

Unwind your Mind

A Guide to Managing Anxiety and Worry



This guide is one of a series about good ways to deal with mental health problems. Such problems are very common and the things you can do to help with them have been shown to work.

Contents

- Getting the most out of this booklet
- Understanding anxiety
- What causes anxiety problems?
- What keeps anxiety problems going?



See it



Treat it



Beat it

This guide provides a number of different techniques to help you to manage anxiety problems. They are provided under the headings of See it, Treat it and Beat it. You may wish to try one of these as a way to start, moving on to try some of the others at your own pace. Find out what works best for you. They are:

- The Thought Diary
- Challenging troublesome thoughts
- The Worry Decision Tree
- Distraction
- The Anxiety Ladder
- Planning worry time
- Problem Solving

These are all techniques that have proved useful for many people. At the end of the book there is information about getting more information, help and treatment.

Getting the most out of the booklet:

As you read this guide, it will ask you to think about what is going on in your life and how you are feeling. There are spaces in the booklet for you to write things down. You may find that this helps you think more clearly about how you feel.

What you'll need:

- ❑ A pen and maybe a notebook for extra notes.
- ❑ Time for reading and thinking about how you can help yourself.
- ❑ Somewhere quiet to read and think.
- ❑ To keep going and pace yourself by taking one step at a time.
- ❑ Support from a family member, friend or health professional if possible.

If you find it hard to read and do the exercises in the booklet, you might find it useful to talk to someone. This could be a health worker such as your doctor or practice nurse. Your concentration, energy or motivation levels may be low right now; so there may be things it would be better to try first.

Understand Anxiety

Introduction

Anxiety is something that we all experience in our lives. It can range from feeling uneasy and worrying, to feeling fear and panic. It is a normal response to something that seems to be a threat. Most people have felt nervous before an exam or worried about speaking in public. These fears are natural and often disappear once the situation is over. However, sometimes the feelings of anxiety can go on for longer periods of time. When it stops you doing the things you would like to do (or need to do), it is time to do something about it.

There are many types of anxiety. These include:

- ❑ **Panic:** a sudden feeling of fear with strong physical symptoms such as heart racing
- ❑ **Phobias:** fear of an object or situation that poses little or no actual danger
- ❑ **Social Phobia:** fear or anxiety about being in public or social situations
- ❑ **Health Anxiety:** constant worry or fear about getting an illness or dying
- ❑ **Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** an uncontrollable worry about everyday things
- ❑ **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** unwanted thoughts and fears that can lead to a person repeating actions again and again to try and reduce the anxiety
- ❑ **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** anxiety in response to a traumatic event

This booklet looks at anxiety in more detail. It will help you understand how your thoughts are affecting your life. It will also show you some ideas for challenging those unhelpful thoughts; so you can unwind your mind.

Range of Anxiety Problems

We can all feel anxious at some point in our lives. This is quite normal; but when it starts to affect how you live your life, it is becoming a problem. Below is a table to show the range of different types of anxiety. At one end, it gives an example of how many people behave on a daily basis. At the other end, it describes how anxiety can severely affect people and their lives.

	Common	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Phobia	Jump when you see a spider	Check room corners for spiders before going in	Avoid the cellar where spiders live	Stop doing the gardening completely
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	Stereo volume has to be on an even number	Check that all car doors are locked before leaving	Need to touch car door handles 8 times	Have to return to car 8 times to check that doors are locked
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	Short flashbacks for 2-3 months after a car crash	Drive slowly past left-hand junctions	Wake up from nightmares over 6 months after the crash	Avoid driving at all
Health Anxiety	Look up symptoms on internet	Focus on medical TV programmes	Visit the doctor many times	Repeated medical tests

If you need more in-depth help to deal with anxiety, a good place to start is to talk to your doctor.

In addition, other organisations can help. There is a list at the end of this booklet.

Anxiety UK is one example. It provides information and support about anxiety problems.

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Helpline: 08444 775 774 (Mon-Fri: 9.30am-4.30pm)

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is natural and it can be useful. It triggers the release of hormones such as adrenaline. This makes you more alert and can help you perform better. It can help you to react quickly, without thinking, such as jumping out of the way of an oncoming car.

This is the 'fight or flight' response. It protects you against physical threats. It makes the body more alert and ready to deal with danger. When you fight a threat, or run away from it, your body is able to use up the adrenaline. It releases other hormones once the danger is over to relax your body. However, your body reacts in the same way to other stressful situations that you can't physically fight or run from. Some examples include opening the mail; speaking in public; moving house; losing your job; and going to a party.

The way that you think can set off your 'fight or flight' response. If someone has had a difficult time and has become anxious, they could fear feeling that way again. When they start to worry about feeling like that, it triggers the 'fight or flight' system and can cause more symptoms. The booklet 'From Distress to De-stress' explains these symptoms and includes skills that you can learn to reduce them. This can be viewed at www.mhim.org.uk

Is anxiety a problem for you?

Over the page, there is a list of symptoms caused by anxiety. Please tick any that you often experience.

You feel...

- Anxious, worried, scared, nervous
- Like something awful is going to happen
- Like things are out of your control
- Tense, on edge, stressed, panicky
- Like you are not really there

You mind is...

- Racing/difficult to switch off
- Going over and over things
- Difficult to focus and jumps from one topic to another
- Over-estimating danger
- Under-estimating help available
- Unable to control or stop worrying
- Imagining that the worst will happen
- Concentrating on bodily sensations

Your thoughts might be...

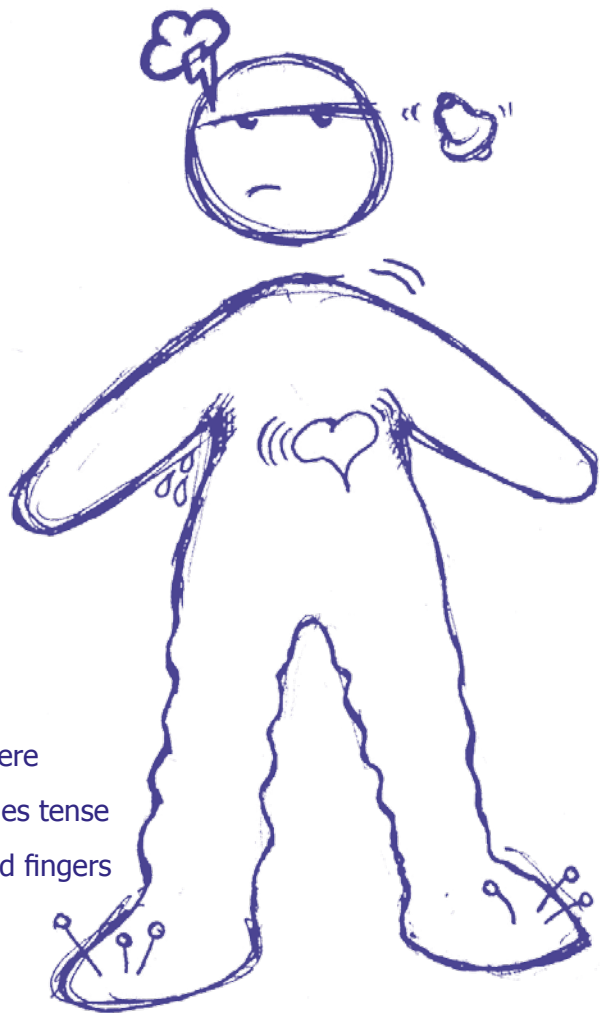
- "I can't cope"
- "Things are out of control"
- "I'm going mad"
- "I'm going to faint/collapse"
- "I'm going to have a heart attack"
- "I'm going to make a fool of myself"
- "I've got to leave, now!"

You might behave by...

- Can't sit still/find it hard to relax
- Start one job before finishing another
- Avoid anxious situations
- Being snappy and irritable
- Eat and sleep more (or less)
- Try to do things perfectly or trying to control events to prevent danger
- Look to others for reassurance/comfort
- Drink/take drugs and/or smoke more

Your body symptoms are...

- Can't sleep
- Heart racing
- Heart palpitations
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Blurry vision
- Butterflies in the stomach
- Feel sick
- Need to go to the toilet
- Headaches
- Tired
- Tearful
- Forgetful
- Can't concentrate
- Feel like you are not really there
- Neck, shoulder and leg muscles tense
- Numbness/tingling in toes and fingers
- Sweating
- Shakiness



If you have ticked a number of these boxes, you may be having symptoms of anxiety. However, don't be alarmed, this is very common. There are things you can do to improve your situation. You will find some useful strategies in this booklet.

Causes of Anxiety

There are many reasons why someone might become anxious. They can include:



- **What you believe about the world:** These thoughts could be about:
 - **Being judged by others:** "They think I'm useless"; "They won't like me".
 - **Being unable to cope.** "I'll make a fool of myself"; "I'm too anxious to do that"; "I'm going to have a panic attack".
 - **Something going badly:** "What if I have an accident?"; "What if I lose my job?"
- **Childhood events:** Childhood abuse or traumatic events can have an impact that lasts into adulthood.
- **Stressful life events:** These could include losing a job, relationship breakdown and bereavement.
- **Being under a lot of pressure:** This could be at home or work. Examples include work/studies; family commitments/problems; being in debt and not having enough money.
- Some people have learnt to **worry as habit.**



What keeps anxiety going?

Anxiety can become a long-term problem because of:

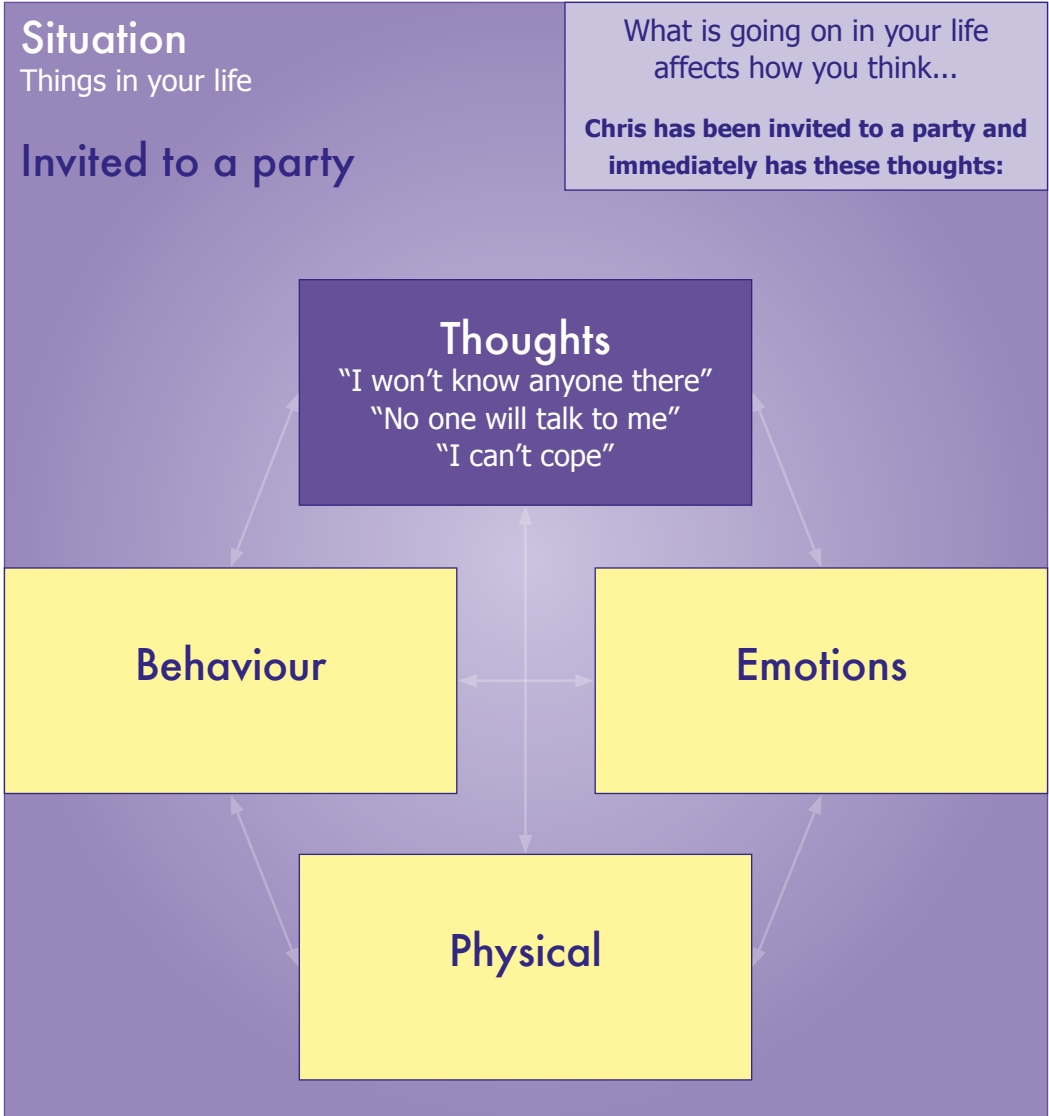
- **Things that happen in your life:** If you have many things you are trying to cope with in your life it can set off your 'Fight or Flight' response. It can also keep it going. This is true even if they are things we enjoy, like holidays.
- **How you physically feel:** Anxiety has a physical affect on the body. This can make you feel worse, which can make you feel even more anxious
- **The way you think:** Some styles of thinking are unhelpful. If you think the worst is going to happen you are going to feel anxious. If you believe that worry protects you, you may start to see danger where there is none.
- **What you do:** Some of the ways we try to look after ourselves can also be unhelpful. If you avoid a situation, you will never find out that there is nothing to worry about.
- **A vicious cycle of anxiety:** This means your thoughts, physical symptoms and what you do or don't do, work together to keep anxiety going.

You've started to look at how anxiety affects you by using the checklists on pages 5 and 6. Now let's put it all together. This next part of the booklet looks at how each of the areas affect each other and keep anxiety going.

The model over the page shows a vicious cycle of anxiety. It gives the example of Chris who has been invited to a party. What Chris thinks about going to the party affects Chris' emotions. It also affects how Chris feels physically. This can also change what Chris does or doesn't do.

Look at the arrows in the diagrams. They show how each area can affect all the others.

Things in your life and in your past, all have an affect on your thoughts, feelings, your body and how you behave.



Your thoughts affect your emotions...

Situation

Things in your life

Invited to a party

Because Chris thinks that he can't cope, he starts to feel anxious and stressed

Thoughts

"I won't know anyone there"
"No one will talk to me"
"I can't cope"

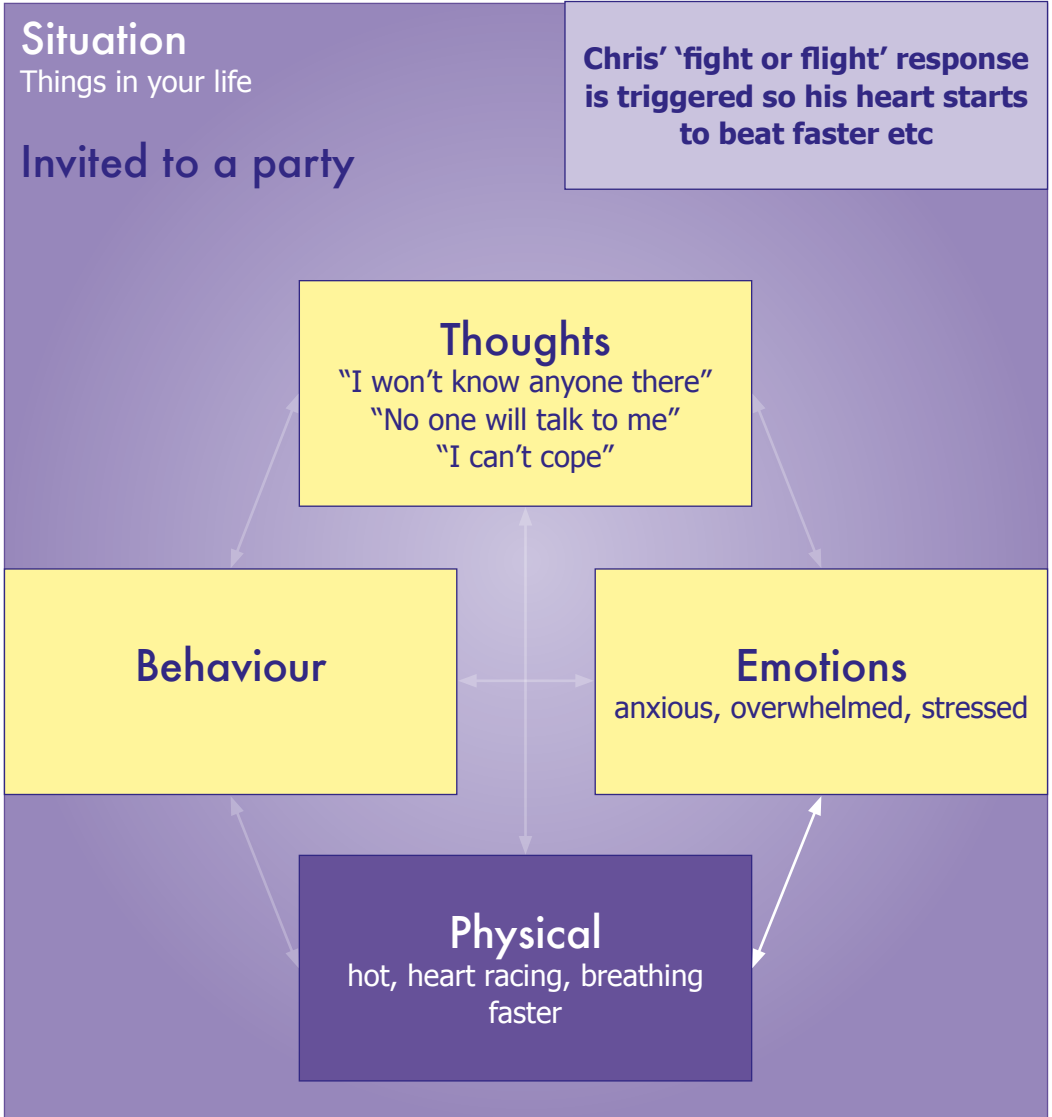
Behaviour

Emotions

anxious, overwhelmed, stressed

Physical

Your thoughts and emotions affect how you physically feel...



Your thoughts, emotions and physical symptoms can affect what you do or don't do...

Situation

Things in your life

Invited to a party

So, because Chris is starting to feel awful he decides not to go to the party

Thoughts

"I won't know anyone there"
"No one will talk to me"
"I can't cope"

Behaviour

avoids the party

Emotions

anxious, overwhelmed, stressed

Physical

hot, heart racing, breathing faster

Your behaviour backs-up your thoughts. So, your thoughts, feelings, physical symptoms and behaviour can all affect one another. And, in turn, they can all be affected by what is going on in your life. This leads to a vicious cycle

Situation

Things in your life

Invited to a party

So Chris feels relieved for a bit. But, when asked to another party, Chris feels even less able to cope.

Thoughts

"I won't know anyone there"
"No one will talk to me"
"I can't cope"

Behaviour

avoids the party

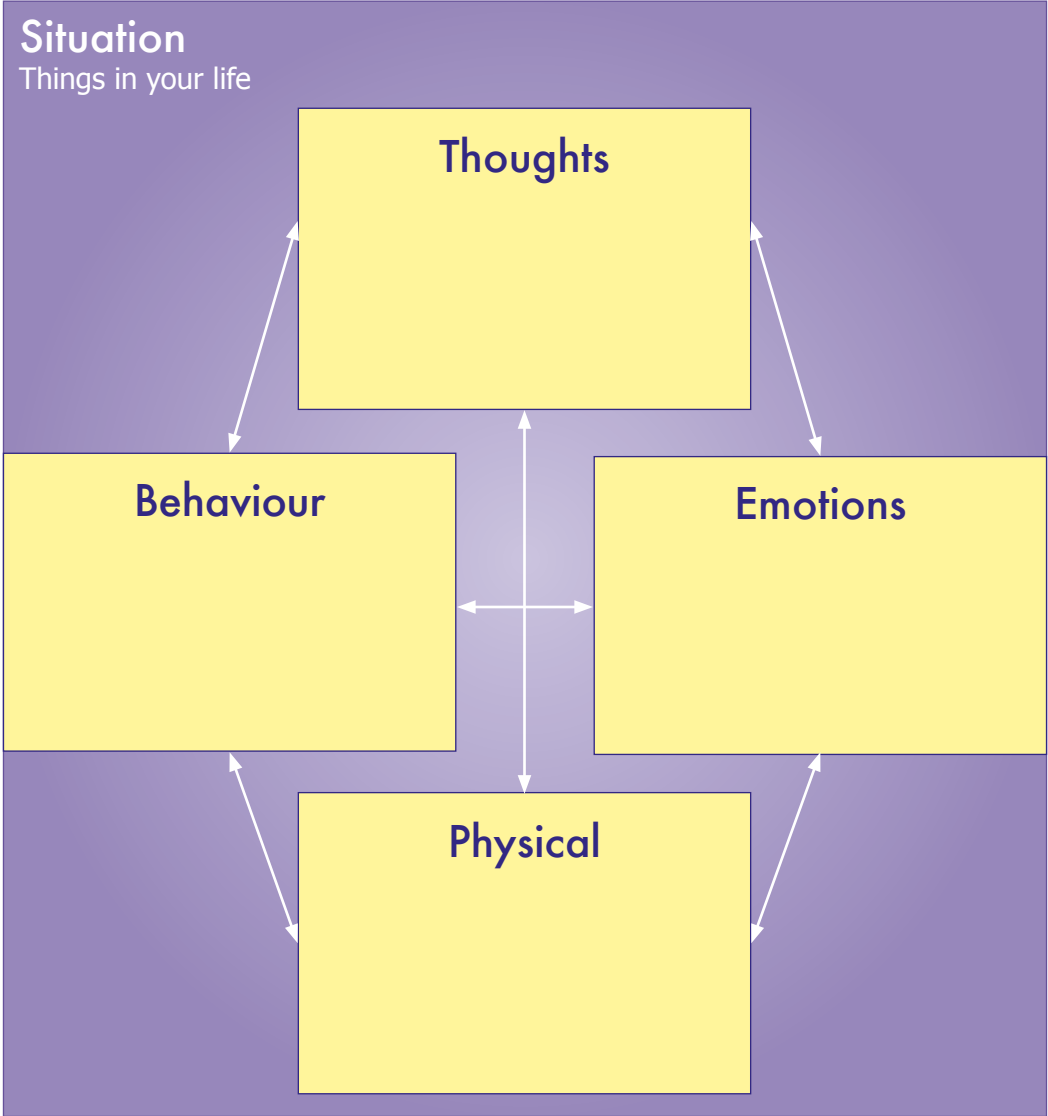
Emotions

anxious, overwhelmed, stressed

Physical

hot, heart racing, breathing faster

Have a go at drawing your own cycle on the blank diagram below. Use the symptom checklist from page 5 and 6, or think of the last time you felt stressed. The arrows in this diagram show how any of the areas can affect any other area to make a vicious cycle.



Once you can see your vicious cycle, you can start to do something about it. The good news is that if you make a small positive change in one of the areas, it will help the other areas.

So, by making a change in how you think or behave, how your body reacts physically or what is going on in your life, you can improve how you feel. This can break your cycle of anxiety.

One of the things that keep anxiety going is the way we think. Unhelpful, or negative, thoughts happen more often when someone is feeling stressed or low. These thoughts often make us feel worse.

Negative Automatic Thoughts

Some thoughts are untrue and unhelpful. These are Negative Automatic Thoughts. They are a bit like your own internal bullies.

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

There are many types of unhelpful thinking styles. There are a few examples over the page.

Do any of them sound familiar?

Once you have recognised an unhelpful thought, you can start to do something about it.



Unhelpful thinking styles

Expecting the worst	Jumping to Conclusions
<p>You might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ expect things to go wrong, no matter what.○ expect the worst to happen○ expect everything to always be a catastrophe.	<p>You might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ assume things about other people or events without any proof○ Mind reading - you think that you know what someone else is thinking○ Fortune telling - you predict that things will go wrong
Living by Fixed Rules	Negative Focus
<p>You might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ have a list of fixed rules about how you and others should behave○ often use the words 'should', 'ought', 'must not', 'shouldn't' and 'can't'	<p>You might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ focus on the bad things about a situation and not see the good○ see only your weaknesses, not your strengths
All - or - Nothing Thinking	Blaming Yourself
<p>You might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ see no middle ground○ feel there is only one right way to do something and every other way is wrong○ place people or situations into 'either/or' groups	<p>You might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ think that things are your fault when something bad happens

What Next?

This booklet is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). This aims to identify unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours. It also looks at how to change them to help you feel better in your body and mood. Research has shown that CBT can help to manage symptoms and problems that cause anxiety and keep it going.

The rest of this booklet concentrates on how you can recognise and then challenge your anxious thoughts. So that you can:



See it



Treat it



Beat it

Try each of the techniques to see which ones work for you. They are designed to help you take back control over your thoughts. You will need to make time to practise the techniques to start to feel better.

And, try to remember:

Just because you think it, doesn't make it true.



See it

You have started to understand anxiety in the first part of this booklet. The vicious cycle helps you to look at what is going on in your life. It shows how it is affecting your body, thoughts, emotions and behaviour.

It is also helpful to start to notice your thoughts and patterns of thinking. Once you can see them, you can begin to do something about them.

By learning to manage your thoughts, you can start to manage your anxiety. Many of these thoughts come and go very quickly. They may happen automatically, so you may feel that they are just a part of you. This is very common and it is important to remember that this can change.

Thought Diary

A thought diary can help you to recognise what you are thinking. There is an example of one over the page.

Once you have filled in your thought diary, you will be more aware of what your thoughts are and how they affect you. Next, you need to see if those thoughts are unhelpful. Then you can start to challenge them.

Complete the table on the next page. Rate how worried or stressed you felt at the time on a scale of 0 to 10.

0 = absolutely calm and

10 = the most stressed/worried you could ever be.

There is a blank copy of the diary sheet available to download from mhim.org.uk



Thought Diary

Date & Time	What happened	What I was thinking	My emotions	How my body felt	Stress rating 0-10
29/02/12 4pm	I have been asked to go to a friend's birthday party	"I won't know anyone there" "No one will talk to me" "I'll say something to upset someone"	anxious overwhelmed nervous	hot heart racing breathing faster	7



Treat it?

There are many options for treating anxiety. This booklet focuses on what you can do to help yourself. Your thoughts are messages from your brain. They are often random and automatic. This means that they will pop into your head whether you like it or not. You might not be able to control what thoughts you have, but you can choose how to react to them.

When they happen, you can learn to do one of the four Ds:



Demand evidence



Dismiss the thought



Distract yourself



Do something about it

The 'Do something' option could also include getting professional support. This could be through your doctor or other services. There are more details about these options near the end of this section.



Demand Evidence

Many of your upsetting thoughts are untrue and you can learn to challenge them. If you can catch the unhelpful thought and challenge it, you can start to see how true it is.

Take the example of Chris, who was invited to a party. Chris' thoughts were:

- "I won't know anyone there"
- "No one will talk to me"
- "I can't cope"

By challenging those thoughts and replacing them with balanced ones, Chris can start to feel less anxious.

Over the page are a set of questions to help challenge thoughts. You can see how Chris has used the questions to challenge his unhelpful thinking.

Use the set of questions to start to challenge your thoughts. You can download a blank version from mhim.org.uk

Thought Challenging Questions

Unhelpful Thought
"I won't know anyone there"
"No one will talk to me"

Challenging Thoughts: What is the evidence?

I haven't been to a party for a while, so I'm not sure what would happen

What type of unhelpful thinking am I making?

Expecting the worst and Fortune telling

What different views are there?

What would someone else think?

My friends are all looking forward to seeing each other

What advice would I give to a friend?

I'd suggest that they could meet up with someone before they go

What effect does this thinking have?

Does it help or make things worse?

It is making me feel worse

What action can I take?

What could I do to change things?

Am I ruling anything out?

I could phone a friend and arrange to meet them before the party

Helpful / Balanced Thought

I'm going to be okay. I will have someone to talk to when I'm at the party and I know some of my other friends will be there.



Dismiss the thought

Although worry can be useful at times, sometimes it can get in the way. The physical effects of worry take up a lot of the body's energy. It can wear you out and make you feel ill.

Worry is like a rocking horse:



**It keeps you going,
wears you out
and gets you nowhere.**

When you start to worry about something, try to see if the thought is:

○ **Not important**

Are you wearing yourself out over something that doesn't matter? Think about whether it will matter in 5 years. On a scale of 1-10, how important is it?

○ **Not likely**

Is it not likely to happen? Then you are wearing yourself out over nothing.

○ **Not certain**

Are you wearing yourself out over something that hasn't happened or might not happen? Worrying is not going to make you better prepared or stronger if it does happen. Instead, it makes you weaker and tires you out.

○ **Not under my control**

Are you worrying about something that you cannot affect? Sometimes we cannot do anything about our anxiety. A person might worry about getting older, but no one can do anything about aging. Some things we just need to learn to accept and live with.

If the worry belongs to any of these four groups, you know that it is safe to stop worrying.

Here is another technique to help manage thoughts. It is called the Worry Decision Tree.

The Worry Decision Tree

The worry tree helps you to:

- recognise what type of worry it is
- turn worries into problems that can be solved
- decide when it is safe to 'let go' of worries

There are two types of things not worth worrying about:

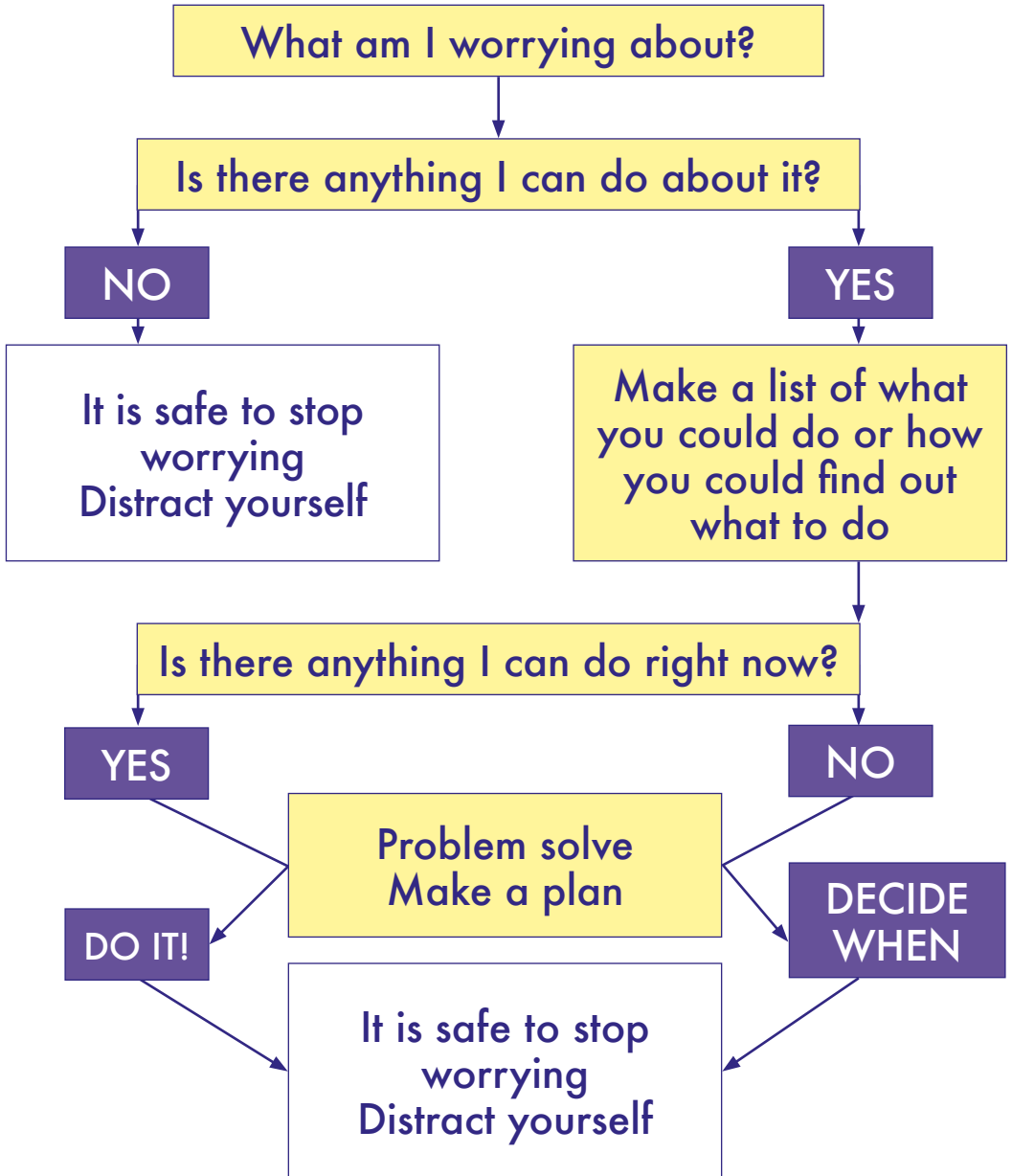
- Things that you can do something about
- Things that you can't do something about

Use the worry tree plan to check out one of your worries.

If it is a worry that you cannot do anything about, you will know that it is safe to stop worrying. You could distract yourself if you find this difficult to do. There are some tips on what to do later in this booklet.

If it is a worry that you can do something about, you can "problem solve" it. This is covered later in the booklet. You will not have to worry about it any more because you will have a plan. If the worry comes up again you can tell yourself that you have a plan so you don't need to worry.

The Worry Tree





Distract yourself

Thinking about your worries can often make you feel worse. This is because it can trigger your 'fight or flight' response.

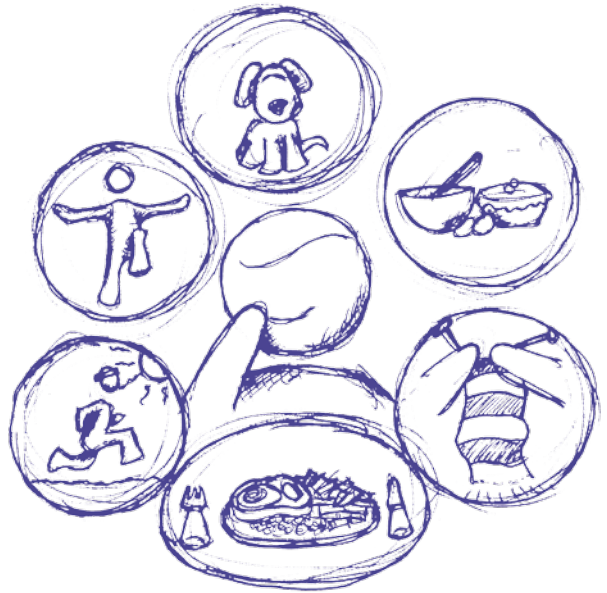
Distraction helps to take your mind off how you are feeling. This can help to reduce physical symptoms and help you think more clearly. You will need to distract yourself for **at least three minutes** before you will start to feel better.

Sometimes it is difficult to know how to distract yourself when you are worried. So, come up with a list of things you could do and write them down. Then when you next want to distract yourself, all you have to do is choose something from your list.



Here are some ideas to get you started:

- choose an activity to focus on eg gardening, singing, housework, arts and crafts
- take notice of small details around you:
 - what can you smell; hear; see; feel; taste?
 - look up at what is around you
- count backwards from 1001 in multiples of 3 or 7
- close your eyes and move your eyes around randomly. When you open them describe in detail the first object you see
- focus on your breathing – count how long it takes you to breathe in and then take longer to breathe out
- imagine a comfortable place where you feel safe eg a woodland glade or beach
- count the number of things that are a certain colour, or begin with a particular letter
- choose a category of objects (eg animals) and try to name one for each letter of the alphabet
- remember a time when you felt positive. Describe the details of the event.





Do something about it

Challenge your Anxiety

Sometimes what you do or don't do can affect your level of anxiety. It may make you feel better in the short term, but it could make things worse in the long term.

- **You might avoid things:** eg, not going out to see people; asking people to come round to yours; asking people to do things for you; not answering the phone; not opening the mail.
- **You might do things that make you feel better.** These are called safety behaviours: eg, avoiding eye contact; not speaking up; keeping busy; holding on tightly; looking for exits; speak quickly; find someone safe to stay with; smoke more; drink more; eat more; take drugs.

Avoidance and safety behaviours keep anxiety going. So, to overcome anxiety it is important to face the fear slowly. You need to give yourself a chance to stay in a stressful situation to feel the anxiety reduce. Your body will get used to it and you will be able overcome your anxiety. This is called exposure.

Remember Chris, who was invited to a party? He felt very anxious about going to social events. He thought that no one would talk to him and that he might have a panic attack.

If Chris decides not to go to the party, his anxiety goes down and he feels better – for a bit. However when he next gets invited to another party he gets even more anxious.

If Chris goes to the party any way, he might feel nervous at first. But, once there, Chris will find that after a while his anxiety goes down. He may even start to enjoy himself because people start to chat to him. The next time he is invited to a party, he feels a little less nervous about going.

When someone feels very anxious, facing his or her fears may feel overwhelming. To reduce this anxiety, it is important to break it down into smaller steps. They would start with something they find a little bit anxious and then build up to situations that they find very anxious.



Anxiety Ladder – Steps to Success

The Anxiety Ladder is a tool that can help you plan this.

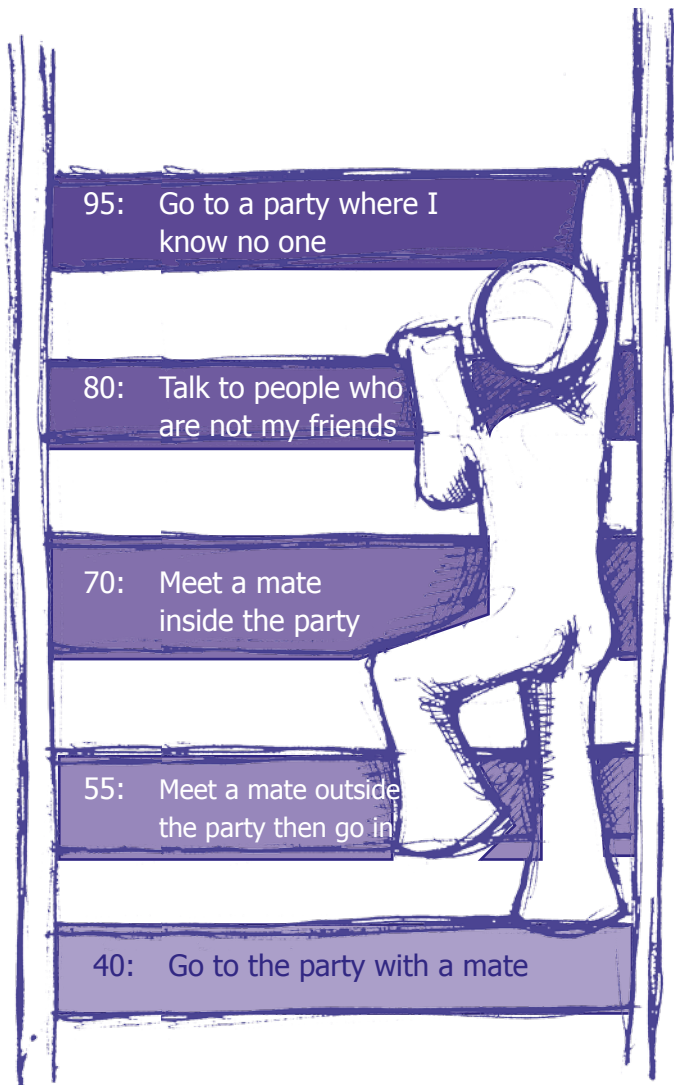
First, make a list of the things that you avoid or do to reduce anxiety. You could use your thought diary to help.

Next, give each item a score on a scale of 0 to 100, where 100 is the most anxious you could feel and 0 is where you are completely relaxed.

Finally, put your list into order: least feared to most feared. You will start with the easiest things and work up to the more difficult stuff.

This is Chris' Anxiety ladder:

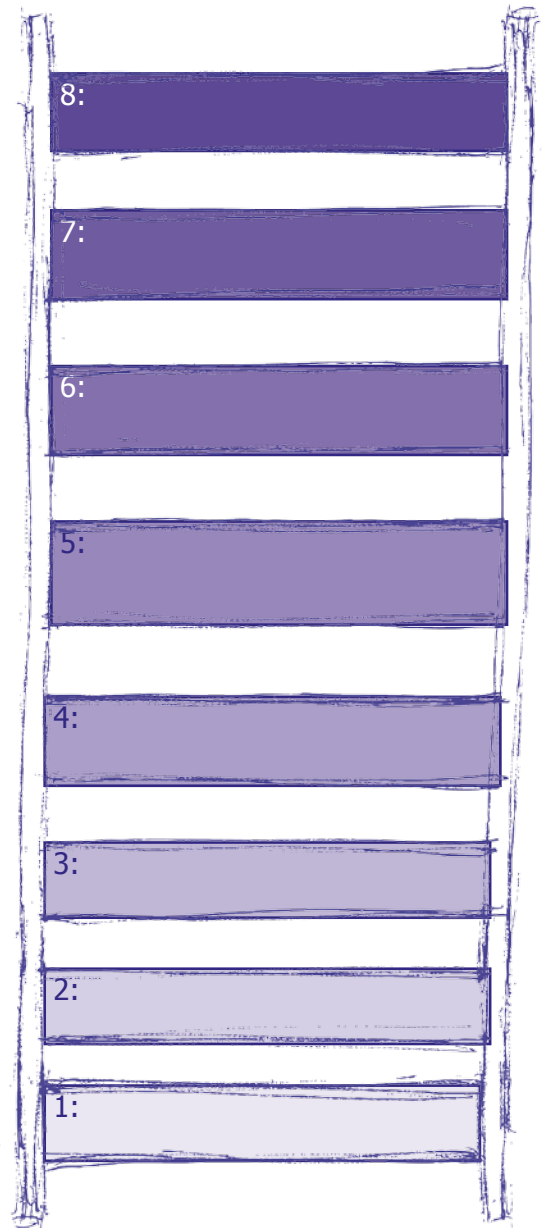
Chris will start with step one and will slowly work towards step five. He asks one of his friends to meet him at his flat before the party.



Try making your own anxiety ladder. Then plan to tackle each item in turn, starting at the bottom. You could use the six steps to problem solving on page 34 to help you come up with a plan.

Remember:

- to breathe
- take it one step at a time
- your anxiety will rise at first
- it will fall as you stay in the situation
- Try to stay until your anxiety has gone down by at least half
- The symptoms you feel are natural and not dangerous
- Repeat your steps again and again until you overcome your anxiety.



Worry Time

When people are anxious they tend to spend too much time worrying. This means that they find it difficult to relax and allow their bodies and minds rest. If you can reduce the amount of time you spend worrying, you can reduce your levels of anxiety.



Worry time is when you set aside around 20 minutes every day to focus on your worries.

When a worry pops into your head, write it down and forget about it until your 'worry time'. It is important to write it down so that you will know that you won't forget about it.

When your worry time arrives, you can work through each worry using the techniques in this booklet. Remember to time yourself so that you don't over run.



Here are some top tips for managing 'worry time':



- Stop when your 'worry time' is over. If you have any worries left over, just save them for the next day.
- Don't worry if you find it difficult to stop worrying; it will get easier with time and practise.
- When you sort out your worries before your 'worry time' is over then stop and congratulate yourself.
- Use relaxation techniques to help you de-stress after your 'worry time'. The booklet 'From Distress to De-stress' has lots of information about this.

Problem Solving

When people have lots of problems it can feel like there is too much to deal with. This can affect a person's level of anxiety. It is very easy to spend a lot of time worrying about a problem without finding a way to sort it out. This can make us feel worse and can affect our ability to sleep and think clearly.

It helps to work through a problem in a structured way. Once you have got a plan to deal with a problem you can try it out.



What is the problem? Identify a problem you want to tackle. You may need to break down a big problem into small, bite-sized manageable pieces to tackle one-by-one.



What could work? Come up with as many ideas as possible.



Work out what is good about each solution and then what is **bad** about each solution.



Choose one of your solutions – the one that seems to be the best. Look at the things that are good or bad about each solution to help you decide.



Make a step-by-step plan. Include what you are going to do and when you plan to do it. It is a good idea to try to think about anything that might get in the way of your plan. You can then think of a mini-plan to overcome any obstacles.



Review what happened and see how well it worked. If it hasn't, then you can go back to another solution and try that.

Looking After Yourself

You can look after yourself in many ways. The skill of 'looking after you' and paying attention to your needs is important.

Some people might feel guilty and view it as being selfish. However, taking care of yourself and being interested in yourself as well as others, is a good thing. Only by looking after yourself will you be ready to deal with the ups and downs that life may throw at you. You will also be more able to support others when you feel strong and well rested.



Eat Well: Your brain uses up more than 50% of the energy in the food you eat. That is why it is important to eat starchy food like rice, pasta, bread and potatoes. When you do not eat well, your brain cannot work properly. Eating your 5-a-day helps improve physical and mental health. It includes fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit and vegetables. It is also important to eat protein such as meat, fish, beans, tofu and quorn. Omega3 oils found in oily fish and dark green vegetables are also important for a healthy brain; as is drinking enough liquids each day. Read the booklet 'Food and Mood' for more information. It is available to download free from mhim.org.uk.



Vitamin D: There is very little Vitamin D in the food we eat. Our skin makes Vitamin D from sunlight. However, this only happens between the months of March and October. You only need to spend 20 minutes in the sun each day, if you have pale skin. The darker you are, the longer you will need to spend in the sun. Many breakfast cereals and all margarines (but not low fat spreads) have Vitamin D added to them. Just check out the label. You can also buy Vitamin D tablets to take once a day.



Get Active: This is a great stress reliever. It can make you feel fitter and more confident. Choose something that you enjoy and can fit into your lifestyle. Aim toward 30 minutes of activity at least five times a week. Walking, gardening and doing the housework are all examples of physical activity. Visit gettingmanchestermoving.org for information about what is going on in Manchester. The booklet 'Physical Activity and Mood' has even more tips about getting started. It is available to download free from mhim.org.uk.



Sleep Well: This lets the body and mind recuperate and rest. When you don't sleep well, your brain does not work properly. You can use relaxation and breathing techniques in bed to help you to fall asleep. Read the booklet 'Getting a good night's sleep' for more information. It is available to download free from mhim.org.uk.



Get a routine: Having a routine can help you ensure that you look after yourself every day. It can improve the quality of your sleep and life. When feeling low, people tend to be less active than normal. This might stop you from doing things that lift your mood. This can be a vicious cycle and make you feel even worse. To help make a start you could download a free activity schedule from mhim.org.uk.



Relax: This helps the body and mind recover and rest. You can relax in many ways. Some people read; others paint and draw; some people knit and others spend time with animals. Try to find a way that works for you. Breathing techniques can reduce the affect of stress on the body. Read the booklet 'From Distress to De-stress' for more information. It is available to download free from mhim.org.uk.



Connect: Build bonds with people. It can help you feel supported and closer to others. Friends and family can be an important source of support and companionship.



Give: This is about doing something nice for others. Helping someone else can make you feel good about yourself. It will make other people feel good too. It could be as simple as smiling at a stranger or holding a door open for someone. You could help a neighbour or friend or do random acts of kindness. It can feel great to volunteer at a local community group or charity. You could meet new people, learn new skills and gain valuable experience.



Keep Learning: Learn or rediscover skills. It builds confidence and esteem. You will feel more able to cope with life. There are a number of life skills courses available across Manchester. For more information, contact Self Help Services on 0161 226 3871. There are also free computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy courses online. These include:

- l1ttf.com – living life to the full website
- moodgym
- ecouch



Take Notice: Notice the world around you. It can put things in perspective and brighten your day. Often we can go around in autopilot and miss the little things that could improve our mood. Keep an eye out for rainbows, architecture and nature!



Crisis: Sometimes things can feel like they are too much to handle. If you feel like this, it is very important to get some help as soon as possible. Here is a list of organisations and services that can help.

Your GP

If you think you may be anxious, your GP is the best person to talk to in the first instance. Write down your doctor's name and number here:

Accident & Emergency

You can go to A&E if your mental health worsens to crisis point. Write in the address of your nearest A&E here:

The Samaritans

The helpline is available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.

Helpline: 08457 909090

Manchester: 0161 236 8000

Crisispoint

For help with crisis accommodation and personal support.

Daytime Tel: 0161 225 9500

If you are already using

Manchester Mental Health & Social Care Trust services:

Check your care plan for your crisis plan contact details.

MMHSCT Crisis Line: 0161 922 3801

Mon-Thurs 5pm - 9am Friday 5pm - Monday 9am & Bank Holidays

Anxiety UK Helpline

Monday – Friday 9.30 to 4.30

08444 775 774

It is important to remember that many people feel like this at times.

**There are people out there who can and want to help you.
Suicide is forever, your problems are not.**

Getting Help and Treatment

Self-Help

This booklet has focused on how what you do and think can affect how stressed and worried you feel. The methods in this booklet can help you start to take back control over your thoughts.

There are a number of self-help booklets and resources available from all local libraries in Manchester. They can be found in the 'Health Matters' section. Look for the apple logo.

Self Help/Support Groups

Many people find it useful to join a support group. Self Help Services also provide a range of support groups in Manchester.

Telephone: 0161 226 3871

E-mail: communityservices@selfhelpservices.org.uk

Your doctor or other health professional

If you are still struggling to deal with stress and worry, it might be worth talking to your GP or other health professional about how you feel. There are a range of options to get more help and support.

Primary Care Mental Health Team

You can refer yourself to the Primary Care Mental Health Team in your local area. They can offer support and treatment around issues such as depression, anxiety, obsessions and compulsions, phobias and post traumatic stress disorder. You will be able to talk about your difficulties and explore ways to overcome them.

North Team: 0161 231 0017

Central Team: 0161 861 2236

South Team: 0161 946 8260

African & Caribbean Primary Care Mental Health Service (ACMHS)

The ACMHS offers a range of services to people from an African or Caribbean heritage, regardless of ethnic background. You can refer yourself to the ACMHS for support with a range of issues including depression and anxiety.

Website: acmhs.co.uk

Tel: 0161 226 9562

Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP)

Self Help Services (SHS) manage the Manchester Psychological Wellbeing Service. They provide one-to-one support for people with common mental health problems such as mild anxiety and depression. A PWP will help you to see and understand your vicious cycle. They will then help you to learn and practise skills to help yourself.

You can refer yourself to this service by e-mail or phone:

E-mail: pws.manchester@selfhelpservices.org.uk

Tel: 0161 226 3871

Medication

Some people are given medication to treat their anxiety. This only happens for a short time; to get over specific situations. The medicine can be helpful, but it does not cure anxiety. For more information, talk to your doctor or, contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647.



Beat it

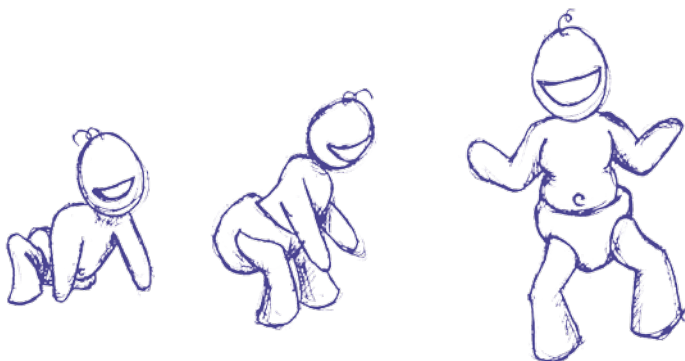
Practise, practise, practise...

Things are not going to change overnight. It can be a challenge to make changes to the way you have been doing things for so long. But, with practise it will become easier and easier. In the end, the changes will feel like second nature as you get used to them.

There is a lot of information in this booklet. It might be useful to read it more than once. Try each technique a few times and keep practising the ones that you find useful.

Do not expect too much too soon. It may take some time for you to change the way you think and feel. It is a bit like learning to walk as a toddler. We all fall over at first. You might even bang your head or graze your knee. Luckily, despite these setbacks, you kept going and eventually learnt to walk. It didn't happen overnight. It took time and practise. It is the same for overcoming anxiety. It is not going to happen overnight. But, it will be worth it in the end.

After a while, it is useful to go back and check your anxiety checklists. You will be able to see if there have been any changes.



Coping with setbacks

Everyone has setbacks. Life is like that! The trick is to find ways to cope with them. When they do occur, remember that it happens to everyone. It does not mean that you have failed, so it is important not to give yourself a hard time. If you do start to think things like 'I'm a failure', you can use the **Demand Evidence** section of this booklet to challenge your thoughts.

When you have a setback, try to remember that **you are not back to square one**. It can be easy to forget about all the progress you have already made. Try to use it as a learning experience. We often learn more from things when they don't go quite right compared to when they go smoothly. Take some time to reflect on what has happened. Try to understand why it has happened and what you can learn from it. You may be able to find a pattern to what is going on.

You can learn to recognise your **warning signs** that a setback is more likely. Warning signs might include:

- lots of things going on in your life
- changes in your mood: feeling low, angry, upset, wound up etc
- changes in your thinking: negative thinking; unhelpful thinking styles; giving yourself a hard time
- feeling overwhelmed
- becoming more irritable and argumentative
- changes in your body: feeling more tired, headaches, aching muscles
- changes in what you do: doing fewer enjoyable things, avoiding people and places; being less active.

Once you can recognise your warning signs, you can do something to deal with them so things don't get worse. You could even come up with your own survival guide with a plan to deal with each warning sign.

Finally – don't give up! Overcoming anxiety takes time and practise. It may take some time to notice an improvement. It is worth taking some time each month to look at the progress you have made.

It is important to realise that stress and anxiety are part of everyday life and as such cannot be got rid of totally. You are not going to get rid of it altogether, but by persevering, you will be able to manage the impact it has on your life.



Other sources of help

Books

Overcoming Anxiety, H Kennerley

Overcoming Low Self Esteem, M Fennell

Overcoming Panic, D Silove

Overcoming Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, D Veale and R Wilson

Overcoming Social Anxiety and Shyness, G Butler

Overcoming Anxiety: A 5 Areas Approach, C Williams

Mind over Mood, D Greenberger and C Padesky

Stress Free Living, T Powell

Teach yourself managing Stress, T Looker & O Gregson

How to stop Worrying, F Tallis

The Worry Cure: Stop Worrying and Start Living, R Leahy.

Help Lines

NHS Direct: 0845 4647

The helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It can provide medical advice and advise you on the best local service to offer the care you need.

National Debt Line: 0808 808 4000

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Help for anyone in debt or worried about falling into debt.

Websites

mhim.org.uk

Mental Health in Manchester website offers lots of information about mental health and wellbeing. It contains a range of free downloadable self-help resources and information about mental health services in Manchester.

cci.health.wa.gov.au

This website features free online self-help modules and resources.

ecouch.anu.edu.au

This is a free self-help interactive program with modules for depression, generalised anxiety & worry, social anxiety, relationship breakdown, and loss & grief.

getselfhelp.co.uk

This website offers free CBT self-help information, resources and including therapy worksheets.

littf.com

Living life to the full website offers a free CBT life skills course made up of modules that aims to improve wellbeing and mental health.

moodgym.anu.edu.au

This is a free self-help program to teach CBT skills to people vulnerable to depression and anxiety.

rcpsych.ac.uk

The online mental health resource from the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Useful Organisations

42nd Street

42nd Street works with young people (aged 13 – 25) living in Manchester, Salford and Trafford. They provide a range of support services to young people under stress.

Website: 42ndstreet.org.uk

Tel: 0161 832 0170

Anxiety UK

Anxiety UK works to relieve and support those living with anxiety disorders by providing information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services.

Website: anxietyuk.org.uk

Helpline: 08444 775 774

Manchester Mind

Manchester Mind offers a range of services including:

- Advice, information & Counselling services
- Young Adult Advice & Support Project (YASP)

Website: harp-project.org

Tel: 0161 226 9907

Self Help Services (SHS)

SHS offers a range of services including:

- Counselling & Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners
- Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Self Help Groups & a range of courses

Website: selfhelpservices.org.uk

Tel: 0161 226 3871

The Roby

The Roby offers a range of services. It specialises in services for people from South Asian cultures.

- Counselling in a range of community languages
- South Asian Women's group
- Parent and Toddlers group
- Evolve (Drop-In)

Website: theroby.org.uk

Tel: 0161 257 2653

