

Talking Changes Pure Self-Help Pack

You have been sent this pack as you are starting to display mild symptoms of depression and/or anxiety. Unfortunately, this is all too common in present day and a high percentage of people are experiencing similar problems. Studies have shown that pure self-help using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can often be very beneficial in helping people to manage their symptoms of depression and/or anxiety.

This pack will help you to understand common mental health problems and will provide web links for resources that you can use to learn about different Cognitive Behaviour Therapy techniques, which can help you to manage your symptoms. We provide a number of resources for each problem; they all cover similar information, but are presented in different ways. You can start with the first one and move on to the others, if you think this would be useful.

Depression / Low Mood

It is normal to feel down at certain times in our lives, but it may become a problem when it goes on for a long period of time or is having a significant impact on our lives.

Depression can be a necessary reaction in human beings. In times of ill health or vulnerability, we may withdraw from friends and family and we may see changes in our sleeping pattern and eating habits. In the short term, this may be beneficial as it provides us with time to heal and allows us to protect ourselves from situations we may not do well in. In the long term however, if we continue with this behaviour we may become isolated and therefore lack opportunities that bring pleasure in our lives. This can make us feel less able to cope with things that other people seem to manage well with.

Here are some examples of common thoughts, feelings and behaviours that we may experience when suffering with depression:

Thoughts	Feelings (emotional and physical)	Behaviours
• No one likes me • I am useless • Things will never change • I am a failure • People would be better off without me	• Sad, flat, upset, lonely • Lack of motivation and energy • Fatigue / tiredness • Sleeping too much or too little	• Withdrawing from family and friends • Spending more time in bed • Socialising less • Doing hobbies less

Self Help for Depression:

- http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax_doc.cfm?Mini_ID=36
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/depression.asp>

Anxiety and Specific Anxiety Problems

It is also normal to feel worried at certain times in our lives, but it may become a problem when it goes on for a long period of time or is having a significant impact on our lives.

Anxiety is a necessary reaction in all human beings. Small amounts of anxiety may actually be useful to help us perform in times of pressure. It causes concern when it does not reduce, is consistently excessive to the situation and when it affects us at times it should not (e.g. when shopping, when talking to a friend, when watching TV).

Here are some examples of common thoughts, feelings and behaviours that we may experience when suffering with anxiety:

Thoughts	Feelings (emotional and physical)	Behaviours
• Worst case scenarios • What if something bad happens • I am not safe • I won't be able to cope • People will judge me or I will make a fool of myself	• Heart beating faster • Dizzy / light headed • Tense Muscles • Needing the toilet • Stomach churning • Sweating • Blushing • Jelly legs / tingling hands	• Avoiding certain tasks / situations / people • Pacing around • Snapping at people • Only going out if family/friends are with you • Keeping earphones in so people can't speak to you

Anxiety problems may be more specific than described above. Please see below for further information on specific anxiety problems and some useful resources. You may find that you relate more to particular problems.

Panic Attacks / Panic Disorder

A panic attack can be described as a short and intense rush of anxiety symptoms (e.g. pounding heart, chest pain, shortness of breath, tingling sensations). They can be very scary and can occur seemingly out of nowhere, usually lasting between 5 – 20 minutes. It can feel as if something is very wrong and people often mistake

having a panic attack as having a heart attack; however a panic attack is not dangerous and should not require medical attention.

Panic disorder is used to describe regular panic attacks that seemingly occur without warning and don't seem to be triggered by any specific event or object.

Useful resources to help you understand panic and to learn techniques for symptom management:

- http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=44
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/panic.asp>

Phobias

A phobia is an intense fear to a specific object or activity. People who have a phobia will often organise their lives to ensure they do not have to face their fear. The intensity of anxiety usually leads to people avoiding their fear, but if they do face it they may experience panic attack symptoms. We can generally categorise phobias in to simple (e.g. spiders, heights, flying) or complex (e.g. agoraphobia, social phobia).

Useful resources to help you understand phobia and to learn techniques for symptom management:

- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/phobias.asp>

Social Anxiety

Social anxiety describes a specific type of anxiety that is concerned with how we are judged by others. It may develop from a single intense anxious experience or instead develop from a lack of confidence in social situations. With social anxiety we may think others think badly of us or that people will notice something wrong with us. We may fear that we will do something embarrassing. This can lead to us avoiding certain situations or using safety behaviours, such as pretending to use our mobile phone so that others do not talk to us.

Useful resources to help you understand phobia and to learn techniques for symptom management:

- http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=40
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/shynesssocialphobia.asp>

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Generalised Anxiety Disorder is characterised by uncontrollable worry about lots of different things, including ourselves and others. This leads to us often feeling anxious. We may worry that our worry is out of control and that this may be harmful to us. We may even worry when we are not worrying, as we are so used to doing so. This can impact on our sleep, make us irritable and make us snappy. It may make it difficult to make decisions.

Useful resources to help you understand phobia and to learn techniques for symptom management:

- http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=46
- https://cedar.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/schoolofpsychology/cedar/documents/Worry_website_version_colour.pdf

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD is characterised by intrusive thoughts or images and repetitive behaviours (compulsions) which are aimed to help reduce associated anxiety.

Obsessions are unpleasant thoughts, images or urges that come into our minds. The presence of these causes us anxiety. Obsessions are not simply worries about life problems.

Compulsions are thoughts or actions we feel compelled to do or repeat when we experience the unpleasant thought, image or urge. We may have a compulsion as a way of managing distressed caused by the obsession.

Obsessions can be very frightening and cause us a lot of distress. As a result, we may carry out behaviours to help us ensure that our thoughts do not become a reality. These behaviours (compulsions) can have a huge impact on our lives and the time taken to complete them may impact badly on our wellbeing.

Useful resources to help you understand OCD and to learn techniques for symptom management:

- https://cedar.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/schoolofpsychology/cedar/documents/Exposure_and_Response_Prevention_Recovery_Guide_Single_pages_Colour.pdf
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/obsessioncompulsion.asp>

Additional Resources

Here are some additional resources that you may find useful.

Sleep Problems

- http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax_doc.cfm?Mini_ID=50
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/pdfGuides/Sleep%20Problems.pdf>

Relaxation

There are a number of relaxation techniques (e.g. mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing).

Audio materials:

- <https://stresscontrolaudio.com/home>
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/downloads/progressivemuscularrelaxation.mp3>
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/downloads/relaxation.mp3>
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/downloads/visualisation.mp3>

Written materials:

- <http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/docs/ACF3C8D.pdf>
- <http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/docs/Info-Calming%20technique.pdf>

Various Tools and apps

This website helps direct you to useful mobile phone apps that can help for a number of different problems. It asks a few short questions to help direct you to free apps that may be most beneficial to you.

<https://au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps>

What should I do if my Symptoms get worse?

We hope that you have found this information beneficial. However, if you think that your mental health problem is getting worse, then we encourage you to contact Talking Changes to discuss this. You can call us on our main office number (0191 333 3300) or refer through your GP.

For more information about Talking Changes, then you can either call or visit our website at: <http://www.talkingchanges.org.uk/about-us>