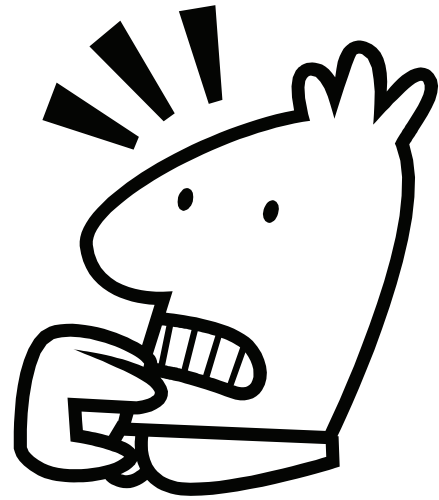


Anxiety



Anxiety feels a bit like fear, worry or nervousness and affects our whole being. It affects our thoughts (what we say to ourselves), how we behave (find an excuse to get out of what is causing us stress) it and has very real physical symptoms. It is easy to mistake symptoms of anxiety for physical illness and think that you have a stomach ache or the flu. Below is a list of symptoms you may experience when feeling anxious.

- ✓ Tense muscles
- ✓ Trembling
- ✓ Churning stomach
- ✓ Nausea
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Backache
- ✓ Fast heart beat
- ✓ Numbness or pins and needles in arms, hands or legs
- ✓ Sweating



We all become anxious from time to time and it is most often triggered by stress in our lives. However it can become a problem when it interferes with our life (stops us from doing things) or goes on too long after the event has passed. Some of us are more prone to anxiety than others, but even those who become anxious can learn to manage it well.

One step you can take that can help you cope more effectively with anxiety is identifying the kind of situations that cause you to feel anxious. This will help you to anticipate when you might feel anxious and be ready with one of the coping techniques described on the next page.

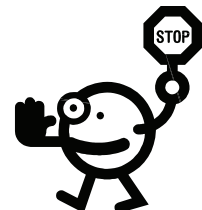
 Situations that cause me to feel anxious 	Level of Anxiety				
	1 - Low	2	3	4	5 - High
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

Coping Techniques

Many experts agree that a major cause of anxiety is negative thinking. People have a tendency to worry about having things go wrong or that they will “goof things up” in some way. Many negative thoughts are the result of irrational fears or beliefs. The good news is that negative thinking can be unlearned and replaced by positive thinking. Here are some ways of learning to replace negative (and frequently irrational thoughts) with more positive

Controlling your Thoughts

1. Learn to become more aware of the things you are thinking to yourself when you are feeling anxious or nervous.
2. Identify any negative thought (those having to do with failing, not doing well, looking foolish, etc.)
3. Examine these thoughts to see if they are based on irrational fears or beliefs.
4. Learn to catch yourself whenever you are thinking any of these negative thoughts.
5. Think **STOP** to yourself and replace these negative thought with positive ones.



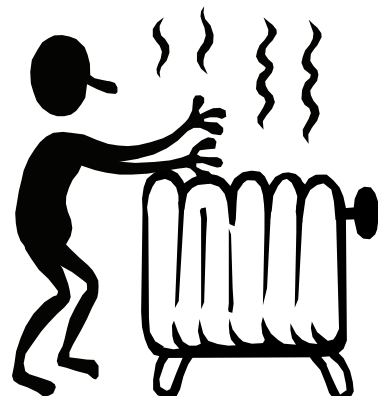
Research has demonstrated that we are capable of controlling our bodies in ways that were previously thought to be impossible. For example, it is possible to learn how to increase or decrease your blood pressure, your heart rate, the temperature of your skin and your brain wave patterns. By learning to control specific functions of your body you can learn to reduce anxiety. The methods for doing this are muscle relaxation, deep breathing and hand warming.

Deep Breathing and Muscle Relaxation:



This consists of breathing in deeply and slowly through your nose, taking the air right down to your abdomen. Visualize the air travelling right down to your abdomen and say the word "calm" to yourself as you breathe in. Then breathe out slowly and gently through your mouth. As you breathe out visualize the stress and tension leaving your body with your breath and think the word "relax." Let your muscles go floppy as you breathe out. Take three deep breaths at a time. If you breathe deeply for too long you may feel dizzy from the extra oxygen. You can repeat the three breaths after a short time of breathing normally.

Hand Warming: As people become more tense and anxious their blood vessels constrict and their hand temperature decreases. By concentrating on increasing the temperature of your hands, you not only can increase the flow of blood to your hand (causing your hands to get warmer) but you can also become more relaxed and less anxious. Use this technique for about five minutes whenever you feel anxious.



Review the situations you identified as making you anxious and write down how you can improve on the way you cope with each situation.

Action Plans for Improving My Ability to Cope with Anxiety

The worksheet consists of four overlapping circles arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left circle is labeled "Situation", the top-right circle is labeled "Situation", the bottom-left circle is labeled "What I Can Do", and the bottom-right circle is labeled "What I Can Do". Each circle is intended for a student to write their own response to a specific anxiety situation.

Situation

Situation



What I Can Do

What I Can Do

Situation

Situation

What I Can Do

What I Can Do

