

# *Anxiety in Later Life*



# *What is Anxiety?*



Anxiety is what we feel when we're worried, tense, or afraid about things that are currently happening, or things that we think could happen in the future.

Anxiety is a natural human response when we feel that we are under threat. It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.



# *What are the symptoms?*



## **Symptoms are different for everyone!**

Some common experiences are;

- Feeling extremely nervous
- Excessive worrying
- Being withdrawn
- Getting tired easily
- Increased heart rate and/or chest pain
- Abdominal pain
- Problems with thinking, memory, making decisions
- Disturbed sleep
- Feeling tense, uptight or irritable
- Low mood



# *Depression and Anxiety*



**Unfortunately Depression and Anxiety can often go hand in hand.**

We all feel low or out of sorts every once in a while, but if these feelings last a long time or keep returning, or if they start to impact your day-to-day life, you should seek professional support because this could be depression.

## *Symptoms of Depression*

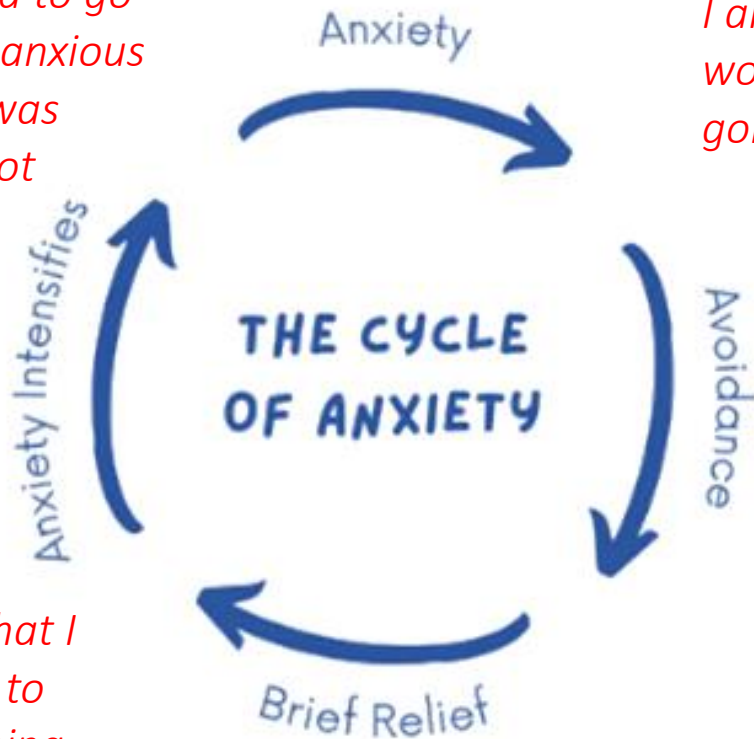
- feeling less able to talk to people
- Preferring to be alone
- losing interest in things
- crying more than usual
- feeling pessimistic, hopeless or guilty
- having difficulty getting restful sleep
- not wanting to get out of bed
- having difficulty motivating yourself to wash and dress
- changes in appetite
- not taking your medication as directed
- low sex drive
- drinking more alcohol than usual
- feeling tired
- losing confidence in yourself and feeling life is pointless
- having suicidal thoughts.

# The cycle of Anxiety



*Next time I need to go out I feel more anxious as this feeling was reinforced by not going out last time.*

*I feel relieved that I no longer have to worry about going out*



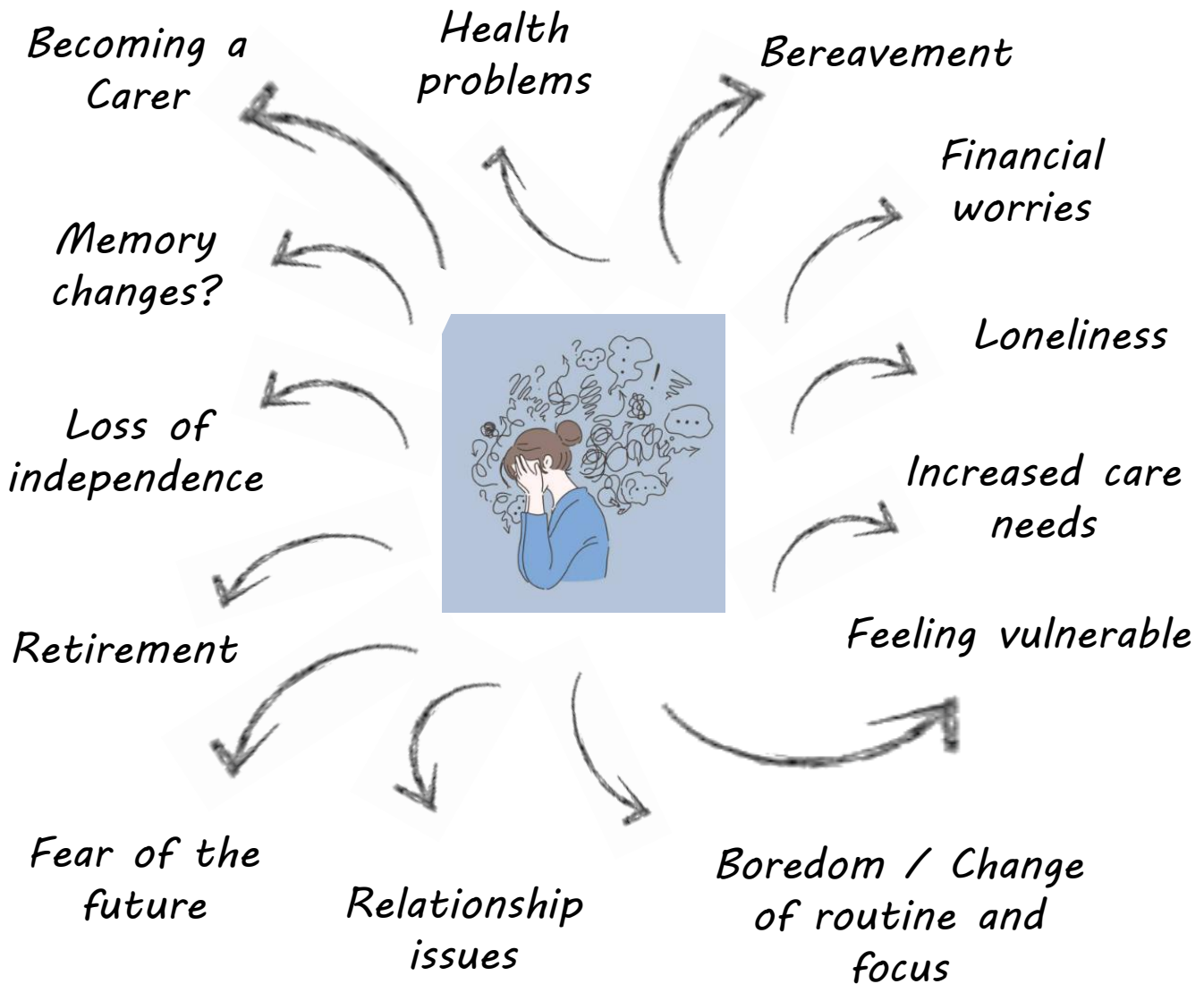
*I am feeling worried about going out*

*I decide not to go out even though I need to or want to*

1. Anxiety is triggered – physical and mental symptoms start
2. Avoidance – physical or mentally avoid the feelings of anxiety or cause of anxiety
3. Short term relief – feelings of relief but these behaviours result in negative reinforcement
4. Anxiety intensifies – by reinforcing the need to feel anxious, this results in an increase in anxiety longer term.

*Try to break the cycle!*

# What can cause Anxiety?



Sometimes, there might not be an obvious reason for how you're feeling. It is often a combination of things.

# My Anxiety...



Firstly, think about some of the things in your own life that could be contributing to your anxiety?

Ask yourself some of these questions...

How is my physical health?

How much social contact do I have and how much do I want?

How much time do I spend on my own?

Do I have regular contact with friends or family?

Have I experienced a bereavement or maybe multiple bereavements?

How often do I get out of my home?

Do I have any hobbies?

Are there specific things I am worrying about, such as money or my health?

Once you have recognised anything that may be contributing, you can start to make some changes to focus on these areas.



# Physical Health



Long-term physical conditions are those which can't currently be cured but can be managed with medication or other treatment. They are also known as chronic conditions. Examples include diabetes, asthma, arthritis, epilepsy, chronic fatigue, COPD, high blood pressure. They also include a number of issues that are simply common in older age such as issues with eye sight, hearing, mobility.

**Chronic conditions are more common in older people (58% of people over 60 compared to 14% of people under 40.**

Having a long-term physical condition can lead to social isolation, low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. You may feel tired, frustrated, worried or stressed, especially when dealing with pain, tests, treatments or flare-ups.

Research shows that people with long-term physical conditions are more than twice as likely to develop mental ill-health, which can then make it harder for you to cope with your physical health condition.



# Physical Health Support



Although not always possible, exercise is a great way of helping with our physical health. Age UK East Grinstead have a range of classes which can help to help improve some physical health conditions by doing light exercise.



## Activities at Glen Vue\*



MORNING

AFTERNOON

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Balance & Bone Health 9:30-10:15AM  Standing Pilates 10:30-11:15AM  Dementia Services 10-1:15PM (PRE-BOOKED ONLY)	Tai Chi 10-11AM  Chair Exercise 11:15AM-12:00PM  Lounge Activities 10AM-12:15PM	Standing Pilates 9:30-10:15AM  Zumba Gold 10:30-11:15AM  Computer Drop In 10AM-12PM  Dementia Services 10-3PM (PRE-BOOKED ONLY)	Standing Pilates 9:30-10:15AM  Chair Exercise 11:30AM-12:15PM  Dementia Services 10-3PM (PRE-BOOKED ONLY)	Tai Chi Beginners 10-11AM  Table Tennis 10:30AM-12PM  Lounge Activities 10AM-12:15PM
CAFE OPEN 10AM-3PM ALL WEEK				
CLOSED	Lounge Bingo 1:30-3PM	Knit & Natter 1:30-3PM  Memory Cafe 2-4PM	Dementia Services 10-3PM (PRE-BOOKED ONLY)	Fish & Chip Bingo 1:30-3PM  Please call to book a space

\*All activities are chargeable, please contact us on 01342 327046 for more details



# Physical Health Support



Jubilee Community Centre have a range of activities available:

## **Short Mat Bowls**

Bowls happens on Monday Afternoons from 2-4pm

Contact [office@jcceg.co.uk](mailto:office@jcceg.co.uk)

## **Sugar Plum Seniors**

A gentle ballet class for the over 60's carefully designed to lengthen out the spin, energise the body and lift the spirits. Katie is a full qualified ballet teacher with 35 years of experience & Silver swan licence holder.

Contact: [katie\\_ahmed@hotmail.com](mailto:katie_ahmed@hotmail.com) / 07557957029

Monday's 2-3pm and Thursday's 10 – 11am

## **Move it or Lose it**

Fitness for Older Adults

Wednesdays 11:45-12:45

Contact: Tracey [tracey.dowling@moveitorloseit.co.uk](mailto:tracey.dowling@moveitorloseit.co.uk)

07857 003219



# Physical Health Support



## Specific support for Physical Health Struggles

There are some phenomenal charities out there that can provide really specific support for many health conditions so it is always worth having a look and getting in contact with these.

Examples are;

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/> - Alzheimer's and Dementia

<https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/> - Parkinsons

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/> - Diabetes

<https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/> - Lung and Breathing Conditions

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/> - Cancer Support

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/> - For Blind and Sight Loss

<https://nras.org.uk/> - For Rheumatoid Arthritis

## Acceptance

Sometimes we simply need to find an element of acceptance of older age and physical health conditions. Speaking with a counsellor can help to find acceptance so you are able to live your life to the fullest, whatever your limitations.



# Bereavement



**Research has uncovered that close to half of bereaved people experience poor mental health – such as feelings of depression or anxiety – following the death of a loved one.**

Looking into why bereavement causes feelings of poor mental health, we found that a third of the respondents felt they were unable to open up about their grief to those around them – despite ‘being able to talk freely’ being listed by those surveyed as the number one action that would be most likely to help them following the death of a loved one.

Almost a third of people who had experienced a bereavement said that their friends and family stopped asking how they were feeling after just three weeks of being bereaved; yet close to two thirds stated that society’s assumption that there was an end to the grieving period was simply untrue.

*There is no ‘timeline’ for Grief*



# Support for Bereavement



## **Marie Curie – Telephone Bereavement Support**

0800 090 2309

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/bereavement>

## **Sue Ryder – Online Bereavement Support**

<https://www.sueryder.org/grief-support/online-bereavement-support/>

## **Cruse Bereavement**

Provides free bereavement support on a one-to-one basis for anyone (including children) bereaved by death in West Sussex.

They also hold 'Understanding Your Bereavement' sessions once a month, alternating between their Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Crawley, Horsham, Chichester and Arun branches. These sessions will provide information on the natural stages of grief along with providing more detail on other services available.

[0808 808 1677](tel:08088081677)



# *Support for Bereavement*



## **In person Grief support in East Grinstead areas;**

### **Solace**

Solace is a bereavement group for mutual support and meets at 2.30pm every 1st Wednesday in the month in St Swithun's Church Hall.

Bereavement of any kind is hard to cope with but losing a loved one can be especially difficult. With this in mind, St. Swithun's offers 'Solace' - an opportunity for company and friendship over a cup of tea.

'Solace' means comfort or relief and support, and the aim of our meeting together is to provide just that. When we lose someone we love, the friendship and understanding of others who have faced a similar experience can be very helpful.

Any questions - Email Isabella

[admin@swithun.org.uk](mailto:admin@swithun.org.uk)

The Parish Office is open Monday to Friday 9.30am - 12.00pm.

# Support for Bereavement



## **Interim**

Interim is a small friendly bereavement support group that meets in the Holy Trinity Church Hall, Forest Row at 10.30am on the 3rd Tuesday of every month for coffee & chat.

Bereavement is often best understood by those who have experienced it, this group is a place where you can gather to begin to learn how to go on.

If you would like to know more about this local support group please contact:

**Lin Smith** [01342 823550](tel:01342823550)

**Revd Angela** 01342 458263

## **THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF CRAWLEY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT**

The Bereavement Support Group aims to provide a chance for you to do just that. It is not a large group meeting nor is it one-to-one counselling. It provides an opportunity for you to talk freely about your loss and perhaps by listening and sharing your experience with others, find something to help you cope more easily with your grief.

The Crawley Parish volunteers who coordinate the 'Drop-In' are friendly people who try to be good listeners and do their best to make you feel welcome. Tea /Coffee and biscuits are provided.

For further information you can contact:

Jane [01293 516758](tel:01293516758) Email: [janegooderson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janegooderson@hotmail.co.uk)

# Loneliness



**Loneliness can significantly impact anxiety, often leading to increased anxiety symptoms, feelings of social isolation, and a cycle of fear and avoidance.**

- Loneliness can trigger or worsen anxiety symptoms like worry, nervousness, and difficulty concentrating.
- Loneliness can lead to social isolation, which can further fuel anxiety, as individuals may fear social interactions or negative judgments from others.
- Loneliness and anxiety can create a vicious cycle where feelings of loneliness lead to avoidance of social situations, which in turn further isolates individuals and exacerbates their anxiety.
- Loneliness can contribute to negative thought patterns and a sense of being misunderstood or unwanted, which can amplify anxiety.
- Chronic loneliness can also have negative impacts on physical health, including sleep problems, a weakened immune system, and increased risk of chronic diseases, which can further contribute to anxiety.
- Research suggests a bi-directional relationship between loneliness and anxiety, where loneliness can worsen anxiety, and conversely, anxiety can lead to feelings of loneliness and social isolation.
- Recognizing the connection between loneliness and anxiety is crucial for seeking appropriate support and interventions, such as therapy, social activities, and building healthy relationships.

# Support for Loneliness



**Call free on 0800 4 70 80 90**

The Silver Line Helpline run by Age UK is a free, confidential telephone service for older people. We provide friendship, conversation and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Age UK

Provide a huge amount of support, including the Silver Line telephone line where you can talk to someone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Glen Vue is the local Age UK Community Hub and they have a lot of activities and support on offer. Call them on 01342 327046 to discuss



Glen Vue  
Community Hub

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# Support for Loneliness



## **Crawley Down, Copthorne, Turners Hill**

Monday Club – Every Monday 10.30am to 2pm

The Haven Centre, Crawley Down

£8 includes coffee and 2 course meal

[www.crawleydownmonday.club](http://www.crawleydownmonday.club)

## **Forest Row**

Thursday Club – Every First and Third Thursday

2.00pm – 3.30pm

The Community Centre, Forest Row

£2 includes tea and cake

[www.forestrow.gov.uk/Thursday-Club](http://www.forestrow.gov.uk/Thursday-Club)

## **East Grinstead – Jubilee Community Centre**

Link Up Lunches - A lunch for those aged 65 and Older, this takes place on the third Tuesday of every month.

Contact [office@jcceg.co.uk](mailto:office@jcceg.co.uk) or ring 01342 328 334 to book your place.



# Change of Routine



A change in routine such as retirement, no longer being needed for childcare or simply not doing as much as you used to can trigger a number of unexpected mental health struggles such as feelings of anxiety, low mood and stress.

**It is important to remember that if you do not keep your mind busy and active then naturally your mind will start to ruminate over small things.**

You may never have experienced anxiety in your life, but start to experience it now, in later life and this can come with a lot of feelings of shame and confusion.

**There is nothing wrong with you and you can help yourself but you need to do it with kindness and by making small changes.**

**What is one thing you can do today that brings you joy?**



# *Support for change of routine*



There are a lot of activities that you can get involved in to help reduce boredom, help with loneliness and to build interests and connections.

## **Hobbies –**

**Glen Vue have a lot of activities including:**

Arts & Crafts  
Gardening Club  
Zumba  
Tai Chi  
Chair Pilates

Call them on 01342 327046 to discuss

**East Grinstead Library have regular free activities such as:**

Board Games  
Knit and Natter  
Relax with colouring  
Talking Pages Reading Group  
Call them on 01342 332900 to discuss



# Why does it happen and how can I help myself?



**Anxiety** can happen because your **body senses fear** and prepares itself for an emergency.

This is known as the '**fight, flight or freeze**' response.

We can help our body and mind when this happens by **enabling our body to relax** and feel safe by regulating our nervous system.

There are lots of different techniques and coping strategies that you can use to help with anxiety.

Lets learn some of these techniques together.



# Grounding Techniques



5, 4, 3, 2, 1 method

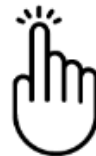
## My 5 steps to a calmer me



5 things I can see.



4 things I can touch.



3 things I can hear.



2 things I can smell.



1 thing I can taste.



# Grounding Techniques



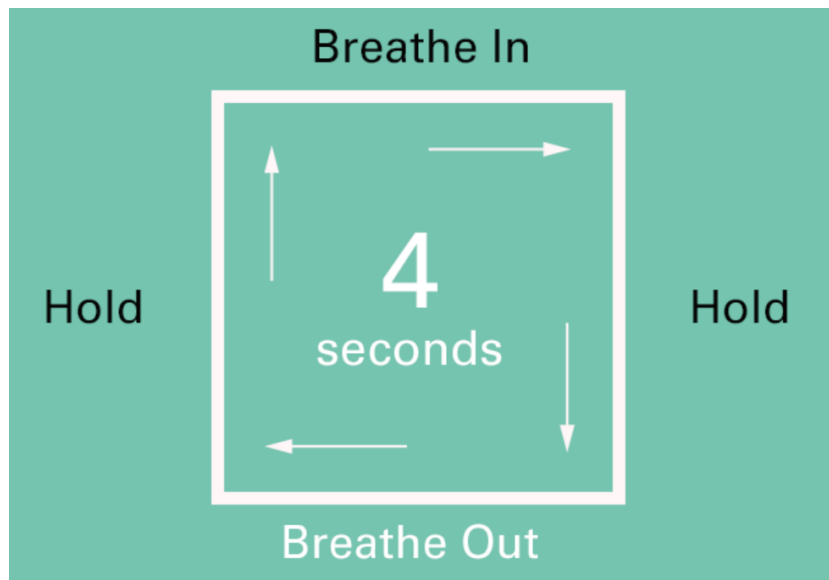
## Body Awareness

1. Take 5 long, deep breaths through your nose, and exhale through puckered lips.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Curl and uncurl your toes several times. Spend a moment noticing the sensations in your feet.
3. Stomp your feet on the ground several times. Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and legs as you make contact with the ground.
4. Clench your hands into fists, then release the tension. Repeat this 10 times.
5. Press your palms together. Press them harder and hold this pose for 15 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension in your hands and arms.
6. Rub your palms together briskly. Notice and sound and the feeling of warmth.
7. Reach your hands over your head like you're trying to reach the sky. Stretch like this for 5 seconds. Bring your arms down and let them relax at your sides.
8. Take 5 more deep breaths and notice the feeling of calm in your body.

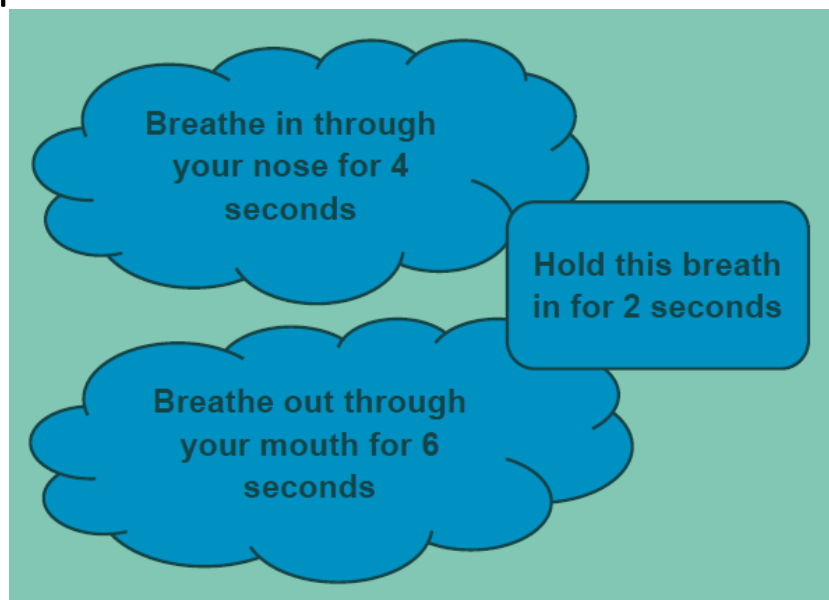
# Breathing Techniques



Box Breathing – trace the shape of a box in the air whilst you regulate your breathing



Longer out breath – regulate your breathing with a longer out breath



# Distraction Techniques



- ★ Think of as many animals as you can that begin with the letter A... Then B.... Then C (for as long as you need to
  - ★ Do a puzzle – a crossword or Suduko or Jigsaw puzzle
  - ★ Get outside and listen to the birds – try to count as many as you can
  - ★ Try counting backwards from 100 in 7s (or something like this – it challenges your brain and distracts it!)
  - ★ Choose 3 of the categories below and name as many as you can from each category
- |              |           |          |                     |
|--------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Movies       | Countries | Books    | Cereals             |
| Sports Teams | Colors    | Cars     | Fruits & Vegetables |
| Animals      | Cities    | TV Shows | Famous People       |
- ★ Do some colouring – get some adult colouring books as a way of helping calm your mind and keep it busy.
  - ★ Talk to someone – nothing is quite as distracting as engaging in conversation so go and find a neighbour or call a friend or family member

# Thought Challenge



Anxiety can be magnified by irrational thoughts. For example, the thoughts that “something bad will happen” or “I will make a mistake” might lack evidence, but still have an impact on how you feel. By examining the evidence and challenging these thoughts, you can reduce anxiety.

*Ask yourself these questions...*

“Is my thought based on facts or feelings?”

“How would my best friend see this situation?”

“How likely is it that my fear will come true?”

“What’s *most likely* to happen?”

“If my fear comes true, will it still matter in a week? A month? A year?”

# *Positive Affirmations*



As well as seeking reassurance from others, it is useful to learn how to reassure yourself in times of anxiety. It can be tempting to surrender to these feelings of despair, but adopting and repeating positive mantras will help you reframe the way you see things.

## *Examples of positive affirmations;*

- This is just anxiety, nothing more.
- This feeling will pass.
- I am safe and I can help myself feel even safer
- I am becoming calmer with each breath.
- I am in control.

*What other affirmations can you think of that feel reassuring to you?*

# Gratitude



Research has proven that focusing on the positives and being thankful for what we have in our lives, rather than the things we are lacking or struggling with can have a huge impact on our mental wellbeing.

*Write down 3 things each day you are grateful for*

Someone whose company I enjoy..

The best part about today...

A reason to be excited for the future...

A valuable lesson I learnt...

Someone who I admire...

Something beautiful I saw...

A fun experience I had...

An act of kindness I witnessed, received or gave to someone else...

Someone I can always rely on...

Something I can be proud of...

An unexpected good thing that happened...

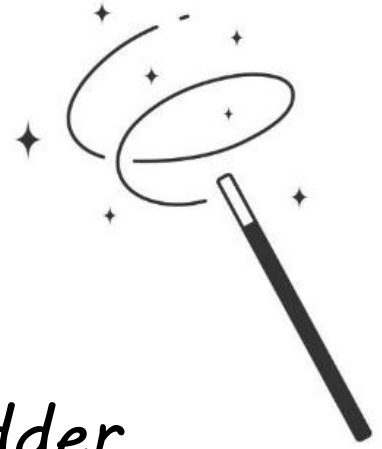
An experience I feel lucky to have had...

# Expectations

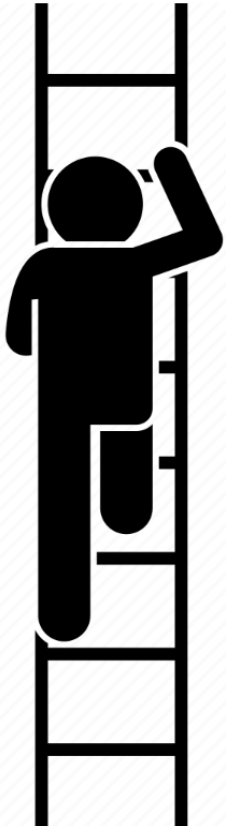


These techniques are not a magic wand.

They are not going to just magically make your anxiety disappear.



*Think of it like a ladder*



It is best to come down a ladder one step at a time.

Give your anxiety a score between 1 and 10

Try to bring your anxiety down by one step at a time.

What can I do to bring myself from a 7 to a 6?

From a 6 to a 5?

What can I do to help myself feel safe?

*How can I help myself? How have I managed up until now?*

# *Final thoughts...*



Be kind to yourself....

Anxiety is a completely normal human experience, which is a lot more common than you feel it is. You are not alone in this and there is nothing wrong with you. You are not “stupid” for feeling like this and telling yourself this just makes it worse. Talk to yourself in a kind voice and with kind words, like you would a friend. Because you deserve kindness.

**You'll never change  
your life until you  
change something  
you do daily. The  
secret of your  
success is found in  
your daily routine.**