

REVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

1. Anxiety is part of the life-saving fight-flight-freeze response. It becomes problematic when we experience anxious reactions in non-dangerous situations.
2. Anxiety is maintained by the interaction between our thoughts, physical reactions, emotions and behaviours.
3. Anxiety can be overcome by: (a) understanding the relationship between thoughts, emotions, physical reactions and behaviours, (b) adjusting our thoughts to reflect reality, (c) testing new behaviours and (d) facing situations that produce unnecessary fear. This is possible even if we do not know what events created the original experience of anxiety.
4. Thoughts are not facts.
5. Perspective taking exercises focus on challenging the content of our anxious predictions.

MORE THINKING SHORTCUTS THAN THINKING ERRORS...

Thinking errors are just thinking short-cuts. We are not making “thinking errors” on purpose. We see the world through our own senses, hence personalization becomes automatic. Sometimes we need to make fast decisions. To do that, we might have to rely on all-or-nothing thinking as otherwise we end up paralyzed with over-analysis. Common thinking short-cuts along with applicable reframing questions are listed below. Have a look at the automatic thoughts you have been recording over the last week and then check the thinking short-cuts that you use the most:

- Personalization (Is it really your responsibility or even about you? Is it within your control? If needed, list all the responsible parties or potential explanations. What is truly yours to do?)
- All-or-nothing thinking (Draw a line with two opposite conclusions on each end. Now imagine what sort of a conclusion fits in the middle of this continuum. Position the most likely conclusion along this continuum. Where does fall?)
- Overgeneralization (Does your conclusion apply to these circumstances or are you generalizing from a similar experience under different circumstances?)

- Emotional reasoning (Is your prediction/conclusion based on facts or on the emotions that you are feeling?)

One way to deal with our anxious thoughts is to recognize our thinking errors and adjust our thoughts accordingly. Have a look at the anxiety provoking events and related thoughts that you have recorded over the last week. Use the table on the next page to practice recognizing.

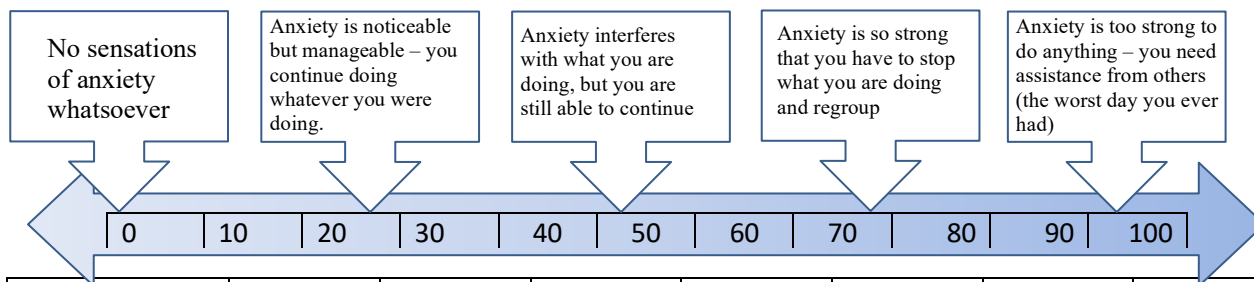
Situation / Context	Automatic Thought /Anxious Prediction	Which thinking shortcut is skewing your thinking?	What impact does this way of thinking have on your actions? Be specific: what do you tend to do when you make such prediction.
Hearing of potential restructuration at work	I will lose my job. I am too old to find a new one. What if I lose my house as a result of it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Personalization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All-or-nothing thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Overgeneralization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emotional thinking	I tend to over-think and give up on my career; lose sleep. I tend to get wrapped up in feeling in anxiety and then start complaining about the situation about everything. I start looking on line for jobs but fail to apply.
		<input type="checkbox"/> Personalization <input type="checkbox"/> All-or-nothing thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Overgeneralization <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional thinking	
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You might have noted that when our thoughts are overly skewed, our actions tend to be directed at reducing emotional discomfort and not necessarily at fixing a problem that we dread. Furthermore, it might not be possible to “fix a problem” when we do not have a full picture. We need to act on facts, not assumptions. The Gaining Perspective worksheets will assist you with both: identifying facts about the situation and acting according to your goals and not your expectations.

GAINING PERSPECTIVE – WORKING WITH ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

<p>1: Describe the situation in which you are experiencing anxiety. What was happening around you? Where were you? What might have triggered you?</p>	<p>2: Rate your anxiety from 0 to 100:</p>
<p>3: What anxious predictions are you making?</p>	
<p>4: Answer the following questions with respect to the painful thought that you have experienced.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is the evidence for your thought? What is the evidence against your thought? What is the best case scenario? What is the worst case scenario? What is the most likely case scenario? If the worst happened, what could you do to cope or address the situation? Is there something that you can do about the situation? If so, what is it? 	
<p>5: Write a balanced prediction that reflects answers to all the questions above:</p>	<p>6: How much do you believe your new prediction? (0 to 100%)</p>
<p>7: Given your balanced prediction, how do you plan to deal with this situation?</p>	<p>8: How much anxiety do you feel now in response to the triggering situation (0 to 100)?</p>

KEEPING TRACK AND KEEPING HONEST



DATE:							
Rate the intensity of your overall anxiety throughout the day using the scale above and mark it on the graph.	100						
	90						
	80						
	70						
	60						
	50						
	40						
	30						
	20						
	10						
0							
What challenges / stresses were you faced with today?							
What skill have you practiced?	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective
What were you able to accomplish during the day?							
How much time was spent on worrying?							
How much time was spent on doing something proactive (problem solving, taking action steps)?							

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