

WORRY & ANXIETY

SESSION 1 COURSE WORKBOOK





Welcome to the Wellbeing. Learn practical strategies for managing excessive worry and anxiety with our clinically proven online course.

At a Glance

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life. For example, you may feel worried and anxious about sitting an exam, or having a medical test or job interview. During times like these, feeling anxious can be perfectly normal.

But some people find it hard to control their worries. Their feelings of anxiety are more constant and can often affect their daily lives. Fortunately, worry and anxiety is very treatable and many people who seek help can get better. This course will teach you practical skills to tackle persistent worry and anxiety and improve the way you feel.

UNDERSTANDING WORRY AND ANXIETY

WHAT IS WORRY?

Worry is a thought process. Our thoughts can be words or images and can feel very real. Worry is concerned about future events especially where there is uncertainty about the outcome. Worry can also be related to past events, but the worry will mostly be about the future implications. The future outcomes being thought about are negative.

TASK 1

What do I worry about?

Make a note of the things you worry about...



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a feeling, an emotional response to the worry in our minds. Anxiety can be accompanied by strong physical sensations, which include muscle tension, stomach churning, restlessness, disturbed sleep and poor concentration.

TASK 2

Tick the ones that apply to you and add in anything else not on the list: How do I feel when I am worried?

- Anxious
- Panicky
- Irritable
- Insecure
- Sad
- No motivation

How does my body react?

- Muscle tension
- Headaches Restlessness
- Sleep disturbed
- Tiredness
- Poor concentration
- Stomach churning
- Heart racing/palpitations

WHEN DOES WORRY AND ANXIETY BECOME A PROBLEM?

We can all get worried at times; this is a normal reaction to stressful events. However, worrying is usually short lived and stops once the stressful situation has passed. Worrying becomes a problem when you feel in a constant state of anxiety and worry most of the time about things that others may see as insignificant. You can worry even when there is not event or situation to be concerned about. It can also be problematic when you get physical symptoms and when it stops you from doing things you would like to do. You may feel that you can't stop worrying no matter how hard you try and worry that it will never stop.



GENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER (GAD)

This is the medical term to describe anxiety when the main symptoms are worry about varied events and activities. There are other types of anxiety disorder which are specific to certain situations or events, for example health anxiety and phobias. Symptoms of Generalised Anxiety Disorder are:

- Excessive anxiety and worrying for more days than not, about several events or activities for at least 6 months
- Worrying feels difficult to control
- Accompanied by at least 3 of the following:
- muscle tension, restlessness, easily fatigued, irritable, sleep disturbed, problems concentrating

Generalised Anxiety Disorder is the most frequent anxiety disorder and the second most frequent mental health disorder. It is estimated that around 2-4% of the population will meet the criteria for Generalised Anxiety Disorder per year.

WHY ME?

Worry and Anxiety has many causes. You may feel that you are a ‘born worrier’, or your family have tended to worry a lot. You may have had difficult events to deal with as a child or later in life. For most people worry and anxiety develops over a long time from lots of little problems and events. A build-up of stress and strains can trigger anxiety, particularly if you are physically run down or not eating or sleeping properly. It is also common that a specific stressful life event can cause worry anxiety to develop.

TYPES OF WORRY

Type 1

Current issues, a problem that exists, for example no money to pay a bill.

Type 2

A potential situation, when you say “What if” (it has not yet happened, it might never happen) (e.g. Plane crash).

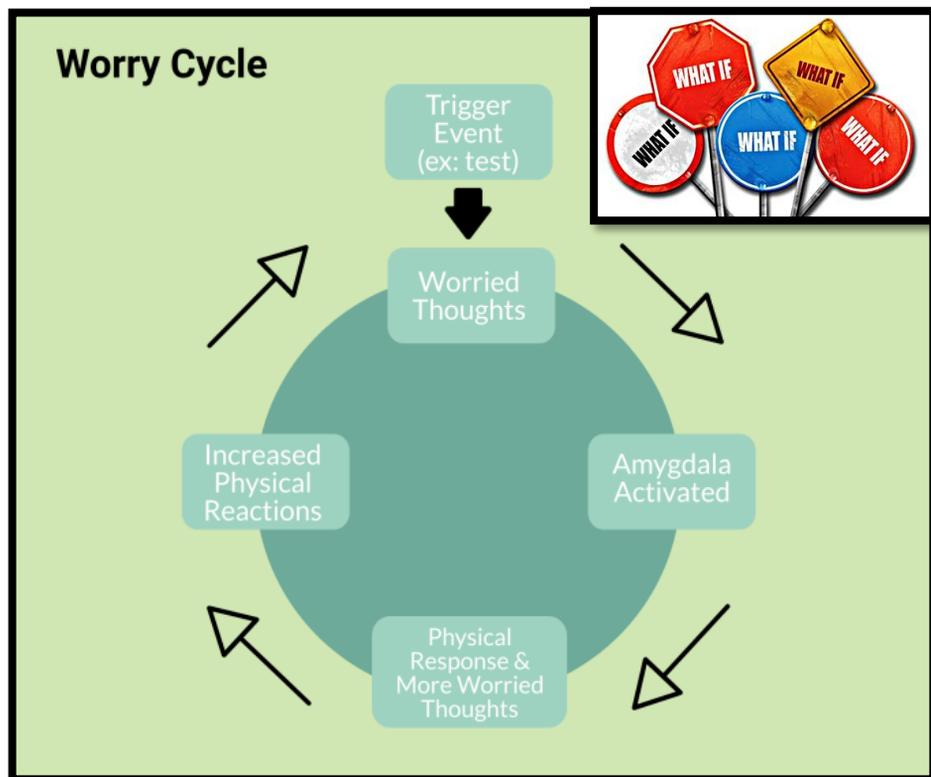
Type 3

When you are worried about worrying (e.g. “worrying is going to make me ill”).

THE WORRY CYCLE

Usually something starts of an initial worry, this can be an event, a memory, an item on the news etc.

- “What if questions” lead to a chain of more worries
- The outcome is uncertain, and outcome is imagined as negative
- Worry is accompanied by anxious feelings
- Worry can last for minutes or hours
- Chronic worry can lead to tiredness and exhaustion



Cameron's Example

Cameron is at work. When he finishes the task he is working on his boss says, "that's fine Cameron, but can you try and do it a bit quicker next time?" Walking away, he can feel his muscles tensing, and he goes bright red. He starts to think "Was that slow? Why am I so rubbish at this? Why can't I get it right?" He starts to worry that he'll get sacked, and then his family will get into debt. He cannot stop worrying about it, and he develops a headache. He starts making mistakes in his job. By the end of the day he's still tense and has started to feel sick as well.



In this example we can see that anxiety affects Cameron's:

Thinking

- ✓ 'Was that slow?'
- ✓ 'Why am I so rubbish at this?'
- ✓ 'Why can't I get it right?'
- ✓ 'I'll get sacked and then my family will get into debt'

Feelings

- ✓ He becomes anxious and embarrassed

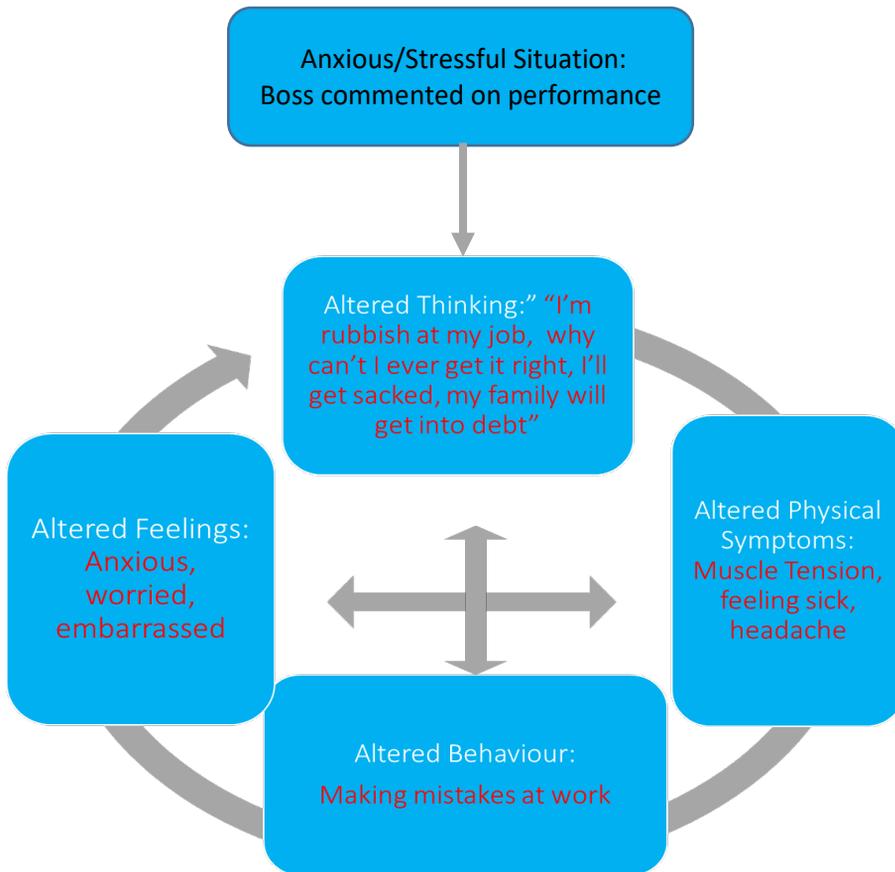
Body

- ✓ His muscles tense up, he gets a headache, feels sick

Behaviour

- ✓ He starts to make mistakes which affects his performance at work

CAMERON'S VICIOUS CYCLE OF ANXIETY



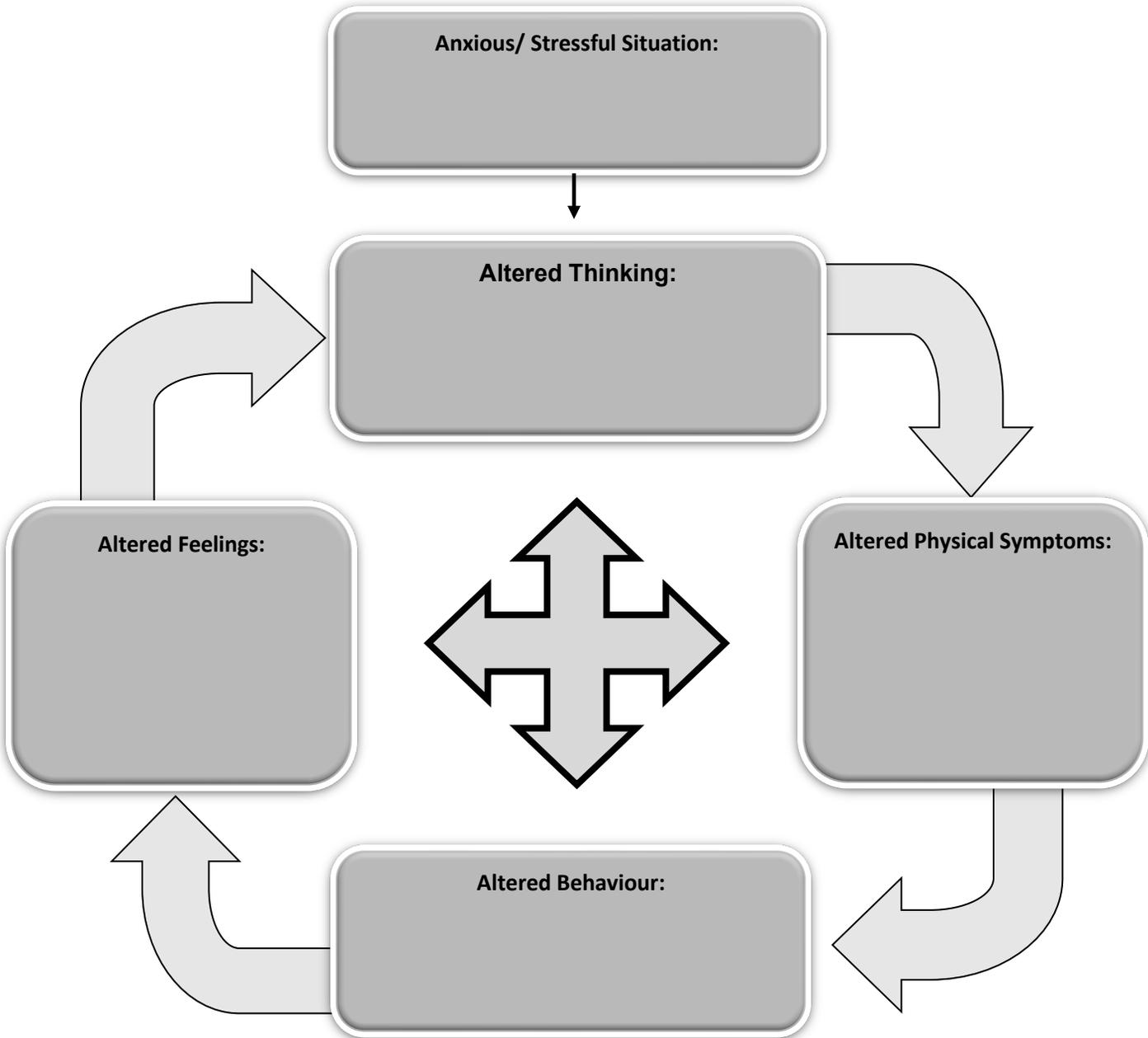
This diagram shows us that what we think about and worry about affects how we feel physically and emotionally (feelings) and changes what we do, (behaviour). If we begin to identify and recognise our triggers (and what keeps our vicious circle going), we can start to make changes and by doing so hopefully we can begin to weaken the circle. An 'anxiety diary' can help us to recognise patterns in our thoughts, feelings and behaviours when we feel anxious.





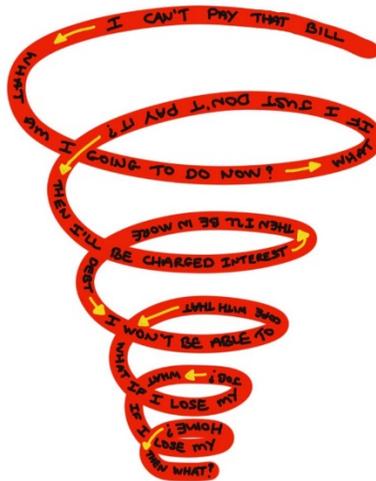
TASK 3

MY VICIOUS CYCLE



WHAT KEEPS WORRY AND ANXIETY GOING?

1. Predicting the worst outcomes in situations, e.g. going to the class, “I won’t find it; I will be taken off the list and never allowed back”.
2. Overestimate risk and underestimate coping, e.g. “this will 99.9% go wrong and I will not be able to deal with it”.
3. Positive and negative beliefs about worry e.g. “worrying will help me find answers v worrying will make me ill”.
4. Intolerance of uncertainty e.g. “I can’t stand having to wait till next week for the outcome”.
5. Avoidance – emotional, cognitive, behavioural e.g. “I will block it out of my mind by keeping busy with other things” and/or “I just won’t go”.



WORRY DIARY

Write down when you notice a worry. When the outcome is known rate the actual outcome and how well you feel you coped using the scale below.

0-5



1 = Much better than I feared

2 = Better than I feared

3 = As bad as I feared

4 = Worse than I feared

5 = Much worse than I feared



WORRY DIARY

DATE	WORRY TOPIC	FEARED OUTCOME	ACTUAL OUTCOME (RATE 1-5)	HOW WELL I COPE WITH THE ACTUAL OUTCOME (RATE 1-5)



MY NOTES

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing notes.