happening or is about to happen, for example we may believe we are having a heart attack or that we will suffocate.

Panic attacks are good examples of how our physical symptoms, thoughts and feelings all affect each other. The more anxious we feel, the more physical symptoms we experience. The more symptoms we experience, the more we are likely to interpret them as serious, for example, "I'm having a heart attack". This then makes us feel worse, and so on. This is known as a vicious cycle (see 'Fear of fear diagram' page 1.6). It is therefore not surprising that the vicious cycle of symptoms and thoughts influence our behaviour for example by trying to escape the situation. However, the relief this 'escape' provides is only temporary and it is often harder to re-enter that situation later. Therefore, although it may be difficult to follow, the best advice is to stay in the situation and let the panic pass by itself.

The diagram below shows what happens to our anxiety levels when we experience a panic attack.

### **How can I cope with panic attacks?**

Although panic attacks may appear to come out of the blue, they are actually triggered by a combination of frightening thoughts and physical symptoms. As with anxiety, unhelpful or frightening thoughts such as "I can't cope" or "I'm going to pass out" are an important component of panic attacks. Unhelpful thoughts or images may make physical symptoms worse, which in turn leads to more unhelpful thoughts and physical symptoms (see 'Fear of fear diagram', page 1.6).

An important first step in controlling panic attacks is to feel more confident that we are capable of controlling them. Although escaping or running away from the situation makes us feel better at the time, it makes us more likely to feel anxious and panicky in that situation in the future, or even to avoid the situation altogether. The most important piece of advice about panic attacks is to stay in the situation, using techniques described later, allowing the panic to happen and pass. Panic will naturally decrease (see 'Panic diagram', below), and by staying in the situation we can see for ourselves that nothing terrible will happen. This will help to lessen our anxiety next time we enter the same situation. It will help us feel more in control.

Unfortunately, whilst experiencing a panic attack it is often *very* difficult for us to think clearly and sensibly. The following six tips can be used to help you stay in the situation and cope more effectively with feelings of panic.

1. **Wait** – don't run away. Stay in the situation and allow the panic to decrease naturally.
2. Remember that your feelings of panic are simply an exaggeration of **normal responses** to threat.
3. Also remember that although the physical symptoms you experience may be unpleasant and uncomfortable, they are **not dangerous**.
4. Try to see each panic attack as an **opportunity to practice** your coping skills. With practice you will learn how to cope with and control your feelings of panic.
5. Focus on the here and now, not what you think will happen.
6. Once your feelings of panic have started to decrease, **give yourself a pat on the back** for staying in the situation. Well done!

These tips have been summarised onto a cue card that can be found at the back of this book. You may find it helpful to keep the cue card with you at all times.

### **What about symptoms when I'm not actually in an 'anxious' situation?**

Sometimes we can have anxious symptoms, even when we are not in the situation that made us feel anxious (see sections 3 & 4 for more details). This is because our thoughts alone can cause anxiety. For example, at times we worry about things that we think will cause us anxiety ('anticipatory anxiety' see page 1.6). This can be either specific (i.e. an approaching job interview), or general (i.e. we feel unable to cope in crowded places). Worrying in this way can lead us to experience many of the complaints and symptoms described on page 2.3. In particular we may experience headaches and muscle tension, often over a sustained period of time.

When we experience anxiety some people find it helpful to write down their thoughts and challenge them. Sections 3 and 4 will explain how to do this.

### **Relaxation techniques**

Now that you have identified some of your physical symptoms of anxiety, you might want to try some of the following techniques to work on your physical symptoms. In addition to the relaxation CD/tape provided, there are a number of other relaxation methods that you may find useful. Relaxation training can help to reduce anxiety because it is difficult for the body to be both anxious and relaxed at the same time. By practising relaxation you can learn to relax before and during anxious situations. By doing so you can reduce the severity of your anxiety.

Some physical relaxation suggestions are given below, try them out and discover which techniques you prefer. Not all will necessarily work for you, but it is worth trying.

#### **1. Hydrotherapy**

Have a warm bath to help relax your muscles and calm your mind. Try adding bubble bath or scented oils to make it even more therapeutic. For example, many people find lavender or ylang ylang particularly relaxing – use the fragrances you personally like. Alternatively, you may enjoy going for a sauna or a jacuzzi.

## 2. Massage

Massage can also be a way of relieving muscle tension and promoting relaxation. You can try treating yourself to a professional massage, or asking a friend or partner to do it for you.

## 3. Music

Listening to music can also help to relax our mind and body. For some people, slow, quiet music can promote tranquillity and can even help them to sleep. For others, faster and louder music may have the same effect. We all like different music at different times. The type of music we enjoy can often depend on our mood and feelings at the time. Use whatever music you enjoy to help you to relax.

## 4. Deep muscle relaxation

Lie down in a warm comfortable place where you are unlikely to be disturbed and close your eyes. Focus on your breathing for a few minutes and breathe slowly and calmly in through your nose and out through your mouth. When you feel ready, have a go at the following relaxation exercise. You should breathe in when you are tensing your muscles and out when you are relaxing them. You may find it useful to ask someone to read the instructions to you until you get used to doing the exercises.

- Hands - Clench one fist tightly for a few seconds. Focus on the feelings of tension this exercise produces in the muscles in your hand and forearm. Then relax your hand and think about the difference between the tension and the relaxation. Repeat this exercise with the other hand.
- Arms - Bend your elbows and tense your arms for a few seconds. You will feel tension in your upper arms. Then relax, breathing out as you do so.
- Neck - Roll your head from side to side slowly and feel the tension move. Then bring your head back to the centre in a comfortable position.
- Face - Raise your eyebrows for a few seconds, and then relax your forehead. Now clench your jaw and then relax, noticing the difference as you do so.
- Chest - Take a deep breath and hold it for a few seconds. Feel the tension and then relax, allowing your breathing to return to normal.
- Stomach - Tense your stomach muscles as much as you can and then relax, noticing the difference as you do so.
- Buttocks - Squeeze your buttocks together tightly, hold it for a few seconds, and then relax.
- Legs - Straighten your legs and bend your feet so that your toes are pointing towards your face. Allow them to relax and wiggle your toes to finish off with.

Don't try too hard to relax, just let go of the tension. Some people might find relaxation or yoga classes helpful. Try them out and see what you think.

You may find that you already practice a method of relaxation that works for you, for example some people find yoga relaxing. Continue to work on the relaxation methods that work for you.

### **How do I decide what methods of relaxation to use?**

It can often be beneficial to try out different relaxation techniques to see what works best for you. You may find that some of the techniques suggested above are more helpful to you than others. You may also know of others that you find useful.

It is worth remembering that as with many skills, learning to relax effectively often takes time and practice. It is important not to be too downhearted if something doesn't work *very* well the first time. It can also be fun to experiment with and adapt different techniques to suit you.

### **What can I do to help me sleep?** Anxiety can

influence our sleep pattern.

Whilst some people may feel lethargic, others may find it difficult to get to sleep. If you find it difficult to sleep peacefully throughout the night try some of the suggestions below.

- Avoid stimulants such as coffee, tea, coca cola, tobacco, for at least 2 hours before you plan to go to bed.
- Have a warm drink like milk or hot chocolate before retiring to bed.
- Avoid large meals before going to bed.
- Take some time to rest and wind down.
- If you find that techniques like listening to music, reading or having a bath makes you feel tired – practice them before bed.
- Make sure you are warm and comfortable.
- If worrying thoughts are preventing you from sleeping, try writing the thoughts down and leaving the piece of paper in a drawer to attend to the next day (if necessary).

## Key Points

- There are many different physical symptoms of anxiety, some immediate, others more long term
- The 'fight or flight' response is where the body prepares itself for action
- Panic attacks are triggered by frightening thoughts and physical symptoms
- Panic attacks are not dangerous and do pass
- Although symptoms of anxiety can be very unpleasant, they are not dangerous
- We can learn to be more in control of our symptoms
- We can learn that the symptoms of anxiety are not dangerous
- 'Escape' from a situation only provides temporary relief and makes it harder to re-enter the situation
- Our thoughts alone can cause anxiety
- Relaxation can help to reduce anxiety because it is difficult for the body to be simultaneously anxious and relaxed



**Please tick when you have completed the following tasks**  
*(Most tasks can be found in Section 2 worksheets)*

- Complete the quiz on page 2.10 [ ]
- Complete the 'Anxiety patterns/triggers diary' [ ]
- Complete the 'Anxiety patterns/triggers diary – questions to ask yourself after completion' [ ]

**In addition, continue tasks below from last week:**

- Use the 'Task and time diary' if you find it useful [ ]
- Continue to practice relaxation using the relaxation CD/tape provided [ ]
- Continue to monitor your relaxation progress using the 'Relaxation diary' [ ]

## *Section 2 : Worksheets*



## Physical Effects of Anxiety - Quiz -

The following questions are for you to check your own understanding of the 'physical effects of anxiety' section.

1. Our body's automatic response to a real or imagined threat is often known as the f\_\_\_\_\_ or f\_\_\_\_\_ response.

2. List five physical symptoms of anxiety

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

3. Briefly describe what a 'panic attack' is

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4. During a panic attack, what will happen to your anxiety levels if you stay in the situation?

---

5. Why do we sometimes have physical symptoms even when we're not in the situation that made us feel anxious?

---

---

6. Name three relaxation techniques

- H \_\_\_\_\_
- M \_\_\_\_\_
- M \_\_\_\_\_

7. List two things that could help peaceful sleeping

- 1)
- 2)

**Section 2 - Physical Effects of Anxiety**

**Anxiety patterns/triggers diary**

The purpose of this diary is to help you to identify any triggers and patterns there may be in your anxiety. You may find that there are certain times or situations when you feel most or least anxious. Completing this diary may give you an insight into when you should use anxiety-reducing techniques. In addition, it may highlight activities that you already do which decrease your anxiety. Using this information you will hopefully be able to manage your anxiety by increasing or decreasing certain activities in your life.

**Instructions**

Try to fill out the blank timetable throughout the day for at least a week. You don't need to fill in every box, but the more spaces you fill in, the more likely you are to discover any patterns in your anxiety. Ask yourself the questions below and write down your responses in the relevant spaces. If you need more space to write there are some full page versions of the diary in section 6 worksheets.

1. What were you doing?	0	50	100
2. What were your symptoms?			
3. How anxious were you on a scale of 0-100?	calm		worst its ever been

	7 - 11am	11 - 3pm	3 - 7pm	7 - 11pm	11 - 7am
<b>Sue's Example:</b>	8.30, On bus to work, pounding heat, dizzy, 50	1.15, having lunch with friends, feel relaxed, 0	4, working, headache, 10 6.05, on bus home, breathless, 55	7.10, listen to radio, 0 9.30, went to bed early, 10	Asleep
<b>Mon</b>					
<b>Tue</b>					
<b>Wed</b>					
<b>Thur</b>					
<b>Fri</b>					
<b>Sat</b>					
<b>Sun</b>					

Patterns	Triggers
<p>Sue's examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually feels relaxed when meeting friends for lunch.</li> <li>• Tends to relax more in the evenings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being on the bus increases Sue's anxiety</li> </ul>

#### Anxiety patterns/triggers diary – Questions to ask yourself after completion

You may find that you can't answer all of these 6. What could you do differently? questions immediately. However, by working through the book you will learn more about anxiety and how to deal with it, and will therefore be able to complete/add to any of the sections above. You 7. Are there times when you intended to do things may need to complete this diary for a few weeks in that you didn't do/avoided? order to notice any patterns.

1. What things trigger your anxiety?
2. What things make you relax?
3. What do you notice you're doing too much of?
4. What do you notice you're doing too little of?
5. Have you got the balance right?
6. What could you do differently?
7. Are there times when you intended to do something but didn't / avoided it? (If so why was that?)
8. Is the week you completed the diary a typical week? - If not, what is different/what other circumstances are contributing to your anxiety?

(N.B. If this was not a typical week you may find it useful to complete the diary again so that you can find your own patterns/triggers more easily)

9. Try to list three things that you could change to help your anxiety

## Physical Effects of Anxiety - Quiz - Answers

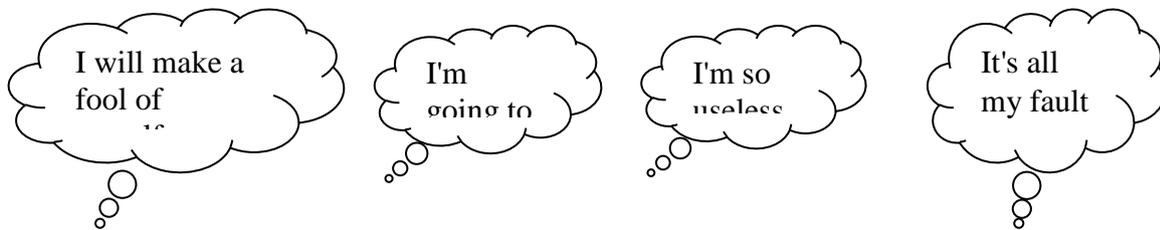
1. Fight or flight
2. Any of the symptoms listed on p2.3 or any others you may have thought of.
3. Any variation of the following: At times we can become so anxious that we feel a sense of panic. In these situations we feel suddenly overwhelmed and out of control. We may fear that something terrible is happening or is about to happen, for example we may believe we are having a heart attack or that we will suffocate.
4. Any variation of the following: When experiencing a panic attack it is advisable to stay in the situation and let the panic happen. Panic will naturally decrease and by staying in the situation we can see for ourselves that nothing terrible will happen.
5. Any variation of the following: This is because our thoughts alone can cause anxiety. For example, at times we worry about things that we think will cause us anxiety ('anticipatory anxiety' see page 1.6. This can be either specific (i.e. an approaching job interview), or general (i.e. we feel unable to cope in crowded places).
6. Hydrotherapy, Massage, Music
7. Any two of the following
  - Avoid stimulants such as coffee, tea, coca cola, tobacco, for at least 2 hours before you plan to go to bed.
  - Have a warm drink like milk or hot chocolate before retiring to bed.
  - Avoid large meals before going to bed.
  - Take some time to rest and wind down.
  - If you find that techniques like listening to music, reading or having a bath makes you feel tired – practice them before bed.
  - Make sure you are warm and comfortable.
  - If worrying thoughts are preventing you from sleeping, try writing the thoughts down and leaving the piece of paper in a draw to attend to the next day (if necessary).

## Section 3: Recognising Anxious Thinking

### How does thinking affect anxiety?

It is important to understand how our thinking affects anxiety and other emotions. We all experience automatic thoughts or images. These thoughts and images pop into our heads and they can be helpful, for example by reminding us of important things. When the thoughts are negative/unhelpful they can lead us to feel anxious. They can also lead to other emotions such as guilt, anger and depression. For example you may be driving to work when you suddenly have a thought that you have forgot to lock the front door. If this were true, it would be a useful thought and you would probably do something about it, such as going back to lock the door. When anxiety becomes a problem we can have lots of negative/unhelpful thoughts that are not true and cause us to feel anxious without good reason. For example if you thought that you had not locked the door every time you left home, and you believed that thought, it would become a problem.

Here are some examples of negative automatic thoughts:



Sometimes the way we think occurs as images or pictures, for example someone with social anxiety may have an image of himself or herself being stared at.

We all have automatic thoughts, and some of them are unhelpful. When they are unhelpful and persistent, and we begin to believe them, then they become a problem. They affect the way we feel and they affect what we feel able to do.

Initially, we may not be able to easily identify our automatic thoughts, but once we learn how to do so we are in a better position to question and reflect on them. It can be especially difficult to identify the thoughts that are associated with anxiety because just focussing on these thoughts can make us feel anxious. Learning to identify such thoughts (using the worksheets at the end of this section) is worth it in the long run because you can then learn to challenge these thoughts.

We can sometimes feel anxious before an event has happened because we anticipate something threatening in that situation. Sometimes just expecting to be anxious can be threatening. This anticipatory anxiety (page 1.6) may cause us to feel physical symptoms of anxiety, which in turn makes us worry even more (see the 'Fear of fear diagram' page 1.6). This may mean that the anxiety we feel whilst worrying is far in excess of the anxiety we actually experience in the feared situation.

It is also true that often the thing we worry so much about doesn't even happen. For example before a social gathering we may think; "What if no-one talks to me", or "I won't know what to say to people".

However, when we get there everything is fine, people do talk to us, and we manage the situation quite well. Thoughts such as these may make us feel some physical symptoms of anxiety, such as a pounding heart and sweating. In response to this our behaviour may change, for example we may avoid such situations. This shows that our thoughts can make us feel anxious and are often not realistic. It is therefore important that we are able to alter our unhelpful patterns of thinking so that we can learn to manage our anxiety better, thereby stopping us avoiding things and helping us to improve our quality of life.

### **How can we recognise anxious thinking?**

To help you identify your own unhelpful thoughts here is an example of unhelpful thinking about paying bills:

“ OH NO! I forgot to pay my telephone bill, now I’ve got a red reminder. If I forget to pay it again they’ll cut me off. What if there’s an emergency, no one will be able to contact me! Where am I going to get enough money to pay this? Only I could make such a stupid mistake. I should always pay my bills immediately! I’ll probably forget to pay my electricity bill too and then I’ll get blacklisted. Maybe I’ll lose the house. Oh this is all my fault, typical! What am I going to do? I’m useless!”

**How would you feel if you had these unhelpful thoughts? *(Please write these feelings here)***

**Here is a more helpful way to think about the same situation:**

*“I forgot to pay my telephone bill, now I’ve got a red reminder. Never mind it’s not the end of the world. I have had a lot of other things on my mind recently. I’ll just pay the bill over the phone, or send a cheque or postal order”.*

**How would you feel if you had these more helpful thoughts? *(Please write these feelings here)***

## Section 3: Recognising Anxious Thinking

Sometimes our thoughts can spiral out of control, so that we end up catastrophising a small event. Here is an example of this kind of thinking.

### **A friend walks past without acknowledging you**



Thoughts such as these commonly give rise to social anxiety and also depression. How would you feel if you had these unhelpful thoughts? *(Please write these feelings here)*

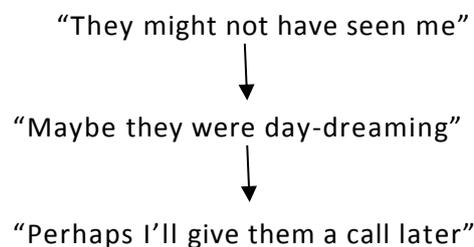
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This shows how a small event can affect our feelings. In this example, it would affect how you behaved when you next met the person. This shows how our thinking affects our feelings and our behaviour.

Here is a more helpful way to think about the same situation:

### **A friend walks past without acknowledging you**



How would you feel if you had these more helpful thoughts? *(Please write these feelings here)*

### **Who has unhelpful/negative thoughts?**

Everyone has unhelpful/negative thoughts. We cannot stop ourselves thinking negatively, particularly when we are under a lot of stress. We tend to **believe our unhelpful thoughts** at the time, but they are not necessarily true. On reflection, we can see unhelpful thoughts for what they are, and put them into perspective. The skill is to reflect on our thinking, question it, and come up with alternatives.

We are more likely to have negative unhelpful thoughts when we have certain beliefs. We all have beliefs about ourselves, the world, other people, the future and so on. Some of our beliefs will be positive and some may be negative and unhelpful at times. A good example is a belief that, "I must do things perfectly or I have failed". This is a perfectionist belief and it can prove a problem when you don't do something as well as you would like. Another example is "If I say no to someone, they won't like me". This belief will tend to result in the person feeling unable to say no and worrying about upsetting others. You can see how these beliefs could affect how a person deals with situations.

Remember that unhelpful negative thoughts:

- are usually not true
- seem real at the time
- come to mind automatically
- can make us feel anxious (or some other mood such as anger, depression or guilt)

We are more likely to have unhelpful thoughts when:

- we are under stress
- we have unhelpful beliefs like:
  - "I'm vulnerable"
  - "No-one likes me"
  - "The world is a dangerous place"
  - "I can't cope"
  - "I must do everything perfectly"
- we are about to enter a situation in which we have previously been anxious (anticipatory anxiety)
- we have experienced anxiety in a similar setting (association anxiety)
- we become preoccupied with our physical symptoms of anxiety (preoccupation and hypersensitivity)
- we have developed a fear of fear (see fear of fear diagram page 1.6)
- we think other people can see that we are anxious

To enable us to question our unhelpful thoughts, it is necessary to identify them. At first it may be easier to write them down, but with practice we should be able to recognise and identify our unhelpful thinking more easily.

### **How can we identify unhelpful thinking?**

In order to control our anxiety, we must learn to identify our unhelpful thoughts. Next time you feel anxious, focus on your thoughts and use the 'monitoring thoughts diary' in the worksheet section to write your thoughts down and see if they resemble any of the following thinking errors. By practicing this, you will learn to recognise your anxious thoughts. Once you are able to recognise your anxious thoughts you can begin to challenge them. Working through 'Questioning unhelpful thoughts' worksheet (page 4.11) will help you to recognise your unhelpful thoughts, question them and replace them with more helpful ones.

The unhelpful thoughts we have are often so automatic that we don't realise we have them. It is important to become aware of them and learn to see them as only thoughts that pop into our heads and affect the way we feel. Remember, they are not necessarily true.

Below are some examples of thinking errors that may be at the root of our unhelpful thoughts and anxieties.

#### **1. Assuming the worst**

This is where you always assume the worst-case scenario when there is no real reason for it e.g. "I can't go to the party because no-one will speak to me".

#### **2. Black or white thinking**

In this type of thinking, things are either one extreme or the other e.g. everything is seen as either perfect or disastrous. So, if something doesn't go perfectly, you may feel you have completely failed.

#### **3. Making a mountain out of a molehill**

When you exaggerate your imperfections, or see something minor as a catastrophe e.g. you trip on a step at work and feel so embarrassed that you can't face everybody the next day.

#### **4. "Must/ought/should" thinking**

These are guilt inducing thoughts, which can place excessive and unreasonable demands on you e.g. "I must be top of the class", "I ought to phone my mother every day", "I should be able to cope".

#### **5. Overgeneralisation**

After one unfortunate experience you expect the same thing to happen again every time e.g. because of one unsuccessful job application you think this will happen every time and you will never get a job.

#### **6. Selective thinking**

Where you dwell on the unhelpful/negative aspects of a situation and dismiss any helpful/positive aspects e.g. you cook a meal and everyone compliments you on how good it was. However you notice that everyone has left their sprouts, a fact that you dwell on. You totally dismiss the compliments you have received about the meal generally, and worry about why they have left the sprouts.

#### **7. Self-Blaming**

When you take the blame for everything when there is no reason to e.g. the football team you play for loses an important match and you think it's all your fault.

#### **8. Self-Labeling**

As a result of past events you attach unhelpful labels to yourself e.g. "I'm stupid", "I'm unlikeable", "I'm no good".

#### **9. Mind-reading**

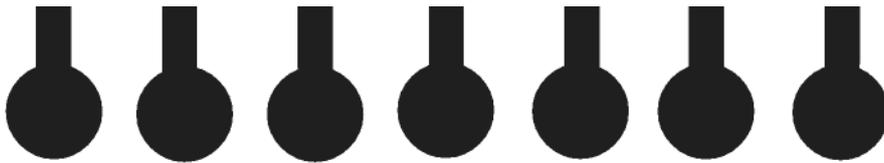
When you think you know what someone else is thinking about you e.g. "they must think I'm stupid".

These thinking errors can lead to other emotions apart from anxiety, such as depression, anger, and guilt.

## Key points

- Negative/unhelpful thoughts or images that are often not true can lead us to feel anxious without good reason
- When our thoughts are unhelpful and persistent and we begin to believe them, they can become a problem
- Certain beliefs are more likely to lead to negative unhelpful thoughts
- We must learn to identify our unhelpful thoughts in order to question them
- There are a number of **thinking errors** that may be at the root of our unhelpful thoughts and anxieties

## Section 3: Recognising Anxious Thinking Worksheets



Please tick when you have completed the following tasks  
(Most tasks can be found in Section 3 worksheets)

- Complete the quiz on page 3.8
- Complete the 'Monitoring thoughts diary'



**In addition, you may wish to:**

- Use the 'Task and time diary' if you find it useful [ ]
- Continue to practice relaxation using the relaxation CD/tape provided [ ]
- Continue to monitor your relaxation progress using the 'Relaxation diary' [ ]
- If you have not yet found any patterns or triggers for your anxiety continue to complete the 'Anxiety patterns/triggers diary' [ ]
- If you have not yet found any patterns or triggers for your anxiety continue to complete the 'Anxiety patterns/triggers diary – questions to ask yourself after completion' [ ]

## ***Section 3 : Worksheets***



### Quiz – Recognising anxious thinking

The following questions are for you to check your own understanding of the ‘recognising anxious thinking’ section.

1. Automatic thoughts can be helpful but they can also be unhelpful
2. Give two examples of a negative and unhelpful belief:
3. Give two examples of times when we are more likely to have unhelpful thoughts

\_\_\_\_\_ 1)

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Give three examples of types of thinking errors
- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

**Answers to Quiz (section 3):  
Recognising anxious thinking**

1. helpful, unhelpful
2. Any of the following or any others you may have thought of:
  - "I must do things perfectly or I have failed"
  - "If I say no to someone, they won't like me"
3. Any two of the following:
  - we are under stress
  - we have unhelpful beliefs like:
    - "I'm vulnerable"
    - "No-one likes me"
    - "The world is a dangerous place"
    - "I can't cope"
    - "I must do everything perfectly"
  - we are about to enter a situation in which we have previously been anxious (anticipatory anxiety)
  - we have experienced anxiety in a similar setting (association anxiety)
  - we become preoccupied with our physical symptoms of anxiety (preoccupation and hypersensitivity)
  - we have developed a fear of fear (see fear of fear diagram page 1.6)
  - we think other people can see that we are anxious
4. Any three of the following:
  - Assuming the worst
  - Black or white thinking
  - Making a mountain out of a molehill
  - "Must/ought/should" thinking
  - Overgeneralisation
  - Selective thinking
  - Self-Blaming
  - Self-Labeling
  - Mind-reading

**Monitoring thoughts diary**

**Instructions**

Before attempting to challenge your unhelpful thoughts, you must first learn to recognise them. This exercise will help you to recognise your thoughts by recording them. When you are feeling anxious write down the situation you are in and the thoughts and images that are going through your mind. Then, rate your mood (how you felt at the time) on a scale of 0-100. Keep using this diary for as long as you need to. After a while you may find that when you are feeling anxious you automatically notice the thoughts going through your mind. Section 6 contains blank copies of all the worksheets.

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Thoughts &amp; Images</b> <i>(What went through your mind at the time)</i>	<b>Mood</b> <i>(How you felt at the time) and mood rating (0-100)</i>
Monday 8.30am, I've slept in and am running late	"Oh no, I'm going to be late for work" "I have a meeting at 9am, everyone will be waiting for me - I'll be so embarrassed" "I'm so stupid"	Anxious (90)

## Section 4: Dealing with Anxious Thinking

### How do we challenge our unhelpful thoughts?

Anxiety may decrease if we closely examine how realistic and true our unhelpful/negative thoughts are. We may find that the actual threat we are faced with is not as bad as we thought or completely unrealistic. Even if there is a real threat, we may overestimate it and underestimate our capacity to deal with it.

We learned in the last section that our negative thoughts are automatic – they pop into our heads. It would be unhelpful to try to stop them happening, although over time as you begin working on your problems the negative thoughts should become less of a problem. Although we cannot stop unhelpful, negative thoughts happening in anxious situations, we can learn to question them. Unhelpful, anxious thoughts are very powerful and seem true at the time we feel most anxious, but sometimes when we are out of the anxious situation and feel more relaxed we realise things were not as bad as we thought at the time.



It is often *very* difficult to challenge your negative thinking whilst you are in a stressful situation and when you feel most anxious. You may look back when you are out of the situation and have calmed down and see things more realistically. We suggest that you begin challenging your negative thinking after the stressful event, when you can look back at it and reflect on it. Over time you should then be more able to challenge your negative thinking during anxious situations.

### So how do we begin to look at things in a balanced and realistic way?

To begin with you should use the 'Monitoring and evaluating thoughts diary' (found in section 4 worksheets) to identify your anxious thoughts and evaluate them. Then, you should use the 'Questioning unhelpful thoughts' worksheet (found in section 4 worksheets) to help you to question and challenge your unhelpful thoughts and replace them with more helpful thoughts. The following questions can help us to challenge our unhelpful thoughts:

**Question 1:** Am I getting things out of proportion?

**Question 2:** What happened the last time I was in this situation?

**Question 3:** What would other people think in this situation?

**Question 4:** Are my thoughts predicting the future in an unhelpful way?

**Question 5:** What is the evidence for and against this thought? **Question 6:** Am I trying to read other people's minds?

**Question 7:** Is this another example of my typical negative thinking?

To help you understand these questions in more depth, below are some fuller descriptions of them. The aim of these descriptions is to help you to question your unhelpful thoughts using 'Questioning unhelpful thoughts' worksheet located in section 4 worksheets.

**Question 1: Am I getting things out of proportion?**

There are a number of ways in which we can get things out of proportion, (see page 3.5 on thinking errors) for example, after an unsuccessful job application we might think, "I'll never get a job". In this example we are over generalising, so after one negative experience we think the same thing will happen every time. Another common way of getting things out of proportion is when we make a mountain out of a molehill and see a minor event as a catastrophe.

**Question 2: What happened the last time I was in this situation?**

Look back and think about what happened last time you were in the same situation. For example, if you are feeling really anxious on a busy bus, think about times in the past when you have been on a busy bus. Did something terrible happen or did you handle it? If something went wrong in some way, was it as bad as you imagined? If you did handle it, this is the evidence that you can handle it again. If you felt that you didn't handle it last time, think about the skills that you have learned in this book and use them to help you overcome it.

**Question 3: What would other people think in this situation?**

Often, when you put yourself in someone else's position, you can see things from a different and more realistic perspective. A similar idea is to ask yourself what a good friend would say to you about your thinking. Both these help you step outside your own thoughts and consider alternatives.

**Question 4: Are my thoughts predicting the future in an unhelpful way?**

This is particularly useful if the thoughts were about something that hadn't yet happened, for example, "at the party no one will want to talk to me", "I'll be completely stuck for something to say", "I'll feel so bad I will pass out and make a fool of myself". In these three examples we are making predictions about future threatening events. As we have said before, such threats often do not occur.

**Question 5: What is the evidence for and against this thought?**

This is a very useful way of evaluating thoughts. Often when you weigh up the evidence for and against the thought, you realise it is unlikely. You may immediately feel less anxious once you have gone through this exercise.

Below are two examples of weighing up the evidence for and against a thought.

### Example 1

#### Situation:

You experience a racing heart and begin sweating

#### Thought:

"I'm about to have a heart attack"

This is an example of the sort of thought someone might have during a panic attack.

#### Evidence for the thought:

My heart is racing and I'm sweating

#### Evidence against the thought:

The symptoms are always worse when I am anxious and stressed

The doctor has checked me out and told me my heart is fine

I don't get these symptoms when I'm relaxed

A racing heart doesn't mean I am having a heart attack – think of athletes, their hearts race a lot and they are healthy

I know a racing heart and sweating can be symptoms of anxiety

### Example 2

#### Situation:

You walk past someone you know well and they walk past you without acknowledging you.

#### Thought:

"there're ignoring me, they don't like me"

This is an example of reading someone's mind, making an assumption about what they are thinking.

#### Evidence for the thought:

They walked straight past me

#### Evidence against the thought:

They looked deep in thought

They were not looking in my direction

They were OK with me when we last met

I've done nothing to offend them

They can be a bit moody at times

### Question 6: Am I trying to read people's minds?

Some people make assumptions about what others are thinking although there is no evidence. For example, "they hate me now", "they must think I'm stupid". Remember these thoughts are assumptions and often there is no evidence for them. In fact, when you consider it you often realise that there is evidence against your thought.

### Question 7: Is this another example of my typical negative thinking?

After a while, you will begin to notice typical negative thoughts that occur again and again. You may also notice themes that link different thoughts, such as having a negative thought about how others see you (mind reading), worrying about something going wrong in the future, always blaming yourself when things go wrong and imagining the worst possible thing happening (catastrophising). Some of these are listed in the thinking errors on page 3.5. It is useful to identify these typical ways of thinking because it helps you see that the thoughts are not necessarily true.

The example below demonstrates how to question and challenge an unhelpful thought and change it into a more helpful thought using the 7 questions above:

**Unhelpful thought:** “I know I’ll never be able to travel on a bus.”

Question	Response
1. Am I getting things out of proportion?	Yes, the fact that I’ve said “never” immediately makes it seem worse than it really is. If I take it step by step I will make progress.
2. What happened the last time I was in this situation?	The last time I was on a bus I felt anxious but nothing terrible happened.
3. What would other people think in this situation?	Other people may be more optimistic than me about making at least some progress.
4. Are my thoughts predicting the future in an unhelpful way?	Yes, I’m predicting the future by thinking, “I know I’ll never”. I don’t know, I can’t see into the future.
5. What is the evidence for and against this thought?	<b>For:</b> I find it difficult to travel on a bus at the moment. <b>Against:</b> I haven’t always been anxious on a bus, so in the future I may not be anxious. I can’t see into the future! If I take it step by step I’ll see how much progress I’ll make.
6. Am I trying to read other people’s minds?	(Not relevant to this thought).
7. Is this another example of my typical negative thinking?	This is typical of the way I think. I’m always pessimistic about the chances of things improving.

**Helpful thought:** “I was anxious last time I got on a bus, however, nothing terrible happened. If I practice relaxation, controlled breathing, distraction and helpful thinking and take it step by step I will be able to cope with it again.”

By questioning and challenging our unhelpful thoughts we are less likely to believe them and more likely to think in more helpful ways.

Below is a brief example to illustrate how stresses, unhelpful thoughts, feelings, physical symptoms and behaviour changes such as avoidance can combine to cause problems (we look at the behaviour changes in more detail in the next section).

### **Miss Learning**

Miss Learning is *very* stressed. She has lost her job, has money problems and has recently had her house repossessed. All of her problems have resulted in Miss Learning feeling very anxious.

She goes to the supermarket to do her weekly shopping and begins to feel her general anxiety increasing. Miss Learning feels her heart pounding, her stomach churning, her breathing rate increasing and she begins to feel dizzy and thinks she's about to collapse. She is in fact having a panic attack. This is not surprising considering that she believes her anxiety symptoms mean that she is going to collapse. Miss Learning wrongly thinks her anxiety and the panic attack is due to the crowds in the supermarket. In fact it's due to her stresses and her thoughts that she will collapse and make a fool of herself. Consequently Miss Learning starts to associate her increased anxiety with the crowds in the supermarket. This is known as association anxiety.

Miss Learning rushes out of the store and feels a relief when she gets outside into the fresh air. Her anxiety is reduced and the panic attack subsides. This strengthens her belief that it was the crowds in the supermarket that caused her anxiety.

Next time Miss Learning is getting ready to go to the supermarket she recalls how she felt last time she went and begins to feel very anxious. This is known as anticipatory anxiety. Once she makes the decision not to go her anxiety begins to reduce.

A friend asks Miss Learning if she would like to go shopping with her to a nearby shopping centre. Again, Miss Learning begins to feel anxious so she makes an excuse and tells her friend she is unable to make it. This is known as avoidant behaviour. Once she makes the decision to avoid going shopping her anxiety is reduced. Each time she avoids the feared situation this strengthens the fear and makes it more difficult to face the situation next time. She has now "miss-learned" that all crowds make her anxious. Consequently the learning and the fear has generalised from supermarkets to crowds in all stores and shopping centres.

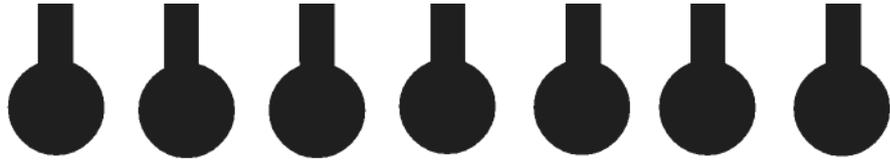
As Miss Learning lives in a large city it is difficult to avoid crowds. Due to the fact that Miss Learning has now learned to be anxious in crowds her anxiety is frequently triggered. She therefore starts to spend an increasing amount of time at home escaping and trying to avoid any anxiety. Over time this actually increases her fear and anxiety. This prevents her from doing things she used to enjoy which restricts her enjoyment and independence. She begins to feel frustrated and depressed.

The only way that Miss Learning will learn that crowds are not threatening is to stay in them long enough to discover that her anxiety reduces in time (refer to next section). By doing this in a graded way and using coping strategies she begins to learn that she can cope in crowds without collapsing. She also finds the more she succeeds in this the less anxious she becomes. As her confidence grows Miss Learning realises that many factors in her life have contributed to her feeling stressed and anxious, such as her

## Section 4: Dealing with Anxious Thinking

### Key Points: Section 4

- By closely examining how realistic our unhelpful thoughts are, our anxiety may decrease
- Although we cannot stop unhelpful thoughts happening, we can learn how to change them
- Unhelpful, negative thoughts are often not true
- We can challenge our unhelpful thoughts by evaluating them and weighing up the evidence for and against



- Complete the quiz on page 4.9



**In addition you may wish to:**

## ***Section 4 : Worksheets***



## Quiz – Dealing with our anxious thinking

The following questions are for you to check your own understanding of the 'Dealing with our anxious thinking' section.

1. List two unhelpful thoughts about events that have not yet happened:

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2. Why is it useful to think about what others might think in the same situation?

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3. List two examples of unhelpful thoughts about trying to read people's minds:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

**Monitoring and evaluating thoughts diary**

**Instructions**

As with the 'Monitoring thoughts diary' in section 3 worksheets, this exercise will help you to recognise your thoughts by recording them and taking it a stage further by looking at how the situation actually turned out. When you are feeling anxious write down the situation you are in and the thoughts and images that are going through your mind. Then, note down your mood (how you felt at the time) and rate it on a scale of 0-100. After that, ask yourself if the situation turned out as bad as you imagined. Keep using this diary for as long as you need to. After a while you may find that when you are feeling anxious you automatically notice the thoughts going through your mind and you automatically evaluate how likely it is to turn out as imagined. Section 6 contains blank copies of all the worksheets.

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Thoughts &amp; Images</b> <i>(What went through your mind at the time)</i>	<b>Mood</b> <i>(How you felt at the time) and mood rating (0-100)</i>	<b>Did the situation turn out as bad as imagined?</b>
Monday 8.30am, I've slept in and am running late	"Oh no, I'm going to be late for work" "I have a meeting at 9am, everyone will be waiting for me - I'll be so embarrassed" "I'm so stupid"	Anxious (90)	No, I phoned in to let them know I was going to be late. I just missed the beginning of the meeting.

**Questioning unhelpful thoughts**

**Instructions**

- This exercise is designed to help you question your unhelpful thoughts.
- You should complete table 1 below , imagining that you had the unhelpful thought that is stated at the top.
- Ask all 7 questions for each thought, writing your responses in the table.
- Finally, you should replace each unhelpful thought with one that is more helpful.
- After completing table 1, use table 2 to challenge an unhelpful thought of your own.

There is an example of a completed table on p 4.4 of the anxiety book that you can refer to if you wish.

At first you may feel unwilling to have a go at this exercise, thinking that it is “too hard” or “not worthwhile”. However, remember that these are exactly the kind of unhelpful thoughts that this exercise aims to identify and question. It is by challenging these thoughts that we are able to stop them from making us feel so anxious and from maintaining our anxiety. Section 6 contains blank copies of all the worksheets.

Use the following questions to help you challenge the unhelpful thoughts:

**Question 1:** Am I getting things out of proportion?

**Question 2:** What happened the last time I was in this situation?

**Question 3:** What would other people think in this situation?

**Question 4:** Are my thoughts predicting the future in an unhelpful way?

**Question 5:** What is the evidence for and against this thought?

**Question 6:** Am I trying to read other people’s minds?

**Question 7:** Is this another example of my typical negative thinking?

**Table 1: Unhelpful thought:** “Everybody will ignore me at the party. I can’t talk to anybody. I know they’ll all think I’m boring.”

Question	Response
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	<p><b>For:</b></p> <p><b>Against:</b></p>
6	
7	

**Helpful thought:**

**Table 2: Unhelpful thought:**

Question	Response
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	<b>For:</b> <b>Against:</b>
6	
7	

**Helpful thought:**

## Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

### Instructions

This exercise will help you to challenge your unhelpful thoughts and look for more helpful ways of thinking. Write down the situation that has led to unhelpful thinking. Write down the unhelpful thoughts. Then, referring to page 3.5, note down the type of thinking errors you have made (number and name). Next, replace your unhelpful thoughts with more reasonable, logical, objective and helpful thoughts.

EXAMPLE:

	<p><b>Unhelpful Thoughts</b> “Oh god! I t ’ s all my fault. I should have stopped that goal. Nobody will want me to play in the team again. I’m useless”. (These type of thoughts are unhelpful and are likely to cause you anxiety)</p>
<b>Errors (from p 3.5)</b>	<p><b>Type of Thinking</b> 7. Self Blaming, 4. Must/Ought/Should thinking, 1. Assuming the worst</p>
	<p><b>Helpful Thoughts</b> Ok, so we lost the match. I wish I’d have stopped that goal but I didn’t. I think we played well the rest of the match. (These type of thoughts are more helpful)</p>

<b>Situation</b>	
<b>Unhelpful Thoughts</b>	<p>(These type of thoughts are unhelpful and are likely to cause you anxiety) © Copyright <sup>Situation</sup> by South The <sub>West</sub> team you <sub>Yorkshire</sub> play for <sub>Mental</sub> loses a football</p>
<b>Type of Thinking Errors (from p 3.5)</b>	
<b>Helpful Thoughts</b>	<p>(These type of thoughts are more helpful)</p>



### **How does anxiety affect our mood?**

There are several ways that anxiety is linked with moods. Firstly, anxiety is itself a mood, an emotion, but knowing this doesn't really tell us much about how to deal with it. That is why it is important to look at how our anxious moods affect us physically, in our thinking and in our behaviour. You have already worked through the sections aimed at helping us with physical effects and the way our thinking can be affected. This section will help you to understand and address how anxious moods affect our behaviour.

Secondly, it is possible to experience more than one mood at once. For example, we may feel irritable as well as anxious, particularly if we have been troubled by physical symptoms such as tiredness and have been worrying excessively.

Thirdly, if we have experienced anxiety for a long period of time it can lead to us developing other moods. For example, if anxiety has interfered with us being able to do what we want to do such as working or socialising, it can lead to us feeling depressed.

Hopefully, you may have already noticed some improvements in your mood through working through the sections on thinking and physical symptoms. A further way to help us deal with anxious and other upsetting moods is to learn to understand and alter what we do (i.e. our behaviour) in response to such moods.

### **How might anxiety affect our behaviour?**

There are several ways that anxiety can affect our behaviour, which we will look at in turn throughout this chapter.

- Avoidance/escape
- Increased and decreased activity

#### **Avoidance**

When anxiety is a problem, we may avoid situations that provoke our anxiety. If, for example, we have previously felt *very* anxious in a supermarket, we may avoid supermarkets or crowded places in general. We often avoid or escape for fear of our anxiety escalating and developing into a panic attack (see 'panic diagram' page 2.4). Although avoiding difficult situations makes our anxiety levels decrease initially, the more we avoid them, the more anxious we feel about challenging them in the future. This is because by avoiding a feared situation we never get the opportunity to find out whether the fear is realistic, and never get the chance to learn to overcome our fears and cope with difficult situations. Avoidance actually makes anxiety worse!

Avoidance does not help us because:

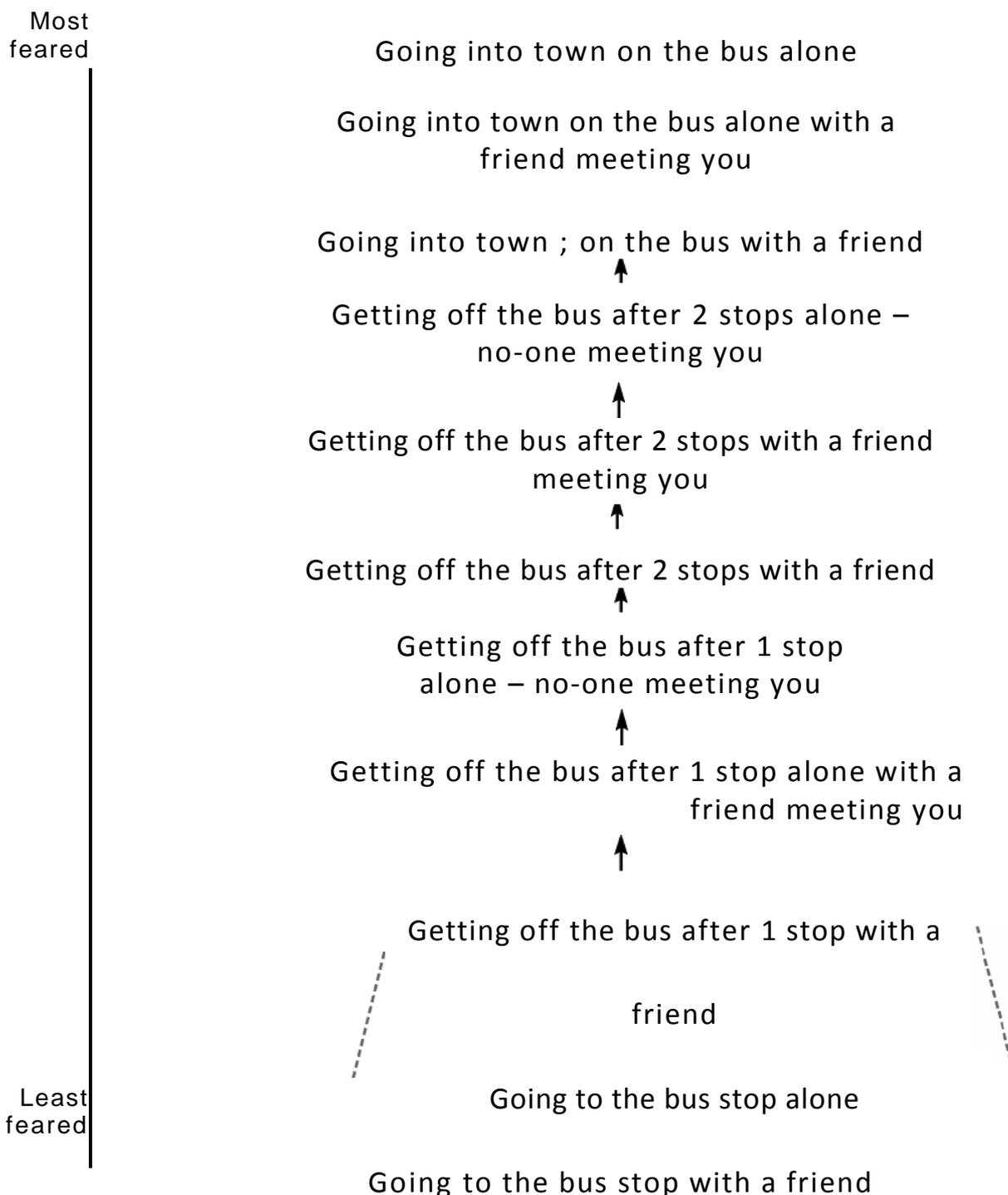
- The relief it provides is only temporary
- We never actually face our fear and learn that the imagined threat will not happen
- Each time we avoid something it makes it even more difficult to face in the future
- Eventually, we may end up restricting our lives because we want to avoid more and more things

Avoiding situations can develop into a habit, resulting in us avoiding more and more situations. We may end up missing out on things that we used to find enjoyable.

**How do I deal with anxious situations?**

To make facing our anxieties easier and more achievable, it can be helpful to approach it in a gradual step by step way. This is not an easy task, but with time and practice we can hopefully achieve it. One of the best ways to overcome avoidance is the use of graded exposure to help us gradually approach what we fear. We can do this by starting with a situation we find less difficult and slowly working up to our most feared situation. The diagram below shows an example of how this works.

**Example of graded exposure:**





## **What other techniques can be used to reduce anxiety?**

### **Distraction techniques**

When we feel anxious, it sometimes feels impossible to stop the unhelpful thoughts going round our heads and making us feel even worse. We tend to focus our attention on thoughts connected to our anxiety and physical sensations. We can use techniques to distract ourselves from the worrying thoughts and help break this cycle.

There are three basic distraction techniques, refocusing, physical activity, and mental activity. Try out each technique and select the one that suits you best. Practice your desired distraction technique whenever you get the chance. It generally takes a few minutes before feeling a decrease in anxiety.

#### **1. Refocusing**

Focus your attention on what is going on around you, rather than your internal symptoms. For example, look at an object and study the fine detail. Make use of all your senses when studying the object, how does it look, smell, feel, sound and taste? Carry out a specific task, such as counting the number of buses you pass or number of people wearing hats. The main point of this exercise is to occupy your attention, therefore making it difficult for anxious thoughts to enter your mind. An obvious example is when you feel less anxious when talking to a friend because it takes your mind off the way you feel.

#### **2. Physical activity**

Keep yourself physically active. Try to choose a task that requires mental as well as physical effort. This way the distraction will be stronger. Go for a swim or a walk, clean the car or a room in the house, or do a bit of gardening. If you are more physically restricted in what you are able to do, try updating your diary or reading an article in a magazine. If you find this technique useful, be careful that it doesn't lead to increased activity (see page 5.7).

#### **3. Mental activity**

Use your mental effort. Try practising mental arithmetic, or do a crossword. Think about a pleasant experience in your life or fantasise about the future, for example, what would you do with a million pounds? This can be particularly useful when trying to distract yourself from worrying thoughts when trying to get to sleep.

Distraction takes time to practice and time to find the techniques most suited to you. It is useful to have a number of distraction techniques that you can use for different occasions. Although distraction can be a very useful strategy when our anxiety is high, it should not be used as a way of avoiding problems or become a way of 'mentally avoiding' facing your anxiety!

Use the space below to write down a few distraction techniques that you think might work for you (remember you can add to this at any time).

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### **Breathing technique**

We all breathe rapidly when we are tense or anxious or doing exercise and this is called 'hyperventilation'. We hyperventilate to provide our muscles with oxygen to burn during activity. Continuous over-breathing causes oxygen levels to rise and carbon dioxide levels to fall causing an imbalance. This chemical imbalance produces many of the physical symptoms of anxiety listed on page 2.3. Some people who have been stressed for a long time develop a habit of over-breathing. This is called chronic hyperventilation. The breathing exercises below help to restore the balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide thereby reducing some of the physical symptoms of anxiety.

#### Breathing exercise

- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Breathe in through your nose allowing your stomach to swell as you do so. Feel your stomach swell out in front of you. Try to keep your chest as relaxed and still as you can.
- Breathe slowly and evenly – in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Count your breaths and aim for about ten breaths per minute.

Inhaling gently and evenly through our nose and exhaling out of our mouth reduces the intake of oxygen and thereby helps to restore the balance. Initially, you may feel as though you are not getting enough air, but with practice you will begin to find this slower rate of breathing much more comfortable.

Don't expect the physical symptoms of anxiety to fade away instantly. You may need to learn relaxed breathing when not in an anxious situation and become confident at recognising the difference between healthy breathing and hyperventilation before trying to apply this technique in an anxious situation.

You may have to breath in this controlled way for five or ten minutes before noticing any difference. Continue to practice this breathing exercise until you do it automatically when you begin to feel anxious.

Though many people find breathing exercises helpful it is possible that you may find that internal focus on breathing makes you preoccupied and even more anxious. If this happens to you try another coping strategy. Remember that everyone is different and everything does not work for everyone.



### **How to use relaxation in everyday life**

It is important to try and build relaxation into our everyday life:

- Give yourself regular breaks.
- Allow yourself enough time to do things to avoid rushing.
- Practice adopting a relaxed posture. Notice when you are tense and practice relaxation techniques, for example, drop your shoulders, sit back.
- Taking a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth can help to release some tension and can be done anywhere.
- Make sure you include enjoyable and relaxing activities into your everyday life.
- Try to plan enjoyable things to look forward to.
- Give yourself time to wind down before you go to bed.
- Remember that it's okay to allow time for yourself – we all need time to recharge our batteries.
- If you have had a stressful day acknowledge that it will take you longer to relax and wind down.
- Listen to your thinking – if you are having unhelpful thoughts question them and remember that unhelpful thoughts are not always true.
- Take up a new hobby, for example, yoga, meditation, Thai Chi, walking.

### **Mindfulness**

In recent years Mindfulness approaches have been found to help people cope with anxiety and depression. Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment, being aware of and accepting thoughts and feelings. There are various techniques that help with this, such as mindfulness meditation and yoga.

These links gives access to further information on Mindfulness and to mindfulness exercises you may find helpful.

<http://www.guilford.com/guided-meditation-practices-MBCTD>

<http://bemindful.co.uk/about-mindfulness/>

## **Increased and decreased activity**

In order to cope with our anxiety, we may change our normal routines and behaviours. Our routines or behaviours may become overactive (increased activity), underactive (decreased activity), or a combination of the two (i.e. both but at different times). Neither of these are particularly helpful to us, and they can leave us feeling even more stressed and anxious.

### **1. Increased activity**

Our routine can be said to be overactive when we place unreasonable demands on our time and energy. We race around trying to do too many things at once, and find it very difficult to stop and relax. We feel that we don't have any spare time, that there are too many things left to do. Our belief that we 'need' to be constantly busy can leave us feeling tense, agitated, and generally worn out. Some people find that they increase their level of activity as a form of distraction from worrying thoughts. Some distraction techniques (see pages 5.4) can be useful, but too much activity should be avoided because it can wear you out. We can't stay overactive for extended periods of time. Eventually it will have an affect on us and we may feel exhausted or physically ill. This leads many people to switch between increased activity and decreased activity.

If your level of activity is increased (overactive), it may help to have a more realistic picture of what you can reasonably expect to achieve in a day. You may find it useful to consider the following points:

- Every minute does not have to be filled with activity
- Regular breaks are both normal and sensible
- Don't expect to be the perfect parent, student, husband/wife, employee etc.
- It is unrealistic to expect to never make mistakes, or never have an off day
- Practice relaxation and make time for yourself
- Congratulate yourself on the work you have done rather than focussing on the work you have left to do
- Look upon breaks and treats as recharging your batteries to help you do things well

These tips have been summarised onto a cue card that can be found at the back of this book. You may find it helpful to keep the cue card with you at all times.

### **2. Decreased activity**

When our level of activity is decreased we can do *very* little, not knowing where to begin. We feel overwhelmed at the number of things to do, or because the tasks we have seem too difficult. It can lead us to feel low in mood and somewhat depressed, and the more depressed we feel the harder it is to do things. It is difficult for us to find the energy to start things, and this becomes increasingly difficult as the jobs mount up. The more you see there is to do, the less able you feel to do them.

If you have an underactive routine, you may find you that a number of tasks have mounted up, and you don't know where to begin.

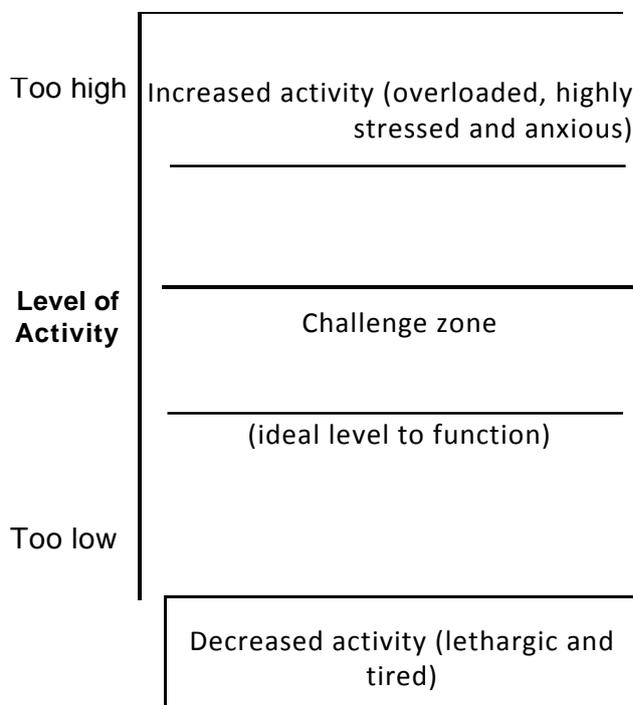
The following points may help you to make a start:

- Write a list of tasks that need to be done. Then prioritise the tasks, putting the most important first and the least important last
- When you have completed a task, mark it off the list
- Pick out some smaller tasks that can be done quickly (e.g. water the garden, wash the dishes). After doing these leave the rest until later
- Allocate yourself set time periods to complete some tasks (e.g. 10am – 11am & 1pm – 1.30pm). Leave tasks that have not been completed until the next day
- You may enjoy some tasks more than others. It's a good idea to avoid doing all the enjoyable ones first leaving the boring/unpleasant ones until last. Try to do one unpleasant task followed by an enjoyable one
- It will take time and effort to get into a routine, so don't expect too much too soon
- At the end of each day and each week you will be able to look back at what you have achieved

These tips have been summarised onto a cue card that can be found at the back of this book. You may find it helpful to keep the cue card with you at all times.

### 3. Challenge Zone

Functioning at a decreased or an increased level of activity can lead to rising levels of stress and anxiety. If we function at a midway point, between these two extremes, we feel more relaxed and motivated. This ideal state is known as the 'challenge zone'. When functioning in this zone, we feel challenged, but not to the point of overload. We work at things at a steady pace, avoiding the tired and overloaded characteristics of the two extreme decreased and increased levels of activity.



Think about your current level of activity. Follow the relevant tips provided to help you reach the challenge zone – the ideal level to function.

## **Key points**

- Anxiety can affect our mood and behaviours
- Avoidance makes anxiety worse
- The more we avoid things, the more anxious we feel about challenging them in the future
- 'Graded exposure' can make facing our anxieties more achievable in a gradual step by step way
- Distraction techniques such as refocusing, physical activity and mental activity can help to reduce anxiety
- Rapid breathing causes a chemical imbalance (too much oxygen and too little carbon dioxide) which produces many of the physical symptoms of anxiety
- Breathing exercises can help to restore this imbalance and reduce the physical symptoms of anxiety
- Make relaxation part of your everyday life
- 'Increased activity' is when we try to do too many things at once - we place unreasonable demands on our time and energy
- 'Decreased activity' is when we do very little - we don't know where to begin
- The ideal state is known as the 'Challenge Zone', which is in between the two extremes

## Section 5: Effects of Anxiety on Mood & Behaviour Worksheets

**Please tick when you have completed the following tasks**

*(Most tasks can be found in Section 5 worksheets)*

- Complete the section quiz
- Complete 'Planning your graded exposure task'
- Complete 'Graded exposure task - your progress'

**In addition, you may wish to:**

- Use the 'Task and time diary' if you find it useful
- Continue to practice relaxation using the relaxation CD/tape provided
- Continue to monitor your relaxation progress using the 'Relaxation diary'
- Complete the 'Monitoring and evaluating thoughts diary'
- Complete the 'Anxiety diary (challenging unhelpful thoughts)' if you find it useful

## *Section 5 : Worksheets*



## Quiz – Effects of Anxiety on Mood and Behaviour

The following questions are for you to check your own understanding of the 'Effects of Anxiety on Mood and Behaviour' section.

- Give three reasons why avoidance does not help us
  - 1)
  - 2)
  - 3)
- Facing our anxieties in a gradual step-by-step way is known as *g e*
- What are the three basic distraction techniques?
 

R \_\_\_\_\_

P \_\_\_\_\_

M \_\_\_\_\_
- Rapid breathing is also known as *h* \_\_\_\_\_
- Over-breathing causes oxygen levels to *and carbon dioxide levels to*
- Give three examples of how to deal with an overactive routine
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- Give three examples of how to deal with an underactive routine
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- The ideal level to function at is the *c z*

### Answers to Quiz (section 5)

- Any three of the following:
  - The relief it provides is only temporary
  - Each time we avoid something it makes it even more difficult to face in the future
  - Eventually, we may end up restricting our lives because we want to avoid more and more things
- Graded exposure
- Hyperventilation
- Rise, fall
- Any three of the following:
  - Every minute does not have to be filled with activity
  - Regular breaks are both normal and sensible
  - All of us have certain tasks we don't enjoy doing. There is no need to feel guilty just because we don't find every aspect of our routines enjoyable
  - Don't expect to be the perfect parent, student, husband/wife, employee etc.
  - It is unrealistic to expect to never make mistakes, or never have an off day
  - Practice relaxation and make time for yourself
  - Congratulate yourself on the work you have done rather than focussing on the work you have left to do
  - Look upon breaks and treats as recharging your batteries to help you do things well
- Any three of the following:
  - Write a list of tasks that need to be done. Then prioritise the tasks, putting the most important first and the least important last
  - When you have completed a task, mark it off the list
  - Pick out some smaller tasks that can be done quickly (e.g. water the garden, wash the dishes). After doing these leave the rest until later
  - Allocate yourself set time periods to complete some tasks (e.g. 10am – 11am & 1pm – 1.30pm). Leave tasks that have not been completed until the next day
  - You may enjoy some tasks more than others. It's a good idea to avoid doing all the enjoyable ones first leaving the boring/unpleasant ones until last. Try to do one unpleasant task followed by an enjoyable one
  - It will take time and effort to get into a routine, so don't expect too much too soon
  - At the end of each day and each week you will be able to look back at what you have achieved
- Challenge zone





## Graded exposure task

The main aim of this task is to help you gradually confront the situation/s that causes you the most anxiety. Try not to rush this task and bear in mind that progress can sometimes seem slow, but persevering will pay off in the end. Remember, you may break this task down into as many or as few steps as you need to.

### Instructions

You should already have identified your feared situation and broken it down into steps in the last worksheet 'planning your graded exposure task'. Feel free to use fewer steps, or add more if you need to. Each practice should be graded (step by step), prolonged (stay in the situation long enough for anxiety levels to reduce) and repeated (more practice leads to less anxiety).

Beginning with the least feared situation, try to carry out each step. Fill in the 'Graded exposure task – your progress' after completing each step. It is a good idea to repeat the step if you do not feel ready to move on to the next step. Only progress to the next step when you can approach the previous one with little or no anxiety.

If you have more than one feared situation, you may find it helpful to repeat the exercise with a different feared situation.

The example below is based on the 'example of graded exposure' on page 5.2 of the book.

Date	Step of 'graded exposure'	Level of anxiety 0-100	Comments
1.1.04	Going to the bus stop with a friend	80	I feel good that I achieved it but I'm not ready to move on yet.
1.1.04	Going to the bus stop with a friend	60	It was easier than last time. I'm getting there but I need to keep practising.
2.1.04	Going to the bus stop with a friend	75	It was more difficult than last time. It could be because I've had a stressful day but at least I still managed to do it.
2.1.04	Going to the bus stop with a friend	20	I feel ready to move on to the next step.
3.1.04	Going to the bus stop alone	90	I felt really anxious but I'm glad I went to the bus stop alone. I need to keep practising.

0

Calm

worst its  
ever been





## Section 6: Dealing with setbacks & Final Thoughts

### What about setbacks?

After learning to deal with situations that you feel anxious in, you may experience 'setbacks'. Setbacks are perfectly normal and do not mean that you have failed, or that you are back to square one. If you experience setbacks do not put yourself down or view yourself as a failure. In fact remember thoughts such as "I am a failure", "I'm back to square one", are the kind of negative thoughts that can be challenged. Everyone has bad days but do not over react.

Experiencing setbacks gives you the opportunity to learn from it. We probably learn just as much if not more from things that don't go according to plan than from things that run smoothly. Everyone has setbacks – the trick is how you cope with them. After experiencing a setback take time to reflect and ask yourself questions to help you understand why you experienced a setback and what you can learn from it.

Ask yourself what might have gone wrong to lead to a setback;

- Was it something you could have done something about?
- If so, what?
- Is there anything that can be learned from the setback?
- How would you want to deal with it if it were to happen again in the future? Think about your current life style.
- Are you rushing around a lot?
- Have you stopped doing activities that you used to enjoy?
- What has been happening in your life?
- Have you had extra pressure put on you recently?
- Have you stopped doing things that were helpful?

These are all things to think about as they may have contributed to your setback. If you find that stressors have begun to creep back into your life, try to balance things out again.

Remember the progress that you have made. Dealing with setbacks is all part of coping with anxiety. It is important that you keep trying, and then over time your anxiety will become less severe, and will occur less frequently. Eventually, and with practice, your feelings of anxiety will improve. You have done well to get this far. This is not an easy process - it takes time and practice. Looking out for warning signs can help to prevent setbacks.

**Warning signs to look out for**

Try to look out for warning signs to give yourself time to plan what to do if your anxiety does begin to get worse.

Everyone is different, but warning signs could include things like:

- When pressures in your life outweigh your activities that reduce pressure.
- When you are having relationship problems.
- When you have a stressful event approaching (i.e. a wedding, a job interview, moving house).

Use the space below to write down situations that may increase your chance of

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experiencing setbacks.

Now, think about the techniques that you have learned about and the skills you have developed. Use the space below to write down the things that you find most helpful in

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reducing your anxiety.

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Go back to these areas of the book if necessary and practice them.

Warning signs can come in different forms. Watch out for:

- Changes in situations (relationship problems, new job)
- Changes in your thinking (more negative / unhelpful thoughts or images)
- Changes in your mood
- Changes in your physical symptoms (more headaches, increased tension and aching muscles)
- Changes in your behaviour (a reduction in enjoyable activities, increased avoidance, increased activity and decreased activity)

If you notice changes in any of the above use the book to help you deal with them.

Example of Sarah's warning signs

- **Situation**  
Sarah has been really busy recently looking after her ill mother, leaving *very* little time for herself.
- **Thinking**  
Sarah's thoughts become *very* unhelpful. For example, she thinks 'I'm going to pass out and make a fool of myself' 'I can't cope anymore' 'Everyone's looking at me'.
- **Mood**  
Sarah's moods become quite low. A simple thing upsets her. Her mood can remain low for long periods of time and she finds it difficult to lift it.
- **Physical** Sarah gets a lot of headaches and feels quite tired and lacking in energy.
- **Behaviour**  
Sarah tends to reduce how often she goes to the gym. She finds herself making excuses to her friends so that she can avoid going out.

Use the space below to write down your warning signs.

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**Situation**

**Thinking**

**Mood**

**Physical**

**Behaviour**

## Survival guide

Next, try to produce your own survival guide to help you plan what to do in response to warning signs.

Example of Sarah's survival guide

- **Situation**

Maybe I could ask someone to help me look after my mother. I will try to take on less work.

- **Thinking**

Recognise and challenge any unhelpful thoughts using the appropriate diaries. Try to put things into perspective, try not to dwell on the negative aspects and focus on the more positive. Recognise that this is a stressful time.

- **Mood**

**My mood** should improve as my survival guide is put into practice.

- **Physical**

Practice relaxation. Create more time for self for example have a leisurely bath, read a good book.

- **Behaviour**

Go to the gym as usual. Go out with friends and talk to them about it. Carry out the breathing exercises.

Use the space below to plan a similar survival guide for yourself.

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**Situation**

**Thinking**

**Mood**

**Physical**

**Behaviour**

If your problems persist despite your attempts, seek out professional advice. Initially, your General Practitioner is usually the best professional to see. They may be able to help you or put you in touch with someone who can help.

**Continue to work on this book**

You may find it helpful to return to this book every month or so to reflect back on how you are doing.

- Have you still got an even balance of pressures and activities that reduce pressure?
- Are you still recognising and challenging your unhelpful thoughts?
- Are you avoiding situations?
- Are you entering situations that you used to avoid?
- Are you overactive/underactive?
- Are you suffering from some of the physical symptoms of anxiety?
- Have you experienced setbacks?
- What progress have you made? Write these down.

Some of the exercises in this book may take a lot of practice before you notice any improvements, for example graded exposure, learning to relax and challenging your negative/unhelpful thoughts. Each month try to reflect on what you have learned from reading the book and doing the exercises. You might find it helpful to re-read the key points at the end of each section and try to complete each quiz again. This will help to remind you of what you have learned.

**Final comments**

As you will have learned, overcoming anxiety is an ongoing process, so you have done very well to get to the end of this book – well done.

This book contains a lot of information, so you may find it useful to read it through more than once. You may find it helpful to go back to it each month to reflect on how you are doing. Continue to practice the techniques you find useful.

Remember that the aim of this book is to help you to cope with and manage your anxiety, not to get rid of it altogether. Stress is a part of everyday life and anxiety is a normal response to certain situations. We all experience stress and anxiety.

To avoid disappointment do not expect too much too soon. Long standing anxiety problems will not just disappear after reading this book. It will take a lot of practice and effort. Try not to give up, by persevering you will gradually begin to see improvements. You can do it. It will be worth it in the end.

Well done again for getting to the end of the book. Continue using the techniques you find useful.

## Key points

- Setbacks are perfectly normal and do not mean that you have failed
- If you are finding it difficult to cope it may be due to an increase in stressors
- If you find that stressors are creeping back into your life, try to balance things out again
- Dealing with setbacks is all part of coping with anxiety
- Looking out for warning signs can help to prevent setbacks
- Survival guides are a good way of helping you to plan what to do in response to warning signs
- Stress is part of everyday life
- Situations change and put different demands on us
- Make a note of the progress you have made

# Section 6: Dealing with setbacks & Final Thoughts

## Worksheets



**Please tick when you have completed the following tasks**  
*(Most tasks can be found in Section 6 worksheets)*



- Complete the quiz on page 6.12

[ ]

**In addition, you may wish to:**

- Use the 'Task and time diary' if you find it useful [ ]
- Continue to practice relaxation using the relaxation CD/tape provided [ ]
- Continue to monitor your relaxation progress using the 'Relaxation diary' [ ]
- Continue with the 'Graded exposure task' and 'Graded exposure task- your progress' [ ]

### **Further sources of support and self-help information**

Please find listed below a number of useful telephone numbers and websites.

Newcastle, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust - This website provides links to some self help leaflets for the following common mental health issues.

- Bereavement
- Controlling Anger
- Depression
- Depression and Low Mood
- Obsessions and Compulsions
- Panic
- Post Traumatic Stress
- Shyness and Social Anxiety
- Sleep problems
- Stress and Anxiety
- Stress
- Understanding Voices and Disturbing Beliefs

Website: [www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/](http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/)

SHARP website – Self Help access in Routine Primary Care. Website with over 40 brief self-help leaflets for anxiety, depression and other problems. Website; [www.primarycare-selfhelp.co.uk](http://www.primarycare-selfhelp.co.uk)

[Anxieties.com](http://Anxieties.com) – A self help website set up for people with anxiety. Website: [www.anxieties.com](http://www.anxieties.com)

Association for Post Natal Illness – Can provide information and support to people affected by postnatal illness. Telephone: 020 7386 0868. Website: [www.apni.org](http://www.apni.org).

Citizens Advice Bureau – Can provide information and support on many different issues including debt management, benefits and housing. Telephone: 0870 1212044. Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) . For Wales call 03444 77 20 20; for England call 03444 111 444

CRUSE Bereavement Care – Can provide support and information to those affected by loss or bereavement. Telephone: 0870 167 1677. Website: [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk).

Depression Alliance – Offers help and support to those affected by depression, including families and carers. Telephone: 020 7633 0557. Website: [www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org).

Gingerbread – Offers information and support to lone parent families. Telephone: 0800 0184318. Website: [www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk).

MIND – Offers support, help and information to anyone affected by mental health problems. Telephone: 0300 123 3393. Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk).

NHS Choices – Provides information on health problems and services:  
[www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx)

No Panic – National self help organisation for phobias, anxiety, panic.: Helpline 0844 967 4848: [www.nopanic.org.uk](http://www.nopanic.org.uk).

Samaritans – 24 hour support for people who are suicidal or in despair. Telephone: 08457 909090. Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk).

Self Help UK – A searchable database providing contact details and background information on over 1000 self help and support organisations in the UK. Website: [www.self-help.org.uk](http://www.self-help.org.uk).

The Mental Health Foundation – Find the latest news and events on mental health issues as well as information on problems, treatments and strategies for living with mental health problems. Website: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Womens Aid – Offers information and support to women experiencing domestic violence. Telephone: 0808 2000 247. Website: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk).

**Links to useful self-help books:**

<http://reading-well.org.uk/>

<http://www.overcoming.co.uk/single.htm?ipg=8616>

Self-help apps:

<http://apps.nhs.uk/>

***Section 6 : Copies of all Worksheets***



## Quiz – Dealing with setbacks and final thoughts

The following questions are for you to check your understanding of the 'dealing with setbacks and final thoughts' section.

1. Looking out for w \_\_\_\_\_ s \_\_\_\_\_ will give yourself time to plan what to do if your anxiety gets worse.

2. Give three examples of possible warning signs

1)

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3. Why are survival guides useful?

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4. Why might it be helpful to return to this book every month or so?

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**Task and time diary (optional)**

	<b>What task(s) do I need to do?</b>	<b>When should I do the task(s)?</b>	<b>Where should I do the task(s)?</b>	<b>What (if any) difficulties might arise?</b>	<b>How can I overcome these difficulties?</b>
<b>Example:</b>	Relaxation	7.30 - 8.00pm	Bedroom	Kids might disturb me	Ask partner to look after them
<b>Mon</b>					
<b>Tue</b>					
<b>Wed</b>					
<b>Thur</b>					
<b>Fri</b>					
<b>Sat</b>					
<b>Sun</b>					

**Relaxation diary**

**Instructions**

This exercise is designed to help you evaluate how useful relaxation is for you. Before practising relaxation using the CD provided, record today's date and circle the number that best reflects how you feel before relaxation. Then jot down anything that may explain your feelings. After that, practice relaxation using the CD provided. Then, circle the number that best reflects how you feel after relaxation. **EXAMPLE: Relaxation diary**

Day	Date	Anxiety level before relaxation		Anxiety level after relaxation	
		Calm	Tense	Calm	Tense
1	01.01.02	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 8 9 1 0		0 1 0 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:- Busy day at work, woke up late, rushed around			

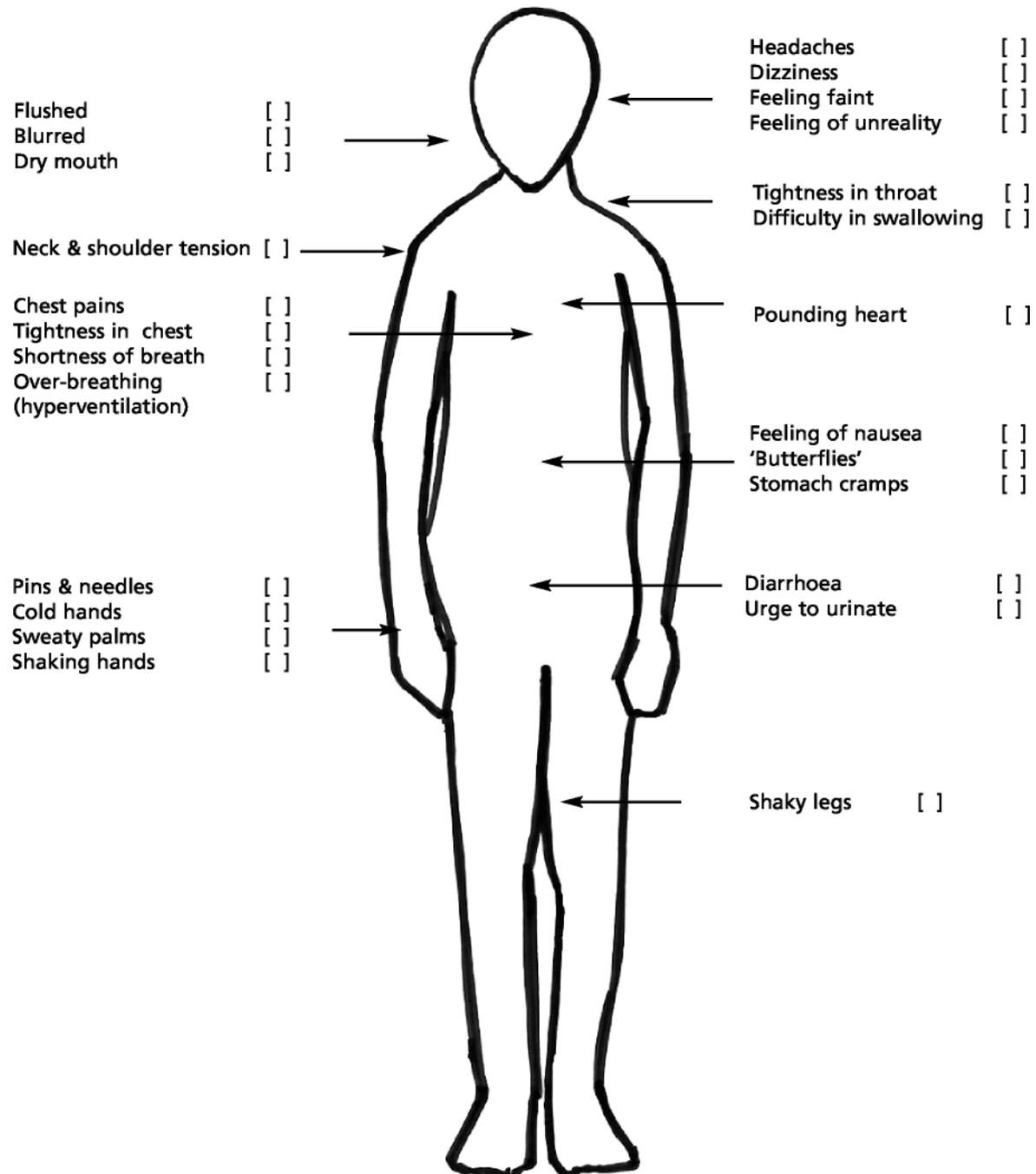
Day	Date	Anxiety level before relaxation		Anxiety level after relaxation	
		Calm	Tense	Calm	Tense
1		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
2		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
3		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 <sup>1</sup> 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
4		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
5		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
6		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			
7		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0		0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0	
		Things that explain my feelings:-			

**Physical symptoms of anxiety diagram**

**Instructions**

Use the diagram below to think about and write down the physical symptoms that **YOU** experience when in situations that you feel anxious in. There are a few symptoms of anxiety listed below to help to start you off. Please tick any of those listed that apply to you and add as many of your own physical symptoms as you can think of.

This exercise should help you to think about and identify the physical symptoms of anxiety that you personally experience.



**Anxiety patterns/triggers diary**

1. What were you doing?	0	50	100
2. What were your symptoms?			
3. How anxious were you on a scale of 0-100?	calm		worst its ever been

	7 - 11am	11 - 3pm	3 - 7pm	7 - 11pm	11 - 7am
<b>Sue's Example:</b>	8.30, On bus to work, pounding heat, dizzy, 50	1.15, having lunch with friends, feel relaxed, 0	4, working, headache, 10 6.05, on bus home, breathless, 55	7.10, listen to radio, 0 9.30, went to bed early, 10	Asleep
<b>Mon</b>					
<b>Tue</b>					
<b>Wed</b>					
<b>Thur</b>					
<b>Fri</b>					
<b>Sat</b>					
<b>Sun</b>					

**Section 2 - Physical Effects of Anxiety**

Patterns	Triggers
Sue's examples • Usually feels relaxed when meeting friends for lunch. • Tends to relax more in the evenings	• Being on the bus increases Sue's anxiety

**Anxiety patterns/triggers diary – Questions to ask yourself after completion**

You may find that you can't answer all of these 6. What could you do differently? questions immediately. However, by working through the book you will learn more about anxiety and how to deal with it, and will therefore be able to complete/add to any of the sections above. You 7. Are there times when you intended to do things may need to complete this diary for a few weeks in that you didn't do/avoided? order to notice any patterns.

1. What things trigger your anxiety?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ If so, why is that?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What things make you relax? 8. Is the week you completed the diary a typical  
 \_\_\_\_\_ week?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you notice you're doing too  
 much of?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ If not, what is different/what other circumstances  
 are contributing to your anxiety?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you notice you're doing too  
 little of? (NB. If this was not a typical week you may find it useful  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to complete the diary again so that you can find your own  
 patterns/triggers more easily)
5. Have you got the balance right? 9. Try to list  
 \_\_\_\_\_ three things that you could change to help your  
 anxiety  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Monitoring thoughts diary**

**Instructions**

Before attempting to challenge your unhelpful thoughts, you must first learn to recognise them. This exercise will help you to recognise your thoughts by recording them. When you are feeling anxious write down the situation you are in and the thoughts and images that are going through your mind. Then, rate your mood (how you felt at the time) on a scale of 0-100. Keep using this diary for as long as you need to. After a while you may find that when you are feeling anxious you automatically notice the thoughts going through your mind.

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Thoughts &amp; Images</b> <i>(What went through your mind at the time)</i>	<b>Mood</b> <i>(How you felt at the time) and mood rating (0-100)</i>
Monday 8.30am, I've slept in and am running late	"Oh no, I'm going to be late for work" "I have a meeting at 9am, everyone will be waiting for me - I'll be so embarrassed" "I'm so stupid"	Anxious (90)

**Monitoring and evaluating thoughts diary**

**Instructions**

As with the ‘Monitoring thoughts diary’ in section 3 worksheets, this exercise will help you to recognise your thoughts by recording them and taking it a stage further by looking at how the situation actually turned out. When you are feeling anxious write down the situation you are in and the thoughts and images that are going through your mind. Then, note down your mood (how you felt at the time) and rate it on a scale of 0-100. After that, ask yourself if the situation turned out as bad as you imagined. Keep using this diary for as long as you need to. After a while you may find that when you are feeling anxious you automatically notice the thoughts going through your mind and you automatically evaluate how likely it is to turn out as imagined.

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Thoughts &amp; Images</b> <i>(What went through your mind at the time)</i>	<b>Mood</b> <i>(How you felt at the time) and mood rating (0-100)</i>	<b>Did the situation turn out as bad as imagined?</b>
Monday 8.30am, I've slept in and am running late	"Oh no, I'm going to be late for work" "I have a meeting at 9am, everyone will be waiting for me - I'll be so embarrassed I'm so stupid"	Anxious (90)	No, I phoned in to let them know I was going to be late. I just missed the beginning of the meeting.

**Questioning unhelpful thoughts**

**Instructions**

- This exercise is designed to help you question your unhelpful thoughts.
- You should complete table 1 below , imagining that you had the unhelpful thought that is stated at the top.
- Ask all 7 questions for each thought, writing your responses in the table.
- Finally, you should replace each unhelpful thought with one that is more helpful.
- After completing table 1, use table 2 to challenge an unhelpful thought of your own.

There is an example of a completed table on p 4.4 of the anxiety book that you can refer to if you wish.

At first you may feel unwilling to have a go at this exercise, thinking that it is “too hard” or “not worthwhile”. However, remember that these are exactly the kind of unhelpful thoughts that this exercise aims to identify and question. It is by challenging these thoughts that we are able to stop them from making us feel so anxious and from maintaining our anxiety.

Use the following questions to help you challenge the unhelpful thoughts:

**Question 1:** Am I getting things out of proportion?

**Question 2:** What happened the last time I was in this situation?

**Question 3:** What would other people think in this situation?

**Question 4:** Are my thoughts predicting the future in an unhelpful way?

**Question 5:** What is the evidence for and against this thought?

**Question 6:** Am I trying to read other people’s minds?

**Question 7:** Is this another example of my typical negative thinking?

**Table 1: Unhelpful thought:** “Everybody will ignore me at the party. I can’t talk to anybody. I know they’ll all think I’m boring.”

Question	Response
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	For: Against:
6	
7	

**Helpful thought:**

**Table 2: Unhelpful thought:**

Question	Response
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	<b>For:</b> <b>Against:</b>
6	
7	

**Helpful thought:**













## **Cue Cards**

**Cue card – It may be helpful to read this when experiencing a panic attack.**

1. Wait – don't run away
2. Feelings of panic are an exaggeration of normal responses to threat
3. Symptoms are unpleasant and uncomfortable, but not dangerous
4. Use this opportunity to practice your coping skills
  - a) Replace unhelpful thoughts with more helpful ones
  - b) Inhale through nose, exhale through mouth
  - c) Practice distraction techniques (refocusing, physical activity, mental activity)
  - d) If possible, practice relaxation techniques (do exercise on CD/tape provided, hydrotherapy, massage, music)
5. Focus on the here and now
6. Congratulate yourself for staying in the situation

**Cue card – If your level of activity is increased (overactive), you may find it helpful to read the following.**

1. Every minute does not have to be filled with activity
2. Regular breaks are normal and sensible
3. Do not expect to be perfect at everything
4. It is unrealistic to expect never to make mistakes
5. Practice relaxation and make time for yourself
6. Congratulate yourself on the work you have achieved
7. View breaks and treats as recharging your batteries

**Cue card – If your level of activity is decreased (underactive), you may find it helpful to read the following**

1. Write a list of tasks that need to be done and prioritise this list
2. Mark each task off the list when completed
3. Pick out some of the smaller, more manageable tasks to do
4. Allocate set time periods in which to complete the tasks, those not completed can wait until the following day
5. Do one unpleasant task followed by an enjoyable one
6. Look back at what you have achieved during the day/week