



**Wellbeing & Recovery College**



**Understanding and Managing Anxiety**

**Session 1**




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**Group Welcome**

- Come with an open mind and an open heart
- Share to help others learning but reminder keep a learning focus
- Confidentiality
- Don't feel pressure to contribute
- Chat




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**Course contents**

**Session 1**  
Understanding anxiety symptoms and the way they can affect us

**Session 2**  
Managing Anxiety




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### Our Aims for Session 1

- To understand what anxiety is
- To understand when anxiety becomes a problem
- To understand how we experience anxiety in the body



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### Myth or Fact?

- Anxiety isn't common
- You will pass out from a panic attack
- Everyone experiences anxiety
- Anxious people should avoid stressful situations
- You need a reason to be anxious
- Only nervous people have anxiety
- It's easy to tell if someone has a problem with anxiety
- You can live well with anxiety



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### What is Anxiety?

- ▶ The Oxford dictionary defines anxiety as:



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### When is anxiety helpful and unhelpful?

Can you think of any examples of when anxiety is helpful?



What about times when anxiety is unhelpful?



How can we tell when anxiety has become a problem?



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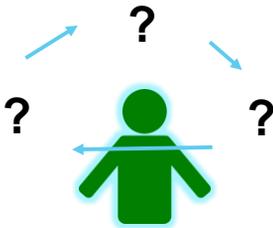
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### How does anxiety affect us?



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### Time for a 10-minute break

(Please feel free to chat with our course mentor if you need support right now, they'll be glad to help ☺).



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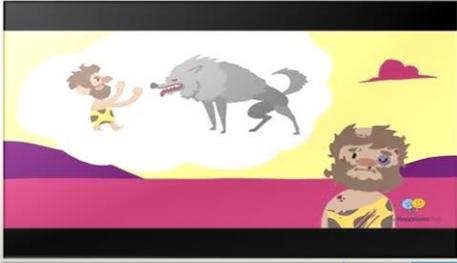
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### Dr Russ Harris; 'Evolution of the Human Mind'



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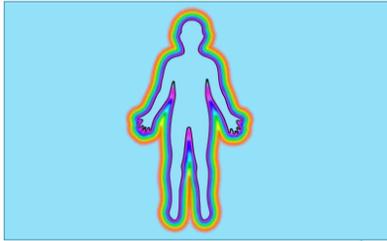
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### How Do We Experience Anxiety in our body?



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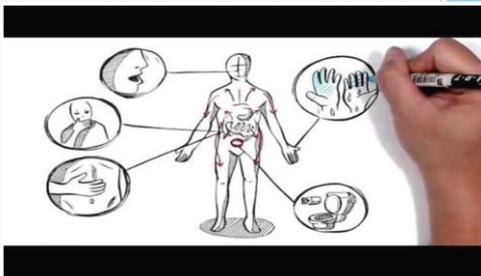
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### Symptoms of fight, flight or freeze



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### Uplifting words



GRANT ME  
THE SERENITY  
TO ACCEPT  
THE THINGS  
I CANNOT CHANGE  
COURAGE TO CHANGE  
THE THINGS I CAN  
AND THE WISDOM  
TO KNOW THE  
DIFFERENCE

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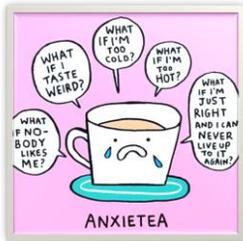
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### How Does Anxiety Impact our thoughts?



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### What do you see?



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## Thought Distortions

- **Mental Filter**
- **Prediction and Catastrophizing**
- **Mind reading**
- **Compare and Despair**



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## Thought Distortions - 1

### Mental Filter

When we see what anxiety wants us to see, we filter out anything positive and sponge up anything that's negative. If you find yourself thinking very black and white statements such as "I completely messed that up" "Everything I do goes wrong" "Nobody likes me" then you are doing mental filter.

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## Thought Distortions - 2

### Mind reading

When we assume we know what others are thinking. We may assume we know that people don't like us, are looking at us or talking about us. We may overthink a situation that has happened, second guessing other people and what they think of us.

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### Thought Distortions - 3

#### Prediction and Catastrophizing

Anxiety can make us ask a lot of “what if?” questions and try to predict what might happen. Our predictions are often negative and can easily become catastrophizing, where you predict the worst case scenario.



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### Thought Distortions - 4

#### Compare and Despair

Due to anxiety creating mostly negative thoughts, we can easily start comparing ourselves to other people and assuming they are better than us. Thoughts such as “they are so clever. I’m stupid” or “they look nicer than me. I look really ugly” are examples of compare and despair.



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### Time for a 10-minute break

(Please feel free to chat with our course mentor if you need support right now, they'll be glad to help ☺).



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### Scenario

Kate is going to an interview. On the way there she thinks to herself:

"I'm going to be late and they will turn me away. I can't do anything right. Everything goes wrong for me."

Kate arrived early and while she is waiting in the waiting room she sees another person waiting to be interviewed and thinks:

"They look smarter than me. I bet I won't get the job."

Can you identify the thought distortions that Kate is having?

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### How does anxiety impact your behaviour?

Take 5 minutes to reflect and write notes on the way that anxiety can impact behaviour



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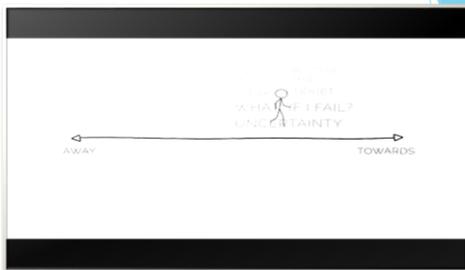
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### Avoidance



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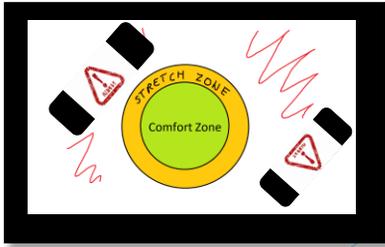
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### Comfort zone & stretch zone



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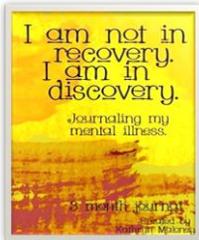
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### Can People With Anxiety Ever Have the Life They Want?



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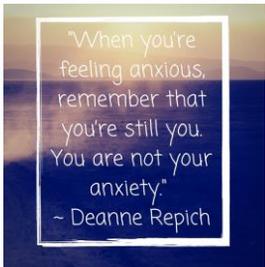
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### Uplifting words...



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### What will be focusing on next week?

- ▶ Explore anxiety management techniques
- ▶ Identify areas you want to focus on in the thoughts-body-behaviour cycle
- ▶ Choose techniques that will best suit you
- ▶ Set goals that challenge you to overcome your anxiety



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### Check-in and Signposting



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