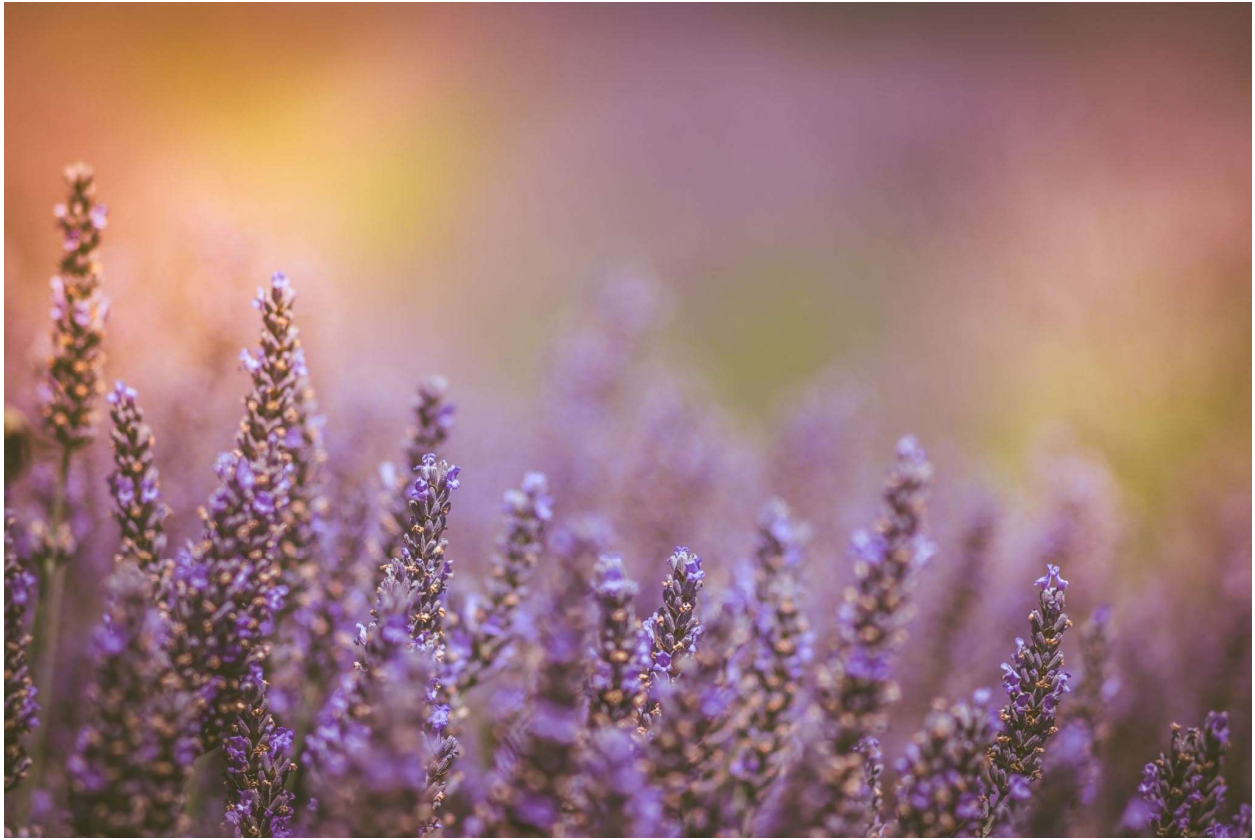


Anxiety Self-Help Workbook



**Counseling and Psychological Services
University of Arkansas
(479) 575-5276
health.uark.edu**

Table of Contents

Welcome & Frequently Asked Questions	Page 3
Lesson 1: Understanding Anxiety/Depression: The Mind-Body Connection	Page 4
Lesson 1: Stress versus Anxiety	Page 5
Lesson 1: Understand Anxiety Disorders	Page 6
Lesson 1: Stress Curve	Page 7
Lesson 1: Anxiety-Avoidance Roller Coaster	Page 8
Lesson 1: Threat System (Fight or Flight)	Page 9
Lesson 1: Sleep Hygiene	Page 11
Lesson 2: Automatic Thoughts & Unhelpful Cognitions	Page 13
Lesson 2: Deep Breathing and Relaxation	Page 14
Lesson 2: The CBT Model	Page 16
Lesson 2: Cross Sectional Formulation Worksheets (example/blank)	Page 17
Lesson 2: Common Anxiety Symptoms	Page 19
Lesson 2: Feelings Wheel	Page 20
Lesson 2: Automatic Thoughts	Page 21
Lesson 2: Homework	Page 23
Lesson 2: Short Relaxation Techniques	Page 24
Lesson 2: Extra Blank Cross Sectional Formulations	Page 25
Lesson 3: Automatic Thoughts & Unhelpful Cognitions Part II	Page 28
Lesson 3: Breath Counting Exercise	Page 29
Lesson 3: Unhelpful Thinking Styles	Page 30
Lesson 3: Identifying Triggers	Page 32
Lesson 3: Homework Assignments	Page 34
Lesson 3: Homework: Identifying Triggers	Page 35
Lesson 3: Cross Sectional Formulation (blank)	Page 37
Lesson 4: Exploring a Different Thinking Approach	Page 40
Lesson 4: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise	Page 41
Lesson 4: Alternative Response Formulation	Page 44
Lesson 4: Alternative Response Worksheet (example/blank)	Page 46
Lesson 4: If You're Having Trouble...	Page 48
Lesson 4: Homework: Alternative Response Worksheet (blank)	Page 50
Lesson 5: Self-Care & Time Management	Page 51
Lesson 5: Grounding Exercises	Page 52
Lesson 5: Self-Care	Page 54
Lesson 5: Pleasant Activities	Page 55
Lesson 5: Values Clarification	Page 56
Lesson 5: Core Values Assessment	Page 57
Lesson 5: Willingness & Action Plan	Page 58
Lesson 6: Relapse Prevention & Debriefing	Page 59
Lesson 6: Guided Imagery	Page 60
Lesson 6: Putting it all Together	Page 61
Lesson 6: Summary/Conclusion	Page 62
Lesson 6: My Plan for Managing Anxiety	Page 63
Appendix	Page 65
Online Resources & Apps	Page 66
Extra Cross Sectional Formulation (blank)	Page 67
Extra Alternative Response Worksheet (blank)	Page 70

Welcome!

Welcome to **Anxiety Toolbox**, a workbook intended to help increase your understanding and knowledge about anxiety. The goal of this workbook is to provide you with life-long tools you can use while facing anxiety-triggering situations. Remember, this intervention is not intended to “get rid of” your anxiety. While occasionally unpleasant, some anxiety can actually be a helpful and motivating emotion. Our hope is that these lessons provide you with a jumping board from which to integrate skills into your daily life in the service of reducing anxiety.

By the end of this course, you will have received a lot of information and at times it may feel overwhelming. Remember that like any skill (e.g., learning to ride a bike), the skills you will learn in **Anxiety Toolbox** take time and practice to master. At times, you may encounter obstacles and/or find it difficult to integrate these skills into your daily life. That’s okay, it’s how change works, and as with all change, it’s important to practice as much as you can, even after encountering setbacks.

Think of your practice of these skills as a form of “mental health hygiene.” At the outset, it may seem tedious and you may question why you need to practice these skills so often. Think of it like dental hygiene—you brush your teeth multiple times a day to prevent the buildup of plaque and ultimately to prevent cavities. Similar to brushing your teeth, daily practice prevents a buildup of anxiety and stress over time. The more you practice and use these skills as part of your daily routine, the less tedious they may seem because they simply become a regular part of daily life.

*****This workbook is an adaptation of CAPS Anxiety Workshop originally from CalPoly University’s wellbeing series*****

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What if I have an urgent need to see a counselor when completing the Anxiety Toolbox?

Simply let the front desk staff at CAPS know and they will facilitate you getting the help you need.

Why do I have to do homework?

The focus of this workbook is on building skills to cope with anxiety; in order to achieve that goal, regular practice is essential. The more you practice, the more you may find you get out of this workshop. The assignments are for you and only you, in the service of your own personal growth.

LESSON 1:

Understanding Anxiety/Depression: The Mind-Body Connection

Stress versus Anxiety

Let's start by talking about what stress and anxiety are. Often, we use the terms "stress" and "anxiety" interchangeably but they are different when it comes to diagnosable anxiety disorders. Clinical anxiety and everyday anxiety or stress often look similar and share the same arousal response. **Arousal** means being alert physically and mentally. So, they both trigger people to become more alert. They also share many of the same symptoms. **Anxiety ranges in severity** from everyday anxiety and stress to a diagnosable anxiety disorder. The chart below explains some of the differences between the two:

Everyday Anxiety (Stress)	Anxiety Disorder
In response to a known environmental factor	In response to an unknown source or in response to the experience of stress
Symptoms go away when the stressor goes away	Symptoms remain despite no identifiable stressor
Worry about living away from home for the first time, passing a class, a romantic breakup, or other important life events	Constant and unsubstantiated worry that causes significant distress and interferes with your daily life
Embarrassment or self-consciousness in an uncomfortable or awkward social situation; feeling nervous about meeting new people	Avoidance of social situations due to fear of being judged, embarrassed, or humiliated
Feeling nervous or sweating before a big test, class presentation, stage performance, or other significant event	Panic attacks that seem out of the blue and preoccupation with the fear of having another one
Realistic fear of a dangerous object, place, or situation (e.g. fear of poisonous snakes)	Irrational fear or avoidance of an object, place, or situation that poses little or no threat of danger (e.g. fear of elevators)
Making sure that you are healthy and living in a safe environment	Performing uncontrollable repetitive actions, such as excessive cleaning, checking, touching or arranging

Adapted from: <http://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety>

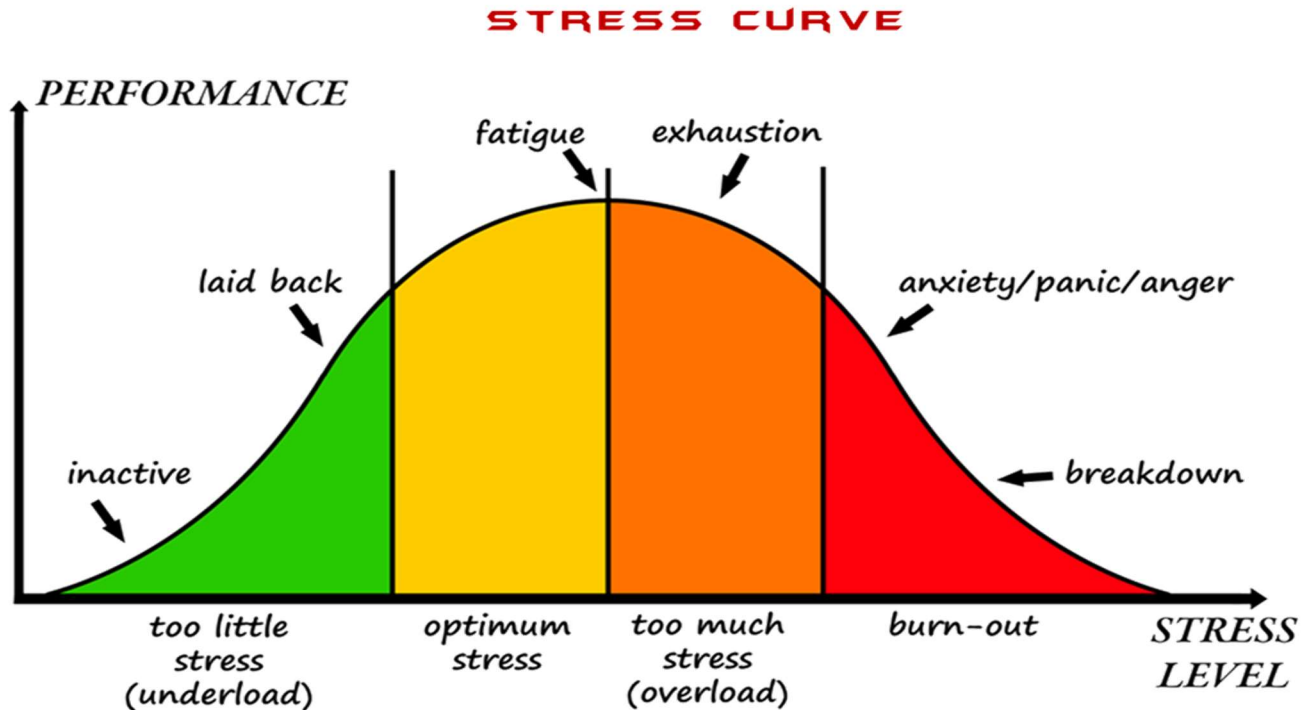
Understanding Anxiety Disorders

While anxiety is a normal and adaptive experience for everyone, anxiety disorders are characterized by significant distress or impairment in social, academic/occupational, or other important areas of functioning (e.g., your general ability to function in life).

Some of the most common anxiety disorders include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Generalized Anxiety Disorder: | Chronic and unrealistic worry that feels difficult to control about everyday things (i.e., things that do not worry most people) |
| Social Anxiety Disorder: | Chronic worry solely related to social situations |
| Panic Disorder: | Characterized by episodes of “panic” that include things like: adrenaline surge, fear of losing control, chest pain, racing heart, shortness of breath, dizziness |
| Phobias: | Specific fears that are excessive in nature and often lead to avoiding that which is feared (e.g., public speaking, heights, tunnels, etc.) |
| Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: | Excessive rumination (thinking) with repetitive behaviors to reduce anxiety |

The anxiety-reducing strategies in this workbook are designed to help with symptoms of everyday stress and anxiety disorders, but knowing the differences between them can be helpful in identifying the cause of anxiety and working to decrease it.



Yerkes Dodson Theory

The visual of the Yerkes-Dodson model of arousal and performance above shows how stress, or **everyday anxiety**, can be a **motivator** and how **high levels of anxiety** can be a **hindrance to performance**.

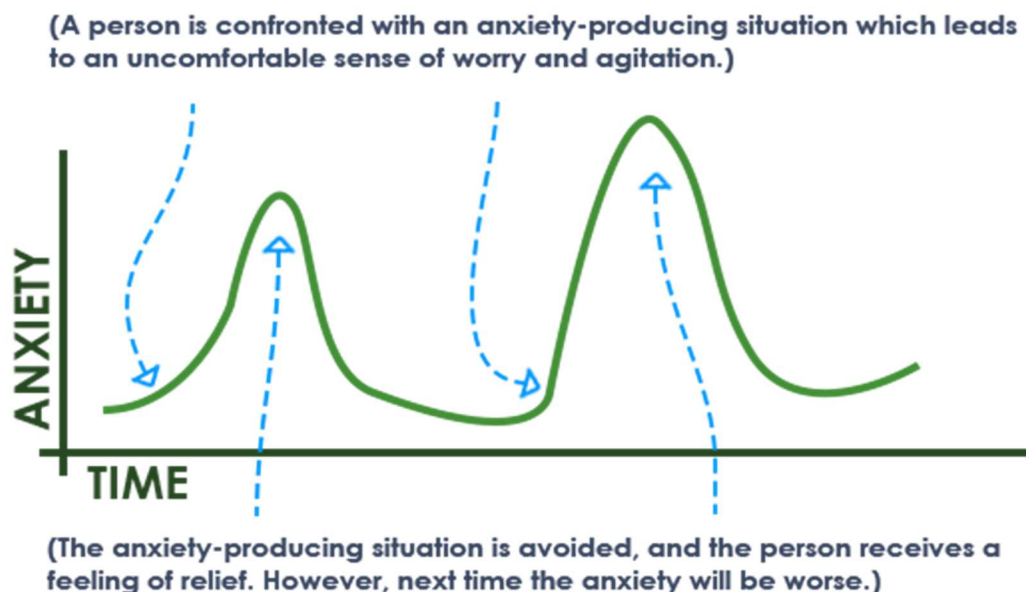
The idea here is that someone who has no stress or anxiety (aka no arousal) has little motivation to perform and keep up with responsibilities. Whereas someone with too much anxiety or arousal may attempt to avoid the situation or perform poorly due to their symptoms. However, with a **moderate level of arousal from stress or anxiety**, a person is likely to be motivated to prepare, concentrate, or do whatever is necessary for the situation without becoming debilitated or avoidant.

For example, some stress before a test may motivate and energize you to study. However, with minimal or no stress, you may say “why bother studying?” and decide to wing it. With too much anxiety you may feel overwhelmed, hopeless and avoid studying at all. So, a healthy amount of stress can actually help us perform, but it is important to recognize when the stress becomes unhelpful and unhealthy.

Anxiety-Avoidance Roller Coaster

Avoidance is a common response to anxiety. Often, when people have an anxiety-provoking situation, they experience numerous uncomfortable physical, emotional and cognitive symptoms. To help avoid the uncomfortable experience of anxiety, people avoid the anxiety-provoking situation completely. For example, some people who download this workbook avoid the anxiety triggered by not completing it at all.

Take a look at the graph below. As you can see, the avoidance initially brings a sense of relief. However, every time we avoid an anxiety-producing situation, our anxiety is reinforced. The brain sees it like this: "When I avoid this situation, I feel better. I should try to avoid it next time too." The avoidance-anxiety roller coaster repeats. But the short term relief of **avoidance and escape comes at a high cost**. Avoidance and escape contribute to the persistence of anxiety and reduces a person's level of daily functioning. This is why **exposure**, or doing things that you usually avoid because of anxiety, is beneficial. Exposing yourself to the anxiety-provoking situation helps you to see the situations more clearly and increases anxiety tolerance.



Adapted from- <http://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/cbt-for-anxiety>

Fight/Flight/Freeze Response

So, how can we increase exposure and get off the anxiety-avoidance roller coaster? First, we need to understand what's going on in your body when you experience stress or anxiety. A big part of anxiety has to do with our physiological responses to stressors. Some of you may have heard of the fight, flight or freeze response. That's what we are talking about here. Essentially, the most primitive part of our brain (our **amygdala**) has an **evolutionary basis in protecting us from danger**.

Our amygdala is our body's anxiety switch. When we as early humans were living in the wilderness and needed protection from danger such as animals and/or other predators, this part of our brain adapted and switched on to help us to either **fight** the predator or **flee** from the situation. Fighting or fleeing (aka avoidance) was our brain's adaptive response to danger.

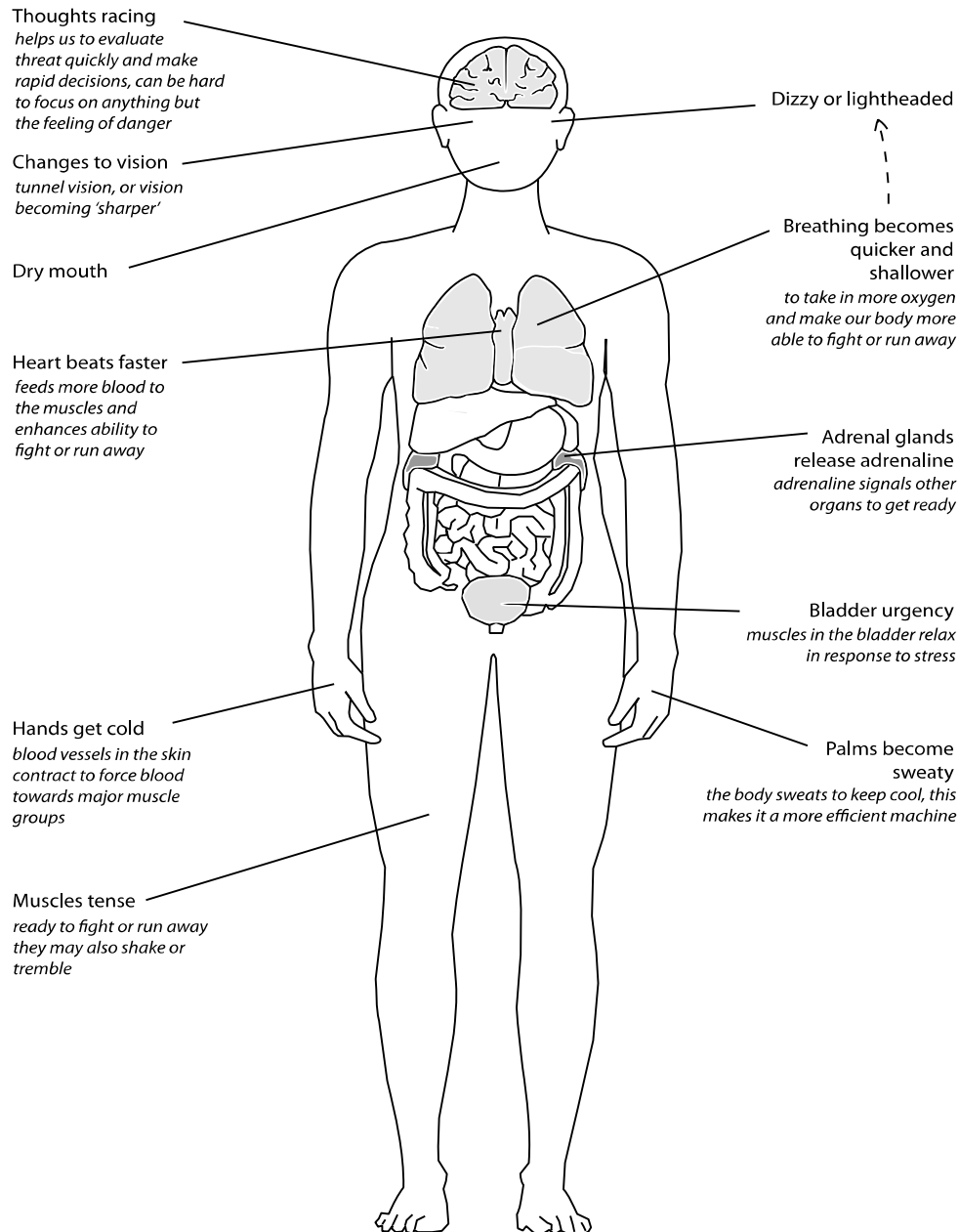
Researchers later acknowledged that in addition to fighting or fleeing, we may also respond by **freezing** when we perceive danger. It's not as commonly discussed, but it's also an adaptive response. The freeze response is like an automatic shut down in functioning, like a deer in headlights. These fight, flight, or freeze responses are triggered by our amygdala. These responses saved us from danger as early humans and they still save us from danger today. So, they can be very helpful and adaptive when it comes to life-threatening situations.

But typically, the threats we face today that trigger the physiological responses are not life threatening, but our brains react like they did when we were early humans dealing with life-threatening situations. The fight, flight or freeze system is mis-triggered because our brains are not distinguishing between life threatening and non-life threatening stressors. It's like a false alarm that is constantly going off. The amygdala learns that this level of arousal and anxiety is the new norm and the amygdala adapts and adopts this new elevated level of anxiety. So, the fight, flight or freeze response triggered by the amygdala contributes to physiological symptoms of anxiety—which may be why you feel anxious all the time.

Take a look at the symptoms listed in the graphic below. Put a check mark next to the ones you have experienced:

Threat System (Fight or Flight)

The 'fight or flight' response gets the body ready to fight or run away. Once a threat is detected your body responds automatically. All of the changes happen for good reasons, but may be experienced as uncomfortable when they happen in 'safe' situations.



Sleep Hygiene

Let's talk about sleep. Good sleep, along with physical activity and attending to your personal nutritional needs, are the foundation of basic physical and mental health. Without this foundation, you may find you're more vulnerable to anxiety symptoms. The research shows that while you sleep, your brain is hard at work forming the pathways necessary for learning and consolidating the information you've taken in that day. Sleep deprivation will impact your mood, energy, memory, grades, ability to focus and your ability to concentrate in class and on homework.

Research shows that you **need 7 to 8 hours of sleep consistently EVERY night** to be well-rested and perform optimally. As we all may know, in college, it's common for people to stay up late, pull all-nighters, "catch up" on sleep later, take naps, etc. HOWEVER, anything less than 7 to 8 hours a night consistently, will impact your functioning. Period. For example, if you've ever pulled an all-nighter and then didn't do so great on that test the next day and were wondering why, lack of sleep may have contributed. In addition to difficulty concentrating, chronic sleep debt can lead to physical health problems.

How do you improve sleep then? **'Sleep hygiene'** is the term used to describe good sleep habits. Considerable research has gone into developing a set of guidelines and tips which are designed to enhance good sleeping, and there is much evidence to suggest that these strategies can provide long-term solutions to sleep difficulties.

On the next page, you'll find the **Sleep Hygiene** worksheet that details ways to improve your sleep hygiene.

Homework

Choose at least 1 sleep hygiene tip to implement into your routine this week!

Tips to Improve Sleep Hygiene:

1. **Get regular.** Go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off!
2. **Get up & try again.** Go to sleep only when tired. If you haven't been able to fall asleep after 30 minutes, get up and do something calming (not stimulating) until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again.
3. **Avoid caffeine & nicotine.** Avoid consuming any caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, chocolate) or nicotine (cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These act as stimulants and interfere with falling asleep.
4. **Avoid alcohol.** Avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before bed because it interrupts the quality of sleep.
5. **Bed is for sleeping.** Do not use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex, so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep.
6. **Electronics Curfew.** Don't use back-lit electronics 60 minutes prior to bed, as the artificial light prevents hormones and neurons that promote sleep.
7. **The right space.** Make your bed and bedroom quiet and comfortable for sleeping. An eye mask and earplugs may help block out light and noise.
8. **No naps.** Avoid taking naps during the day. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm.
9. **Sleep rituals.** Develop rituals to remind your body that it is time to sleep, like relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed.
10. **No clock-watching.** Checking the clock during the night can wake you up and reinforces negative thoughts such as "Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep."
11. **Keep daytime routine the same.** Even if you have a bad night sleep it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.



Adapted from <http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au>

LESSON 2:

Automatic Thoughts & Unhelpful Cognitions

Deep Breathing and Relaxation

Let's learn a new skill for our anxiety toolbox. One of the most effective coping strategies you can use for anxiety symptoms (particularly the physical ones) is to use deep breathing and relaxation techniques.

Remember the **fight, flight, or freeze** response? This response activates your **sympathetic nervous system**. It sends oxygen to your arms and legs so that you are prepared to fight or flee. However, less oxygen is sent to our thinking brain in our prefrontal cortex which makes it difficult to think clearly. **Deep breathing** and relaxation activate the other part of your nervous system, the **parasympathetic nervous system**, which sends a signal to your brain to tell the anxious part that you're safe and don't need to use the fight, flight, or freeze response. Deep breathing gets more oxygen to the thinking brain. Also, by addressing the physical, fight, flight and freeze symptoms directly, you are freeing up mental energy to address other symptoms.

Before we practice the deep breathing, take a moment to check in on your anxiety level. This is like taking a **thermometer reading of anxiety**. Rate your anxiety on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 being very low to non-existent and 10 being the most severe anxiety you've ever experienced. Please jot down what your number is right now. Thermometer Reading:_____

Okay. So, let's learn this new skill of **deep breathing**.

Place one hand on our stomach and one on our chest. We want to feel the hand on our stomach move in and out more than the hand on our chest. We will take a deep breath in through our nose. As we inhale we count in our mind 1...2...3...4 and we imagine using the air we breathe in to push against our hand on our stomach. Hold for a count of 4. Then we exhale through our mouth like we are blowing out a candle. Exhale for a count of 1...2...3...4 and pause for a count of 4 before starting again.

Take a minute to **practice on your own**:

Breathing in for a count of 4, holding for a count of 4 and breathing out for a count of 4.

And again: Breathing in for a count of 4, holding for a count of 4 and breathing out for a count of 4.

Okay. Now, let's **take a new thermometer reading**. Please rate your current level of anxiety on the scale from 1 (very low to none) to 10 (most severe). Did you notice a shift in your numbers? Thermometer Reading:_____

We encourage you to keep practicing this simple yet powerful tool. This is something you can continue to practice anywhere since it is quiet and we always need to breathe.

The CBT Model

As we talk about anxiety, we will be using a specific model called “Cognitive Behavioral Therapy” or CBT. This model is evidence based in treating anxiety. The **CBT model focuses on interactions between symptoms** in 3 areas: thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When we talk about anxiety, we add physiological/physical sensations to this model because, as we just discussed, physical sensations are a major part of the anxiety experience. So, in these next lessons, we’ll focus on 4 symptom clusters: physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive responses.

On the next page, **you will find a visual of the model and an example**. This diagram illustrates how each of these symptom categories interact with and impact the others. This CBT model is a fundamental part of this anxiety workbook and we will frequently refer to this diagram, which is called a cross sectional formulation, throughout the lessons. At the top of the page, you fill in a situation, something that happened or an occasion during which you felt anxious. **Before completing your own** personal cross sectional formulation, it is important to **acknowledge** that for some, this activity (thinking about and writing down our anxiety symptoms) may increase our current anxiety. Even thinking about thinking about **this activity may increase our anxiety**. This is totally normal, especially **if we are accustomed to avoiding** thinking about it. Just know that as we spend time exploring our anxiety in a constructive manner, the intensity of the anxious feelings will most likely begin to decrease. And at the same time, we will be practicing our new tools to manage the anxiety.

Looking at the blank diagram, please take a minute to think about a situation where you felt anxious, and jot down the corresponding symptoms of anxiety you personally experienced. If you’re having trouble thinking of symptoms, **see examples of symptoms & a feelings wheel on the pages after the CBT diagrams**.

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?*)

A student invited me to a party in my residence hall, but I didn't know her very well and felt anxious about going.

Physical (*When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?*)

Heart racing, tight chest, shallow breathing, hot

Emotional (*What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?*)

Scared, ashamed,
Lonely, agitated, nervous

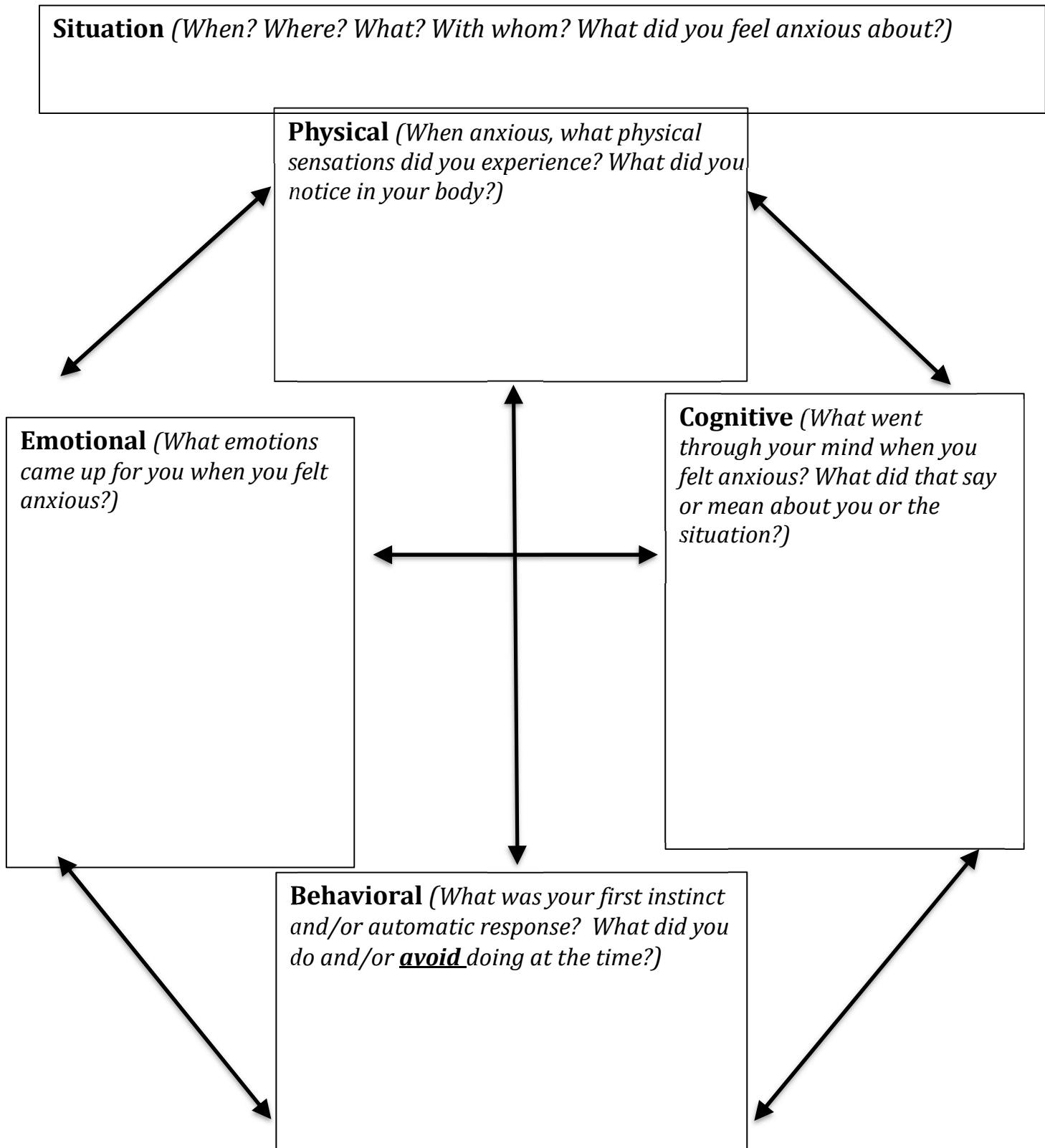
Cognitive (*What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?*)

I won't know anyone at the party and will feel awkward. No one will like me because I'm so socially awkward. I won't have fun. But if I say no, this person won't like me and I wouldn't make friends.

Behavioral (*What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?*)

My first instinct was to say no. I avoided saying no but telling her that I would think about it. I never got back to her. I didn't go to the party.

Cross Sectional Formulation



Common Anxiety Symptoms

Physical Symptoms

- Increased heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain or pressure
- Choking sensation
- Dizziness, lightheadedness
- Sweating, hot flashes, chills
- Nausea, upset stomach, diarrhea
- Trembling, shaking
- Weakness, unsteadiness, faintness
- Tense muscles, rigidity
- Dry mouth
- Other: _____

Behavioral Symptoms

- **Avoidance** of threat cues or situations
- **Escape**, flight
- Pursuit of safety, reassurance
- Restlessness, agitation, pacing
- Hyperventilation
- Freezing, motionlessness
- Difficulty speaking
- Other: _____

Cognitive Symptoms

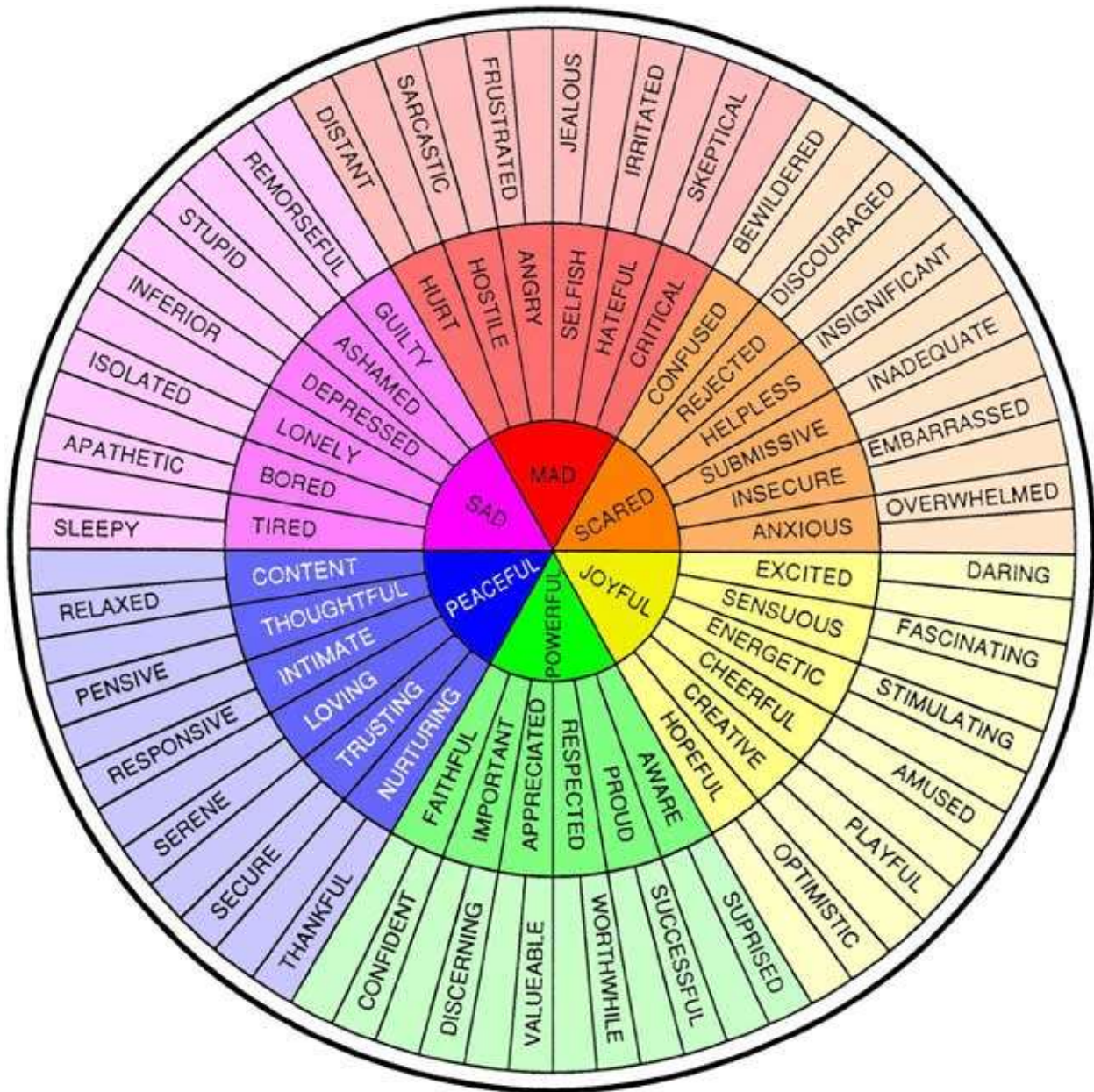
- Fear of losing control, being unable to cope
- Fear of physical injury or death
- Fear of “going crazy”
- Fear of negative evaluations by others
- Frightening thoughts, images, or memories
- Perceptions of unreality or detachment
- Poor concentration, confusion, distractibility
- Narrowing of attention, hypervigilance for threat
- Poor memory
- Difficulty in reasoning, loss of objectivity
- Other: _____

Emotional Symptoms

- Feeling nervous, tense, wound up
- Feeling frightened, fearful, terrified
- Being edgy, jumpy, jittery
- Being impatient, frustrated
- Other: _____

Adapted from *The Anxiety and Worry Workbook* by Clark and Beck

Feelings Wheel



Automatic Thoughts

Now that we have looked at the interactions between thoughts, emotions, and feelings, let's focus on thoughts. Our **thoughts can be conscious, intentional** and/or purposeful, like when you are purposefully working on a homework assignment and thinking about the content. Or our **thoughts can be automatic**, like a reflex.

Automatic thoughts are the thoughts and/or images that automatically pop into our heads. We don't choose for them to happen, they just do.

For example, you may be purposefully working on your homework when the automatic thought pops up that you suddenly need to clean your room or text a friend or call your mom back. These automatic thoughts can be helpful or unhelpful.

For example, if you're working on that homework assignment and you have the thought "I need to go to the bathroom," that's helpful. But if the automatic thoughts distract you from what you are trying to accomplish and you can't refocus on your homework, it is not so helpful. Sometimes, automatic thoughts can impact the way we feel or further think about things. We're going to hone in on these automatic thoughts, particularly the unhelpful ones, because this is where we can start to see some difficulties when it comes to anxiety.

Let's talk about some examples of automatic thoughts and feelings that might go with them. Imagine you notice that your heart rate has accelerated. You may have the thought, "My heart is racing, I must be having a panic attack" or you may have the thought "My heart is racing, I'm so excited!" Can you see how the same **internal experience** or stimulus (i.e., heart racing) can provoke different thoughts?

What **feelings** do you think you would have if you had the thought "My heart is racing, I must be having a panic attack?"

Okay, now what **feelings** do you think you would have if you had the thought "My heart is racing, I'm so excited!"

Can you see how different thoughts may provoke different feelings?

Here's another example, this time, the thoughts are in response to an **external stimulus**. Imagine you're walking on campus and someone doesn't acknowledge you when you say "hi." You have the thought "they must not like me" or you have the thought "maybe they didn't hear me."

Can you see how having these two different thoughts might elicit a different emotional response? You may feel hurt if you think they don't like you, or you might brush it off if you think they didn't hear you.

Lesson 2: Homework Assignment

- Between now and when you begin the next lesson **complete one cross sectional formulation** (included after the relaxation techniques worksheet) to practice exposure. If you feel up to it, choose an activity that you typically avoid. Otherwise, use a situation you experience over the next week or something that happens to you often. Try to complete the worksheet as soon as possible after the event. If you're unable to do so, jot down some notes on your phone to review later to prompt yourself to remember what happened.
- **Practice a deep breathing strategy** from below or one of the "short relaxation" techniques on the list included on the next page.

Belly (or Diaphragmatic) Breathing

You can do this exercise in any position, but it is helpful to do this exercise while lying down when first learning belly breathing.

1. Lie comfortably on your back, with a pillow under your head, your knees bent and your back flat. You can stretch your legs out if that's more comfortable.
2. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your upper chest.
3. Inhale slowly and expand your belly as you breathe so that your lower hand moves with your belly. The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible.
4. Slowly exhale, focusing on the movement of your belly and lower hand as it returns to its original position.
5. Repeat steps 3 & 4 for several minutes, always focusing on the movement of the belly as you breathe. If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breathing.

Breath-Counting Exercise

This exercise focuses on the use of counting with the rhythm of the breath. Start with a short period of time and gradually increase the time. Set a timer so that you do not have to worry about when to stop.

1. Find a comfortable position. Take several deep breaths and settle into yourself. You may either close your eyes or keep them open, depending on your own comfort. If you keep them open, fix them on an object or a spot on the floor about four feet in front of you. Your eyes may be either focused or unfocused.
2. Take deep, comfortable breaths. Notice your inhalation. The pause between inhaling and exhaling, your exhalation, and the pause before starting again.
3. As you inhale, count, "one..." As you exhale, count, "two..." Inhale, "three..." Exhale, "four..." Continue until you reach 10 then start over.
4. If you lose count, simply begin with "one" on your next inhalation.
5. If you notice your mind has wandered, gently notice this, and return your focus back to counting your breath

Short Relaxation Techniques: When you only have a few minutes	
Correct Breathing	Learn to always breathe using the diaphragm. Let the breath reach the bottom of the lungs, and let the chest and shoulders relax. High, shallow chest breathing is stressful and gives messages of stress to the brain.
Three-Part Breathing	Take a deep breath and imagine the lungs divided into three parts. Visualize the lowest part of the lungs filling with air; the chest should remain relatively still. Imagine the middle part of the lungs filling; visualize the rib cage expanding. Visualize the upper part filling with air as your shoulders rise slight and over backward. Exhale fully and completely; drop your shoulders, feel your rib cage contract, and force every last bit of air from the bottom of the lungs. Repeat.
Stretching	Gently roll your head and shoulders many times a day. Also, gently stretch other areas of the body that may need it.
Tense-Relax Muscles	Tighten the muscles you want to relax and feel the tension. Let the muscles become loose and limp and feel the relaxation.
Body Scan	With your mind, briefly scan every muscle in your body from your toes to your head. Release any tension with a relaxing breath. Correct your posture and relax all the muscles you are not using.
Jaw Drop	Be aware of any tightness in your jaw. Allow your jaw to loosen by separating your teeth.
Heaviness and Warmth in Hands & Arms	Relax your body and feel heaviness in your arms and hands. Imagine a warmth flowing through them. Imagine and experiences your shoulders, arms, and hands becoming heavy, relaxed, and warm.
Mind-Quieting Meditation	Begin by focusing on your breathing. Use a special phrase that helps you focus on relaxation, and quiet your mind.
Attitudes & Perceptions	Pay attention to your perceptions and attitudes. Allow yourself to put a stress-reducing “frame” around the stressor. Remember, stress affects the body based on your perceptions of the outside world.

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Physical *(When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)*

Emotional *(What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?)*

Cognitive *(What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)*

Behavioral *(What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?)*

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Physical *(When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)*

Emotional *(What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?)*

Cognitive *(What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)*

Behavioral *(What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?)*

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Physical *(When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)*

Emotional *(What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?)*

Cognitive *(What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)*

Behavioral *(What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?)*

LESSON 3:

Automatic Thoughts & Unhelpful Cognitions Part II

Lesson 3:

Breath-Counting Exercise

Let begin Lesson 3 with a relaxation strategy. This exercise focuses on the use of counting with the rhythm of the breath. Start with a short period of time and gradually increase the time. Set a timer so that you do not have to worry about when to stop.

6. Find a comfortable position. Take several deep breaths and settle into yourself. You may either close your eyes or keep them open, depending on your own comfort. If you keep them open, fix them on an object or a spot on the floor about four feet in front of you. Your eyes may be either focused or unfocused.
7. Take deep, comfortable breaths. Notice your inhalation. The pause between inhaling and exhaling, your exhalation, and the pause before starting again.
8. As you inhale, count, “one...” As you exhale, count, “two...” Inhale, “three...” Exhale, “four...” Continue until you reach 10 then start over.
9. If you lose count, simply begin with “one” on your next inhalation.
10. If you notice your mind has wandered, gently notice this, and return your focus back to counting your breath.
11. If you notice any body sensations catching your attention, focus on that sensation until it fades. Then return your attention back to counting your breaths.

This is a great exercise to practice everyday, especially when you are not feeling anxious. That way, it becomes easier for you to remember to use the strategy and for it to work in calming you down when you are experiencing anxiety.

Unhelpful Cognitions

When we think about automatic thoughts, we can often place them into a number of common categories of styles of thinking that everyone engages in. When I say everyone, I mean everyone, not just people who struggle with anxiety. These ways of thinking are so common that we have names for them.

One of the most commonly used styles of thinking is what we call **“catastrophizing.”** This is when your thoughts snowball. So, for example, you start with the thought, “I’m going to fail this test”, which leads to the thought, “If I fail the test, I’ll fail the class”, and then, “I’ll fail out of U of A and never graduate,” and then, “I’ll never get a good job”, and finally, “I’ll be homeless and unable to support myself.” Notice how that went downhill quickly.

So that was just one example of many. Go ahead review the **Unhelpful Thinking Styles** worksheet on the following page. As you read through these styles of thinking, start to identify in some way (star, circle, or highlight, whatever works for you) the ones you tend to use.

Let’s practice identifying unhelpful thinking patterns by returning to the **sample party situation on page 17**. What do you think are some of the unhelpful thinking styles this person may have had? Go ahead and jot the thoughts down near the cognitive box.

Bring it back to the Cross Sectional Formulation

Now turn back to your homework assignment again. Do any of the thoughts you wrote down in the cognitive box of your homework, fit into any of these unhelpful thinking categories? Go ahead and write the unhelpful thinking style near the corresponding thought in the cognitive box on your homework.

These unhelpful thinking patterns can trigger other anxiety symptoms. And as you may have noticed, we come back a lot to the interactions between thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and physical symptoms, and talk about how they each impact one another. Each of these types of symptoms (unhelpful thoughts included) can be triggers for other symptoms.

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

All or nothing thinking

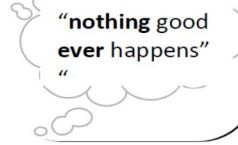


Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed

Either I do it right or not at all

Over-generalizing



Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

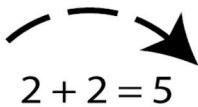
Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count

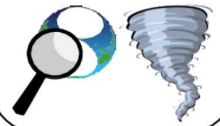
Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading**
(imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling**
(predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophizing) & minimization



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labeling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

*I'm a loser
I'm completely useless
They're such an idiot*

Personalization

"this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

Identifying Triggers for Automatic Thoughts

So let's talk about common triggers. Triggers can be external events (e.g., a test) or internal stimuli (e.g., lightheadedness or racing heart beat) that lead to anxiety symptoms.

Having one symptom can be a trigger for other symptoms. For example, I just said light-headedness, which is a symptom of anxiety (like was explained in the last lesson). But lightheadedness can also be a trigger for other symptoms like thought or behavior symptoms.

Understanding your triggers is important because it helps you know yourself better. Understanding your triggers can also help you know when to use your toolbox before it feels overwhelming.

Take a look at the **Identifying Triggers Worksheet** on the following page. Notice that there are several domains listed at the top of the page to help prompt you. We are going to look at this worksheet, learn about common triggers and **identify some of our own triggers**. Keep in mind that your triggers may or may not fit in these categories. Some examples of triggers might include actual events (e.g., being invited to a party), physical sensations (e.g., racing heart beat), or thoughts (e.g., worrying about the health and/or safety of others).

Take some time to complete this worksheet, identifying triggers you have noticed yourself experiencing.

Identifying Triggers Worksheet

While at times it may be difficult to identify a trigger, understanding your triggers for anxiety is an important step in helping you know when to implement and/or emphasize practice of the coping strategies you will learn in Anxiety Toolbox. Triggers can be external events (e.g., a test) or internal stimuli (e.g., a physical sensation or emotion) that led to your experience of anxiety (i.e., the emotional, physical, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms previously discussed during this workshop). Remember that sometimes the symptoms themselves can be a trigger that starts the cycle of anxiety.

The following are some typical categories in which triggers might appear with examples:

Responses to Internal Stimuli:

- **Emotions:** e.g., feeling down, fear or worry
- **Mental Images:** e.g., replaying interpersonal interactions or performance experience
- **Physical State:** e.g., racing heartbeat, lightheadedness, tightness in chest
- **Thoughts:** e.g., “I might fail this test”, “That person must not like me”, “If someone talks to me in class, I won’t be able to handle it.”

Responses to External Stimuli:

- **Presence of Others:** e.g., attending a social event, meeting with a professor, spending time with roommates, family interactions
- **Physical Setting:** e.g., a classroom, open areas on campus, inside a car
- **Social Pressure:** e.g., feeling pressured to make friends, feeling pressured to perform well in school (in comparison to your peers)
- **Activities:** e.g., a sports event, a party, going home for the weekend

List some triggers you experience related to your anxiety:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Lesson 3: Homework Assignment

- Complete Identifying Triggers Worksheet (provided on the next page of your workbook)
- Complete at least 1 Simple Cross Sectional Formulation worksheet between now and beginning the next lesson (multiple blank copies provided starting on **page 37**)

Homework: Identifying Triggers

Pay attention to any triggers for anxiety that you may experience over the next week. Write them down in the following categories. You may have triggers in all of the categories or you may notice triggers in only one or two categories. (Use the “other” category for triggers you feel don’t fit in the options listed.)

Emotions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Mental Images:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Physical States:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Thoughts:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Presence of Others:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Physical Setting:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Social Pressure:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Physical *(When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)*

Emotional *(What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?)*

Cognitive *(What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)*

Behavioral *(What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?)*

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

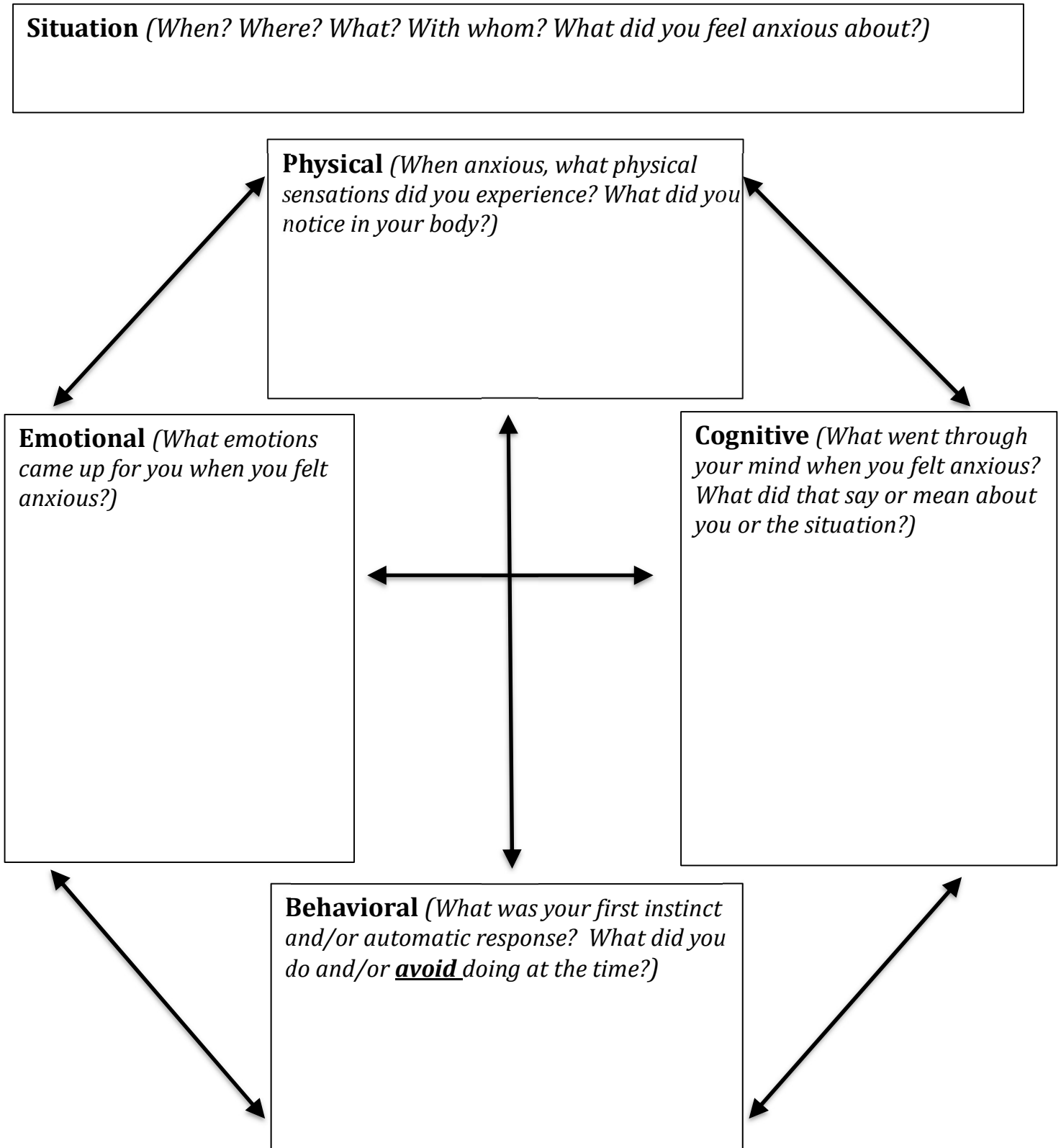
Physical *(When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)*

Emotional *(What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?)*

Cognitive *(What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)*

Behavioral *(What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?)*

Cross Sectional Formulation



LESSON 4:

Exploring a Different Thinking Approach

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise

We're going to start this lesson with another relaxation exercise called progressive muscle relaxation or PMR. But before we do this, let's take our current anxiety thermometer reading. 1-10 where are you right now? Go ahead and jot that down. Thermometer Reading:_____

Back to PMR. As a reminder, PMR is another direct way to address the fight/flight/freeze symptoms. And remember that by addressing the physical symptoms directly you are freeing up mental energy to address other symptoms.

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that reduces stress and anxiety in your body by having you slowly tense and then relax each muscle. The theory behind this exercise is that you cannot have the feeling of relaxation and warm well-being in your body and at the same time experience anxiety symptoms. With practice, you will become more aware of when you are experiencing tension and you will have the skills to help you relax.

Okay, during this exercise each muscle should be tensed, but not to the point of strain. Pay special attention to the feeling of tension in each muscle and the feeling of relaxation as you release the tension. If you have any injuries or pain, you can skip the affected areas. Let's begin.

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Shut your eyes if you're comfortable doing so; if not, soften your gaze on a fixed point.

Start by taking a deep breath and noticing the feeling of air filling your lungs. Hold your breath for a few seconds. One.....two....three... Release the breath slowly and let the tension leave your body.

Now, take another deep breath and hold it. One.....two....three.... Slowly release the air.

Even slower now, take another breath in. Fill your lungs and hold the breath. One.....two....three. Slowly release the breath and imagine the feeling of tension leaving your body with each breath out.

We are going to begin progressively tensing and releasing our muscles. Let's start by clenching our fists, tighter and tighter. Hold. Study the tension in your fists, wrists and forearms as you hold the clenched fist. *(5 second pause)*. Now let go and relax your hands. Feel the looseness in your hands and notice the contrast between the tension and the feeling of relaxation. *(5 second pause)*

Now bend your elbows and tense your biceps. Tense them as hard as you can and observe the feeling of tautness. Hold. *(5 second pause)*. Okay, relax. Straighten out your arms. Notice the feeling of relaxation in your hands, arms, and shoulders. Notice how your arms feel limp and at ease. *(5 second pause)*

Okay, let's turn our attention to our head. Wrinkle your forehead as tight as you can. Hold. *(5 second pause)* Now relax and smooth it out. *(5 second pause)*

Now close your eyes, squint them tighter. Feel the tension. *(5 second pause)*. Now, relax your eyes. Let them remain closed gently and comfortably. *(5 second pause)*

Okay, still focusing on our heads, roll your head to the right and feel the changing locus of stress, roll it to the left. *(5 second pause)*

Straighten your head and bring it forward. Press your chin against your chest. Feel the tension in your throat, the back of your neck. Hold. *(5 second pause)* Relax, allowing your head to return to a comfortable position. Let the relaxation deepen. *(5 second pause)*

Next, tense the muscles in your back by bringing your shoulders together behind you. Hold them tightly. Tense them as hard as you can without straining and keep holding *(5 second pause)*. Now let go. Release the tension from your back. Feel the tension slowly leaving your body, and the new feeling

of relaxation. Notice how different your body feels when you allow it to relax. *(5 second pause)*

Now shrug your shoulders up to your ears and hold. *(5 second pause)* Relax your shoulders. Drop them back and feel the relaxation spreading through your neck, throat and shoulders. Give your body a chance to relax. Feel the comfort and the heaviness. *(5 second pause)*

Next, breathe in and fill your lungs completely. Hold your breath. Notice the tension. *(5 second pause)* Now exhale. Let the air hiss out and let your chest become loose. Continue relaxing, letting your breath come freely and gently. *(5 second pause)*

Now tighten your buttocks and thighs. Squeeze your thighs as hard as you can and hold. *(5 second pause)*. Release. Feel the difference as you let go. *(5 second pause)*

Now let's move our attention to the calves and feet. Press your toes downward, making your calves tense. Study the tension. *(5 second pause)*. Relax. *(5 second pause)*.

Now bend your toes towards your face, creating tension in your shins. *(5 second pause)*. Relax again. *(5 second pause)*.

Okay. Finally, tense your entire body. Tense your feet, legs, stomach, chest, arms, head, and neck. Tense hard, without straining. Hold the tension. *(5 second pause)*. Relax. Feel the looseness and heaviness throughout your body as the relaxation deepens. Let go more and more. Experience the relaxation deepening. Pay attention to the feeling of relaxation, and how different it is from the feeling of tension *(Wait 10 seconds)*.

Begin to wake your body up by slowly moving your muscles. Adjust your arms and legs. Stretch your muscles and open your eyes when you're ready.

Alternative Response Formulation

By now, you are probably an **expert on the cross sectional formulation** and can probably explain it to your friends, but let's take another look at it before incorporating the next component. You begin the simple cross sectional formulation by identifying an anxiety provoking event and then noting the interactions of your experiences of anxiety symptoms.

We have found that the **cognitive component is heavily weighted** such that the way you think about or interpret a situation can perpetuate the anxiety and then trigger other symptoms. We spent the majority of last lesson talking about the impact of automatic and unhelpful thoughts. You may be asking yourself, so now what? What do I do about it? Remember that we have done 2 activities to address the physical symptoms directly (deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation) and that by addressing the physical symptoms directly you are freeing up mental energy to address other symptoms.

Also, remember that completing the cross sectional formulation is a tool. It requires that you slow down and detangle the symptoms you are feeling.

Okay, so now let's focus on how to address the thoughts directly through **cognitive restructuring**. What we mean by cognitive restructuring is to take a different thinking approach to the anxiety provoking situation. This involves purposefully slowing down, challenging your automatic and unhelpful thinking patterns and giving yourself a **broader perspective on the situation**. This takes time and lots of practice, so be patient with yourself.

Here's how it works. When you start to notice anxiety, think to yourself: **"Stop, pay attention and get perspective."** This means, stop, pay attention to **what is going on in your mind and body** and then **be intentional** about what happens next. What we want to do here is to slow down the process so that you don't get caught up in the anxiety and so that you feel more in control. The ultimate goal is for the "stop and pay attention" mantra to become second nature so that you use it even before experiencing anxiety. That is going to take time and lots of practice.

To better understand this “stop and pay attention” mantra, let’s work through an **example of alternative responses** to anxiety. When we are doing the alternative response we are **not saying “just think positive”**, because you have probably heard that before and it’s not that simple. What we are saying is, “let’s look at the situation from a broader perspective.”

For example, using the same anxiety provoking situation of being invited to a party and feeling anxious about going, one of the alternative responses is "I might still have an okay time." It is important to remember that you probably won’t jump from the thought: "I’m gonna have a terrible time" to the thought: "I’m gonna have a blast." Make sure your alternative thoughts are **realistic and believable**. Don’t try to jump to positive extremes, as this would be an example of an unhelpful thinking style (black and white thinking).

Now, review the **Alternative Response Worksheet** on the next page. Using the anxiety event from one of your homework assignments from last lesson, fill out the blank Alternative Response Worksheet on **page 47**. Use the page titled, "If you're having trouble, ask yourself these questions" as a guide. These questions are intended to guide you to think of alternative responses until they become second nature, which is going to take a lot of time and practice.

Alternative Response Worksheet

Situation: *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

A student invited me to a party in my residence hall, but I didn't know her very well and felt anxious about going.

Alternative Thoughts and Images: *(Are these thoughts helpful? Are the anxious thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)*

I may not be as socially awkward as I think.

If she invited me, she probably wants me there.

I might still have an okay time even if I am anxious

Alternative Behaviors: *(What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)*

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Distract myself
- ☐ Seek support from a friend/ family member
- ☐ Do a pleasurable activity
- ☐ Use alternative response worksheet

Alternative Feelings: *(What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)*

Excited

Wanted

Liked

Hopeful

Original Outcome: *(What was the original outcome?)* ***I stayed in my room and watched Netflix.***

Desired Outcome: *(Using these new alternatives, what would you like the outcome to be in the future?)* ***I want to go to the party so that I can make friends. If I feel too uncomfortable, I can always leave.***

Alternative Response Worksheet

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Alternative Thoughts and Images: *(Are these thoughts helpful? Are the anxious thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)*

Alternative Behaviors: *(What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)*

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Distract myself
- ☐ Seek support from a friend/ family member
- ☐ Do a pleasurable activity
- ☐ Use alternative response worksheet

Alternative Feelings: *(What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)*

Original Outcome: *(What was the original outcome?)*

Desired Outcome: *(Using these new alternatives, what would you like the outcome to be in the future?)*

If you're having trouble, ask yourself these questions:

Whenever we recognize an anxiety-related thought, feeling or behavior, it can be very helpful to ask ourselves the following questions:

Alternative THOUGHTS:

1. What are other ways of looking at this situation?
2. Am I looking at the whole picture?
3. What might be a more helpful way of picturing this situation?
4. What unhelpful thinking styles might I be using here (see below)?
5. What is the evidence that my thoughts are true? Is there an alternative way of thinking about this situation that is more true?
6. What is the probability that my thoughts will happen? What are some other things that could happen that are equally, if not more, probable?
7. Have I had any experiences in the past that suggests that this thought might not be COMPLETELY true ALL of the time?
8. Can I really predict the future? Is it helpful to try? What is more helpful?
9. Am I exaggerating how bad the result might be? What is more realistic?
10. Can I read people's minds? What else might they be thinking (that's not so negative)?
11. If a friend or loved one were in this situation and had this thought, what would I tell them?

<i>Common Cognitive Distortions (Unhelpful Thinking Styles)</i>	
All or Nothing Thinking: thinking in absolute, black and white categories	Over-generalizing: seeing a pattern based upon a single event or being overly broad in conclusions we draw
Mental Filter: only paying attention to certain types of evidence (e.g., dwelling on the negatives)	Disqualifying the positive: discounting the good things that have happened
Jumping to Conclusions: Mind reading: imagining we know what others are thinking Fortune telling: predicting the future	Magnification (catastrophizing) and minimization: blowing things out of proportion or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important
Emotional Reasoning: assuming because we feel a certain way, what we think must be true	Should/Must Thinking: Using words like "should", "must", "ought to" or "have to"
Labeling: assigning labels to ourselves or others	Personalization: blaming yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for OR blaming others and overlooking ways you may have contributed to the outcome

Alternative BEHAVIORS:

1. What could I do in the moment that would be more helpful?
2. What's the best thing to do (for me, for others, or for the situation)?
3. If my feared situation happens, how will I cope? What coping skills can I use to handle my feared situation? What have I done in the past that was successful?
4. Am I needing to work on acceptance, letting go of control, being okay with less than perfect, or having faith in the future and myself?
5. Breathe: Focus your attention on your breathing. Imagine you have a balloon in your belly, inflating on the in-breath, deflating on the out-breath.

Alternative FEELINGS:

1. What might it feel like if I acted/thought differently?
2. When I'm not feeling this way, do I think about this situation differently?
3. Are there any strengths or positives in me or the situation that I might be ignoring?
4. What else might this anxiety be related to? Is it *really* about feeling _____?
5. Tell yourself: "This feeling will pass. It's a normal body reaction."

Lesson 4: Homework Assignment

Complete the **Alternative Response Worksheet** with a new situation using the blank form to follow.

Alternative Response Worksheet

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Alternative Thoughts and Images: *(Are these thoughts helpful? Are the anxious thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)*

Alternative Behaviors: *(What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)*

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Distract myself
- ☐ Seek support from a friend/ family member
- ☐ Do a pleasurable activity
- ☐ Use alternative response worksheet

Alternative Feelings: *(What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)*

Original Outcome: *(What was the original outcome?)*

Desired Outcome: *(Using these new alternatives, what would you like the outcome to be in the future?)*

LESSON 5:

Self-Care & Time Management

Grounding Exercises

When people become overwhelmed with distressing thoughts or feelings, including intense anxiety, activities that keep your mind and body connected (called “grounding”) can be helpful in regaining a sense of stability and mental focus. The following are a number of grounding exercises to choose from to help firmly anchor you in the present moment and provide you with space to choose where to focus your energy. **You may need to try multiple different exercises to find one or two that work best for you.**

1. Remind yourself of who you are now. State your name, age and where you are right now.
2. Take ten slow deep breaths. Focus your attention on each breath on the way in and on the way out. Say the number of the breath to yourself as you exhale.
3. Splash water on your face or place a cool wet cloth on your face.
4. Pay purposeful attention as you hold a cold (non-alcoholic) beverage in your hands. Feel the coldness, and the wetness on the outside. Note the taste as you drink. You can also do this exercise with a warm beverage.
5. Find a “grounding object” to hold, look at, listen to, and/or smell. This could be a soft object such as a pillow or stuffed animal, a smooth stone you found on the beach, a picture of a beautiful scene or loved one, and/or any other object that represents safety or comfort.
6. Listen to music. Pay close attention and listen for something new or different.
7. If you wake up suddenly during the night and feel disoriented or distressed, remind yourself who you are and where you are. Look around the room and notice familiar objects and name them. Feel the bed you are lying on, the softness of the sheets or blankets, the warmth or coldness of the air, and notice any sounds you hear. Remind yourself that you are safe.

8. Feel the clothes on your body, whether your arms and legs are covered or not, and the sensation of your clothes as you move in them.
9. While sitting, feel the chair under you and the weight of your body and legs pressing down on it.
10. If you are lying down, feel the contact between your head, your body and your legs, as they touch the surface you are lying on. Starting from your head, notice how each part feels, all the way down to your feet, on the soft or hard surface.
11. Stop, look, and listen. Notice and name what you can see and hear nearby and in the distance.
12. Look around you, notice what is front of you and to each side, name first large objects and then smaller ones.
13. Get up, walk around, take your time to notice each step as you take one then another.
14. If you can, step outside, notice the temperature, the sounds around you, the ground under your feet, the smell in the air, etc.
15. “54321” Grounding Exercise:
 - Name 5 things you can see in the room with you.
 - Name 4 things you can feel (tactile; e.g. “chair on my back” or “feet on floor”)
 - Name 3 things you can hear right now
 - Name 2 things you can smell right now
 - Name 1 good thing about yourself
16. Write and/or say grounding statements
 - This situation won’t last forever
 - This too shall pass.
 - I can ride this out and not let it get me down.
 - My anxiety/fear/sadness won’t kill me; it just doesn’t feel good right now.
 - These are just my feelings and eventually they’ll go away.

Adapted from: <http://www.livingwell.org.au/well-being/grounding-exercises/>

Self-Care

Another aspect to keep in mind while focusing on addressing anxiety is your overall self-care. Like we talked about in the first lesson, sleep hygiene is one of the best self-care strategies because it affects everything else about your health. In addition to practicing good sleep hygiene, exercise, a balanced diet, minimal caffeine use and pleasurable activities are also important in maintaining a healthy mind and body.

Rate your current use of wellness practices in your everyday life 0 (non-existent) to 5 (use every day) and jot it down. Wellness practices can include, pleasant activities, yoga, meditation, journaling, etc.) _____

What are your current roadblocks to effective self-care?

The following page provides information on **pleasant activities** that can also be used for self-care and as coping strategies. Take a minute to review the sheet. As you review the worksheet, highlight or circle the information that you believe you could start to incorporate into your daily or weekly routines.

Pleasant Activities

Acting	Amusing people	Attending a concert	Beachcombing	Being alone	Being with animals	Being at the beach
Being complimented	Being coached	Being counseled	Being in the country	Being at a family get-together	Being at a fraternity/sorority	Being with friends
Being with happy people	Being in the mountains	Being with my roommate	Being with someone I love	Being told I am loved	Being with my parents	Bird-watching
Boating/canoeing	Budgeting my time	Buying things for myself	Buying something for someone I care about	Camping	Caring for plants	Canning/Making preserves
Cheering for something	Collecting things	Combing/brushing my hair	Completing a difficult task	Complimenting or praising someone	Cooking	Counseling someone
Dancing	Dating someone I like	Designing/Drafting	Discussing my favorite hobby	Doing art work	Doing experiments	Doing favors for people I like
Doing housework	Dreaming at night	Driving long distances	Eating good meals	Exploring/Hiking	Expressing love to someone	Feeling the presence of a Higher Power
Fishing	Fixing machines	Gardening/Doing yardwork	Gathering natural objects	Giving gifts	Giving a party for someone	Getting up early
Getting massages	Giving massages	Going to an amusement park/zoo	Going to a barber/beautician	Going to a concert	Going to lectures	Going to a luncheon/potluck
Going to a health club/sauna/spa	Going to the movies	Going to a museum	Going on nature walks/field trips	Going to a play	Going to a restaurant	Going to a reunion
Going to a spiritual/peaceful place	Going to a sports event	Having coffee/tea with friends	Having daydreams	Having friends over to visit	Having a lively talk	Having lunch with friends
Having an original idea	Having spare time	Hearing jokes	Helping someone	Hiking	Horseback riding	Improving my health
Kicking sand/pebbles/leaves	Kissing	Knitting/crocheting	Laughing	Learning something new	Listening to the radio	Listening to music
Looking at the stars/moon	Making charitable donations	Making food to give away	Making a new friend	Meditating/Doing yoga	Planning or organizing something	Playing sports
Playing cards	Playing music	Playing with a pet	Playing in nature	Playing a board game/chess	Photography	Repairing things
Reading	Reminiscing	Riding in an airplane	Running/jogging	Saying prayers	Seeing beautiful scenery	Seeing old friends
Sewing	Shaving	Singing	Sleeping late	Smelling a flower or plant	Seeing good things happen to people	Solving a puzzle/crossword
Speaking a foreign language	Staying up late	Smiling at people	Taking a bath	Using my strengths	Watching TV	Writing in a journal

Values Clarification

Values clarification increase awareness of any values that may have a bearing on lifestyle decisions and actions. This process has show be helpful for self-improvement, increased well-being, and interactions with others.

Using techniques to clarify values often helps people learn more about themselves and develop reasonable goals, and therapy often allows for a safe environment in which people can understand and develop their own set of values and achieve realization of their motivations and characteristics.

Using the **Core Values Assessment** on the next page, select your 10 most important values and rank them in order. Ask yourself what kind of things you are doing every day to live in congruence with your values. What would you like to add? What might you need to subtract?

Core Values Assessment

Common Personal Values		
Accomplishment	Good will	Quality over quantity
Abundance	Goodness	Quantity over quality
Accountability	Gratitude	Reciprocity
Accuracy	Hard work	Recognition
Achievement	Harmony	Regularity
Adventure	Healing	Relaxation
Approval	Holistic Living	Reliability
Autonomy	Honesty	Resourcefulness
Balance	Honor	Respect for others
Beauty	Improvement	Responsibility
Challenge	Independence	Responsiveness
Change	Individuality	Results
Clarity	Initiative	Romance
Cleanliness, orderliness	Inner peace	Rule of Law
Collaboration	Innovation	Sacrifice
Commitment	Integrity	Safety
Communication	Intelligence	Satisfying others
Community	Intensity	Security
Compassion	Intimacy	Self-awareness
Competence	Intuition	Self-confidence
Competition	Joy	Self-esteem
Concern for others	Justice	Self-expression
Confidence	Knowledge	Self-improvement
Connection	Leadership	Self-love
Conservation	Learning	Self-mastery
Content over form	Love	Self-reliance
Cooperation	Loyalty	Self-trust
Coordination	Meaning	Sensuality
Creativity	Merit	Service
Credibility	Moderation	Simplicity
Decisiveness	Modesty	Sincerity
Democracy	Money	Skill
Determination	Nature	Solitude
Discipline	Nurturing	Speed
Discovery	Obedience	Spirituality
Diversity	Open-mindedness	Stability
Education	Openness	Standardization
Efficiency	Optimism	Status
Environment	Patriotism	Straightforwardness
Equality	Peace, Non-violence	Strength
Excellence	Perfection	Success
Exploration	Perseverance	Systemization
Fairness	Persistence	Teamwork
Faith	Personal Growth	Timeliness
Faithfulness	Personal health	Tolerance
Family	Pleasure	Tradition
Flair	Power	Tranquility
Flexibility	Practicality	Trust
Forgiveness	Preservation	Trustworthiness
Freedom	Privacy	Truth
Friendship	Problem solving	Unity
Frugality	Professionalism	Variety
Fulfillment	Progress	Vitality
Fun	Prosperity	Wealth
Generosity	Punctuality	Wisdom
Genuineness	Purpose	

Using the information from the sections above, complete the **Willingness and Action Plan** worksheet below to create a self-care action plan.

Homework: Your homework for this lesson will be to begin implementing this plan.

Willingness & Action Plan

My goal is to (be specific):

The values underlying my goal are:

The actions I will take to achieve that goal are (be specific):

The thoughts/memories, feelings, sensations, urges I'm willing to make room for (in order to achieve this goal):-

- Thoughts/memories:
- Feelings:
- Sensations:
- Urges:
- It would be useful to remind myself that:
- If necessary, I can break this goal down into smaller steps, such as:
 - The smallest, easiest step I can begin with is:
 - The time, day and date that I will take that first step, is:

Lesson 6: Relapse Prevention & Debriefing

Lesson 6

Guided Imagery

For this final lesson, start by practicing this relaxation technique described below. You can find a demonstration of the exercise here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7o-oqjiLAOs>

Close your eyes and imagine your restful place. Picture it as vividly as you can: everything you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel. Just “looking” at it in your mind’s eye like you would a photograph is not enough. Visualization works best if you incorporate as many sensory details as possible. For example, if you are thinking about a dock on a quiet lake:

- See the sun setting over the water
- Hear the birds singing
- Smell the pine trees
- Feel the cool water on your bare feet
- Taste the fresh, clean air

Enjoy the feeling of your worries drifting away as you slowly explore your restful place. When you are ready, gently open your eyes and come back to the present. Don’t worry if you sometimes zone out or lose track of where you are during a visualization session. This is normal. You may also experience feelings of heaviness in your limbs, muscle twitches, or yawning. Again, these are normal responses.

Putting it all Together:

Now you can put everything you have learned into an **action plan for managing anxiety**. On the pages following this lesson, you will find a worksheet with a number of questions about recognizing symptoms and triggers and implementing some of the coping strategies we've discussed. This worksheet will help you come up with your own plan to manage anxiety. Return to previous lessons if you need help creating your plan.

First, take a moment to figure out how you are going to **remind yourself** that you have a **plan for managing anxiety** and that you have set goals.

It may be helpful to review your plan in the morning, before you go to bed, or before an anxiety-provoking situation. Some people find it helpful to take a picture of their plan and have it easily accessible in their phone. You could write post-it notes of your goals and keep them visible. Maybe you could ask a friend to check-in with you about your goals.

What are some ways that you can remind yourself about your plan? Please write them under question #10 on the worksheet.

Summary / Conclusion

Okay, so let's talk about what we learned in these 6 lessons. You learned that anxiety symptoms focused on the ways in which thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and physical symptoms interact. You also increased awareness of your triggers and unhelpful thinking styles and identified coping strategies for dealing with these symptoms.

Remember that it is important to **practice these strategies regularly** to effectively manage anxiety and to remember that **some amount of anxiety is normal** in the human experience. With consistent practice, the coping strategies taught in this workbook will help maintain your ability to manage anxiety and prevent feeling overwhelmed from anxiety.

On the following page, you will find where you can create a personalized action plan to continue to practice in the future. Make sure to use your plan even when your anxiety is low as a maintenance measure. In fact, it can be more helpful to practice when your anxiety is low because practicing when your anxiety is low, makes the skills become more second nature so that when you do feel anxious, the skills come more easily.

My Plan for Managing Anxiety

1. My primary anxiety symptoms include: **(pg. 18)**
 - a. Emotional:
 - b. Physical:
 - c. Cognitive:
 - d. Behavioral:
2. Some of my unhelpful ways of thinking are: (e.g., all or nothing thinking, catastrophizing, etc.) **(pg. 31)**
3. My situational and cognitive triggers are: (e.g., unfamiliar situations, negative thoughts, etc.) **(pg. 35-36)**
4. The most helpful grounding techniques **(pg. 53)**:
5. The most helpful relaxation exercise:
6. The best time and place to practice relaxation exercises:

7. When I feel overwhelmed, it is helpful for me to:
8. Positive changes I can make to help my sleep include: (e.g., no TV 30 minutes before bed, wake up at the same time daily, turn phone off, etc.; **pg. 12**)
9. MY GOALS: Name 2 goals you would like to achieve ***over the next few months***, related to anxiety and self-care. Think: **specific, achievable, and measurable**.
- a. Name 2 goals you would like to achieve related to ANXIETY (e.g., Thinking about the strategies you find most helpful, what would you like to try, how often, when, etc.?)
- i. _____
- ii. _____
- b. Name 2 goals you would like to achieve related to SELF-CARE: (What will your self-care look like over the next few months? These could be goals related to nutrition, exercise, sleep, schoolwork, leisure activities, etc.)
- i. _____
- ii. _____
10. Reminder about plan and goals:
- _____
- _____
- _____

APPENDIX

Online Resources

Mayo Clinic Stress Reduction Website

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mindfulness-exercises/MY02124>

Meditation Oasis www.meditationoasis.com

Mindful www.mindful.org

Mindfulness Research Guide <http://www.mindfulexperience.org/>

UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center- Guided Meditations

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

Apps for your Smartphone, Tablet, or Computer

ACT Coach

Breathe2relax

Breathing techniques by Hemalayaa

CBTi-Coach

Mindfulness Coach

Mindshift

T2 Mood Tracker

Take a break!

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Physical *(When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)*

Emotional *(What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?)*

Cognitive *(What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)*

Behavioral *(What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?)*

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Physical *(When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)*

Emotional *(What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?)*

Cognitive *(What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)*

Behavioral *(What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?)*

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Physical *(When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?)*

Emotional *(What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?)*

Cognitive *(What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?)*

Behavioral *(What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?)*

Alternative Response Worksheet

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Alternative Thoughts and Images: *(Are these thoughts helpful? Are the anxious thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)*

Alternative Behaviors: *(What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)*

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Distract myself
- ☐ Seek support from a friend/ family member
- ☐ Do a pleasurable activity
- ☐ Use alternative response worksheet

Alternative Feelings: *(What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)*

Original Outcome: *(What was the original outcome?)*

Desired Outcome: *(Using these new alternatives, what would you like the outcome to be in the future?)*

Alternative Response Worksheet

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Alternative Thoughts and Images: *(Are these thoughts helpful? Are the anxious thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)*

Alternative Behaviors: *(What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)*

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Distract myself
- ☐ Seek support from a friend/ family member
- ☐ Do a pleasurable activity
- ☐ Use alternative response worksheet

Alternative Feelings: *(What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)*

Original Outcome: *(What was the original outcome?)*

Desired Outcome: *(Using these new alternatives, what would you like the outcome to be in the future?)*

Alternative Response Worksheet

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

Alternative Thoughts and Images: *(Are these thoughts helpful? Are the anxious thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)*

Alternative Behaviors: *(What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)*

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Distract myself
- ☐ Seek support from a friend/ family member
- ☐ Do a pleasurable activity
- ☐ Use alternative response worksheet

Alternative Feelings: *(What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)*

Original Outcome: *(What was the original outcome?)*

Desired Outcome: *(Using these new alternatives, what would you like the outcome to be in the future?)*

