

Coping with Anxiety

Session 2

Weekly check-in

- How has your week been overall?
- What's been positive about your week?
- How are you feeling today?



What about your target?

- Did you complete the relaxation link every day?
- How did you feel during the exercise?
- Could you adapt the exercise, maybe do it your favourite song that you find relaxing?

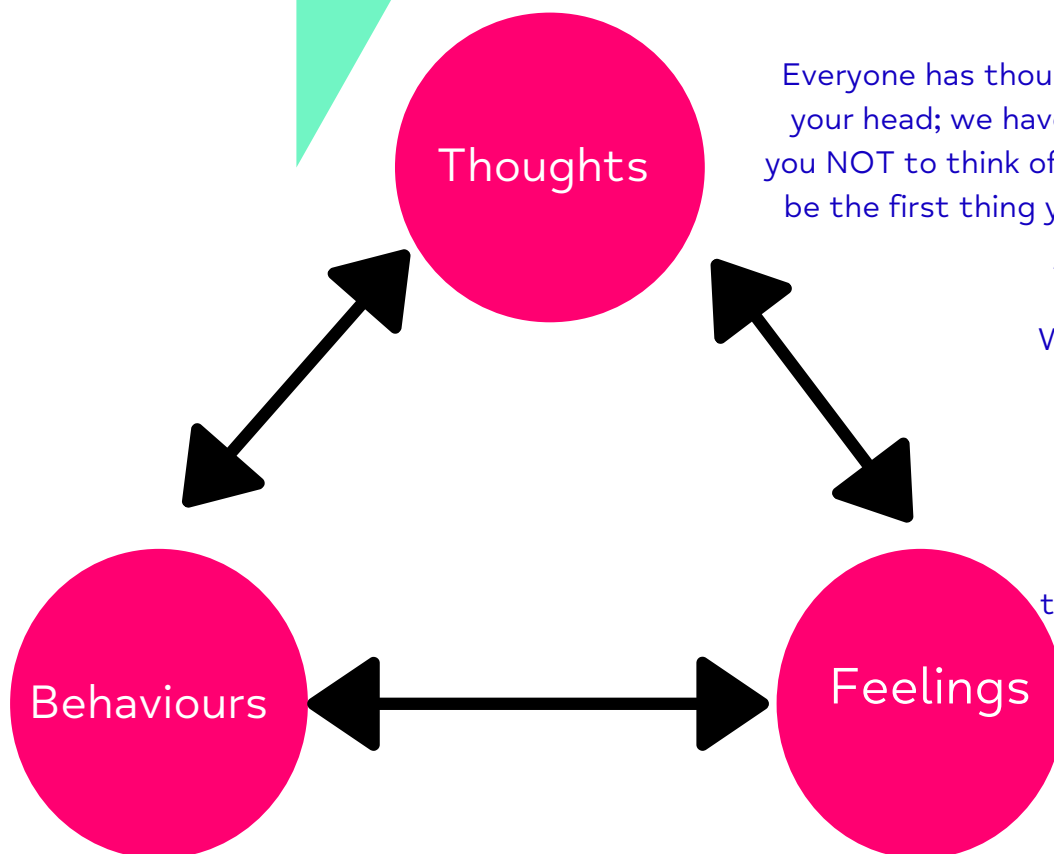


- Did you notice any changes that happened in your body when you felt anxious or worried?
- Do you feel more confident in knowing your personal Early Warning Signs to be able to start the relaxation exercise to help you feel calmer?

Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours

In this session, we will start to look at how we can break the cycle of and explore things we can do to start feeling better about ourselves.

Firstly take a look at this:



Thoughts:

Everyone has thoughts; things will always pop into your head; we have no control over them. If I told you NOT to think of an elephant, it would most likely be the first thing you think of. We are all human; it just happens.

When you feel anxious, you may have automatic negative thoughts like:

"I can't do this"

"What might people think?"

This is okay and out of our control; this is not where we break the cycle.



Feelings:

We have two types of feelings, our physical feelings and our emotional feelings.

When we are anxious, our physical feelings may present as our Early Warning Signs (we looked at these in session one). This is normal; it is our body trying to protect us.

Our emotional feelings when we experience anxiety can also be very very uncomfortable like worry, fear or sadness.

However we also DO NOT HAVE CONTROL over our feelings. This is not where we break the cycle. Feelings do not respond to efforts to try and control them; we have to let them pass on their own.

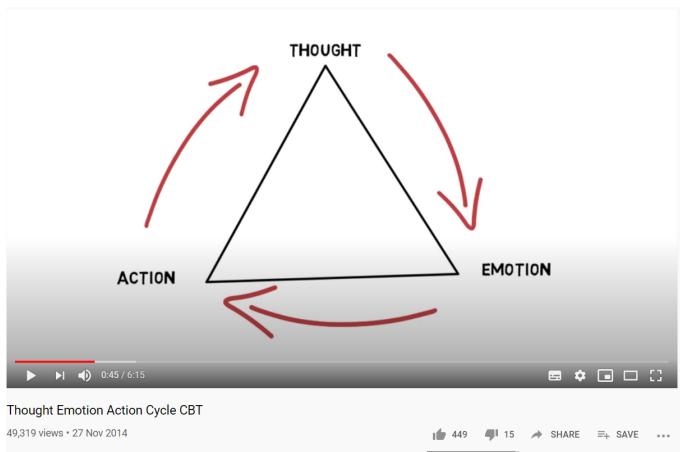
Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours

Behaviours:

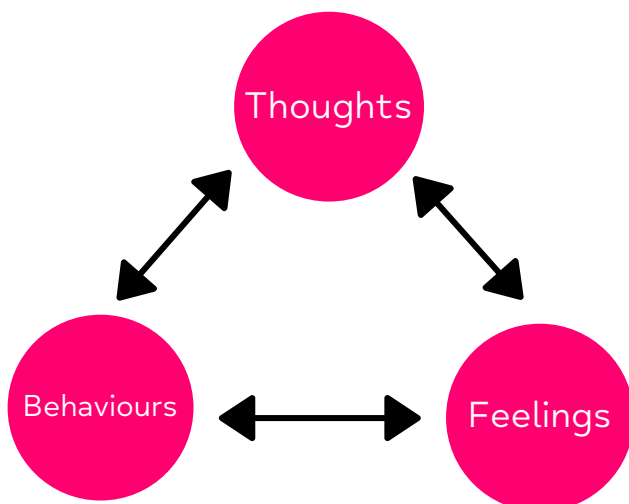
Our behaviours are all of the things that we do. All of our actions in life are behaviours. You may find that you do certain things when you have anxious thoughts or feelings, like bite your nails or pace around.

Behaviours is the most important part of this cycle because it's where we CAN CONTROL what we do.

All behaviours have an outcome and this can be either positive or negative. It is important that we are able to recognise our Early Warnings Signs and start completing some behaviours that will help us manage our anxiety, rather than make it worse. This can be really really hard and will take a lot of practice, but with commitment and hard work, you can do this!



Click on the video to watch a Youtube clip explaining the cycle.



Can you create your own example from a time you have felt anxious?
Did your behaviours continue the cycle?
What are the thoughts that usually trigger the cycle?

Helpful vs Unhelpful Coping Behaviours

As we looked at in the cycle earlier, often when we feel anxious, it can lead to unhelpful behaviours. By unhelpful coping behaviours, we mean things you do that actually causes the thoughts and feelings to last longer. We are now going to look at unhelpful coping behaviours and learn some alternatives.

Can you come up with a list of unhelpful vs helpful behaviour for anxiety ?

Unhelpful coping

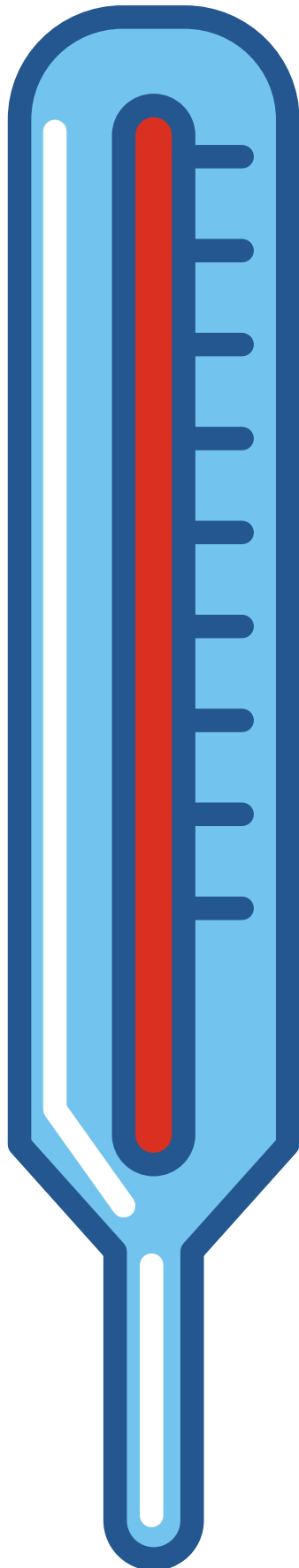
- Running away from or avoiding situations
- Not talking to people or trying to ignore our worries
- Harmful behaviours towards ourselves or others

Helpful Coping

- Breathing exercises
- Relaxation
- Talking to someone whom you trust
- Keeping a diary
- Listening to music



Helpful Coping Strategies



Extremely anxious, unable to function

Feeling overwhelmed,
repeatedly thinking about the
problem

Feeling physically uncomfortable,
unfocused and stressed

Feeling uneasy,
noticeable worry thoughts

Calm and content

By using a thermometer to scale our worries and anxieties,
it can help us in lots of different ways:

- Helps us to connect our thoughts, feelings and behaviours
- Help us to recognise our Early Warning Signs
- Builds our self-awareness
- Helps us to put our situations into perspective
- Helps us develop a self-management plan for those times where we do feel anxious

Weekly Targets

Replace your unhelpful behaviour with your new helpful coping skills when you feel anxious or start to recognise your Early Warning Signs.

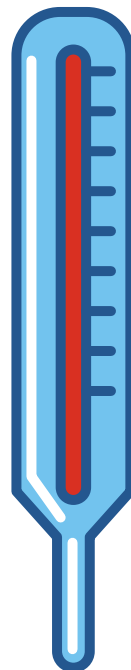
Remember the activity you did earlier about the unhelpful vs helpful coping strategies?

Remember your behaviour is a choice and will determine how you continue to feel. What are you going to do this week when you feel worried or scared that will be helpful to start to manage your anxiety?



Create your own Anxiety Thermometer

When and if you feel anxious, it can be really useful to keep a record of how we were feeling to help us the next time. Think of perhaps triggers to your anxiety and reflect upon them by creating your own anxiety thermometer



Remember, you should also be doing your targets from session one as well every day to help you to build your emotional resilience

Information Page

If you do feel that you need further support, please check out our dedicated young people section on our website for more resources and support.

<https://cwmind.org.uk/children-and-young-peoples-services-temporary-service/>



You can find resources, helplines and a Mental Health Survival Kit on our website by following this link:

<https://cwmind.org.uk/category/children-young-people-resources/>



Please aim to leave at least 5 days before completing session 3 of this workbook. This will give you time to change your unhelpful behaviours and start learning about your anxiety using your anxiety thermometer.