



STRESS – ANXIETY

Tool Kit



DOORWAYS – Here to Listen

Stress- Anxiety

Life is not easy, there are worries and fears every day. Most of the time we try to ignore them, even pretend they're not there. Sometimes I might even pretend I am someone else.

Some days my stress levels are just too high, and I feel like I am going to burst. No-one understands me – I don't understand what's going on and I can't get away from it!

Understanding

When we understand how something works, we can begin to manage things better – that makes sense doesn't it? So, anxiety is all about how we feel, and we don't feel good. Feelings are often felt in our gut, but they are really in our head – that's where all the thinking goes on.

Our thoughts and imaginings, the What if's and the Why me stories go around in my head at speed. Our head processes things like a computer, searching for answers that sometimes can't be found, no wonder we feel dizzy.

Our mind's purpose is to keep us safe no matter what and if we are under stress, the mind is going to try and get us out of it – this is where you feel like your head and your gut is turning over and over. Don't worry, you are not the only one – we just need to figure out a good strategy.

If someone in the town tried to give you a bag of money, you would probably refuse (thinking there was a catch), especially if they were pushy about it and insisted you take the money. Why do we often refuse the things that would really help?

Anxiety is something that happens, not something you are.

Who you are is a wonderful unique person with enough emotional intelligence and confidence, to get you through your life and all that the world might send your way?

Anxiety doesn't define you. It's a feeling – it will come, but it will always go, and it's as human as having a heartbeat.

Thoughts are thoughts.

They are NOT predictions.

Let them come. And then let them go.

How we feel

Your breathing changes to short, shallow breaths. You are trying to conserve oxygen on breathing, so that as much as possible goes to the muscles so they can get ready to fight or run. It's just the way we were designed.

If you don't fight or run, the oxygen builds up in your body and the carbon dioxide drops; you might feel dizzy or a bit confused.

Your heart races to get the oxygen around your body and it can feel like it is beating out of our chest.

Energy is sent to your arms and to your legs and you may feel tense or shaky.

Your body starts cooling itself down to stop it from overheating and you may feel a bit clammy or sweaty.

Anything happening in your body that isn't essential in the moment for your survival will shut down to conserve energy. Your digestive system is one of these. It shuts down until the 'danger' is dealt with, so the fuel it was using to digest your food can be used by your body for fight or run. You may feel butterflies in your belly. You might also feel sick, as though you're about to vomit, and your mouth might feel dry.

Your mind also controls your emotions so when it's in fight or run, it's switched on to high alert. This means your emotions can be too. You might burst into tears or get angry.

Everything you feel when you have anxiety is to do with your body getting ready to fight or run, when there is no need for either.

It's okay – there are things you can do about this.

What I can do

There's a saying – "It's all in your head" (and it probably is), though your feelings are everywhere.

Here's another good saying – "If you don't like something then change it. If you can't change it, change the way you feel about it."

Finding a better way to see or hear our stuff, helps us feel better and choose what to do about it. The more often we do these things, the better we become in handling our emotions (the way we feel).

Just like an athlete trains their body, we should train our mind. The mind is like any other muscle in the body and requires training.

Your Tool Box

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness strengthens the mind against anxiety, it enables us to relax and find the answers we need.

Most of the time our mind is on high alert, watching and listening for the next situation – this is stressful. We need to give our mind some down-time, to re-charge the power cells.

Gaming, socialising and even watching TV is not really down-time. It's important for us to escape to a safe space and have some "time just for ourselves." This safe space can be a physical space (your room), though we can imagine we are somewhere special and be there in our mind, even if we are sitting on a bus. The more we can control our mind to think the way we want it to, the less worry we will feel.

By doing these exercises, we are helping the mind to stay in the Now; to deal with the issue rather than run around in circles, creating more anxiety. Our minds like to wander, so we need to keep them focused.

Our mind is the strongest part of us; so, why would we not want to make the most out of what we have?

How To

- Get comfy and close your eyes.
- Notice your breathing. How does the air feel as you draw it inside you? Notice the sensation of the air, or your belly rising and falling. Notice your heart beating. If your mind starts to wander, come back to your breathing.
- Now, what can you hear? What can you feel outside of you and inside your body? If your mind starts to wander, focus on your breathing again.

Is there an app for that?

There are some brilliant apps that can guide you through mindfulness. Try these:

SMILING MIND – a free app has tailored programs for different ages.

STOP BREATHE THINK – start by choosing words to describe how you're feeling right now, and the app will suggest the best meditations based on where you're at.

BREATHE

We breathe all the time of course, but if we focus on our breathing it takes our mind away from the stress of what's going. When we focus on our breathing, it slows down a little and we begin to relax, this quietens the dizzy neurons going on in our head.

How To

Breathe in through your nose for 3, hold for 1 and then out through your mouth for 3. (If you're the type who quite fancies a visual, imagine holding a cup of hot cocoa and smelling the warm, heady aroma for three, hold your breath for one, then blow it cool for one.) Make sure the breathing is going right into your belly, not just into your chest.

In the thick of anxiety, the brain is too busy with other things to remember to do strong deep breathing. To make strong deep breathing easier for your brain to access, practice it a couple of times a day when you're calm.

EXERCISE

Exercise is important to us, it helps to keep a right chemical balance in our brain, which keeps our busy neurons in check – reducing anxiety.

How To

Any activity that gets your heart pumping counts as exercise. This will be different for everyone. It doesn't have to mean pounding the pavement with your running feet on to the point of that you're gasping for air. Not that there's anything wrong with this. A brisk 20-minute walk or 8-10 minutes of going up and down the stairs a couple of times a day will also do it. Whatever works for you. Try for something you can do at least five times a week.

FOOD

There's a saying "We are what we eat." So, we have got to look after our belly.

Anxiety can cause tummy troubles, but often it can be what we eat that gives us an unhappy belly, which can make an unhappy brain. Some foods send unhelpful messages back to the brain. The good news about this is that it doesn't take too much effort to put it right but eating well is super-important. Too much junk food and not enough of the good stuff, upsets the balance in our belly, which upsets the mind.

How To

Eating unprocessed, healthy food, and food that contains good bacteria (such as miso or yoghurt) can help to balance things out inside your gut and put things back on track.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with eating something unhealthily delicious now and then, but make sure that you're not overdoing it.

The healthier your gut, the healthier your mental health. Gut bacteria are the rock stars of the mental health world. It's really important to keep yours happy, because, you know – cranky rock stars can be painful and annoying and cause more than a decent amount of trouble.

LOVE YOURSELF

Make sure you love yourself a little louder. In adolescence, you're at a point in your life where the world is opening up to you. It's a world that needs your wisdom, your courage and your interesting and very wonderful take on things.

Anxiety can have a way of shifting the focus too often to the negative, but the things about ourselves that we would like to change often have very wonderful strengths built into them. Of course, you would always rather not have anxiety, but there are so many strengths in you. Spend lots of time noticing them.

Anxiety is something that happens, not something you are. What you are is smart, with truckloads of emotional intelligence, and a very wonderful and unique way of looking at things, as well as being the person people can count on, the one who thinks of things that other people haven't, creative (even if you aren't doing anything creative, it's in you), sensitive, strong, and brave. You would be most people's favourite type of humans.



We all have questions – Here's a safe place to ask them:

Use the QR code

You're special

And how we talk to ourselves is important – believe in YOU!

UNIQUE

A Special Note to You

You are a Beautiful Human person as you read this,
read this and absorb it, don't read these words flippantly.

Are you reading?

They are written for YOU especially YOU.

You are a valuable person

You are a special person

You are a unique person

You are beautiful

You are precious

You are unrepeatable

You are mysterious

You are a beautiful human person

No one will ever exist like you

No one will ever experience
the life that you have experienced

You are a collection of specialness
that has never been put together before.

From Pip Wison.Com

Get out there and do it!

Take control of your life.

- Change the way you see & hear things
- Stay positive
- Relax, find some real down-time
- Make better choices
- Talk to someone you can trust

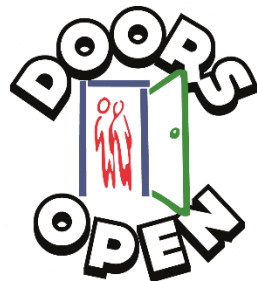
DOORWAYS – Here to Listen

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Enabling Change in Young People



SALTBURN CHRISTIAN PROJECTS (DOORWAYS)
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