

Journey to Wellbeing Session Three Workbook



Course Overview

Session 1: Identifying Symptoms, Introduction to CBT, Routine Regulation, and Goals

Session 2: Changing Behaviours (Behavioural Activation and Physical Activity)

Session 3: Changing Behaviours (panic and exposure, worry management, and problem solving)

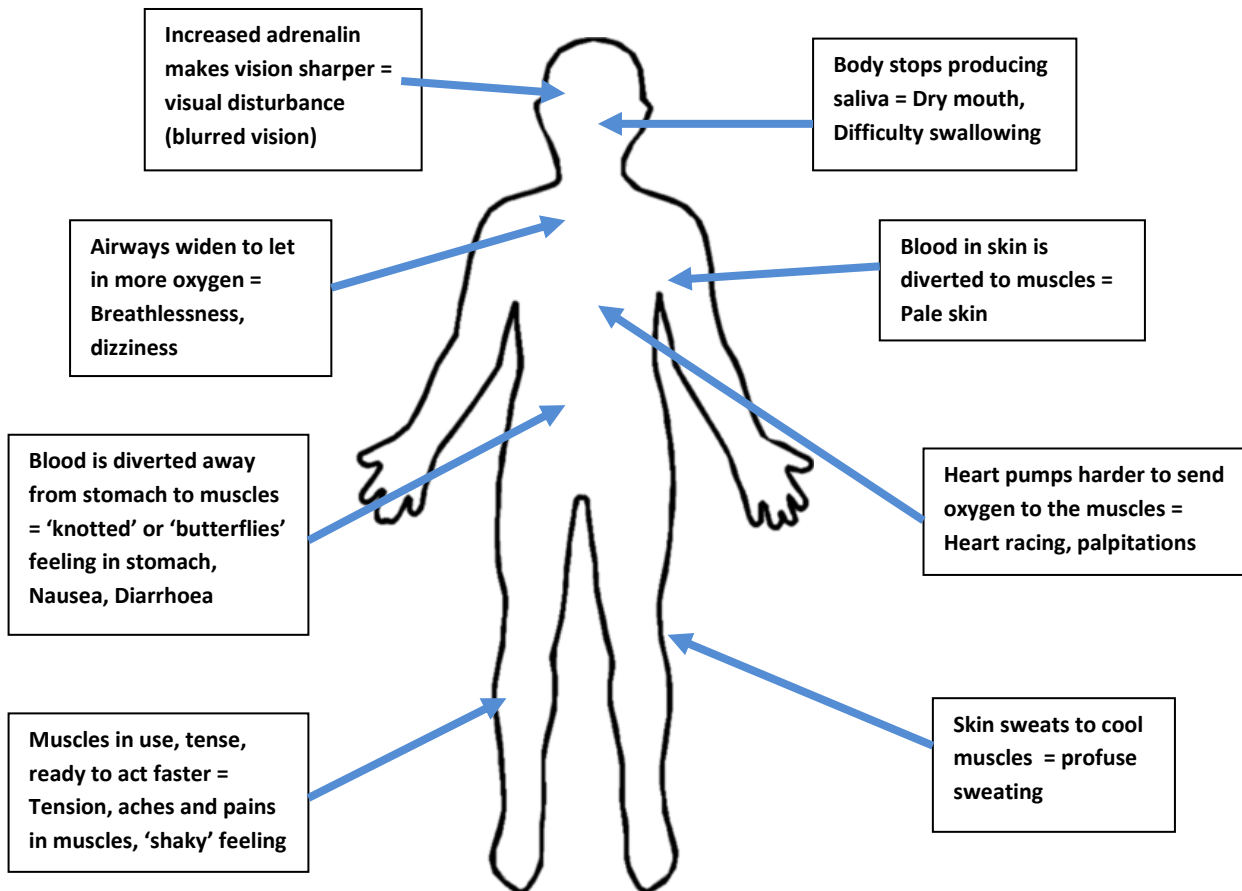
Session 4: Changing Thoughts (unhelpful thinking styles and positive coping statements)

Session 5: Changing Thoughts (thought challenging and anger)

Session 6: Communication, Recap, and Relapse Prevention

“Journey to Wellbeing” provides skills for symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. It is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques and consists of six weekly sessions, all with a different focus.

The Flight or Fight Response



The **fight or flight** response is the body's way of responding to being in danger. Adrenaline is rushed into our bloodstream to enable us to run away or fight. This happens if the danger is real, or if we *perceive* the danger is real. It is the body's alarm and survival mechanism.

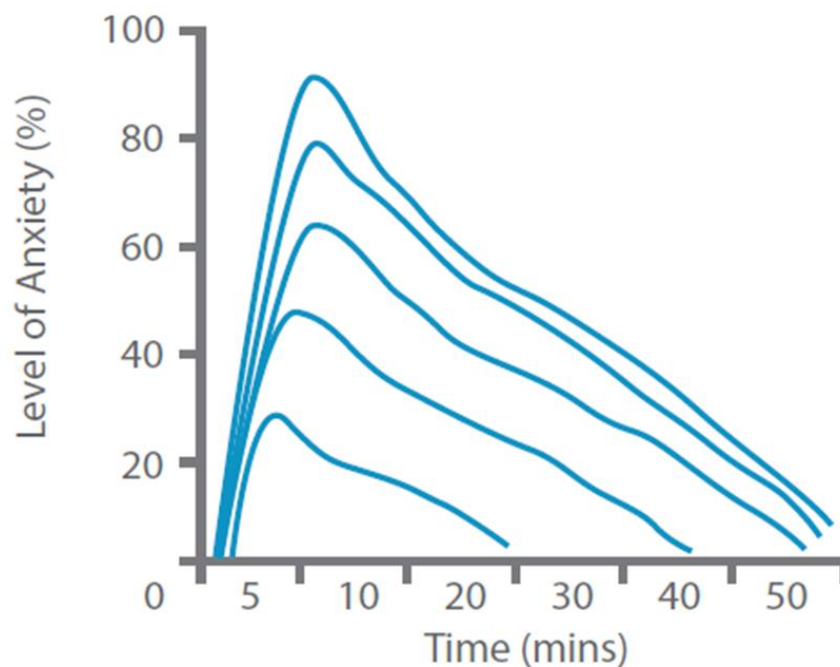
Primitive man wouldn't have survived for long without this life-saving response; it is there to keep us alive. It works so well that it often kicks in when it's not needed; we think we're in danger, so that's enough to trigger the system!

Remember: panic attacks occur when we misinterpret these bodily changes as being dangerous to our health or catastrophic.

Exposure and Habituation

If we link panic attacks or anxiety symptoms to specific situations or activities, we may start to avoid them to reduce our anxiety. This works in the short term, but we are not allowing ourselves to test our fears. In the long term, this makes it more and more difficult to face these situations.

Exposure works by **habituating** our body to anxiety and teaching our brain that it doesn't need to trigger the flight or fight response every time we are in our feared situations. Over time, anxiety naturally reduces as we remain in contact with our fears and **this means we are able to do more and stop missing out.**



Each time we enter the feared situation, we will experience less anxiety because our body is habituating to it and we will calm down faster.

The Rules for Exposure

GRADED

Start with exercises on your anxiety ladder that cause enough anxiety to habituate, but do not feel overwhelming and feel manageable. We need to start with activities that cause 50% anxiety so we can trigger the adrenaline response.

PROLONGED

Each time you do the exercise, you need to stay in the situation until your anxiety drops by 50% from the rating at the start of your exercise.

REPEATED

You need to repeat each step of your anxiety ladder until it no longer triggers a high level of fear. 4-5 exercises a week is recommended to achieve this. You repeat each step of the hierarchy until your anxiety drops to 40% or less before and at the start of the exercise.

WITHOUT DISTRACTION

You need to be aware of any distractions or safety behaviours as you are doing the exercise, so that your anxiety can reduce naturally.

Use the worksheet on the next page to create your hierarchy of feared situations. Remember: you can break it down into as many smaller tasks as you need.

Your Hierarchy

Most Anxious



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Least Anxious



Keeping an Exposure Exercise Rating Sheet

- To build tolerance to a situation, we need to **experience** it.
- Starting at the bottom of your anxiety ladder, plan when you will try your activity, and practise doing it.
- Then use the anxiety diary to **record your progress** as this happens.

Situation & Duration	Anxiety Before (0-10)	Anxiety During (0-10)	Anxiety After (0-10)	Comments

Identifying Worry

We all worry, but sometimes it can become excessive.

We may worry about lots of different things and feel trapped in a cycle of worrying and feeling tense. We may even start to see our worry as helpful because it means we are prepared. Alternatively, some people may start to worry about how much they worry.

In either case, this can make the cycle of worry hard to break.

We need to become more aware of our worries to learn to manage them. There are two main types of worry; hypothetical and practical

Hypothetical	Practical
<p>These are usually more future focused and are often out of our control. As such, they have no solution.</p> <p>An example might be worrying about whether the bus will be late tomorrow.</p>	<p>Problems that are happening in the here and now and that have some kind of solution.</p> <p>An example may be our car breaking down.</p>

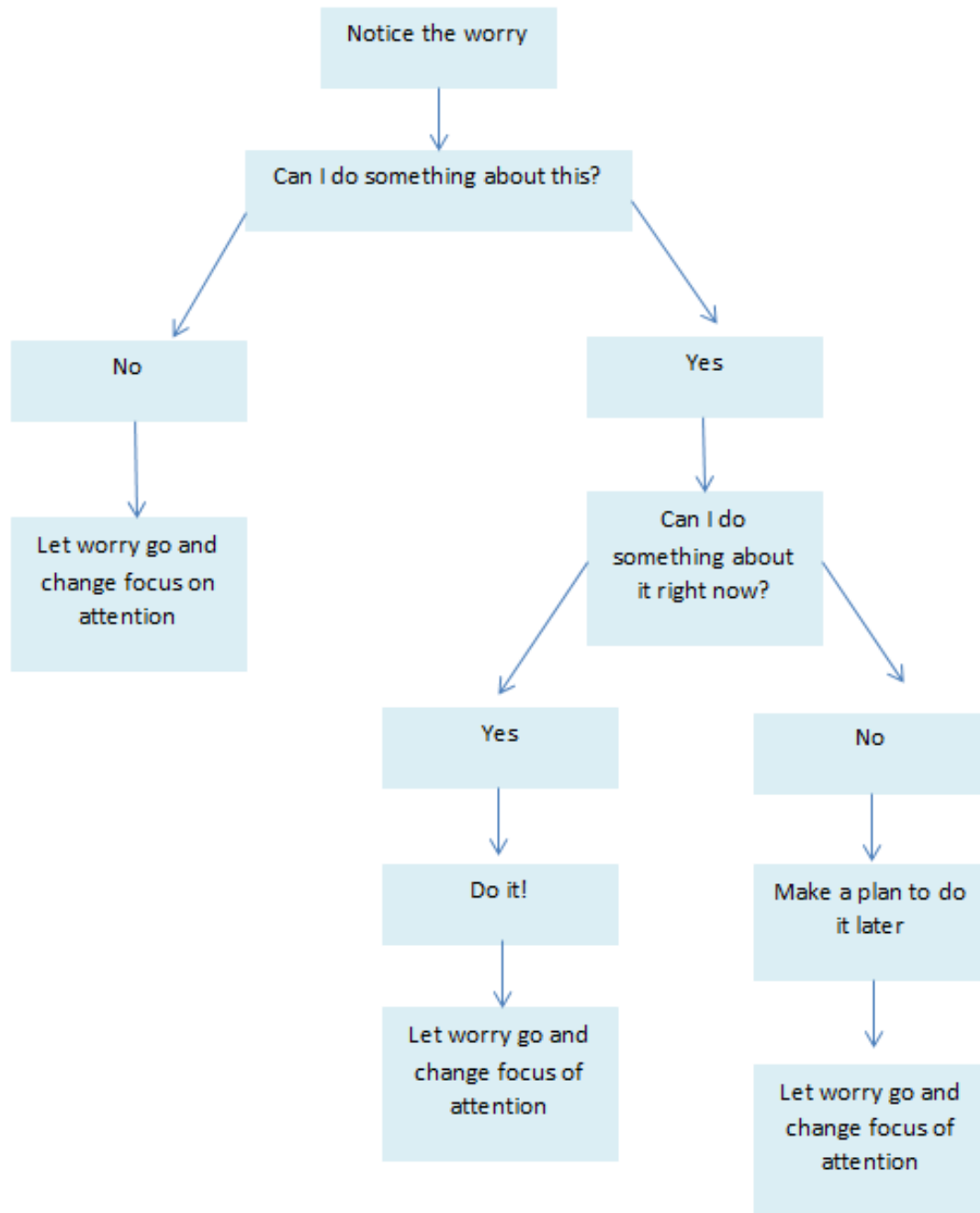
My Worry Diary

If you're noticing that worry is a problem for you, it can be helpful to keep a worry diary to start to identify patterns and whether your worries are more practical or hypothetical.

Situation – Date & time	What am I worrying about? <i>Be specific!</i>	How anxious do I feel on a scale 0 – 10?	Is my worry Practical or Hypothetical?

The Worry Tree

If you are struggling to identify whether your worries are practical or hypothetical, you can use the below tool to help.



Worry Time

This is a technique which some people find useful to help let go of hypothetical worries. You put aside around 15 minutes at a particular time of the day (eg/ 8pm to 8.15pm. This is your 'Worry Time'. If you start to worry about something at any other time throughout the day, tell yourself that you will save it for your 'worry time'.

At worry time, sit down somewhere quiet and give yourself permission to worry about the things you have stored up over the course of the day. You may have forgotten some, some things may have already been resolved and you may find that you feel differently about some of the things you were worrying about now that some time has passed.

At the end of worry time try to re-focus your mind back onto the present. Maybe get up and go into a different room, or start doing something different, use all your senses to really tune in to what is going on around you. If you find yourself starting to worry again repeat the process: you will worry about it in your next worry time.

Worry Time Technique



Step One: Set a worry time. For example, 15 minutes at 7:30pm.

Step Two: When you notice a worry during the day, label it 'I'm just worrying about.....', write it down if you can

Step Three: Accept the worry is there and ask yourself 'Can I do anything about this right now?' If no.....

Step Four: Let the worry go (for now) and refocus attention using your senses

Step Five: At worry time, go through any worries you noticed during the day. Then repeat the process from step one.

Problem Solving

If you are finding you are having a lot of practical worries, or even if you are just struggling to know what to do with problems or stresses in your life. Problem solving can help us identify good solutions and ensure we put them into place.

Step One: Problem Identification Write down the problem you want to solve
Step Two: Solution Identification Write down all solutions that come to mind
Step Three: Strengths vs Weaknesses Use page 12
Step 4: Which solution will you select?
Step 4: Plan
When: Where: Who: Anything to do before:
Step 6: Implement the plan
Step 7: Review it

Solution	Strenghts	Weaknesses

Session Three Notes

Homework:

- Try exposure and habituation OR
- Try worry time OR
- Try problem solving

Home Practice

(use this tool kit to remind you of the tools to practice)

