

CBTm

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY WITH MINDFULNESS
THÉRAPIE COGNITIVO-COMPORTEMENTALE DE LA PLEINE CONSCIENCE

Class 3 - Handouts

Mindfulness Exercise - *Body Scan*

Behavioural Experiment

Exposure Therapy

Fun Activities

Goal Setting

SMART Goals

BODY SCAN

1. Begin by feeling the weight of your body on the chair. Notice the points of contact between that and your body.
2. Become aware of the sensations of your breath. You may feel the breath going in and out of your nostrils, or passing through the back of your throat, or feel the chest or belly rising and falling.
3. When you're ready, move your awareness down into the big toe of your left foot. Notice the sensations in your big toe with a sense of curiosity. Is it warm or cold? Now expand your awareness to your little toe, then all the toes in between. What do they feel like? If you can't feel any sensation, that's okay.
4. As you breathe, imagine the breath going down your body and into your toes. As you breathe out, imagine the breath going back up your body and out of your nose. Use this strategy of breathing into and out of each part to which you're paying attention.
5. Expand your awareness to the sole of your foot. Focus on the ball and heel of the foot. The weight of the heel. The sides and upper part of the foot. The ankle. Breathe into the whole of the left foot. Then, when you're ready, let go of the left foot.
6. Repeat this process of gentle, kind, curious accepting awareness with the lower part of the left leg, the knee and the upper part of the left leg.
7. Gently shift your awareness around and down the right leg, to the toes in your right foot. Move your awareness up the right leg in the same way as before. Then let it go.
8. Move up to the lower torso, the lower abdomen and lower back. Notice the movement of the lower abdomen as you breathe in and out. Notice any emotions you feel here. See if you can explore and accept your feelings as they are.
9. Bring your attention to your chest and upper back. Feel your rib cage rising and falling as you breathe in and out. Be mindful of your heart beating if you can.
10. Go to both arms, beginning with the fingertips and moving up to the shoulders. Breathe into and out of each body part before you move to the next one, if that feels helpful.
11. Focus on your neck. Move your mindful attention to your jaw, feel your lips, inside your mouth, your cheeks, your nose, your eyelids and eyes, your temples, your forehead and checking if it's frowning, your eyes, the back of your head, and finally the top of your head.
12. Gently bring your attention back to the room and slowly open your eyes.

Behavioural Experiment

Prediction

What is your prediction?
What do you expect will happen?
How would you know if it came true?

Rate how strongly you believe this will happen (0-100%)

Experiment

What experiment could test this prediction? (where & when)
What safety behaviours will need to be dropped?
How would you know your prediction had come true?

Outcome

What happened?
Was your prediction accurate?

Learning

What did you learn?
How likely is it that your prediction(s) will happen in the future?

Rate how strongly you agree with your original prediction now (0-100%)

Behavioural Experiment (Example)

Prediction

What is your prediction?

What do you expect will happen?

How would you know if it came true?

If I don't drink when I feel stressed, I won't be able to relax or feel better.

Rate how strongly you believe this will happen (0-100%)

90%

Experiment

What experiment could test this prediction? (where & when)

What safety behaviours will need to be dropped?

How would you know your prediction had come true?

I will not rely on a drink to help me relax.

Friday after work I can do other things to relax like: have a shower, go for a walk, watch a comedy show, spend time with friends or family.

I will know the prediction is true if I stay stressed, feel frustrated, and be miserable.

Outcome

What happened?

Was your prediction accurate?

I went for a walk and it cleared my head.

The shower helped me feel physically calmer.

I laughed at the show and I didn't feel the some craving.

I didn't feel worse, I felt a bit better and proud.

Learning

What did you learn?

How likely is it that your prediction(s) will happen in the future?

I can relax without alcohol.

It wasn't easy, but I managed.

The craving didn't control me.

Rate how strongly you agree with your original prediction now (0-100%)

50%

Behavioural Experiment (Example)

Prediction

What is your prediction?
What do you expect will happen?
How would you know if it came true?

If I don't use marijuana when I am anxious, I'll feel overwhelmed and I won't be able to calm down.

Rate how strongly you believe this will happen (0-100%)

95%

Experiment

What experiment could test this prediction? (where & when)
What safety behaviours will need to be dropped?
How would you know your prediction had come true?

I will not rely on a cannabis to help me relax.

I will try 10 minutes of breathing exercises or mindfulness practice to help me relax.

I could journal my thoughts or text/call a friend for support.

I will know the prediction is true if I stay stressed, feel frustrated, and be miserable.

Outcome

What happened?
Was your prediction accurate?

I started off really stressed, wanting to grab my stash, but I didn't.

The breathing exercise helped me feel physically calmer.

I noticed I was catastrophizing. After I texted my friend I felt supported.

I didn't feel worse I felt a little anxiety but can tolerate the feeling and I felt proud.

Learning

What did you learn?
How likely is it that your prediction(s) will happen in the future?

Anxiety is uncomfortable, but I can tolerate it.

It wasn't easy, but the urge passes, especially when I do something constructive.

The craving didn't control me.

Rate how strongly you agree with your original prediction now (0-100%)

55%

Behavioural Experiment (Example)

Prediction

What is your prediction?
What do you expect will happen?
How would you know if it came true?

If I speak in public I will shake so much that people will notice and laugh at me.

Rate how strongly you believe this will happen (0-100%)

90%

Experiment

What experiment could test this prediction? (where & when)
What safety behaviours will need to be dropped?
How would you know your prediction had come true?

I could speak up at the next meeting on Monday - I could present some of the data that I have been meaning to present.

I would need to gesture to the slides with my hands and not hold onto the table or keep my hands in my pockets.

I could ask my friends if they noticed me shaking when I talk.

Outcome

What happened?
Was your prediction accurate?

I was really nervous and was very aware of my hands.

My friends said I spoke well and that they could not see my hands shaking.

Learning

What did you learn?
How likely is it that your prediction(s) will happen in the future?

Although I feel nervous when speaking, it's not as obvious to other people, and I can get through it successfully.

I feel like this will be easier to do in the future.

Rate how strongly you agree with your original prediction now (0-100%)

50%

BEHAVIOURAL ACTIVATION

The symptoms of depression such as tiredness, lethargy, loss of interest, loss of motivation, loss of pleasure, and indecisiveness can lead to inactivity, and this often keeps the depression going or even makes it worse. Also, because of the lack of motivation, a depressed person might begin to neglect everyday tasks and responsibilities at work or at home, and the list begins to pile up. As such, when a depressed person thinks about the things they have to do, they might feel overwhelmed by the pile of things they have put off doing. This might result in them feeling guilty or thinking that they are ineffective or even a failure. This will also worsen the depression.

Increasing your activity level.

One of the ways of overcoming depression is to increase your level of activity. There is a lot of evidence that shows that the more people do, and the more pleasant activities they get involved in, the better they feel. Becoming more active has a number of advantages:



Activity helps you to feel less tired.

Usually, when you are physically tired, you need rest. However, when you are depressed, the opposite is true. Sleeping more and sitting around doing nothing will only cause you to feel more lethargic and tired. Also, doing nothing leaves room for your mind to ruminate on depressive thoughts, which will make you feel even more depressed.

Activity helps you to feel better.

At the very least, when you start engaging in some kind of activity, it gives your mind something else to think about – a different focus. Doing things, even a little at a time, can help give you a sense that you are moving forward, taking control of your life again, and achieving something – experiencing a sense of MASTERY. You may even find PLEASURE and enjoyment in the activities you do.

Activity can help you think more clearly.

Once you get started, you may find that you take a different perspective on particular problems in your life. Also, because your mind takes a different focus as a result of the activity, your thoughts may become clearer.



FUN & ACHIEVEMENT

It makes good sense to do fun and pleasurable things to make yourself feel better, but these are not the only sorts of activities that will help generate positive feelings.

Being depressed isn't just about feeling sad – there are a lot of other feelings involved as well, such as hopelessness, guilt, and despair. So, it also makes sense to do things that result in other positive feelings, such as achievement and a sense of purpose.

When you are planning things to do for yourself, it is important to remember to include a mixture of activities, adding those that have the potential to give you other positive feelings.

An example of this is paying off money -

on your credit card, or doing the ironing. Doing these things can help you feel more in control of your life (e.g., paying off your debts) and give you satisfaction that you have started doing something (e.g., catching up on household chores).

Doing tasks that give you a sense of achievement or mastery will help you feel like you are starting to get back on top of things again. Some activities may combine the two. For example, making your bed may give you a sense of pleasure at having a neat, tidy bed, but it may also give you a sense of achievement at having done something to improve your home environment.

This sense of achievement is just as important as getting pleasure out of something, and may indeed prompt you to do more.



START SIMPLE

Even though there are a number of advantages in increasing your activity level, it may not be easy to get started. Often, this is because when you are depressed, you think negative thoughts such as “I won’t enjoy doing this” or “It’s too hard” or “I’ll probably fail at this, too.” These thoughts may stop you from getting started. Often the big mistake people make is trying to do too much, too soon.

When you are depressed, things that you usually don’t even have to think about doing (when you are not depressed) can seem to require a huge amount of effort. The idea is to start with small easy steps and begin with things you can do. Think of it in terms of training for a sports event. If you hadn’t been doing any running for 6 months, would you try and run a marathon without doing any training? Of course not! You would go on a training programme that slowly builds up your fitness and endurance.

Similarly, when you are depressed, it is unreasonable to expect yourself to be able to jump out of bed and clean the house before going out to meet a friend for a late lunch.

If you set your goals too high, you might end up not doing them, feel disappointed -

in yourself, and feel worse than ever. Instead, plan to do things that are achievable at your current level of functioning.

Start with small steps and slowly build yourself up to the large tasks that seem unmanageable right now. For example, aim to get out of bed for 10 minutes, then slowly build up the amount of time you are out of bed for. Don’t try to clean the whole kitchen – just aim to do the dishes. If this is too much, just stack all the dirty dishes in a pile. Aim to get one bench top clean, or just wash 5 plates. Any task can be broken down into smaller and smaller steps until you find something achievable.

Sometimes it is easier to aim to do a task for a set period of time rather than trying to achieve a set amount. Read a book for 5 minutes rather than reading a whole chapter. Say you will spend 10 minutes weeding the garden rather than aiming to weed a certain area. In this way, it will be easier for you to achieve your goal. In the beginning, the important thing is not what you do or how much you do, but simply the fact that you are DOING.

Remember that action is the first step, not motivation, and you’ll soon find yourself feeling better!

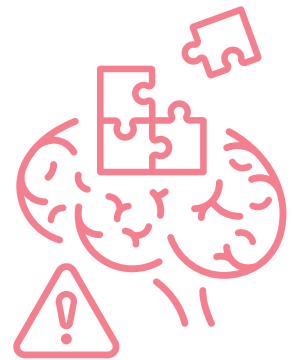
WHAT IS EXPOSURE THERAPY?

Exposure therapy is the most active psychological treatment for anxiety. Exposure means *'facing your fears'* and is the opposite of avoidance. When we avoid something that we fear, the fear only gets stronger: by avoiding, we don't get to learn anything about our ability to cope. If we confront our fears and learn that we can cope, then we become more able to manage similar situations in the future. Exposure can be done to real situations or to imagined ones. In psychological terms, exposure leads to the *extinction of a learned fear response*.

What is exposure used for?

Exposure is an active treatment for any type of fear including:

- Phobias – fears of specific objects, events, or situations
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – fear associated with painful memories of traumatic events
- Panic attacks – fear of particular body sensations
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) – various fears, e.g. of being contaminated, of causing harm to others



How exposure works

One helpful way to think about how exposure works is to consider memories. A scary event creates a 'fear memory' linking the object, event, or situation with a feeling of fear. Reminders activate this fear memory and make you feel afraid. It is not possible to get rid of old memories, but it is possible to create helpful new ones which will outnumber the old ones. Exposure therapy creates new memories linking the feared object, event, or situation with feelings of control, safety, or achievement. With successful exposure, whenever you are reminded of the object, event, or situation your mind learns to recall a good memory and you feel okay.

Example provided on the following page.



Graded exposure

Graded exposure is a gentler way of facing your fears. Fears are faced in order of increasing intensity, starting with something that is not too scary. Steps for graded exposure:

- Identify a ladder of increasingly fearful situations
- Starting with the easiest, confront that object, event, or situation and stay there until your fear reduces
- Don't move up the ladder until you feel comfortable at each step

WHAT IS EXPOSURE THERAPY?

Example of Exposure Therapy:

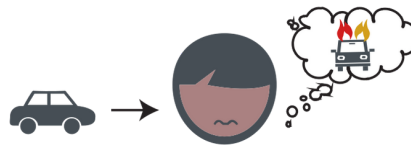
Step 1: Learning to be afraid of something

Bob is involved in a car crash. He feels very frightened at the time. A memory is created in Bob's mind which links cars with feeling afraid.



Step 2: The problem of fear

Reminders of the crash activate Bob's fear memory and make him feel afraid. His fear means that he avoids travelling in cars or on the road. This avoidance means that he doesn't get to learn how safe travelling by car normally is.



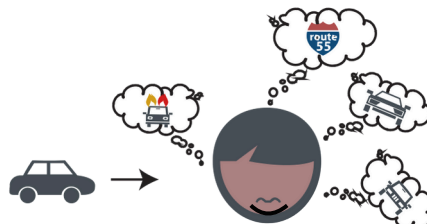
Step 3: Exposure therapy

As part of his treatment Bob is gradually exposed to cars in a variety of different situations. Nothing bad happens so he begins to feel safer around cars. He starts driving again.



Step 4: Anxiety is reduced

Exposure doesn't make the fear memory go away, it just creates new 'safe' memories. In potentially scary situations the old fear memory and the new safe memories 'compete' – whenever a reminder comes along, Bob can be reminded of either the old fear memory or the new safe memory. The more exposure therapy he has done, the more positive memories he will have to rely on and the more capable he will feel.



FACING YOUR FEARS: EXPOSURE

adapted from AnxietyCanada

It's natural to want to avoid things that you fear. The purpose of fear is to alert us to when we're in danger and need to do something to protect ourselves. However, when our fear response is going off at the wrong time (when there is no danger or very little danger), the fear response itself becomes a problem.

In this type of situation, avoidance leads to worsening anxiety, and prevents you from learning that the things you fear are not as dangerous as you think. An important step in managing anxiety involves facing feared situations, places or objects, so that you can learn through experience that these situations are not as dangerous as your body thinks.

The process of facing fears is called exposure. Exposure involves gradually and repeatedly putting yourself in feared situations until your fear level drops. Exposure is not dangerous to your health. After repeated exposures to a situation, your anxiety will naturally lessen.

It's important to start with small goals, with things that are not too frightening or overwhelming. After repeatedly facing things that are mildly scary, you will build confidence in those situations and will feel ready to gradually face more challenging situations over time.

For example, if you have a fear of dogs, a first exposure goal might involve looking at pictures of dogs. Once you have done this repeatedly, any anxiety you have when looking at pictures of dogs will naturally lessen. Next, you could move on to watching videos of dogs on the internet, and keep doing that exposure activity until it no longer triggers much anxiety, and so on.

Exposure is very effective, but it takes planning and patience to make it work for you. Many individuals with anxiety have doubts about trying exposure. You might have tried it in the past and found it didn't work. However, you might have tried to face something too scary too soon, which can be overwhelming. Or, you might not have had a chance to practice repeatedly in order to get the benefits of exposure. Be willing to try again!

The following steps can help you make exposure work for you.

Step 1. Make a list

Make a list of situations, places or objects that you fear. If we go back to the example of dogs, the list might include: looking at pictures of dogs, watching videos of dogs, standing across the park from a dog on a leash, standing in the same room as a dog on a leash, standing a few feet from a dog, or petting a puppy. If you're afraid of social situations, the list might include: saying "hi" to a co-worker, making small talk with a cashier, going for coffee with coworkers, or calling a friend on the phone.



FACING YOUR FEARS: EXPOSURE

adapted from AnxietyCanada

Tip: Group Fears Together

Some people have a lot of different fears, so it can help to group similar fears or specific fear themes together. For example, if you have a fear of bugs and a fear of heights, make different lists for each of them.

Step 2. Build an Approach Ladder

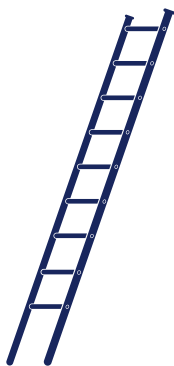
Once you've made a list, arrange items from the least scary to the most scary. You can do this by rating how much fear you feel about each situation on the list, from "0" (no fear) to "10" (extreme fear). Include a whole range of situations on your list: some that you can do with only mild anxiety, some that you can do with moderate anxiety, and some that would be too overwhelming to do now. If everything on your list feels too overwhelming to do now, pick the least scary situation on the list and break it down into smaller, less overwhelming steps. Now your list has become a fear ladder.

Tip:

When making an approach ladder, identify a specific goal (such as having a meal in a restaurant), and then list the steps needed to achieve that goal. See the example below:

1. Go to a restaurant and get a coffee to go
2. Have a coffee at the restaurant and sit near the door
3. Have a snack at the restaurant and sit at a table in the middle of the room
4. Have a full meal at the restaurant and sit near the door
5. Have a full meal at the restaurant and sit at a table in the middle of the room

If you're wondering how to break things on your list into smaller steps, consider changing one of the following factors:



1. Length of time

e.g. Talk to someone for 1 mins instead of 5 mins

2. Time of day

e.g. Go for groceries first thing in the morning on a weekday vs. on a Saturday afternoon

3. Environment

e.g. Go swimming at a local pool vs. swimming in a lake

4. Who you're with

e.g. Go to the mall with a friend vs. alone

Step 3. Facing Fears (Exposure)

Starting with the situation that causes the least anxiety, repeatedly put yourself in that situation (e.g. saying "hi" to the bus driver every day) until you start to feel less anxious doing it. If the situation is one that you can remain in for a prolonged period of time (e.g. standing on a balcony), stay in the situation long enough for your anxiety to lessen (usually 20-30 minutes).

FACING YOUR FEARS: EXPOSURE

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If the situation is short in duration, try "looping" it, which means doing the same thing over and over again for a set number of times (e.g. repeatedly driving back and forth over a bridge until you start to feel less anxious).

If you stay in a situation long enough, or continue doing a specific activity enough times, your anxiety will start to lessen. The longer you face something, the more quickly you will get used to it and the less anxious you'll feel when you face it again.

- It can help to track your fear level during exposure exercises and try to remain in those situations (or continue a specific activity) until your fear and/or anxiety decrease.
- For example, if you have a fear of needles, and you rated holding a needle as a 6/10 on the fear scale, then you want to continue holding the needle until your fear level drops to 3/10.
- It's important to plan exposure exercises in advance, so you feel more in control of the situation, and you can decide how much to challenge yourself.
- Once you're able to face a specific situation on several separate occasions without having much anxiety, you can move on to the next item on your fear ladder.
- Don't rush! It can be very hard to face the things you fear. Be patient with yourself, and go at a pace that you can manage.



Step 4. Practice

- Practice on a regular basis. The more often you practice, and the longer you practice for, the faster the fear will fade.
- Don't forget to maintain the gains that you've made. Even after you become comfortable doing something, it's important to keep putting yourself in that situation from time to time to make sure your fears don't creep back. Re-rate your fear ladder every once in a while so you can see the progress you've made, and identify the things on the ladder you still need to tackle.

Step 5. Reward yourself!

- It's not easy facing your fears. Reward yourself when you do it. Rewards can be things you want for yourself (e.g., book, treat) or things you enjoy doing (e.g. going to the movies).
- Don't forget to give yourself credit for what you've done.



Tip: Don't be discouraged if your fears start creeping back. This can happen from time to time, especially during stressful periods or transitions, such as starting a new job or moving. This just means that you need to start practicing exposure again.

FUN ACTIVITIES LIST

This is a list of activities that you may find enjoyable. Consider the activities listed below. You may find that some fit for you and some don't. Also, some activities may be things you can do right away, and others may require a bit of planning. Taking part in activities that you find fun can lead to positive experiences and lift your mood. You can test the idea of behavioural activation by recording your mood before an activity and comparing it to how you feel during or after. At the end of this list there are a few lines for you to add your own fun activities.

- Cook or bake a new recipe
- Soak in the bathtub
- Go for a walk at the park
- Call/text/facetime a friend or family
- Plan a trip to the beach
- Do something nice for someone
- Redecorate your room
- Build a bird house
- Volunteer for a cause you support
- Look at pictures /videos of cute animals
- Get a new plant for your home
- Listen to new music
- Learn a new language
- Open the curtains/blinds to let light in
- Take a free online class
- Try a new good-smelling shower product
- Work on a puzzle
- Donate old clothes or items to charity
- Sing out loud
- Lay in the sun
- Flip through old pictures
- Go for a walk around the mall
- Organize your desk/workspace
- Play volleyball
- Buy new stationary
- Find a river or lake to visit
- Attend a trivia night
- Journal beside a river
- Spend time in nature
- Enter a competition
- Spend time watching the clouds drift
- Do crossword puzzles
- Cuddle a pet
- Do an at-home spa day (manicure, facials...)
- Learn a magic trick or how to juggle
- Listen to a podcast or radio show
- Stretch your muscles
- Take a walk with the intention to notice the architecture/nature around you
- Play soccer
- Plan a visit to a local botanical garden
- Try a DIY project or other arts/crafts
- Watch a comedy show
- Sign up for a ghost tour
- Play frisbee
- Sketch, paint, doodle
- Play chess
- Do some yardwork or gardening
- Jump on a trampoline
- Plan a future activity (horseback riding, hiking...)
- Go fishing
- Organize your dishes
- Sit outside and listen to birds sing
- Visit your local library
- Sing karaoke with friends
- Cook a fresh meal and freeze the leftovers
- Plan a trip to a national or provincial park
- Plan a party for you or a friend
- Sign up for lessons (learn how to sail, play piano...)
- De-clutter
- Plan a camping trip
- Play cards
- Reconnect with an old friend
- Re-watch a favourite movie or tv show
- Watch a live sports game
- Visit a new coffee shop
- Go out for ice cream

FUN ACTIVITIES LIST

- Go rollerblading at the park
- Purposefully schedule a day with nothing to do
- Make a new playlist with your favorite songs
- Initiate a hangout with friends or family
- Make jams or preserves with local fruit
- Order in something new for dinner
- Wash your car or someone else's
- Watch a new TV series
- Watch motivational videos on YouTube
- Send a loved one a card or letter in the mail
- Bake something to share with others (e.g., family, neighbours, friends, work colleagues, a local retirement facility)
- Organize your wardrobe
- Join a recreation sport (e.g., basketball, pickle ball, baseball, etc.)
- Play a musical instrument (piano, guitar, drums...)
- Light a scented candle, oil, or incense
- Exercise in a way that feels good to you
- Put up a framed picture or artwork
- Host a dinner party
- Go swimming at a local pool
- Ride a bike
- Sew, knit, crochet, quilt
- Visit the zoo or planetarium
- Birdwatch
- Do something spontaneous
- Go on a picnic
- Check out events at your community centre
- Plant herbs or vegetables in planters or a garden
- Go to a bingo night
- Make your favourite warm drink
- Plan a weekend road trip
- Go bowling
- Watch a comedy show
- Play tennis or badminton
- Go for a skate on your local rink
- Play a video game
- Attend an event in your community
- Organize your camera roll
- Upcycle old items
- Buy a new clothing item
- Plan a trip to a speedway
- Listen to an audiobook
- Start a gratitude journal
- Learn a new skill (e.g. painting, coding, photography, etc.)
- Initiate a movie date with a friend
- Talk to an older relative and ask them questions about their life
- Make your bed with freshly laundered sheets
- Whittle wood
- Read a book
- Have a daytime nap
- Go for a haircut
- Re-arrange your furniture
- Go for a drive
- Star gaze
- Do a mindfulness exercise
- Go for a jog, walk, or run
- Teach your pet a new trick
- Skip/jump rope
- Go to the gym
- Make a weekend brunch
- Try a new board game

Other ideas:

GUIDE FOR GOAL SETTING

adapted from AnxietyCanada

We often want to make changes in our life, but sometimes don't know where to start. Goal-setting can help you identify where you want to go and the steps needed to get there.

STEP 1. IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS

Take some time to think about the things that you would like to do or that you want to change in your life. Try to identify some short-term goals (for example, things you would like to work on over the next couple of weeks or months), medium-term goals (for example, things you would like to be able to do in six months or a year from now) and long-term goals (for example, things you are hoping to accomplish in your lifetime). Goals can be related to a variety of life areas such as:



- Relationships (friends and family)
- Career/School
- Finances
- Health
- Lifestyle
- Personal development

Tip: People who suffer from anxiety problems often limit their lives because of anxiety. When trying to think of your goals, imagine a life without anxiety. What would you like to be able to do? You can use goal setting as a way to help you practice your tools for managing anxiety, or to move forward with your life as your anxiety becomes more manageable.

Goals should be:

A) Realistic

Make sure that your goals are *realistic* and *attainable*. If you set your goals too high, it will be too difficult to accomplish them and your motivation will suffer. For example, if you have never worked out, expecting yourself to go to the gym for 1 hour 4 times a week is unrealistic. A more realistic goal would be to go to the gym once a week for 20 minutes. Your long-term goal may be to go to the gym 4 times a week, but you need to start with smaller goals and work your way up to the long-term goal.

Tip: People often have goals about never feeling anxious or making mistakes. However, these goals are unrealistic because it is normal to feel anxious, and everyone makes mistakes sometimes.

GUIDE FOR GOAL SETTING

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B) Concrete and Specific

You are far more likely to accomplish your goals if you make them concrete and specific rather than vague. If goals are too vague, it will be difficult to determine what steps you need to take to accomplish them. If your goals are specific, it will be easier to know when your goals have been met.

For example, “exercise more” is not a very good goal because it is too vague. How will you know when you are exercising enough? How often do you want to exercise? For how long? “Exercise twice a week for 30 minutes” is a better goal because it is more specific - you will know exactly when you have completed it successfully.

| Examples of Vague Goals | Examples of SMART Goals |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Eat less sugar | Reduce the cans of pop I have by 1 can per day |
| Spend less time on my phone | Reduce my screentime by half an hour |
| Meet new people | Sign up for a workshop or sport through my community centre and talk to one new person each week |
| Save money | Put \$10 in my savings account each month |
| Exercise more | Move for at least 20 mins every day |
| Be less anxious | Practice relaxation exercises once a day |
| Practice exposure exercises | Complete exposure exercises weekdays between 6 and 7pm |



Key Tip: Write down your goals! You are more likely to stay on top of your goals if you make a list of them.

GUIDE FOR GOAL SETTING

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STEP 2. BREAK GOALS INTO SMALLER STEPS

Many goals can be broken down into smaller steps. This is especially true of medium- and long-term goals. For example, if your goal is to develop some friendships at work, an initial goal may be to ask two coworkers about their weekend plans on Friday afternoon. If your goal is to find a new job, a smaller goal may be to check the classified ads in the newspaper on Saturday.



STEP 3. IDENTIFY OBSTACLES

Once you have established a realistic and concrete goal, identify any obstacles that may be standing in the way of accomplishing your goal. For example, one of the obstacles for going to the gym may be finding childcare. So, if you have set a goal of going to the gym for 30 minutes after work on Wednesday, you will have to arrange for a babysitter.

STEP 4. SCHEDULE YOUR GOALS

You are more likely to complete your goals if you are clear about what you are going to do and when you plan to do it. For example, your goal may be to practice relaxation exercises for 15 minutes on Saturday morning around 10 AM. Use a day planner or calendar to help you remember to complete your goals.



Tip: It is important to be flexible! Sometimes things can get in the way of accomplishing your goals (for example, there is a rainstorm on the day you wanted to go for a hike, or your son comes home sick from school the morning you were planning to practice driving). Be willing to come up with an alternative plan (e.g., go for a walk in an indoor mall or re-schedule your driving session for the next day).

STEP 5. CARRY OUT YOUR GOALS

Now that you have picked a goal, you need to start taking the necessary steps to follow through with it. However, it can be hard to get started. In addition to writing down your goal (e.g. work out at the gym for 30 minutes after work on Wednesday), you can write out the steps that you will need to take to complete it (for example, call babysitter on Monday to arrange for her to pick up the kids after school on Wednesday, pack gym clothes on Tuesday evening, take gym clothes to work on Wednesday morning, head straight to the gym after work on Wednesday).

You are more likely to take the steps needed to achieve your goal if you write them down first. The key to achieving your goals is to just DO IT! Don't wait for the motivation to come before you act; take action, and motivation will follow. For example, you may not feel motivated to start exercising, but once you have done it a few times you will start to feel more motivated to do it again.

GUIDE FOR GOAL SETTING

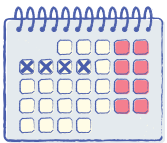
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If you were able to accomplish your goal, reward yourself.

- It's not easy to accomplish goals, so it's important to reward yourself when you do accomplish them.
- It may be helpful to use specific rewards as your motivation to achieve a goal.
- For example, plan to purchase a special gift for yourself (book, treat) or engage in a fun activity (watch a movie, go out for lunch or dinner, plan a relaxing evening, watch your favourite show) after you reach a goal.
- Don't forget the power of positive self-talk (e.g., "I did it!").



If you had trouble completing your goal, you may need to revise it.



- Take a step back and see what got in the way. Retrace the steps for goal setting listed above.
- Make sure your goal is *realistic*. If you set the goal too high, try to scale it back.
- Make sure your goal is *concrete and specific*. If it was too vague, it may have been difficult to tell if you completed it.
- Try to *schedule* your goal, because this will increase your chances of accomplishing it.
- Find ways to get around *obstacles*.
- *Write down* the steps that you need to take to accomplish your goal.

Tip: As you complete goals, check them off your list. This can be a helpful reminder of all that you have accomplished so far.

Helpful Hints:

- **Start small.** Making small changes can have a big impact on your life. Don't try to do everything all at once. Instead, pick 1 or 2 goals to work on at a time.
- **Be patient.** It can take time to meet goals, especially long-term goals. Hang in there and stick with it!
- **Don't think in "all or nothing" terms.** No one completes all of their goals all of the time. You have not failed if you don't accomplish all of your goals.
- **Praise yourself** for the goals you were able to meet and come up with a new plan for accomplishing the goals that you were unable to complete.

SMART GOAL PLANNER

Identify a goal that is **SMART**: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. This helps us break our goals into smaller, actionable steps.



Specific

What exactly do you want to accomplish? Make your goal clear and specific.



Measurable

How will you measure progress? Specify how long, how often, when and where you'll work on your goal.



Attainable

Is the goal doable? Make sure the goal is something you can do and that you have the resources for.



Relevant

How does it fit into your overall goals? Why is it important to you?



Timely

What is your timeframe for this goal? Set a deadline and make sure it's something you can start now.