

# Anxiety Resource Workbook

# 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.

# Goal Planning

## Setting Goals

Something I want to accomplish in the next week:

In the next month:

In the next year:

In five years:

## Obstacles and Strategies

Obstacles to reaching my goals:

Things I will need to do to achieve my goals:

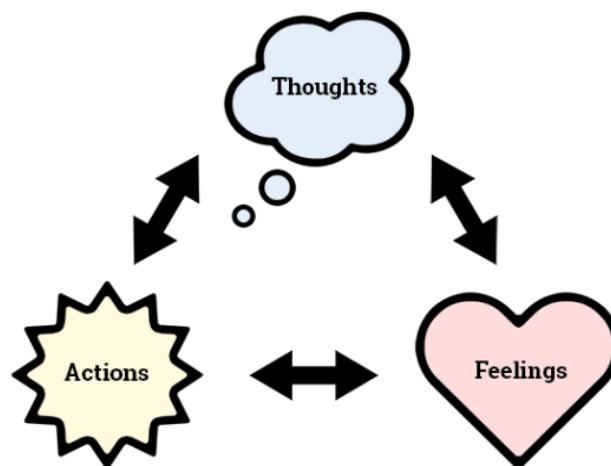
What I can begin doing tomorrow to work toward my goals:

# Thoughts Feelings Actions

Everyone has problems, both big and small. To better solve your big problems, it helps to learn how your **thoughts**, **feelings**, and **actions** are connected.

Imagine you have an upcoming test, and you think “I’m going to fail”. Because of this thought, you start to worry. You are so worried that you feel sick just thinking about the test. Because it’s so uncomfortable, you decide not to study.

The thought (“I’m going to fail”) led to a feeling (worry), which led to an action (not studying). What might have changed if you had a different thought?



**Thoughts** are the words that run through your mind. They’re the things you tell yourself about what’s going on around you. There are many different thoughts you could have about a single situation.



**Feelings** come and go as different things happen to you. You might feel happy, angry, and sad, all in one day. Some feelings are uncomfortable, but they are not bad. Everyone has these feelings from time-to-time.



**Actions** are the things you do, or the way you behave. Your thoughts and feelings have a big impact on how you act. If you feel happy, you are likely to do nice things. But if you feel angry, you might want to act mean.

# Thoughts Feelings Actions

## What happened?

My friend Emma hasn't spoken to me as much as usual over the past week.

### My Thoughts

I thought: "Emma hasn't talked to me much this week. She must be mad at me."

Because I was upset I ignored Emma and avoided her at school.

### My Actions

I felt sad and hurt.

### My Feelings

Just because you have a thought doesn't mean it's true. Your thoughts are *guesses* about why something happened, or about something that might happen. Coming up with new thoughts will help you see a situation differently.



### New Thoughts



### New Feelings



### New Actions

	New Thoughts	New Feelings	New Actions
<b>1</b>	"Emma might be upset with me, but maybe not. I don't know."	Concerned that Emma <i>might</i> be upset, but I'm not as sad as I was.	Ask Emma if she is mad at me, or if she has another problem.
<b>2</b>	"Emma has probably been busy with school or something else."	Disappointed I haven't talked to Emma, but understanding.	I'll stay friendly with Emma, as usual. I'll be sure to say "hi" anyway.
<b>3</b>	"Maybe Emma is upset about something unrelated to me."	Worried about how Emma is feeling.	Ask Emma what's going on, and if she needs help.

# Thoughts Feelings Actions



New Thoughts



New Feelings



New Actions

	New Thoughts	New Feelings	New Actions
1			
2			
3			

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My Actions



My Feelings

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## Coping Mechanisms



Any other ideas \_\_\_\_\_

What are you most likely to try? \_\_\_\_\_



"I give up easily"  
 "My potential is predetermined"  
 "Failure is the limit of my abilities"  
**FIXED MINDSET**  
 "My intelligence is static"  
 "I avoid challenges"  
 "I stick to what I know"  
 "Feedback and Criticism is personal"  
 "I will never improve"  
 "I am either good at it or I am not"  
 "There is no point in trying it"

"I like to try new things"  
 "I can learn to do what I want"  
 "Failures offer opportunity & growth"  
**GROWTH MINDSET**  
 "My intelligence can be developed"  
 "I embrace challenges"  
 "I learn from feedback"  
 "I keep trying and never give up"  
 "I am inspired by others people's success"  
 "My mistakes help me grow"  
 "I know this will help me even though it is difficult"

Instead of "I am not good enough" try "I am filled with peace"

**Use a handout to encourage the group members to brainstorm some of the common "Fixed Mindset" phrases that they use on a consistent basis.**



## Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset Practice Sheet

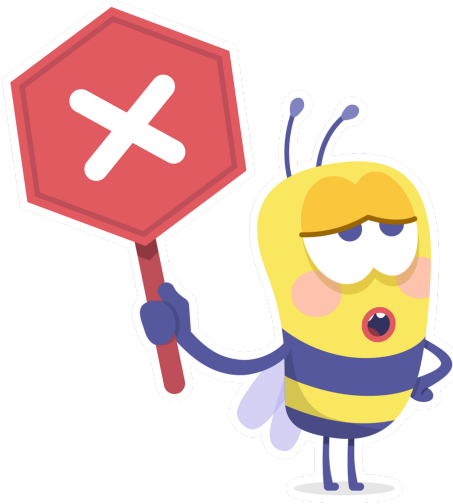
On the left side, write down examples of “fixed mindset” phrases that you think/tell yourself...On the right side, counteract that phrase with a “growth mindset” phrase.

<b>FIXED MINDSET</b>	<b>GROWTH MINDSET</b>
<i>I am bad at math</i>	<i>I can learn math</i>
<i>I failed that test</i>	<i>I will do better on the next one</i>

## **Intervention and Prevention**

“There are two ways to work on managing anxiety. The first is by practicing prevention, which means that you spend time doing relaxation techniques on a regular basis to keep your everyday anxiety at a low level. The second is by practicing intervention: at the time you feel your anxiety level rising, you perform a relaxation technique to help you calm down and manage the current situation.” - Lisa M. Shab, LCSW

Intervention: Something is in the middle of happening, or has already happened and THEN we decide to stop it.



Prevention: Stopping something from happening before it happens.

Brushing Teeth Example: Do you wait until AFTER you get a cavity to start brushing your teeth or do you brush your teeth every day in order to PREVENT a cavity?

# My Fears

What are some things  
that make you feel  
nervous or scared?

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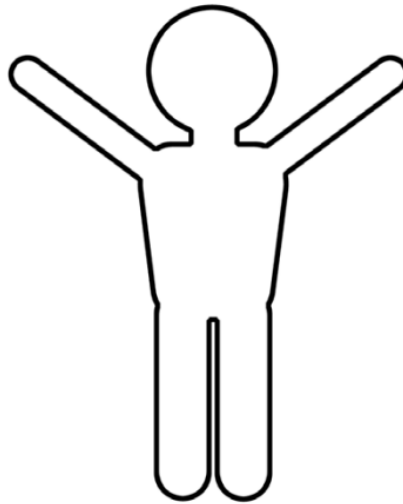
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What do you think about when you are nervous or scared?

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How does your body feel when you are nervous or scared? Color the areas  
where you can sense these feelings.



What's something you can do to feel better next time you are afraid?

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## **Social Anxiety Activity**

Make a list of the situations which give you anxiety:

What do you fear could happen in these situations?

What are the facts of the situations listed above? Remember to focus on **FACTS** of the situation, not **GUESSES**.

## Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions are irrational thoughts that can influence your emotions. Everyone experiences cognitive distortions to some degree, but in their more extreme forms they can be harmful.

**Magnification and Minimization:** Exaggerating or minimizing the importance of events. One might believe their own achievements are unimportant, or that their mistakes are excessively important.

**Catastrophizing:** Seeing only the worst possible outcomes of a situation.

**Overgeneralization:** Making broad interpretations from a single or few events. "I felt awkward during my job interview. I am *always* so awkward."

**Magical Thinking:** The belief that acts will influence unrelated situations. "I am a good person—bad things shouldn't happen to me."

**Personalization:** The belief that one is responsible for events outside of their own control. "My mom is always upset. She would be fine if I did more to help her."

**Jumping to Conclusions:** Interpreting the meaning of a situation with little or no evidence.

**Mind Reading:** Interpreting the thoughts and beliefs of others without adequate evidence. "She would not go on a date with me. She probably thinks I'm ugly."

**Fortune Telling:** The expectation that a situation will turn out badly without adequate evidence.

**Emotional Reasoning:** The assumption that emotions reflect the way things really are. "I feel like a bad friend, therefore I must be a bad friend."

**Disqualifying the Positive:** Recognizing only the negative aspects of a situation while ignoring the positive. One might receive many compliments on an evaluation, but focus on the single piece of negative feedback.

**"Should" Statements:** The belief that things should be a certain way. "I should always be friendly."

**All-or-Nothing Thinking:** Thinking in absolutes such as "always", "never", or "every". "I *never* do a good enough job on anything."

# Cognitive Distortions Continued

- 1) Think about a situation which led to a cognitive distortion
  - a. What thought led to that cognitive distortion?
- 2) Do these cognitive distortions impact symptoms of anxiety?
- 3) Use the CBT model to analyze this distortion
  - a. What was the thought?
  - b. What feeling was experienced?
  - c. What was the behavior/emotion?
  - d. Discuss Alternate Thoughts
    - i. Utilize a Thought Record

# Thought Record

Situation	Thoughts	Emotions	Behaviors	Alternate Thought

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# “Should” Statements

Using “should” appropriately versus using it unrealistically or unimportantly. (Shab, 2008).

## **Example #1:**

*“I should be using this time to study.”*

### **Counterstatements:**

My grades are good.

If I spend too much time studying, I will burn out.

It is probably healthier to use this time for self-care

***Therefore, this is an unrealistic “should” statement.***

## **Example #2:**

“I should have studied harder for this test.”

**In this situation, maybe it is the truth...you didn’t study enough, you didn’t use your time wisely...therefore it is a realistic “should” statement.**

Over the next week, make a list of “should” statements that you use in your day-to-day life.

Bring the list in, and we can go over the statements, create counterstatements, or identify if they are realistic statements that we can improve on.

# Socratic Questions

Thoughts are like a running dialogue in your brain. They come and go fast. So fast, in fact, that we rarely have the time to question them. Because our thoughts determine how we feel, and how we act, it's important to challenge any thoughts that cause us harm.

**Spend a moment thinking about each of the following questions, and record thorough responses. Elaborate, and explain "why" or "why not" in your responses.**

Thought to be questioned: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the evidence for this thought? Against it? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I basing this thought on facts, or on feelings? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this thought black and white, when reality is more complicated? \_\_\_\_\_

Could I be misinterpreting the evidence? Am I making any assumptions? \_\_\_\_\_

# Socratic Questions

Might other people have different interpretations of this same situation? What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I looking at all the evidence, or just what supports my thought? \_\_\_\_\_

Could my thought be an exaggeration of what's true? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I having this thought out of habit, or do the facts support it? \_\_\_\_\_

Did someone pass this thought / belief to me? If so, are they a reliable source? \_\_\_\_\_

Is my thought a *likely* scenario, or is it the *worst case* scenario? \_\_\_\_\_

## Countering Anxiety

Come up with a rational counterstatement for each of the following thoughts:

Anxiety-Producing Thought	Rational Counterstatement
I can't go to the mall with my hair like this--everyone will notice me.	<b>Example:</b> My hair looks a little messy, but everyone will be too occupied with other things to notice. Even if they do notice, I doubt they would care.
I know I won't be able to finish my work on time.	
I can't face my boss. She's going to yell at me.	

Next, think of three examples of anxiety-producing thoughts and rational counterstatements from your own life:

Anxiety-Producing Thought	Rational Counterstatement

## Supplemental Material/Worksheets

### References

Take a Deep Breath [Picture], [Breathing Pictures - Cliparts.co](#)

Fidget cube <https://clipartart.com/wallpaper/getimg.html>

Journal [Journal Clip Art - Cliparts.co](#)

Exercise [Workout Vector at GetDrawings | Free download](#)

Painting [All Cliparts: Painting Clipart Gallery \(clipartsall.blogspot.com\)](#)

Music [clipart-music-player-3.png \(1257×1280\) \(clipground.com\)](#)

Mindfulness [mindfulness clipart 10 free Cliparts | Download images on Clipground 2021](#)

Intervention and prevention [Anxiety-help-book-for-Teens.pdf \(theministryofparenting.com\) p.11](#)

Challenging Anxious Thoughts [Challenging Anxious Thoughts \(Worksheet\) | Therapist Aid](#)

Countering Anxiety [Countering Anxiety \(Thought Log\) \(Worksheet\) | Therapist Aid](#)

Cognitive Restructuring: Decatastrophizing [Cognitive Restructuring: Decatastrophizing \(Worksheet\) | Therapist Aid](#)

GAD-7 [Generalized Anxiety Disorder.pdf \(crossroadscounselingcenters.com\)](#)

Goal Planning [Goal Planning \(Worksheet\) | Therapist Aid](#)

My Fears [My Fears \(Worksheet\) | Therapist Aid](#)

Thought stopping p. 40-41 [Anxiety-help-book-for-Teens.pdf \(theministryofparenting.com\)](#)

What is anxiety [What is Anxiety? \(Worksheet\) | Therapist Aid](#)

Growth Mindset [Growth Mindset – Infinity Community Solutions Ltd \(infinitycs.org.au\)](#)

Thought Records <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/cognitive-restructuring>