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pause on
the go

resource kit

helpful tips and ideas for
looking after yourself and your
mental wellbeing



What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness: a state of nonjudgmental awareness of what's happening in the present moment, including the awareness of one's own thoughts, feelings, and senses.

Components of Mindfulness

Awareness. During a state of mindfulness, you will notice your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations as they happen. The goal isn't to clear your mind or to stop thinking—it's to become aware of your thoughts and feelings, rather than getting lost in them.

Acceptance. The thoughts, feelings, and sensations that you notice should be observed in a nonjudgmental manner. For example, if you notice a feeling of nervousness, simply state to yourself: "I notice that I am feeling nervous". There's no need further judge or change the feeling.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety

Improved memory, focus, and mental processing speed

Improved ability to adapt to stressful situations

Greater satisfaction within relationships

Reduced rumination (repetitively going over a thought or problem)

Improved ability to manage emotions

Mindfulness Practice

Note: Mindfulness is a state of mind, rather than a particular action or exercise. However, without practice, mindfulness is difficult to achieve. These techniques are designed to help you practice.

Mindfulness Meditation

Sit in a comfortable place, and begin paying attention to your breathing. Notice the physical sensation of air filling your lungs, and then slowly leaving. When your mind wanders—which it will—simply notice your thoughts, and turn your attention back to breathing.

Mindfulness Mindfulness Walk

While walking, make a point to practise mindfulness. Start by noticing how your body moves and feels with each step. Then, expand your awareness to your surroundings. What do you see? Hear? Smell? Feel? This technique can also be expanded to other daily activities.

Body Scan

Pay close attention to the physical sensations throughout your body. Start with your feet, and move up through your legs, groin, abdomen, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, neck, and face. Spend anywhere from 15 seconds to 1 minute on each body part.

Five Senses

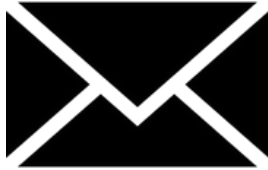
Make a conscious effort to notice the present moment through each of your senses.

- 5 things you see • 2 thing you taste
- 4 things you feel • 1 thing you smell
- 3 things you hear

Gratitude Exercises

Journal About Gratitude

Take a few minutes every evening to write down five good things about your day. The entries don't have to be major events—they might be as simple as a good meal, talking to a friend, or getting through a difficult challenge.



Write a Letter

Think about someone who has had a major impact on your life, someone who you would like to thank, or someone who you appreciate having in your life. Write a letter with specific details about what it is you appreciate about them, and send it.

Visit Someone who you Appreciate

Write a letter to someone you appreciate as described above, but instead of mailing it, deliver the letter in person. Don't tell them why you're visiting! Read them letter, and then allow them to keep it as a memento.



Say "Thank You"

Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say "thanks". Try to recognize the small actions people do every day that might be overlooked such as a colleague who always goes the extra mile, or a friend who always seems willing to listen.

Take a Gratitude Walk

Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings. You might notice the smell of flowers, a pretty building, or a soothing breeze. Spend a few minutes focusing on each of your senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) to find new things you may not have noticed.



Positive Journal

Every day brings a combination of good and bad experiences. Unfortunately, the human brain tends to focus more heavily on the bad experiences, while forgetting or discounting the good experiences. For example, we're more likely to remember one awkward social interaction over hundreds of normal interactions.

Making a point to recognize positive experiences—no matter how small—can help to improve mood. Practice by recording three positive events at the end of each day.

Monday
1
2
3

Tuesday
1
2
3

Wednesday
1
2
3

Positive Journal

Thursday
1
2
3

Friday
1
2
3

Saturday
1
2
3

Sunday
1
2
3



PAUSE ON THE GO

A mindfulness podcast



Study Break Playlist

A Spotify playlist to help you
relax whilst studying

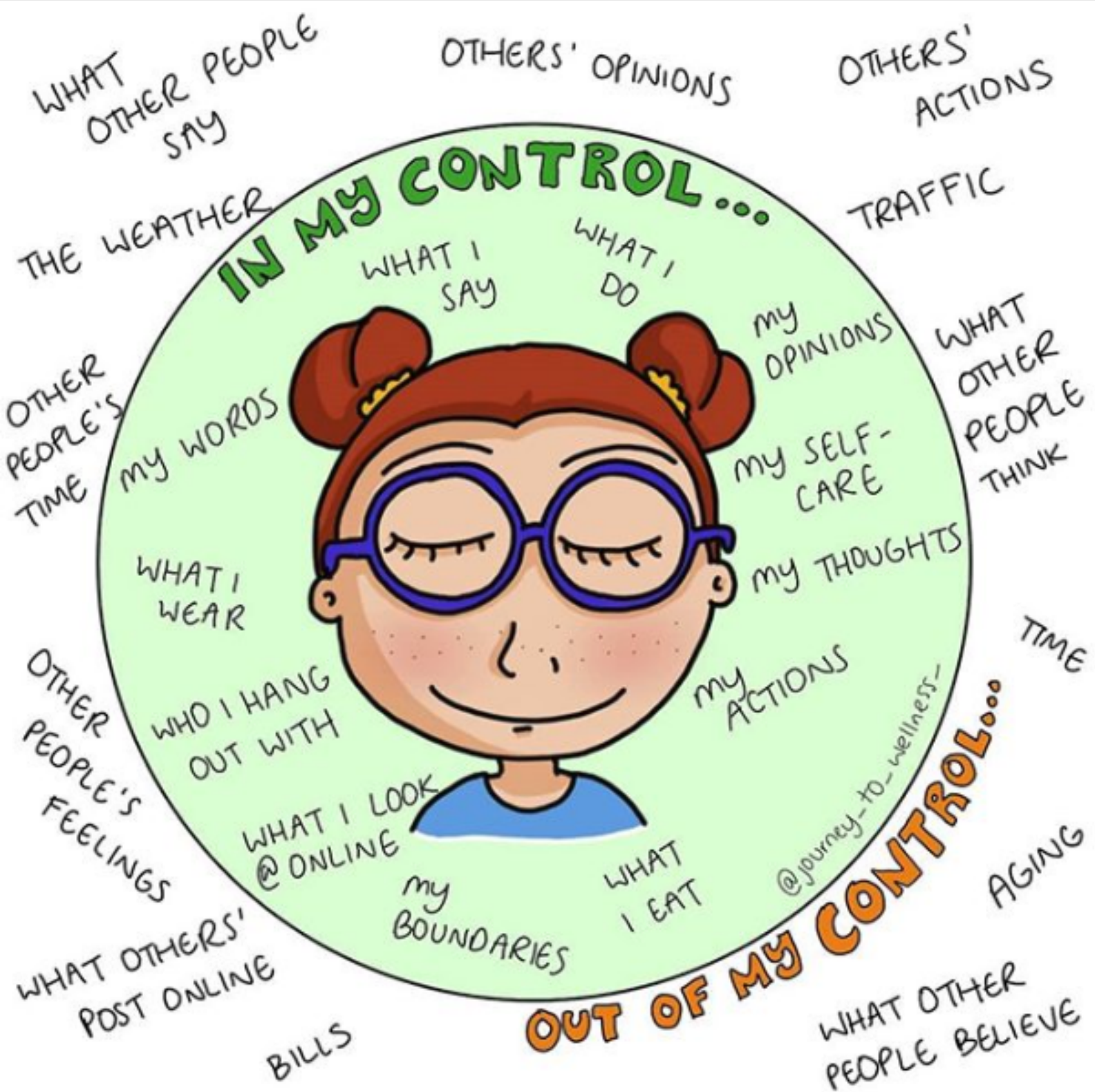


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SCAN ME

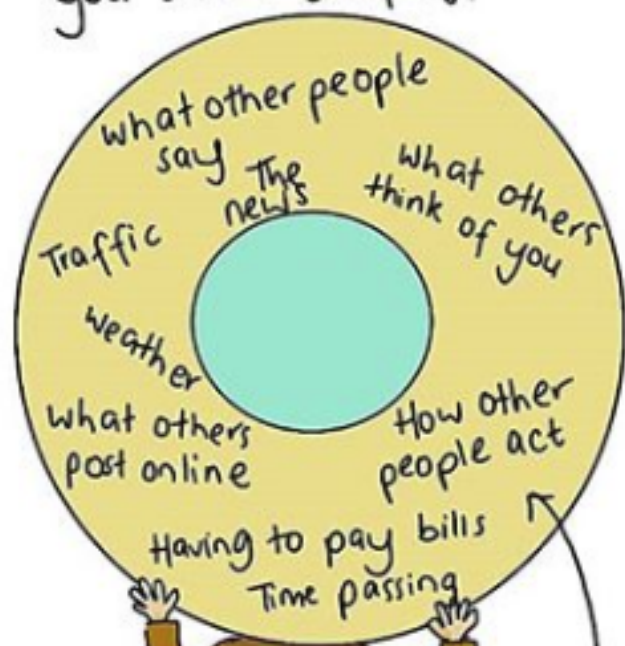
The
Children's
Society

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Reactive

- Time & energy spent on things you can't control.



"circle of concern"

Proactive

- Time & energy spent on things within your control.

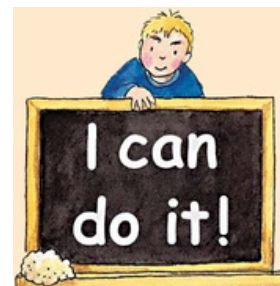


"circle of control"

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Positive Self- talk / Coping Thoughts Worksheet

Positive statements encourage us and help us cope through distressing times. We can say these encouraging words to ourselves, and be our own personal coach. We have all survived some very distressing times, and we can use those experiences to encourage us through current difficulties. Examples of coping thoughts might be:



Stop, and breathe, I can do this
This will pass
I can be anxious/angry/sad and still deal with this
I have done this before, and I can do it again
This feels bad, it's a normal body reaction – it will pass
This feels bad, and feelings are very often wrong
These are just feelings, they will go away
This won't last forever
Short term pain for long term gain
I can feel bad and still choose to take a new and healthy direction
I don't need to rush, I can take things slowly
I have survived before, I will survive now
I feel this way because of my past experiences, but I am safe right now
It's okay to feel this way, it's a normal reaction
Right now, I am not in danger. Right now, I'm safe
~~My mind is not always my friend~~
Thoughts are just thoughts – they're not necessarily true or factual
This is difficult and uncomfortable, but it's only temporary
I can use my coping skills and get through this
I can learn from this and it will be easier next time
Keep calm and carry on

Write down a coping thought or positive statement for each difficult or distressing situation – something you can tell yourself that will help you get through. Write them down on a piece of card and carry it in your pocket or handbag to help remind you.

Difficult or distressing Coping thought / Positive statement situation
























Week 1: Practice Gratitude

[illegible]

Week 2: Rethink Your Thoughts

[illegible]

Week 3: Get Creative

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
 Color	 Color	 Color	 Color	 Color	 Color	 Color
 Doodle	 Doodle	 Doodle	 Doodle	 Doodle	 Doodle	 Doodle
 Write it out	 Write it out	 Write it out	 Write it out	 Write it out	 Write it out	 Write it out

Week 4: Take a Breather

[illegible]

STRESS - WHAT IS IT?



At one point or another we will all most likely experience some form of stress. Stress can be caused by many different things. As a Student you may feel stressed for a variety of reasons- exams, housing issues, relationship difficulties, financial constraints just to name a few! We may feel stressed because we have lots on our minds, too much to do or when demands are placed on us that we find difficult to manage.

Stress can be very overwhelming and at times it can feel as though you don't know where's best to start in managing your stress.

-  **SWEATING**
-  **UPSET STOMACH**
-  **POOR JUDGMENT**
-  **WORRYING**
-  **CHEST PAIN/PALPITATIONS**
-  **INABILITY TO FOCUS**
-  **FREQUENT COLDS & INFECTIONS**
-  **SEEING ONLY THE NEGATIVE**
-  **DRY MOUTH & DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING**
-  **FORGETFULNESS AND DISORGANISATION**

If you have found that you are feeling stressed lately or recognise that you are experiencing some of the symptoms linked with stress make sure you speak to someone for advice and support.

FIVE STEPS TO WELLBEING

5

Taking care of you is an extremely important part of university life. Here are 5 simple steps that you can easily introduce into your life to promote positive wellbeing.



CONNECT

Spend time developing relationships with those around you. Have a movie night with your flatmates or ask a course mate if they want to grab a coffee?



TAKE NOTICE

Reflect on your daily experiences to appreciate the moments that matter to you.



GIVE

Give your time, advice or whatever you have to offer and feel better for it. Try some of the volunteering opportunities at the Guild!



KEEP LEARNING

Try something new, surprise yourself! Read a book on a subject you know nothing about, do a crossword or teach yourself a new language!



BE ACTIVE

Get involved in something active that suits your interests. Go for a walk, play a game of football or take up tai chi.

30 DAY SELF-CARE CHALLENGE

- ☐ Day 1: Watch your favourite film
- ☐ Day 2: Tell three people you appreciate them
- ☐ Day 3: Clean or tidy your room
- ☐ Day 4: Do a social media detox
- ☐ Day 5: Take a long shower
- ☐ Day 6: Make a smoothie
- ☐ Day 7: Create a 'happy' playlist
- ☐ Day 8: Read for fun (not an academic book!)
- ☐ Day 9: Talk to an old friend
- ☐ Day 10: Do some colouring
- ☐ Day 11: Watch a TED talk
- ☐ Day 12: Start a journal
- ☐ Day 13: Turn your phone off for an evening
- ☐ Day 14: Make yourself a fancy breakfast
- ☐ Day 15: Volunteer for a good cause



- ☐ Day 16: Have an early night
- ☐ Day 17: Cook a healthy meal
- ☐ Day 18: Create a workout routine
- ☐ Day 19: Visit a museum or art gallery
- ☐ Day 20: Go for a coffee date
- ☐ Day 21: Do half hour of exercise
- ☐ Day 22: Have a flat game night
- ☐ Day 23: Print out some photos
- ☐ Day 24: Take a walk somewhere new
- ☐ Day 25: Watch funny YouTube videos
- ☐ Day 26: Bake a cake
- ☐ Day 27: Wear super comfy clothes
- ☐ Day 28: Watch the sunrise or sunset
- ☐ Day 29: Listen to some new music
- ☐ Day 30: Call someone you love



DIAL · DOWN YOUR DISTRESS

- NOTICE YOUR EMOTIONS
- NAME THEM
- NOTICE WHERE YOU FEEL THIS IN YOUR BODY

- ALLOW THE EMOTION TO BE
- RELAX AND RELEASE TENSION IN YOUR BODY



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EXHALE A
SLOW OUT
BREATH &
RELEASE
TENSION

TOOLS TO IMPROVE DISTRESS



ACTIVATE

WALK
JOG
CLEANING
COOKING
CALL A FRIEND
GO OUT FOR LUNCH/
COFFEE
TV
SHOPPING
GAMES
GYM
GARDENING
DANCE
COLD SHOWER

SOOTHE

LIGHT A CANDLE
AROMATHERAPY
BEACH WALK
SOOTHING MUSIC
BODY LOTION
MASSAGE
PAT YOUR PET
BUBBLE BATH
FOOT SOAK
FACE MASK
JOURNALLING
READ
GRATITUDE LIST
MEDITATE

SQUARE BREATHING

Start at the bottom right of the square

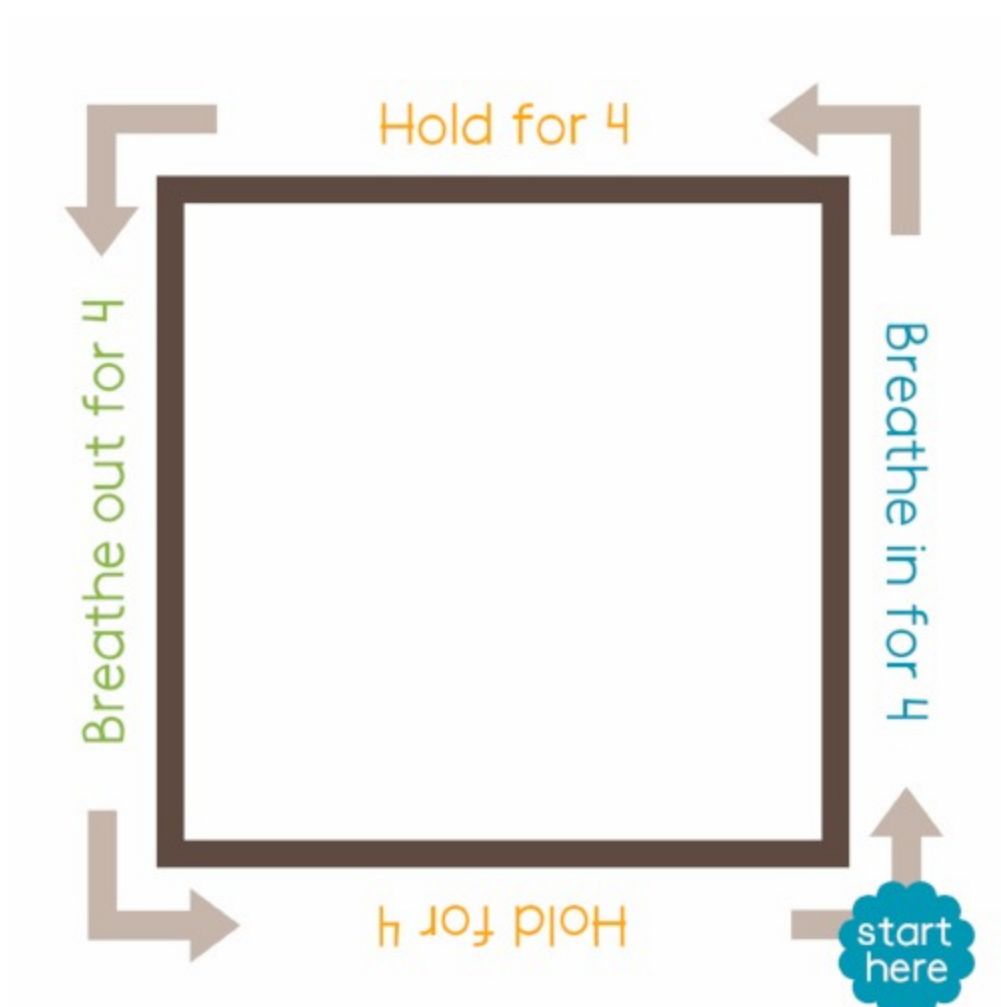
Breathe in for four counts as you trace the first side of the square

Hold your breath for four counts as you trace the second side of the square

Breathe out for four counts as you trace the third side of the square

Hold your breath for four counts as you trace the final side of the square

You just completed one deep breath!



What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a mental and physical reaction to perceived threats. In small doses, anxiety is helpful. It protects us from danger, and focuses our attention on problems. But when anxiety is too severe, or occurs too frequently, it can become debilitating.

Symptoms of Anxiety

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| • uncontrollable worry | • excessive nervousness | • sleep problems | • muscle tension |
| • poor concentration | • increased heart rate | • upset stomach | • avoidance of fear |

Types of Anxiety

Generalized Anxiety: An excessive amount of anxiety or worry in several areas of life, such as job responsibilities, health, finances, or minor concerns (e.g. completing housework).

Phobias: A very intense fear of a specific situation or object, which is out of proportion to its actual threat. For example, a fear of giving speeches, or of spiders, could be considered a phobia.

Panic: An extreme anxious response where a person experiences a panic attack. During a panic attack, the individual experiences numerous physical symptoms, and is overwhelmed by a feeling of dread.

How Does Anxiety Grow?



Anxiety drives people to avoid the things that scare them. When a “scary” thing is avoided, there is an immediate but short-lived sense of relief. However, the next time a similar threat arises, it feels even scarier. This creates a harmful cycle of avoidance, and worsening anxiety.

Anxiety Treatments



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a very effective treatment for anxiety.

During CBT, the unhealthy thinking patterns that create anxiety are identified, and challenged.

Oftentimes, CBT will also include components of exposure therapy and relaxation skills.



Exposure Therapy

During exposure therapy, the therapist and their client create a plan to gradually face anxiety-producing situations, thus breaking the cycle of avoidance. With enough exposure, the anxiety loses its power, and the symptoms diminish.



Relaxation Skills

Various techniques—such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and mindfulness—provide immediate relief from the symptoms of anxiety. With practice, relaxation skills will become a powerful way to manage anxiety in the moment.



Medication

Medication can help control the uncomfortable symptoms of anxiety. However, because medication does not fix the underlying problems of anxiety, it is typically used in conjunction with therapy. The need for medication varies greatly, case-by-case.

Grounding Techniques

After a trauma, it's normal to experience flashbacks, anxiety, and other uncomfortable symptoms. **Grounding techniques** help control these symptoms by turning attention away from thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocusing on the present moment.

5-4-3-2-1 Technique

Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.



What are 5 things you can see? Look for small details such as a pattern on the ceiling, the way light reflects off a surface, or an object you never noticed.



What are 4 things you can feel? Notice the sensation of clothing on your body, the sun on your skin, or the feeling of the chair you are sitting in. Pick up an object and examine its weight, texture, and other physical qualities.



What are 3 things you can hear? Pay special attention to the sounds your mind has tuned out, such as a ticking clock, distant traffic, or trees blowing in the wind.



What are 2 things you can smell? Try to notice smells in the air around you, like an air freshener or freshly mowed grass. You may also look around for something that has a scent, such as a flower or an unlit candle.



What is 1 thing you can taste? Carry gum, candy, or small snacks for this step. Pop one in your mouth and focus your attention closely on the flavors.

Categories

Choose at least three of the categories below and name as many items as you can in each one. Spend a few minutes on each category to come up with as many items as possible.

Movies	Countries	Books	Cereals
Sports Teams	Colours	Cars	Fruits & Vegetables
Animals	Cities	TV Shows	Famous People

For a variation on this activity, try naming items in a category alphabetically. For example, for the fruits & vegetables category, say "apple, banana, carrot," and so on.

How to support someone having a panic or anxiety attack

How to support someone having a panic or anxiety attack

Reassure them you are with them, remind them it is anxiety and it will pass

Hold their two hands, with their permission and look directly at them

Invite them to breathe with you

Breathe s.l.o.w.l.y Aim for in for 3 slow seconds and out for 5 slow seconds and if that works, try in for 7, out for 11

If the person wishes, end with a big hug- well done, you are a great friend!

Useful Places to Get Support:

Your GP- if you feel worried about talking about your mental health, take a trusted friend with you

**Pause Under 25 with a Birmingham GP; a drop-in emotional support service, no need to book
www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk/pause**

**The Living Well Consortium – lots of mental health free services
www.livingwellconsortium.com**

The Waiting Room – lots of free health and wellbeing services across Birmingham and Solihull www.the-waitingroom.org

**If you are feeling worried about yourself or a friend:
SHOUT (Text 85258) is a free 24/7 text service if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help**

Papyrus www.papyrus-uk.org for support and immediate help for suicidal thoughts

Samaritans 116 123 call for free 24/7 or email jo@samaritans.org

If you or a friend is in need of immediate help, call 999 or go to A&E at the hospital