**Anxiety is a word we use to describe feelings of unease, worry and fear. It incorporates both the emotions and the physical sensations we might experience when we are worried or nervous about something. Although we usually find it unpleasant, anxiety is related to the ‘fight or flight’ response – our normal biological reaction to feeling threatened.”**

*Mind, “Anxiety and Panic Attacks”*

**Stress and Mood Management**

**Managing Anxiety and Panic**

Anxiety = \[rac{\text{Perceived Threat}}{\text{Perceived Ability to Cope}}\]

**Session Aims**

- To normalise the symptoms of anxiety and panic.
- To learn techniques to manage anxiety and panic.
- Learn to challenge our unhelpful thoughts.
- Begin to face our fears.

**Further Reading**

- Overcoming Anxiety by Helen Kennerley
- Overcoming Anxiety, Stress and Panic: A Five Areas Approach by Chris Williams
- Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway by Susan Jeffers

**Graded Exposure – Tips for success**

- Make it graded – don’t start with a task that is unachievable or overwhelming.
- Experience the anxiety – ensure you withdraw from any safety behaviours.
- Tolerate the anxiety – stay with it long enough for your anxiety to reduce by half.
- Keep doing it – repeat each step, building your confidence as you go.

**Home Practice**

- Add learning points to your Recovery Blueprint.
- Continue keeping a Thought Record and challenge your thinking.
- Try Graded Exposure.
- Practice relaxation and breathing techniques.

**Keeping Yourself Safe**

If you are feeling suicidal:

- Call NHS direct on 111
- Call the Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90
- In an emergency please go to A&E
## Challenging Tina’s Unhelpful Thinking

Try completing the Revised Thoughts column as if you were Tina. Avoiding giving advice, instead think about how Tina could think differently. Use the Challenging Questions to help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation or Trigger</th>
<th>Thoughts</th>
<th>Challenging Questions</th>
<th>Revised Thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have been asked to chair a meeting at work.</td>
<td>Colleagues will ask questions and I won’t know the answers.</td>
<td>• Is this fact, or just a thought?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will go red and everyone will notice.</td>
<td>• Is there another way of looking at this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I must perform perfectly or my colleagues will think I’m stupid.</td>
<td>• What unhelpful thinking habit is this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m just not good enough at my job.</td>
<td>• What would someone else make of it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What advice could Tina give someone else?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What evidence exists that proves Tina’s thoughts are true?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Where is thinking like this getting Tina?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the possible pros and cons of holding these beliefs for Tina?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the ways people try to cope with high levels of anxiety is by often looking to avoid the situations which trigger it. However, by not exposing ourselves to these situations we never get the chance to disconfirm our fears. This is where Graded Exposure Therapy can help.

**Tips for using Graded Exposure**

- **Plan your goal.** Be clear about what it is you want to achieve.
- **Make it graded.** Don’t start with a task that is unachievable or overwhelming otherwise you might make the problem worse for yourself.
- **Keep doing it.** Repeat each step, building confidence with each step that you can manage your anxiety.
- **Experience the anxiety.** Ensure you withdraw from using any safety behaviours when you are doing a task as this will prevent you from facing up to the source of your anxiety.
- **Tolerate the anxiety.** Stay with it long enough for your anxiety to naturally begin to fall until it reduces by half.
## Stress and Mood Management
### Graded Exposure Worksheet

**My Goal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Anxiety Rating (0 – 100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Difficulty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session Name: Managing Anxiety and Panic

What did you find useful from today’s session?

What were the key learning points for you?

What techniques are going to try over the next week?

What coping strategies did you learn today that you don’t want to forget about?

What information would be useful to remember in the future to help manage your wellbeing?