

ANXIETY MANAGEMENT EXERCISES

Starting a Conversation

If your anxiety could talk, what would it say?

Now, if you could talk back to your anxiety, what would you say?

Forward Thinking

If your life was free of anxiety, what would it look like?

How would you feel? What would be different from now?

Daily Survival Kit

Here's how to create a daily anxiety survival kit to help you address your anxiety right when it happens. The key is activating your six senses to help you contextualize your feelings and re-center. Feel free to carry this kit around with you and use these techniques several times a day, whenever you're feeling anxious.

- **Taste:** Chew strongly flavored gum or sour gummies.
- **Sight:** Look at an image that you love, a photo that brings you “back” to a special place.
- **Smell:** Put on lip balm, essential oil, suntan lotion, or favorite lotion or body wash.
- **Touch:** Take a hot shower or bath, get a body massage, or manicure or pedicure.
- **Hearing:** Put on your favorite music playlist, sounds of the ocean, or a favorite song.
- **Proprioception:** Ride on a tire swing, apply a weighted blanket, vest or jacket for deep pressure, or use a body massager in thumping mode.

What are some other things you can use to activate your senses? Brainstorm some ways that will work well for you:

Sight

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Taste

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Smell

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Hearing

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Touch

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Proprioception

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Prepare Your Emergency Plan

This plan is to be used when your anxiety levels are particularly high, to shock your body and mind into a different state.

Temperature change: Sudden temperature change quickly “cools” the body and mind down. Do it long enough that it will make a difference. For example, take a freezing cold shower, splash cold water on your face 10 times or put your head under freezing cold tap water. If you have ice, hold an ice cube in your hand for 30 seconds to 1 minute (or for as long as you can handle it, but do not hurt yourself).

Intense exercise: Intense exercise shocks the body by increasing oxygen in the body and decreasing your stress level quickly. Sprint to the end of the block, do burpees or jumping jacks until exhaustion. Run up a hill.

What are 5–10 things can you do to shock your body quickly (and safely) and effectively?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

Decode Your Emotions

There is an old expression: “You can’t argue with an emotion.” This is because our emotions are there for a reason. Your emotions give you valuable information;

they are the key to understanding what is happening inside of you. Emotional regulation is the ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience. People unconsciously use emotion regulation strategies to cope with difficult situations that come up all the time throughout the day. Some of us have a natural ability to regulate our emotions, while others of us must learn how to manage these emotions in a healthy way.

Today I felt . . .

Question Your Thoughts

Our own “added-on” thoughts and beliefs often cause more anxiety and suffering than needed. Stop, think and question your thoughts. Remember we want to problem solve the initial emotion.

Event

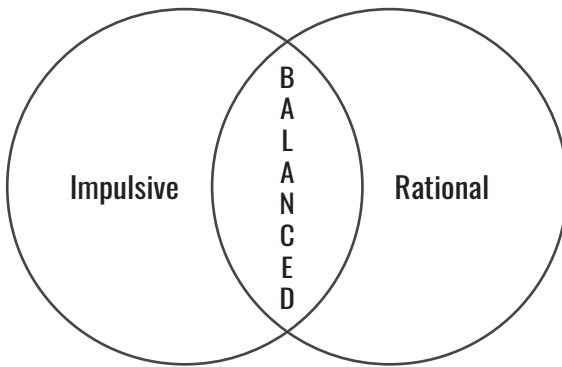
Initial Thought

Added on Thoughts

Original Emotion

Added on Emotions

Practice Using Balanced Mindset



Impulsive Mindset: We act impulsively out of emotions and feelings only.

Rational Mindset: We act rationally out of logic and facts only.

Balanced Mindset: We synthesize facts AND emotions and act wisely, in a healthy way.

Today I acted this way:

My balanced mind would have acted:

Today I acted this way:

My balanced mind would have acted:

Today I acted this way:

My balanced mind would have acted:

Four Squares: Pros and Cons Problem Solving

IDENTIFY THE ISSUE/PROBLEM

Pros of Doing	Cons of Doing
Pros of Not Doing	Cons of Not Doing

Practice Effective Problem-Solving

- 1) Identify the problem.
- 2) Change the situation.
- 3) Change the emotional reaction.
- 4) Accept and tolerate the problem.
- 5) Make a decision to let the problem go.
- 6) Do not change your mind.

What is your current problem? Be specific.

How can you change the situation? What action can you take to make it better?

How can you change how you “feel” about the situation or the problem?

How can you better accept and tolerate the problem?

I will let the problem go.

I won't change.

Re-Working Your Negative Beliefs

For example: I used to believe that everyone thought I was stupid so I wouldn't put my hand up in class or talk to anybody which made me feel isolated.

Now I believe that everybody has strengths and weaknesses, and the important thing is to try. The only way to move forward in life is to try. If you make a mistake, see it as a stepping-stone, rather than a stumbling block.

I used to believe . . .

Now I believe . . .

I used to believe . . .

Now I believe . . .

Brain Training: Celebrate the Small Things

Changing your thinking takes practice, begin by acknowledging the little bits of enjoyment or success you experience every day. **Every day, acknowledge 5–10 good things that happened**, they can be the smallest little things, like “I got out of bed,” or “I washed my face.”

For example, today I:

1. Got a hug and kiss from my puppy.
2. Bought my favorite lip gloss.
3. Said “hi” to my neighbour.
4. Talked to my sister on the phone.
5. Used my favorite bodywash that smelled like summer.
6. Went for a long walk with my dog.
7. Made a nice dinner for myself.
8. Sat in the sun for 15 minutes to drink my favorite tea and relax.

Today I . . .

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

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Building Positive Self-Talk

Self-talk is the internal dialogue that runs in your head, your inner voice. The words you say to yourself, about yourself, that others cannot hear. This talk plays a critical role in shaping how you feel about yourself. In fact, it shapes your life. It tells the brain what to believe by giving it messages and clues of your inner world, your true feelings.

To get you feeling happier and healthier, it is important to turn that self-talk into positive talk. We don't want to apply a "Band-Aid approach," we want to work on shifting your true thoughts and feelings about yourself. Letting some good feelings in, building your confidence and self-worth. A good exercise to do is to start by writing down some words or phrases that you

notice yourself saying about yourself. Then come up with a “nice” list of things to say to yourself.

Write down words or comments you noticed that you said about yourself today.

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

What five “nice” things, comments or good qualities can you say about yourself today? Pick something ever so small if you need, even if it’s a nice eyelash!

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

Body Awareness

Exercise: Improving your Interoceptive Awareness

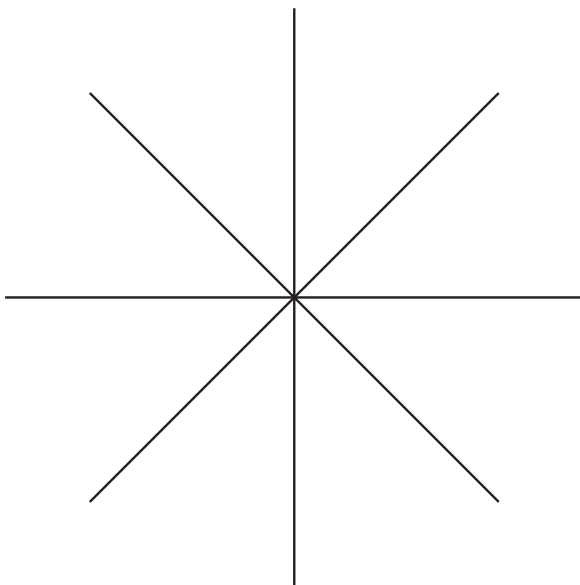
Take a self-inventory of your body and ask yourself, “Today, do I have any of the following symptoms of anxiety? Tick off the one(s) that apply to you.

- Headache
- Tight shoulders
- Stomach ache
- Sore neck
- Sore back
- Sore hips
- Sore eyes
- Sore feet
- Tired legs

Now, ask yourself if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Tired
- Anxious
- Cold
- Hot
- Feeling disconnected from my body

Spokes of the Wheel Exercise



Identify your spokes:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Write a goal statement for each spoke:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Write down 1–3 action steps for each spoke goal. Then accomplish one action step at a time. It's best if the action step has a time frame to it.

Action Steps for Goal 1

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Steps for Goal 2

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Steps for Goal 3

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Steps for Goal 4

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Steps for Goal 5

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Steps for Goal 6

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Steps for Goal 7

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Steps for Goal 8

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____