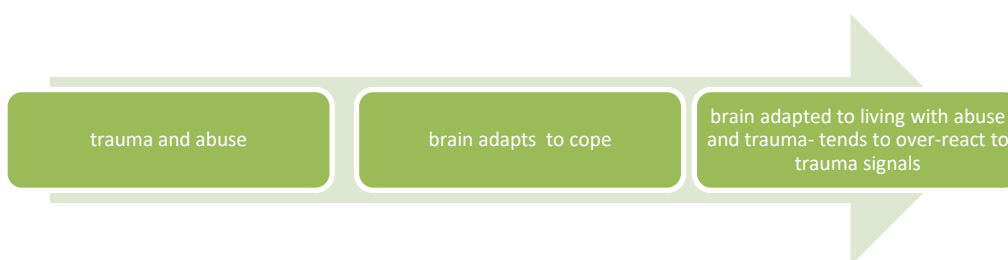


# survive & thrive

Moving forward from interpersonal trauma

Anxiety can be seen as when the body's natural flight or fight system gets 'jammed on'. This week's course explains why this happens for many survivors as their brains learned to be on hyper-alert to cope with the possibility of further abuse and trauma.

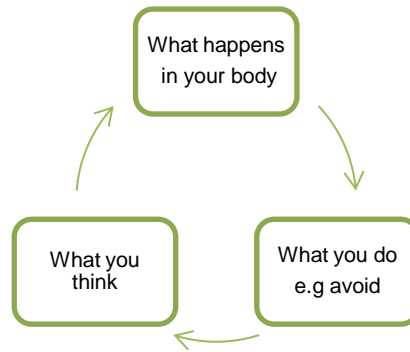
REMEMBER IF YOU ARE STILL AT RISK, PLEASE TAKE THAT SERIOUSLY. THIS SHEET IS FOR COPING WITH ANXIETY WHICH IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH REAL RISK



Anxiety (and panic attacks) can have a huge impact on your life and your health.

- ✓ Cutting down on caffeine, nicotine and alcohol can help anxiety
- ✓ Think about the stresses in your life, this might include money, health, children or work. Is there anything that could help you with these? Is there anyone who could give you some advice?

You also learned that anxiety can be understood as a 'vicious circle' where what we think, what we do and how our body reacts gets stuck in a pattern.



## Body

Anxiety has a huge effect on your body as it reacts as if something terrible is about to happen, sending extra oxygen and adrenalin to help you run away or fight. Sometimes, it reacts to keep you safe by making you feel frozen to the spot. The palpitations, breathlessness, sweating, shaking, churning stomach can set off our thoughts about what is happening to us and make us want to get out of the situation

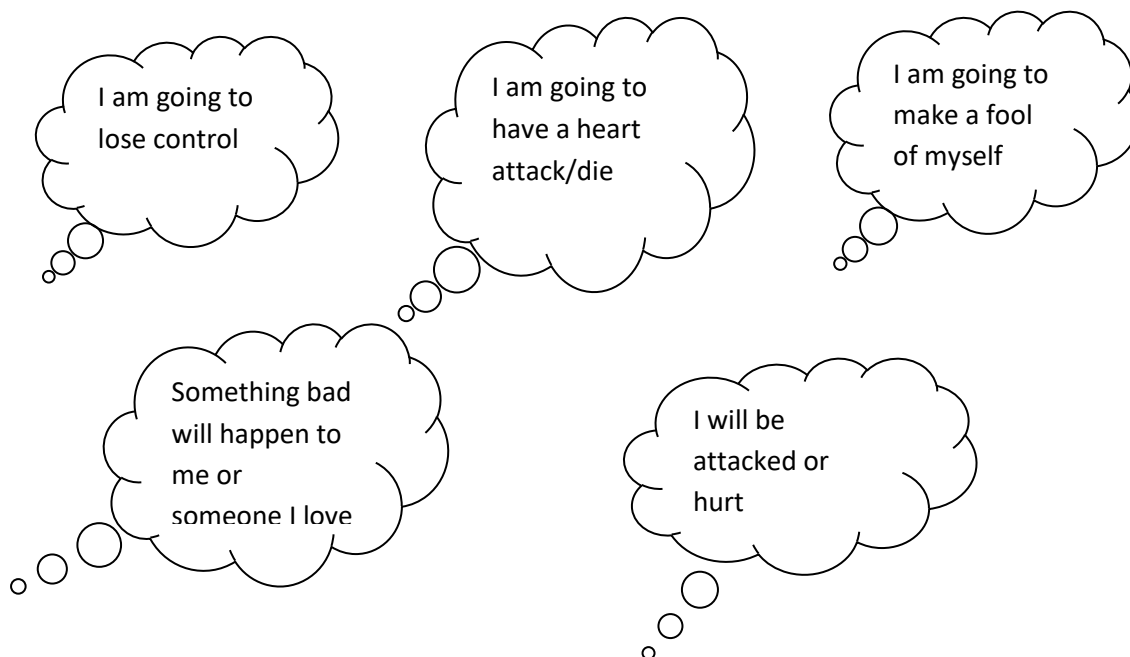
## Behaviour (what we do)

The most common response to feeling anxiety is wanting to AVOID and GET AWAY. This makes sense in the moment (and given your experiences) but in the long run this will convince you that the danger you were in was real, and that you were not able to cope. This undermines your confidence further in the safety of the world and your ability to cope with it.

## Thoughts

We can think ourselves anxious. The pattern of thinking we are in can have a huge impact on our anxiety. Firstly, we get into a pattern of seeing the world/other people as being dangerous (not surprising given your experiences) and seeing yourself and not being able to cope. People also often get very anxious about what is happening in their bodies

Common thoughts when faced with anxiety include:



### Managing Anxiety

- ✓ Managing your body
- ✓ Managing your behaviour
- ✓ Managing your thoughts

This is designed as a starting point, you may need more specialist help if your anxiety is long standing or severely affecting your life. Please ask the course leaders for further information about other sources of support.

### Managing your Body

If your brain is telling your body that the world or other people are dangerous, we need to help it to 'switch off' these signals. Effective strategies include

- ✓ Breathing
- ✓ Letting go of tension
- ✓ Mindfulness

You have already been starting to work on these over the past 5 weeks

### Managing your Behaviour

Overcoming avoidance is the key to this. The more you avoid, the more problems become stuck in the familiar pattern. Try to write a list of things you avoid, put them in order of difficulty (easiest first), and then slowly but

regularly set yourself goals to tackle these. You very well need additional support with this. Ask the course leaders, your link person or other supports

### **Managing your Thoughts**

Again, you may need more support with this, but the first stage is to become more aware of your 'anxious self-talk' (the 'chat' in your head when you feel anxious). Remember A THOUGHT IS NOT A FACT and there may be more than one way to think about a situation.

Try practicing some 'helpful self-talk'

- ✓ I am safe just now
- ✓ I will be ok (anxiety is horrible but not at all dangerous)
- ✓ I have coped with these feeling before, I will cope
- ✓ If I stay and face it, it will be easier in the long run

### **My Managing Anxiety Plan:**

The way anxiety affects me is:

What I need to work on is:

To prepare for this, I need to:

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My plan to practice is:

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*I will be patient with myself.*