

Wellness Suite - Workbook

HOW DO I DEAL WITH MY WORRY

A self-guided plan for understanding and
managing anxious thoughts and feelings

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Welcome

Anxiety can be a scary feeling, especially when we are unable to keep it under control. This workbook will help you understand and view anxiety in a less intimidating way. You will learn 3 different methods used to cope with anxiety and guidance on how to practice these skills.

At the end of this workbook you will...

1. Understand anxiety and how it shows up in your life
2. Learn 3 coping methods that really work and are easy to practice
3. Have a clear weekly routine that helps you feel less anxious and more in control



An Introduction to Anxiety

Anxiety is the fear of the unknown. We become anxious when we think about past and/or present events and how they may affect our future. This is a very expected, and in many situations helpful, reaction to uncertainty of what will happen because we want to know what to do to prepare for the future.

In 2019, more than 15% of Americans reported experiencing mild, moderate, or severe symptoms of anxiety in the past two weeks. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a 25% increase in the occurrence of anxiety and depression around the world.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to see if anxiety is something that affects your life:

1. Do you tend to "overthink things" and have difficulty stopping?
2. Is it uncomfortable for you when you don't have a plan, schedule, or itinerary for upcoming events or situations?
3. Does your mind typically jump to a worst case scenario?
4. Are you consistently worrying about your actions and what people may think about you?

1 in 3 adults experiences anxiety that interferes with their daily life



If you find those questions ring true to you, then the information in this workbook may be of help. This workbook introduces three different methods to deal with anxiety. It provides explanations and exercises to give you a basic understanding of each approach and see what is most helpful for you. There are also tips on how to make changes and work toward your goals, and additional resources to help you continue your journey toward a better you.

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1. Skills
 - a. Mindfulness
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2. Self-care plan
3. Resources



skills to help you

MASTER YOUR ANXIETY

01

Mindfulness Keeps Us Present

Anxiety keeps us focused on the future or worrying about the past - mindfulness bring us to back to center



02

Thinking New Thoughts

Our mind tells us the story of why we feel the way we do but we can rewrite the story to create a calmer experience

03

Actions Can Change Feelings

Moving your body, engaging in new activities, and finding the small pleasures in life can slow our anxious thoughts and feelings

Big changes start with small steps.



finding your center
Mindfulness Matters



This section will teach you about Mindfulness. It will help you understand the concept and ways to use it in your daily life. The goal is help you be more aware of what is happening within you in-the-moment so that you can be more purposeful in your actions.

What is Mindfulness?

The basic idea of mindfulness is to be "in-the-moment" of whatever is happening. If we focus on what is happening within ourselves or with our surroundings at this very moment, we stop thinking about everything else, like the past and future. When we start thinking about all the things that happened or will happen, we start feeling all the feels.

We may regret what we said to someone, be disappointed in something we did, or feel hopeless about change. Those feelings can occur and even stack on top of each other. Our anxiety then steadily increases about what will happen, the worst-case-scenario, and all the things that can and will go wrong. If we can just pay attention to what is happening at this moment, this second, right now, right now, right now, then life is bearable.

Notice what is happening in our bodies, the colors we see, what we smell, the feel of the clothes on our bodies. Instead of judging ourselves, we silently observe. This way, we can recognize something, acknowledge its existence, and move to the next piece of information. This helps to remove anxiety and introduce calm and understanding.



CLOUDS

Find a comfortable position and close your eyes. Bring your attention to breath as you inhale and exhale. Notice your body and if there are any areas of tension. If there are, take a moment to focus on that area and as you breathe out, allow the tension to leave with your breath.

As your body relaxes, imagine you're in a place where you feel at peace the most. This could be outside on a field of grass, on a beach, or in your bed. It's a sunny day and you look up from the field or out of a window.

The skies are clear, the temperature is just right, and you are exactly where you need to be. You notice puffy white clouds floating along and coming into view.

You watch as the clouds float by, one by one. Notice the shapes and sizes of each cloud. Notice the speed at which they're moving. Are they close together, scattered?

Now imagine each cloud represents a thought or feeling. Look at a cloud and take a moment to see whether this cloud is a feeling or thought.



CLOUDS

How does the cloud represent your thought or feeling? Are words appearing on it? Is it taking a different shape? Has the color of the cloud changed? How fast is it moving?

Recognize its presence and acknowledge that it is present within you at this moment. Watch as it moves along, and as you come to the end of that cloud, shift your attention to the next cloud.

As you watch the clouds floating by, identify what the clouds represents, acknowledge that it exists, and continue moving on to the next cloud.

When you're ready, slowly bring your attention back to your body and your breath.

Then, slowly bring your attention back to this moment and open your eyes.

[CLICK HERE TO
DOWNLOAD AUDIO](#)



Weekly Mindfulness Planner

SUNDAY:

MONDAY:

TUESDAY:

WEDNESDAY:

THURSDAY:

FRIDAY:

SATURDAY:

NOTE:



Complete Guide to Thinking New Thoughts



What we think and the way we perceive situations significant affects how we feel. This section aims at helping you find different ways to address those thoughts that may be "maladaptive", "intrusive", or seem to unending. You will have an opportunity to practice changing the way you think to help change the way you feel.



How Thoughts Relate to Feelings

When anxiety occurs, people are likely focusing on all the negative/unhelpful thought and worst-case scenarios. These thoughts overshadow the positive/helpful ones and can quickly become overwhelming

Various emotions begin to arise as we are steadily buried by this mountain of unhelpful thoughts. If that wasn't enough, we start losing track of our all the different feelings because so many things are running through our minds by the second.

So what does our body do? It clumps all our feelings into one - anxiety.

Our brains tend to jump to all the negative thoughts because that's what it's used to. Therefore, what we need to do is retrain how our brain works. It can be difficult in the beginning, but like any other skill, the more you practice, the easier it gets.

An effective way to deal with anxious thoughts is to come up with reasons (counter statements) and/or facts (contradicting evidence) that disproves, or decreases the likelihood, of the unhelpful thought.



What Else Might Be True?

Imagine you're in a grocery store and people are staring and laughing in your direction. This may cause you to start feeling anxious because you may think they are laughing at you. Maybe it's your outfit, something you did, or what you have in your cart.

With counter statements, the goal would be to come up with any other reason someone could be laughing while looking in your direction. They could be laughing about something behind you. They could be talking about a show they saw and thought was funny. Maybe they're playing a game to see who could make the other person laugh first and someone just said something extremely funny.

Drawing on past experiences or facts you know will help you come up with contradicting evidence. You might think about a time when you and a friend were in a store and saw a funny sign or product and were laughing about it. There may have been times when you're just walking around and suddenly think of something that happened a few days ago and randomly bust out laughing.

The more ideas you come up with, the less likely you are to focus on the worrisome thought. This should then decrease your anxiety and hopefully even bring you joy and laughter.



Learning to Change Your Behavior



It may sound so simple that it's unbelievable, but getting up and moving around can help improve our moods. In this section, we talk about how movement can actually cause changes within us even at the biological level. Then, we take some time to find things that can actually work for you.

Changing Behavior Can Change Anxiety

Another widely used method to deal with anxiety is to do stuff. Yep, do stuff. When we do things, our minds are thinking about the thing we're doing. Similar to mindfulness, if we're thinking about what we're doing, we aren't able to think about the things that bring us anxiety. In a way, we're distracting ourselves from our worries.

An added benefit to doing things is that when we are active, our bodies literally change. It starts to activate different parts of our brain and bodily functions that can affect our mood. Movement can also trigger our bodies to produce dopamine and serotonin. Both of these are related to feelings such as reward, motivation, satisfaction, and happiness.

It may be difficult figuring out what we can do that will actually improve our moods. Identifying things you need or things you like/like to do are great ways to start. Reasonably, if you do things that meet your needs or are related to things you like, you will feel enjoyment and fulfillment. This should help decrease feelings of anxiety and improve your mood.



Time For Some Action

Review your wants and needs and now let's change some behaviors. List 3 things you want or need to feel less anxious and an action you can take to make that happen.

Want/Need

Behavior I Can Try to Make it Happen

Want/Need

Behavior I Can Try to Make it Happen

Want/Need

Behavior I Can Try to Make it Happen



Tips for Setting up Your Anxiety Self Care Plan

01

Give a Tip for Creating a Regular Habit

Creating new habits can be difficult and even discouraging. A way to help us maintain hope and motivation is to redefine successes. Try viewing success as any positive change instead of whether we reach the goal. If the goal is to exercise more, then just opening the door and stepping outside can be a success if you typically just stay indoors.

02

Give a Tip for Daily/Weekly/Monthly Habit

Define exactly what it is you're trying to accomplish. Saying you're going to be "healthier" may be unhelpful because it can mean so many things. However, if you say you're going to only eat out 3 times a week or exercise 2 days a week, it becomes more manageable. You can also measure your progress more accurately.



Tips for Setting up Your continued...

Anxiety Self Care Plan

03

Give a Tip for Daily/Weekly/Monthly Habit

Make sure you come up with achievable habits. It may sound like a good idea to exercise 5 days a week or cook every meal, but is it actually doable. Think about all aspects of your life and the time and energy needed. This will allow you to set a realistic goal you're more likely to achieve, which will help keep you motivated.

04

Give a Tip for Daily/Weekly/Monthly Habit

Every little bit counts. To run a mile, you have to take a lot of steps. One less step means you're one step away from a mile. If you want to start waking up earlier, just setting an alarm can count as a step toward that habit. Opening your eyes when the alarm goes off could be the next step. Celebrate those accomplishments because the more you can do those things, the more likely you'll actually get up early.



My Anxiety Self Care Plan

Daily Habits

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Weekly or Monthly Habits

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*The goal is not to stop yourself
from ever being anxious... it is
to move from reacting to your
worry to responding with your
head and your heart.*



Some Helpful Resources



The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook by Edmund J. Bourne

The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook by Edmund J. Bourne, PhD

This book has a lot of educational information about anxiety and multiple techniques to cope with it.



UCLA Guided Meditations - Audio

University of California Guided Meditations

This website provides various mindfulness meditation recordings and are even available in different languages.



Therapy is Not A Dirty Word

Therapy is not a dirty word

<https://therapyisnotadirtyword.com>





When it's time to Choose a Therapist

This workbook is a great resource to help you start the process of coping with your anxiety. However, it may not be enough for some people. If any of these are true for you, it may be helpful to reach out to therapist for additional support:

1. The material doesn't make sense or they don't work.
2. The skills are helpful but anxiety is still extremely disruptive to your life.
3. Anxiety prevents you from using these skills or completing general responsibilities.
4. You are experiencing panic attacks.

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- [AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION](#)
- [GROUP THERAPY ASSOCIATES](#)
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