

Anxiety

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Occasional anxiety is a normal human experience. However, if your feelings of anxiety are very strong or last for a long time, they can be overwhelming. You might also experience physical symptoms such as sleep problems and panic attacks. You might be diagnosed with a particular anxiety disorder, such as generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), social anxiety (social phobia), panic disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Most people feel anxious at times. It is particularly common to experience some anxiety while coping with stressful events or changes, especially if they could have a big impact on your life.

Anxiety can become a mental health problem if it affects your ability to live your life as fully as you want to. For example, it may be a problem if:

- your feelings of anxiety are very strong or last for a long time
- your fears or worries are out of proportion to the situation
- you avoid situations that might cause you to feel anxious
- your worries feel very distressing or are hard to control
- you regularly experience symptoms of anxiety, which could include panic attacks
- you find it hard to go about your everyday life or do things you enjoy.

The **Coping Skills: Anxiety** worksheet describes four strategies for reducing anxiety. Strategies include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, imagery, and challenging irrational thoughts. These coping strategies can help you deal with anxiety when it arises, as well as contributing to long-term anxiety relief. This worksheet includes a brief description and instructions on how to perform each skill.

The **Cycle of Anxiety** is when a person avoids a feared situation - whether through physical avoidance or otherwise - the uncomfortable symptoms of anxiety quickly fade away. Unfortunately, the relief doesn't last long. Next time, the anxiety will be worse. The brain thinks "Last time I avoided this situation, and that felt good." The desire to avoid a situation becomes increasingly difficult to resist.

Resources:

Social Anxiety Safety Behaviours

Anxiety Coping Skills

Challenging Anxious Thoughts

Countering Anxiety

The Cycle of Anxiety

Anxiety Detective

Anxiety and Panic Attacks

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/anxiety-and-panic-attacks/about-anxiety/>

11 Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/anxiety-disorder-symptoms>