



Alberta   
Anxiety to  Calm™ 

**JOURNAL**

**8 WEEK WORKSHOP**

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**Name**

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# Introduction

If you struggle with anxiety and want to learn tools to manage your anxiety, this workshop is for you! This workbook includes highlights of the **Alberta Anxiety to Calm™** information we will be sharing with you. Use it to guide you with the skills and bring it with you to every class. When you are finished this workshop you can refer back to it to practice the skills you learned.

**Alberta Anxiety to Calm™** is a Red Deer Primary Care Network workshop designed by psychologists and clinical social workers with the support of family doctors.

Over the next **8 weeks**, we will be looking at **three key areas** and you will **practice skills** proven to help you **manage your anxiety**.

The **three areas** we will be addressing are:

**Challenge Myself:** Challenge my thoughts, behaviours and emotions

**Live Well:** Learn to improve my lifestyle

**Find Calm:** Learn exercises that will help me to manage my anxiety

## Skills

These skills have been proven to be effective through research and our participant use. You will be introduced to a **few skills each week** throughout the workshop. Participants who have the biggest reduction in anxiety use **one or more** of these skills every day. It will take **commitment** and **practice** to incorporate these skills into your daily life.

### Week 1

**Challenge Myself:** Benefits of Anxiety

**Find Calm:** Breathing Exercises

**Live Well:** Be Active

### Week 2

**Challenge Myself:** Respond To Stress

**Live Well:** Choose To Create Balance

**Find Calm:** Progressive Muscle Relaxation

### Week 3

**Challenge Myself:** Thinking About Thinking

**Live Well:** Sleep Well

**Find Calm:** Body Scan

### Week 4

**Challenge Myself:**

**Challenge My Beliefs About My Anxiety**

**Live Well:** Build Support

**Find Calm:** Mindfulness Blitz

### Week 5

**Challenge Myself:** Tolerating Uncertainty

**Live Well:** Find a Pleasurable Experience

**Find Calm:** Discover the Benefits of Loving Kindness

### Week 6

**Challenge Myself:** Honour My Emotions

**Live Well:** Use Music to Influence My Mood

**Find Calm:** Self-Compassion Break

### Week 7

**Challenge Myself:** Choose New Behaviours

**Live Well:** Choose to Eat Well

**Find Calm:** 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Techniques

### Week 8

**Challenge Myself:** Plan For My Future

**Live Well:** Enjoy My Success

**Find Calm:** Find My Safe Place

## Housekeeping

- Each class will have a **Vitality Break** about halfway through—this is a chance to refresh yourself—walk around, use the facilities and get some water.
- Bring your **Anxiety Journal** each week.

## Group Informed Consent Participation

Welcome to RDPCN group workshops. We are excited to work and learn with you over the next few weeks. We want you and other group members to have a positive experience during the workshop. We ask you to review and sign the following consent form. Please feel free to ask the coaches if you have a question.

## Workshop Format

- Provides education and skill-based group workshops to the public.
- Provides trained health professionals to facilitate the groups.
- Keeps the group on track in a safe environment.

## Participant Responsibility

### Attendance

- Please make every effort to attend on time.
- If you miss a workshop, review the material you missed prior to the next workshop.
- Let the coach know if you will be late or miss a workshop.
- If you miss more than two classes, please consider registering for the next workshop.
- You may withdraw from the group at any time.
- If you do not wish to remain in a group, discuss the potential benefit of other resources with the coach.
- If you require individual support for your situation, you can speak to your coaches at a break. During group we will focus on class experiences.
- Virtual attendance:
  - No picture taking or recording.
  - Put video on so we can all see you.
  - Be in a private location to keep confidentiality for all in the group.
  - If you have something you want to discuss privately, please use the direct chat function with one of the coaches. You can also request a phone call during break or after class if you prefer.

## Participation

- To get the most benefits and growth from our groups, try the activities, participate in discussions, and do homework. Use “I” language when sharing rather than advice giving.
- Some topics may be uncomfortable. You have the option to decline to answer a question or take part in an activity. Feel free to discuss this with your coach.
- Treat other group members with the same courtesy that you would like to receive. Please refrain from providing unsolicited advice. Encouragement and validation are appropriate.
- Have private conversations at break rather than during the workshop.
- Safety is of utmost importance, therefore verbal or physical harassment to others will not be tolerated. Anyone who violates this rule will be asked to leave the group and will be called by a coach to discuss expectations for returning.
- Refrain from trauma sensitive sharing. We all have different experiences and we want a safe place for all.

## Housekeeping

- There is a \$20.00 material fee for each workshop but this can be waived due to financial hardship.
- Please turn off your cell phone or put it on silence/vibrate.
- You can bring snacks. Please dispose of your garbage.
- Give a workshop coach a thumbs-up if you need to leave the room before a break so they know that you are okay. If you are gone for more than five minutes, one of the coaches will come to check on you.
- Avoid wearing fragrances.
- Smoking is only permitted outside as per City bylaws.
- Children are neither permitted to come to class nor be left with administration staff.

## Confidentiality (Protections and Limitations)

- All information shared by the participant will be kept confidential within the group.
- A letter will be sent to your physician about your participation in the workshop and kept on your medical file.
- No information will be released to any other party except when:
  - There is a risk of harm to the participant or others,
  - There is a risk of harm to a child or other vulnerable person,
  - A lawyer subpoenas the records for a court case.

## Evaluation

RDPCN conducts evaluation of all workshops. Your involvement and feedback helps us ensure high quality workshops.

- All evaluations are voluntary.
- Any information provided, will be kept confidential.

All information collected from the workshop will be aggregated into reports. No individual participants will ever be identified. Comments that participants provide about the program may be used for reporting purposes, but will not be used in any way that can identify individual participants.

- In order to show progress and as part of the care provided by the RDPCN, it may be necessary to communicate aspects of the evaluation with your family physician.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, I consent to participate in the workshop and am aware that these workshops collect data for evaluation purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client/guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client PHN

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Family Doctor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of clinic

\_\_\_\_\_  
Location of Clinic

\_\_\_\_\_  
Coach signature

Information on this form is collected under the authority of section 33(c) of FOIP and/or section 20 (b) of HIA (pursuant to sections 27.1 and 27.2 of HIA) for the purposes of providing health services and carrying out planning and resource allocation, health system management, public health surveillance and health policy development.

For more information about the collection of information on this form, please contact the Executive Director, Red Deer Primary Care Network at 403.343.9100.

## Structure of the Class

We will help you to learn skills to keep your anxious mind and body from standing between you and your life. You will learn ways to be kinder to yourself, accept all of who you are and the way your body reacts to thoughts, situations, and feelings in a way that you may not have done before.

The **practice** and the **lived experience** is where we really see progress. That is why the homework is so important. It's the small steps we do over time that will make the changes you want to experience. Remember: your brain can change!

# Week 1

## Week 1 Skills

Challenge Myself: **Benefits of Anxiety**

Find Calm: **Breathing Exercises**

Live Well: **Be Active**

## Skill

### Challenge Myself: **Benefits of Anxiety**

#### **Healthy Anxiety: Fight or Flight Response**

What happens in our bodies when we are exposed to real danger?

How the body reacts	Purpose
Breathing gets faster	To take in more oxygen
More blood to muscles and limbs; muscles tense up	More strength and speed
More blood to brain	Act more instinctively
Heart beats quicker, blood pressure increases, blood sugar increases	More energy
Pupils dilate	See clearer
Sweat	To prevent overheating
Digestion slows down	Not needed in time of fight or flight

We then jump out of the way to **safety** and our bodies return to **normal**.

## Anxiety: Threat Response

You can be triggered to have the fight or flight response from an emotional memory. You get all the symptoms of fight or flight, but there is no real danger present, your alarm is misfiring or flipping your lid.

## Skill

### Find Calm: Breathing Exercises

Many of our **Finding Calm** skills are based on breathing. The first skill today is **Breathing Exercises**. You can use these when you are feeling anxious and as a regular body maintenance/stress control. It is recommended that you try these 15 times a day.

#### Diaphragmatic “Belly Breathing”

1. Put your hands on your chest and belly
2. Observe where your air moves as you take normal breaths
3. Breathe in deeply. Hold, then breathe out for longer than you breathed in.

**Reminder!** It will take more than breathing to reach your goal, but this is where we can start.

You can try out this **Breathing Reset Exercise** over the next week.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 1

Take a few moments to reflect on the following questions.

What did I notice before beginning the [Breathing Reset Exercises](#)?

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What did I notice after?

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What did I learn?

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# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 1

You can use the **Calm Breathing Diary** to reflect on the effect of the breathing exercises you try.

- What do you notice before? (Rate your anxiety on a scale of 1 – 10. **1 is low, 10 is high.**)
- Write the number of breaths you took.
- Rate your anxiety level after the breathing on a scale of 1 – 10.
- Write any comments or thoughts you have related to this experience. What **difference** did it make? What is your **plan to use** these and incorporate them **into your day**?

Day	Anxiety level before (1 – 10)	Number of breaths	Anxiety level after (1 – 10)	Comments/thoughts
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

## Skill Live Well: Be Active

### Regular physical activity decreases:

- **Symptoms of depression:** 30 minutes of exercise 3 times a week can be as effective as taking an antidepressant
- **Anxiety levels:** 5 minutes of exercise can be enough to decrease an anxiety episode

### Regular physical activity increases:

- Mood
- Energy
- Coping
- Attention, focus and productivity
- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- Group activities improve mood, social connections and health.

**What is my current activity level?**

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**When I do exercise, what do I notice about myself?**

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**Does anything get in the way of me being active?**

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**What can I do to make being active a regular part of my routine of self-care?**

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## Check-out

### My Plan to Practice This Week's Skills

**Find Calm: Breathing Exercises.** I will practice the **Breathing Reset Exercises** \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use the breathing exercises?

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**Challenge Myself: Capture My Best Hope.** When will I work on my **Self Study** this week?

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**Live Well: Choose to Be Active.** What one thing will I do to increase my activity?

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## Self Study

### Challenge Myself: Capture My Best Hope

Imagine 8 weeks in the future. Anxiety is not stopping you from your usual activities. What does this look like or feel like for you?

What others have found helpful about the workshop that you might consider as goals:

- Leaving with tools to manage life
- Learning mindfulness and calming skills to improve anxiety symptoms
- Understanding my anxiety and how it works
- Improving coping skills
- Feeling of not being the only person with problems in life; learning you are not alone
- Improving lifestyle factors that contribute to stress/anxiety
- Attending all the groups to learn and focus on myself
- Increasing awareness
- Understanding the importance of anxiety/threat response
- Learning to cope with worry/rumination and negative thinking
- Learning in a group to share experiences
- Reducing physical symptoms and having a sense of calmness
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 1

Imagine 8 weeks in the future. Anxiety is not stopping you from doing your usual activities. That may seem impossible to imagine, but now, take a moment to break it into smaller steps. **Small steps lead to big changes.**

**How would you like your experience with anxiety to change after coming to this workshop?**

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Once you know the **what or why**, you can start to reflect on the **how** as we learn to practice these skills.

**What do you hope to get from this workshop?**

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**How would you like your experience with anxiety to change from coming to this workshop?**

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## Goal Setting

Specific/Small

Measurable/My Own

Action-Oriented

Realistic/Rewarded

Time-Defined

Have you heard about **SMART Goals** before?

Using this tool, we will help you refine your best “hopes” into a goal. You may need to break it into smaller steps in order to make your hopes (goals) achievable.

**How will I know when my goal is completed?**

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**Is it my own?** (Rather than someone else's)  yes  no

**Am I in control?** (Or does it depend on someone else's cooperation)  yes  no

**Is it realistic to my life?**  yes  no

**Is it based on something I can do?** (Rather than on thoughts/feelings)  yes  no

**How will I reward myself?**

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# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 1

## Time defined

Your **Immediate Goal** should include a time frame for completion. If you can't do it this week, set it aside and come up with another goal. You may notice that when you set goals for "in the next 7 days" they either don't happen or get done on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. If so, be more specific for at least some of your goals.

**Using these rules, what's your SMART Goal? Be as precise as you can.**

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Notice what you have done. You have created a **plan** to get started on your **goal**. Work on this plan over the coming week.

That seems like a lot of work just to get one **goal**, doesn't it? Don't worry. You will get better at it the more you practice.

**When I am successful, what else will I be able to do?**

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**Keep looking back at this throughout the 8 weeks. It is not uncommon for people to adjust it as they go.**



# Week 2

## Self Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** Did I find a way to hold myself accountable to my goal this week?

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**Live Well: Choose to Be Active.** What did I do to add activity into my day this week?

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**Find Calm:** When did I use the **Breathing Exercise**?

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What difference did it make?

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## Week 2 Skills

**3 Minute Breathing Space**

**Challenge Myself: Responding to Stress**

**Live Well: Choose to Create Balance**

**Find Calm: Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

## 3 Minute Breathing Space

*“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf” - Kabat-Zinn 2004*

To practice the **3 Minute Breathing Space** without a recording, use these instructions:

- **First minute:** focus on here and now, your mood, emotions and thoughts. Don’t try and change anything, just notice.
- **Second minute:** move your awareness to your breath. Focus on breathing into your abdomen. If your mind wanders acknowledge where it went and gently guide it back to your breath.
- **Third minute:** notice your breath moving through your entire body. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Open your eyes and bring your attention back to the here and now. Continue on with your day.

What did I notice before the **3 Minute Breathing Space**?

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What did I notice after?

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What did I learn?

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## Skill Challenge Myself: Respond to Stress

### Symptoms of Stress

#### Self Assessment

Check off any of the following **symptoms of stress** that I have experienced in the last week.

#### Physical Symptoms

- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Stomach aches
- Sweaty palms
- Sleep difficulties
- Dizziness
- Back pain
- Tight neck, shoulders
- Racing heart
- Restlessness
- Tiredness
- Ringing in ears

#### Behavioral Symptoms

- Excess smoking
- Bossiness
- Compulsive gum chewing
- Critical attitude
- Grinding teeth at night
- Overuse of alcohol
- Compulsive eating
- Inability to get things done

#### Emotional Symptoms

- Crying
- Nervousness, anxiety
- Boredom, no meaning to things
- Edginess – ready to explode
- Feeling powerless to change things
- Overwhelming feeling of pressure
- Anger
- Loneliness
- Unhappiness for no reason
- Easily upset

#### Cognitive Symptoms

- Trouble thinking clearly
- Forgetfulness
- Lack of creativity
- Memory loss
- Indecisiveness
- Thoughts of running away
- Constant worrying
- Loss of sense of humour

#### Spiritual Symptoms

- Emptiness
- Loss of meaning
- Doubt
- Unforgiving
- Martyrdom
- Looking for magic
- Loss of direction
- Cynicism
- Apathy
- Need to “prove” self

#### Relational Symptoms

- Isolation
- Intolerance
- Resentment
- Loneliness
- Lashing out
- Hiding
- Clamming up
- Lowered sex drive
- Nagging
- Distrust
- Lack of intimacy
- Using people
- Fewer contacts with friends

Stress can cause big problems if you do not recognize and respond to it well, it can create or magnify anxiety and deplete your resources.

## Definition of Stress

Stress is any demand placed on the mind or body. It becomes a problem when life demands exceed the resources we have to cope. Stress can cause big problems if you do not recognize and respond to it well. It can create or magnify anxiety and deplete your resources to deal with it.

## Different Types of Stress

1. **Environmental:** multiple demands in our environment that we have to adjust to (e.g., weather, traffic, sounds, lighting, dishwasher not working, not finding a close enough parking spot).
2. **Social:** The management of your various roles and interactions with others (family, friends, coworkers, and pets). The impact on your well-being when others demand your time, energy, and collaboration (e.g., financial problems, loss of a loved one, conflict).
3. **Physiological:** Your physical health status. Our age, any developmental changes, nutrition, activity level, and the demands placed on the body due to our life roles. Stress can create or intensify persistent pain.
4. **Thoughts:** Your brain is constantly scanning for threats in your environment and body. If it interprets and labels your persistent situation as threatening, it will turn on your stress response and see what resources you have to cope.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 2

**What makes some things stressful to you?**

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**How do you know you are stressed?** Remember the symptoms of stress assessment.

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**Please consider one stressful situation that comes to mind after reviewing the different types of stress.**

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## Tactics For Coping With Stress Inventory

### Instructions

Listed below are some common ways of coping with stressful events. Mark those that are characteristic of your behaviour or that you use frequently.

- 1. I ignore my own needs and just work harder and faster.
- 2. I seek out friends for conversation and support.
- 3. I eat more than usual.
- 4. I engage in some type of physical exercise.
- 5. I get irritable and take it out on those around me.
- 6. I take a little time to relax, breathe, and unwind.
- 7. I smoke a cigarette or drink a caffeinated beverage.
- 8. I confront my source of stress and work to change it.
- 9. I withdraw emotionally and just go through the motions of my day.
- 10. I change my outlook on the problem and put it in a better perspective.
- 11. I sleep more than I really need to.
- 12. I take some time off and get away from my working life.
- 13. I go out shopping and buy something to make myself feel good.
- 14. I joke with my friends and use humour to take the edge off.
- 15. I drink more alcohol than usual.
- 16. I get involved in a hobby or interest that helps me unwind and enjoy myself.
- 17. I take medicine to help me relax or sleep better.
- 18. I maintain a healthy diet.
- 19. I just ignore the problem and hope it will go away.
- 20. I pray, meditate, or enhance my spiritual life.
- 21. I worry about the problem and am afraid to do something about it.
- 22. I try to focus on the things I can control and accept the things I can't.

### Evaluate your results

The **even-numbered items tend to be more constructive ways to deal with stress** and the **odd-numbered items tend to be less constructive ways of coping with stress**. Congratulate yourself for the even-numbered items you checked. Think about whether you need to make some changes in your thinking or behaviour if you checked any odd-numbered items. Consider experimenting with some even-numbered items you haven't tried before.

Adapted from "The relaxation and stress reduction workbook" Davis/Eshelman/McKay, 2008 at timetothrive.com

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 2

For the stressful situation you chose on **page 23**:

**How awful or dangerous are you thinking this situation will be on a scale from 1 – 10?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Fine/  
safe

Awful  
dangerous

**What do you think is going to happen?**

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**If this was to happen, what is your confidence that you would be able to handle it on a scale of 1 – 10?**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Not at all  
confident

Very  
confident

Please follow the instruction on the [Tactics For Coping With Stress Inventory](#) to further explore the ways you deal with the stressful situation you chose on **page 24**.

**What even number responses am I already doing from the [Tactics For Coping With Stress Inventory](#)?**

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**What is one small thing I can do to build on my constructive ways to deal with stress?**

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Less constructive (odd numbered) responses can become automatic. Many can reduce anxiety quickly and temporarily. However they let us continue to distract from or avoid our feelings and needs.

**What is the smallest step I can do to handle this situation better?**

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**What skills so far from Anxiety to Calm am I already using or will start to use?**

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## Slowing Down to Reduce Stress

You can use this **acronym** to remind you of the **steps to take** when you notice you are **feeling stressed**.

**S**top: Be present

**T**ake a breath

**O**bserve my reactions

**P**roceed: Choose a healthy response

**An example to consider:** I'm at a social gathering. I look around and see that there are a lot of people I don't know. I'm starting to notice that I'm shaking and about to spill my coffee.

**S:** Stop!

**T:** Breathe

**O:** My neck is tight, my heart is pounding and I'm sweating and shaking

**P:** I will take a step back, scan the room and see who I know. I will seek that person out and ask, "How is your family doing?"

## Skill

### Live Well: Choose to Create Balance

A balanced life means having the **time** and **energy** to do the things you **need to do** as well as the **things you want to do**. Make choices that **create balance** when you recognize the **early warning signs** that your **life is not balanced**.

What did I learn from doing [My Life Balance Wheel](#)?

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What are my first signs that life is getting out of balance?

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Take a few minutes to fill out the balance wheel on the **next page** using the **instructions** on the **wheel**.

## My Life Balance Wheel

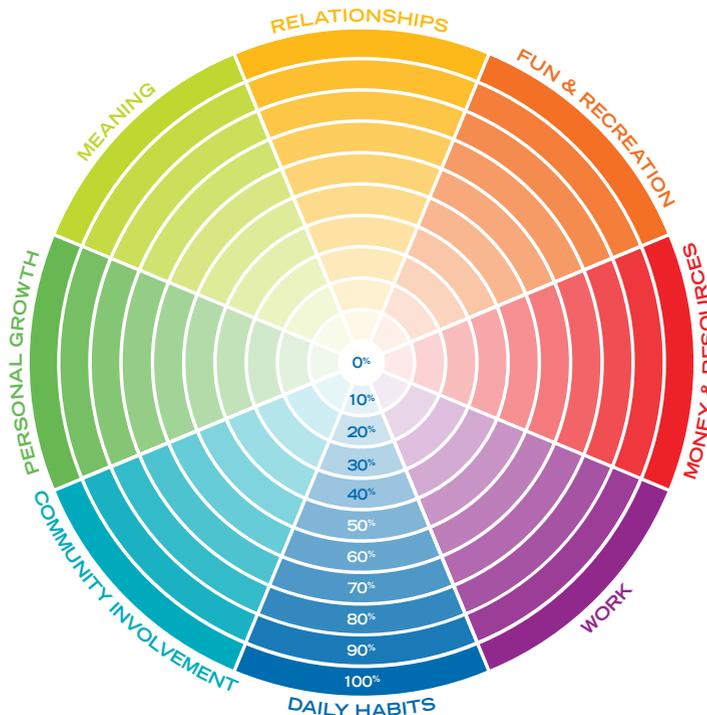
This wheel provides an opportunity to reflect on your present life balance. Life Balance is constantly changing with life circumstance and stage of life. Take a few minutes to consider your life balance.

Mark an **X** for the degree to which you are satisfied with this area of your life right now. Write the date and review monthly.

**0% = Not Satisfied at all**

**100% = Extremely Satisfied**

Reflect on areas where you are satisfied, and where you would like to make some changes. Use **Positive Daily Intentions**, **Microsteps** and **Longer Term Goals** to make those changes. Your choices reveal your priorities.



Look carefully at how you rated the various sections of the **My Life Balance Wheel**. What does it tell you about your choices right now and how you are living? Use the **Reflection** below to determine if there is one (or more areas) that you want to work on to become healthier? For most people picking one area to work on helps to make a realistic plan and increases their chances of being successful.

Once you have chosen a focus, think about how you will move forward in that area.

You can use the **Self-Care Journal** to help you get started, or use goal setting, small steps or make daily intentions to help keep you on track. Which area(s) can you **realistically** focus on right now? Start with 1 or 2 at the most. Often success in one area leads to improvement in other areas.

### RELATIONSHIPS

- Family and friends
- Colleagues
- Pets

### FUN & RECREATION

- Sports
- Vacation
- Hobbies (e.g., art, music, reading)

### MONEY & RESOURCES

- Financial and other resources
- Recognizing problem gambling
- Planning for the future

### WORK

- Household work
- Caring for family
- Volunteer work
- Paid work

### DAILY HABITS

- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Limiting alcohol and drugs
- Not using tobacco
- Healthy use of your smartphone

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Local community
- Communities of interest (e.g., book club, environmental action group)

### PERSONAL GROWTH

- Hopes and aspirations
- Learning and doing new things

### MEANING

- Finding meaning in everyday activities
- Spirituality
- Feeling connected to others

## Skill

### Find Calm: Progressive Muscle Relaxation\*

**Relaxation** is a way to **change** the focus of attention for **managing a wandering mind** and the **physical symptoms** that come with anxiety.

What did I notice before **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**?

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What did I notice after?

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\*If you want a reference back to this skill and many of the others in class, please visit our Red Deer PCN website: [www.reddeerpcn.com](http://www.reddeerpcn.com)

## Check-out

### My Plan to Practice This Week's Skills

**Challenge Myself: Respond to Stress.** How will I respond when stressful situations come up?

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**Live Well: Choose to Create Balance.** What is one small thing I will do to move towards restoring balance in my life?

---

---

**Find Calm: Progressive Muscle Relaxation.** I will continue to practice **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

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### Additional Resource

If you are interested in learning more ways to manage stress, this is a great Ted Talk you can watch on your own:

**Kelly McGonigal – How to make stress your friend**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcGyVTAoXEU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcGyVTAoXEU)

# Week 3

## Self Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** What did I do differently when a stressful situation came up?

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---

**Live Well:** What did I do to restore some balance to my life?

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**Find Calm:** When did I use the **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**?

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What difference did it make?

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## Week 3 Skills

**3 Minute Breathing Space**

**Challenge Myself: Thinking About Thinking**

**Live Well: Sleep Well**

**Find Calm: Body Scan**

# Skill

## Challenge Myself: Thinking About Thinking

What are your beliefs about thoughts and their role with respect to anxiety?

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Do you notice a change in anxiety that is connected to certain thoughts?

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## Part 1: Understanding Thinking That Fails to Reflect the Whole Picture

### Automatic Thoughts (Thinking Traps)

#### All or Nothing Thinking

Sometimes called “black and white thinking.”

*If I'm not perfect, I have failed.*

*Either I do it right or not at all.*

#### Challenging the Trap:

- Things don't have to be black and white.
- What is the less extreme way of looking at this?
- Are there any shades of grey or acceptable options between perfect and horrible?
- What is a reasonable option between the two extremes that I can believe in?

#### Mental Filter

Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

Noticing our failures but not seeing our success.

#### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I only noticing bad stuff and filtering out the good?
- What is going well here?
- What have I done right?
- Am I wearing my “gloomy glasses?”
- What is a balanced view of what is happening?

#### Jumping to Conclusions

There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

1. **Mind Reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
2. **Fortune Telling** (predicting the future)

#### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I thinking that I can predict the future?
- Are there other outcomes that may be better or just as likely?
- Am I 100% sure that is what this person is thinking?
- These are my thoughts, not theirs.
- What else might be happening for them?
- Am I assuming the worst possible outcome will happen?
- What is most likely to happen?

#### Emotional Reasoning

Assuming that because we feel a certain way, what we think must be true.

*I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot.*

#### Challenging the Trap:

- Just because it feels bad doesn't guarantee it is bad.
- My feelings are a reaction to my thoughts.
- Is it a false alarm?
- Would another person feel this way in this situation?
- Is it possible that my emotions are colouring how I see the situation?

## Labelling

Assigning labels to ourselves or other people.

*I'm a loser.*

*I'm completely useless.*

*They're such an idiot.*

### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I telling myself that this label is all I am?
- Is that really fair and accurate?
- What is the evidence that this is true of myself or others all of the time?
- Am I comparing my blooper reel to someone else's polished product?
- Am I labelling someone else based on one event?

## Overgeneralizing

Seeing a pattern based on a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw.

*Everything is always bad.*

*Nothing good ever happens.*

### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I taking one event and applying it to everything forever?
- What is the likelihood that things could change, be better, or just be different from how they are now?
- Does this thought help me?
- Or am I trapping myself?

## Disqualifying the Positive

Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another.

### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I overlooking something good that I have done?
- What is the bigger picture here?
- Am I allowed to feel good about the things I have done well without saying they don't matter or were easy?

## Magnification (Catastrophizing) and Minimization

Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important.

### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I making this a bigger deal than it needs to be?
- Am I discounting something that should be taken into account as well?
- What is the big picture of what is happening?
- Thinking the worst possible thing is definitely going to happen is not helpful right now.
- What's most likely to happen?

## Shoulds and Musts

Using critical words like *should*, *must* or *ought* can make us feel guilty or like we have already failed.

If we apply shoulds to other people, the result is often frustration.

### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I putting more pressure on myself setting expectations that are almost impossible?
- What would be a more realistic expectation?
- Can I accept what is happening and where I am without judgement and self-criticism?
- If this is where I am, what is the point in “shoulding” myself?
- Can I make a plan to move more to where I want to be, rather than wasting my energy beating myself up?

## Personalization

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely blaming other people for something that was your fault.

### Challenging the Trap:

- There's my internal bully again, would most people who really know me say that about me?
- Is this something that I am totally responsible for?
- There was nothing that someone else could have done.
- Can I take responsibility for my role and then allow myself some compassion by viewing the role of others as well?
- Can I get a whole picture rather than just part of it?

## Thinking Traps

**Thinking Traps** are ways of thinking that fail to reflect the facts or whole view of a situation. Practice identifying these **Thinking Traps** using the matching exercise below. Indicate which fear I'm facing best represents the **Thinking Trap** and indicate it by the number it corresponds with.

Thinking Trap	Matching Exercise	What fear am I facing?
<b>1. Fortune-telling (Jumping to Conclusions)</b> You predict that things will turn out badly.		"I should have known..." "He/She should have been on time." "The world should be fair."
<b>2. All or Nothing Thinking</b> You look at things in absolute, black and white categories.		"I know I'll mess up." "I will not be able to manage my anxiety."
<b>3. Mind-reading (Jumping to Conclusions)</b> You assume that people are reacting negatively to you.		"I got lucky in that class; I did poorly at that task, so I'm just not good at it."
<b>4. Over-generalization (Patterns)</b> You view a single negative event as a never ending pattern of defeat.		You believe your presentation was bad – one person complained and you received many compliments.
<b>5. Labelling</b> You use a single negative word to describe yourself.		"Others think I'm stupid." "She doesn't like me."
<b>6. Mental Filtering</b> You dwell on the negatives while ignoring all the positives.		"I'll freak out and no one will help." "I'm going to make such a fool of myself, everyone will laugh at me, and I won't be able to survive the embarrassment."
<b>7. Catastrophizing (Magnification)</b> You blow things way out of proportion.		"I'm stupid." "I'm a loser."
<b>8. Should and Must Statements</b> You have an expectation about how to feel and behave.		"I feel anxious, so I must not be getting better."

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 3

Thinking Trap	Matching Exercise	What fear am I facing?
<p><b>9. Blame (Personalization)</b></p> <p><b>Self-blame</b> – You blame yourself for something you are not entirely responsible for.</p> <p><b>Other blame</b> – You blame others and overlook ways you contributed to the problem.</p>		<p><i>“Anything less than perfect is a failure.”</i></p> <p><i>“I had a piece of chocolate cake. Now my diet is completely ruined!”</i></p>
<p><b>10. Emotional Reasoning</b></p> <p>You reason from your feelings.</p>		<p><i>“I always make mistakes.”</i></p> <p><i>“I am never good at public speaking.”</i></p>
<p><b>11. Disqualifying the Positive (Discounting the Positive)</b></p> <p>You reject positive experiences by insisting they “don’t count.”</p>		<p><i>“I didn’t get the job because I asked about sick days.”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s your fault that the trip got cancelled.”</i></p> <p><i>“She looks upset, maybe I did something.”</i></p>

Adapted by J. Tilbury from ©anxietybc.com and David Burns

## Part 2: Awareness Log: A Tool to Evaluate and Adjust Your Thinking

### Thoughts

Write down 3 thoughts on your **Awareness Log** that you are thinking right now as you are sitting here. You can also focus your attention on a mildly stressful situation. What thoughts come to mind?

### Is this true?

Now look at the list of unhelpful **Thinking Traps** on **pages 33 and 35**. See if any of your thoughts fall into one or more of these categories. Choose one thought that is linked to a **Thinking Trap**.

### Other Possibilities

Now that you have identified a **Thinking Trap** you commonly use, look at the questions below. These questions are ways of challenging your automatic thoughts to explore different perspectives and possibilities. Let these questions guide you as you complete the chart. You will find an extra blank form on **page 112** that you can copy.

1. Identify a **Thought** that you often tell yourself. You can use the **Thinking Trap** worksheet to help you identify one that resonates with you.
2. Ask yourself, is this a fact or **100% completely true**?
3. Ask yourself, what are some **Other Possibilities**? Use the **Challenge the Trap** questions on **pages 33 – 35** to help guide you through this part.
4. Evaluate. Does adjusting your thoughts change your anxiety level?

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 3

Thoughts <i>What is the trap?</i>	Is this 100% true?	Other Possibilities <i>Challenge the Trap</i>	Emotions	Behaviour/Action

If I really believed these new thoughts or possibilities, what would be different?

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## Skill

### Live Well: Sleep Well

#### Realistic Expectations For Sleep

Research shows that people have **different sleep needs** and that you don't have to worry about getting eight hours per night to stay healthy. Sleep needs decrease as we age. The **average person does not fall asleep instantly** and healthy sleepers take 20 – 25 minutes to fall asleep.

**Awakening** during the night **3 – 4 times** is a **normal** occurrence and only becomes a problem when individuals become alarmed about awakenings and are not easily able to return to sleep.

#### How can you get a better sleep?

- Avoid napping during the day.
- Avoid stimulants close to bedtime.
- Exercise regularly; complete your workout at least 2 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid food right before sleep.
- Seek exposure to natural light early in the day.
- Establish a regular relaxing bedtime routine.
- Avoid activities other than sleep in your bed.
- Make sure that the sleep environment is pleasant and relaxing.
- A self-directed sleep workshop is available—talk to us about attending an orientation to see if the workshop is something you are interested in.

#### When to seek additional medical support:

1. Changes in ability to function in daily activities.
2. Mood changes.
3. Family/friends report you snore/gasp in sleep.
4. If you take sleep medications (prescribed/over the counter), consult with a pharmacist to discuss impact on your sleep.

## Tracking Sleep

Tracking information when sleep went well can help you focus on healthy patterns. When you get a better sleep, what's different? You can use a [Sleep Diary](#), like this one from [anxietycanada.com](#) to help you track your sleep habits, or use the App [Insomnia Coach](#).

### Sleep Diary

Use this form to keep track of your progress. Each morning, place a check mark in the box beside the strategies you used the day before and then rate your overall sleep quality for that night.

Sleep strategy	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Comfortable sleep environment							
Relaxation exercise							
Light bedtime snack							
Exercised late afternoon or early evening (but at least 2 hours before bed)							
Followed bedtime routine							
Woke up at set time							
Went to bed when sleepy							
Used bed only for sleep							
Got out of bed if not asleep within 20 – 30 minutes							
Avoided caffeine, alcohol and smoking at least 4 hours before bedtime							
Avoided naps							
Natural light in the morning							
Other strategy (specify)							
<b>Quality of sleep</b> (Rate from 0 – 10): 0 = poor sleep/restless and unsatisfied 10 = no sleep problems/restful and satisfied							

Comments:

---

## Skill Find Calm: Body Scan

The **Find Calm** skill today is the **Body Scan**. It is a simple tool to **check through** your **entire body** to notice physical sensations. This can help you gain **awareness** of yourself in the **present moment**.

What did I notice before the **Body Scan**?

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What did I notice after?

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What did I learn?

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## Check-out

**Challenge Myself: Thinking About Thinking.** How will I use my **Awareness Log** this week?

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**Find Calm: Body Scan.** When will I try the **Body Scan**?

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**Live Well: Sleep Well.** Use the sleep diary to monitor my sleep habits. I will practice the following good sleep habit:

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How am I feeling this week after practicing the **3 Minute Breathing Space** for the last two weeks?

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# Week 4

## Self Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** What did I notice as I challenged my thinking?

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**Live Well:** What good sleep habits did I use?

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**Find Calm:** When did I use the **Body Scan**?

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What difference did it make?

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## Week 4 Skills

**3 Minute Breathing Space**

**Challenge Myself: Challenge My Beliefs About My Anxiety**

**Live Well: Build Support**

**Find Calm: Mindfulness Blitz**

## Skill

### Challenge Myself:

## Challenge My Beliefs About My Anxiety

**Without overthinking it, what is one Automatic Negative Thought (ANT) you have about yourself related to your anxiety?** This thought might be about your perception of how others view you, how safe you feel in the world, or how you cope with stress and deal with emotions.

---

---

## Awareness Log

1. Put your **Automatic Negative Thought (ANT)** in the first column of your **Awareness Log**.
2. Fill out the second.
3. Identify what **Thinking Traps** are linked to your **ANT**. If you need to review **Thinking Traps**, they are on **pages 33 – 35**.

Automatic Negative Thought (ANT)	Is this absolutely 100% true?	Other Possibilities <i>Helpful Thoughts</i>	Emotions	Behaviour/Action

Look at the **Challenging the Trap** questions to help shift your perspective.

**What are other helpful possible thoughts about yourself related to your anxiety?** If you are having a hard time thinking of something, please look at the **Helpful Thought Checklist** on **page 55** for ideas.

---



---

**If I really believed these new thoughts or possibilities were true, what would be different?**

---



---

Fill out the third column of your **Awareness Log**.

## Skill

### Live Well: Build Support

Sometimes we think of anxiety as **only our problem** when it really **affects others** as well. Consider how to include others who love and support us as part of the healthy changes we are making. You may wish to learn more at [www.anxietycanada.com/articles/how-friends-and-family-can-help/](http://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/how-friends-and-family-can-help/)

**Who are my support people?**

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**Helpful support**

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---

**Unhelpful support**

---

---

**My role**

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Specifically, what do I need from others to support me in reaching my goals?

**Partner**

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**Friends**

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---

**Family**

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---

**Coworkers/boss**

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## Skill

### Find Calm: Mindfulness Blitz

**Mindfulness** can be helpful in detaching ourselves from our constant stream of thoughts, judgements, and concerns. Through practicing mindful techniques like the ones we will do today, you can enhance your ability to be more engaged with your life and increase your capacity to deal with adverse events.

### Mindfulness Blitz Activity

What did I notice before the **Mindfulness Blitz**?

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What did I notice after?

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What did I learn?

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Which one of the mindful exercises you practiced would you use to respond to your thoughts differently?

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## Present Moment

### Take ten breaths

1. Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible, until the lungs are completely empty, and breath in using your diaphragm.
2. Notice the sensation of your lungs emptying and your ribcage falling as you breathe out. Notice the rising and falling of your abdomen.
3. Notice what thoughts are passing through your mind. Notice what feelings are passing through your body.
4. Notice what it's like to observe those thoughts and feelings with an attitude of acceptance.

## Label and Let Go

1. Find a comfortable position, feet on the floor, back straight, shoulders loose.
2. Close your eyes, or fix them on a non-distracting spot.
3. Make it your intention for the next few minutes to purely and simply be present, here and now—and to notice what is happening, with an attitude of openness and curiosity.
4. There's a useful metaphor that we can use that thoughts are just like clouds floating in the sky.
5. There's no need to push them away or fight them. Just to notice them as they pass through just like clouds in the sky.
6. Focus on your breath feeling the in breath and the out breath.
7. At some point you will notice your attention has “wandered off” and notice thinking is happening. As soon as you realize this has happened, gently acknowledge it. There is no need to be disappointed or frustrated. Our attention naturally wanders.
8. There is no need to push away the thoughts. Just let them be as if you were suddenly aware of being immersed in a cloud in the sky.
9. Let the cloud drift away and orient your attention back to your breath.
10. As you follow the breath in, it can be helpful to quietly say in your mind, “breathing in” and with the out breath, “breathing out.”
11. Again, notice when your mind wanders and say to yourself, “*ah thinking.*” Invite thoughts in, allowing them to stay as long as they want to until they are ready to float and drift away.
12. Reorient your attention and come back to the body, and the breath.
13. There is nothing to hold onto and nothing to push away, like clouds in the sky.
14. Remember, you are learning a valuable skill so be gentle with yourself. Even if your attention wanders away from your breathing 1,000 times, your aim is simply to bring it back 1,000 times.
15. Finally, notice where you are, what you're doing, and anything else you're aware of. Open your eyes and connect with the room around you, holding onto the sense of being present, here and now.

## Acceptance of “What Is”

### Yes and no

This simple activity can help you connect with radical acceptance, by receiving all aspects of your present-moment experience without trying to control or judge them. Sit in a chair for two or three minutes. Whenever you notice a sensation like your back against the chair, say “no” to the sensations. If you would like, you can also say “no” to any thoughts or emotions about the sensations or even the exercise more generally. Afterwards, reflect on what sensations came up and what it was like to say “no” to those sensations. Can you distinguish between physical sensations and the thoughts and feelings that accompanied resistance?

Next, do the same exercise, except rather than avoiding the sensations of your back against the chair, be willing to feel those sensations, whatever they may be, positive or negative; pain, discomfort, tingling, warmth, coolness, and so on. Whatever those sensations are, say “yes” to them. Again, describe the physical sensations and the thoughts and feelings that came up. Reflect on the difference between your experience when you said “yes” to when you said “no.” Consider your willingness to embrace experiences as opposed to trying to control them.

## Check-out

### My Plan to Practice This Week's Skills

**Challenge Myself: Challenge My Beliefs About My Anxiety.** I will focus on the helpful thought:

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I will challenge this **Thinking Trap** and strengthen more realistic thoughts by:

---

---

**Live Well: Build Support.** How will I build my support network?

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---

**Find Calm: Mindfulness Blitz.** I will practice the **Mindfulness Blitz** activity \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

---

---

When will I find time to do my **Self Study** this week?

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## Self Study

### Gather Evidence For the Helpful Thought

Last week we learned to become aware of and question unhelpful thoughts. The next step is to gather evidence for more helpful alternative thoughts that can increase our self-worth and confidence. Please go to **page 47** and answer question after the [Awareness Log](#).

Now that you have considered some helpful alternative thoughts about yourself, choose one to focus on in the next two weeks. It may feel a little bit more believable than other ones. It may be one that other people have mentioned about you but you don't entirely believe it yet. It may be a belief you want to be curious about and want to grow.

### Helpful Thought Checklist

**Instructions:** Place a check mark beside each statement that you believe some of the time and would like to strengthen or a statement others have made about you. It could be a statement that you would like to have or believe would be helpful in decreasing your anxiety.

- I'm a solid person.
- If I work hard at something, I can master it.
- I'm a survivor.
- Others trust me.
- I care about other people.
- People respect me.
- If I prepare in advance, I usually do better.
- I deserve to be respected.
- I like to be challenged.
- I'm intelligent.
- I can figure things out.
- I'm friendly.
- I can handle stress.
- I can learn from my mistakes and be a better person.
- I'm a good spouse (and/or parent, child, friend, lover).

Source. Adapted from Wright JH, Wright AS, Beck AT: Good Days Ahead: The Multimedia Program for Cognitive Therapy. Professional Edition, Version 3.0. Louisville, KY, Mindstreet, 2010. Used with permission. Copyright © 2010 Mindstreet.

## Nourish the Helpful Thought

These thoughts are not just positive, they are also more factual, accurate thoughts.

For example:

- “I can’t handle this.”
- “I don’t deal with stress.”

Replace with:

- “I can figure this out.”

Please fill out the first three questions that will help you get started on growing your helpful thoughts. Remember how we start to change our brain pathways (neuroplasticity), and the work we need to do to change the well beaten, old pathways when **Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs)** come into your head.

1. **In the next two weeks which helpful thought am I going to focus on? What will I do to make this happen?**

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2. **What positive effect would having this helpful thought have on my anxiety?**

---

---

3. **What is one small thing I can do to allow this helpful thought to grow within me?**

---

---

Please fill out the last question before group next week to reflect back on the successes you have made.

4. **What experiences or moments have I had that prove this helpful thought is true?**

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## Additional Resource

### Other metaphors to try out for thoughts in the Mindfulness Blitz Exercise “Label and Let Go”

#### Thoughts are like:

Clouds floating across the sky.

Birds flying across the sky.

Waves arising from the sea, then falling back in. You can watch the waves from the shore, without being swept away.

Leaves and sticks floating down a stream. You don't have to dive in. You can watch from a bridge.

A passing parade. You can watch the floats pass by. You don't have to climb on board.

Trains coming and going while you stand watching from the platform.

A waterfall. You're standing behind it, not under it.

Guests entering a hotel. You can be like the doorman: you greet the guests but you don't follow them to their rooms.

Cars passing by while you wait at an intersection.

Suitcases dropping onto a conveyor belt at the airport. You can watch them pass by, without having to pick them up.

People passing by you in the street. You can nod your head at them, but you don't have to stop and have a conversation.

Wild horses running across the plains. You can admire them but you need not chase them.

Bubbles rising in a champagne bottle. They rise to the surface and then disappear.

Fish swimming in a tank. Watch them come and go.

Children running across a playground. You can stay still and watch, while they run wherever they want to.

Actors on a stage. You can watch the play; you don't need to get on stage and perform.

Junk email/text messages. You can't stop it from coming in—but you don't have to read it!



# Week 5

## Self Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** What did I work on? What did I notice as I began **Challenging My Beliefs About My Anxiety?**

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**Live Well:** How did I build on my support system?

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**Find Calm:** When did I practice a **Mindfulness Blitz** exercise?

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What difference did it make?

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## Week 5 Skills

**3 Minute Breathing Space**

**Challenge Myself: Tolerating Uncertainty**

**Live Well: Find a Pleasurable Experience**

**Find Calm: Loving Kindness**

## Skill

### Challenge Myself: Tolerating Uncertainty

To have creativity, is to have imagination; and when we have imagination, uncertainty becomes a companion.

#### How Well Do I Tolerate Uncertainty?

Eliminating uncertainty and unpredictability from your life is both impossible and unhelpful.

To reduce symptoms of anxiety, or to feel “hope in the future,” we can get into behaviours that can take up a great deal of time and energy. Many of the behaviours are healthy (e.g., problem solving, planning, gaining knowledge, accessing support), however they can become unhealthy once they negatively impact the quality of life for you and for your loved ones.

#### Some things we might say or do to cope:

- “I can’t cope not knowing.”
- “I know the chances of it happening are so small but, it still could happen.”
- “I need to be 100% sure.”
- I prefer that something bad happens right now rather than go on any longer not knowing.
- It’s hard to make a decision or put a plan or solution in place, because I first need to know how it will work out.
- I seek reassurance or guidance from others.
- I worry, I need to think about all parts of the situation.
- I make lists.
- I double check to “make sure.”
- I do not trust anyone either at work or at home to do certain tasks because they might not do it right or be trusted to complete it.
- I procrastinate.
- I distract myself, keep busy.
- If I don’t know if something will go well, I procrastinate doing it.

#### What do I often predict will happen?

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## The Worry and Problem Solving Tree

Thoughts of “what if,” having trouble solving a problem, or making a decision due to uncertainty can activate the stress response.

Situations can be a **problem** when there seems to be no solution and previous attempts of resolving things have not worked. These situations can create a great deal of anxiety. Since these situations can be linked with anxiety, we can avoid, ignore, procrastinate, and try to control difficult issues.

A common way to cope with uncertainty is to worry.

**How does worry help us to deal with our fears?**

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**What are the advantages of worry?**

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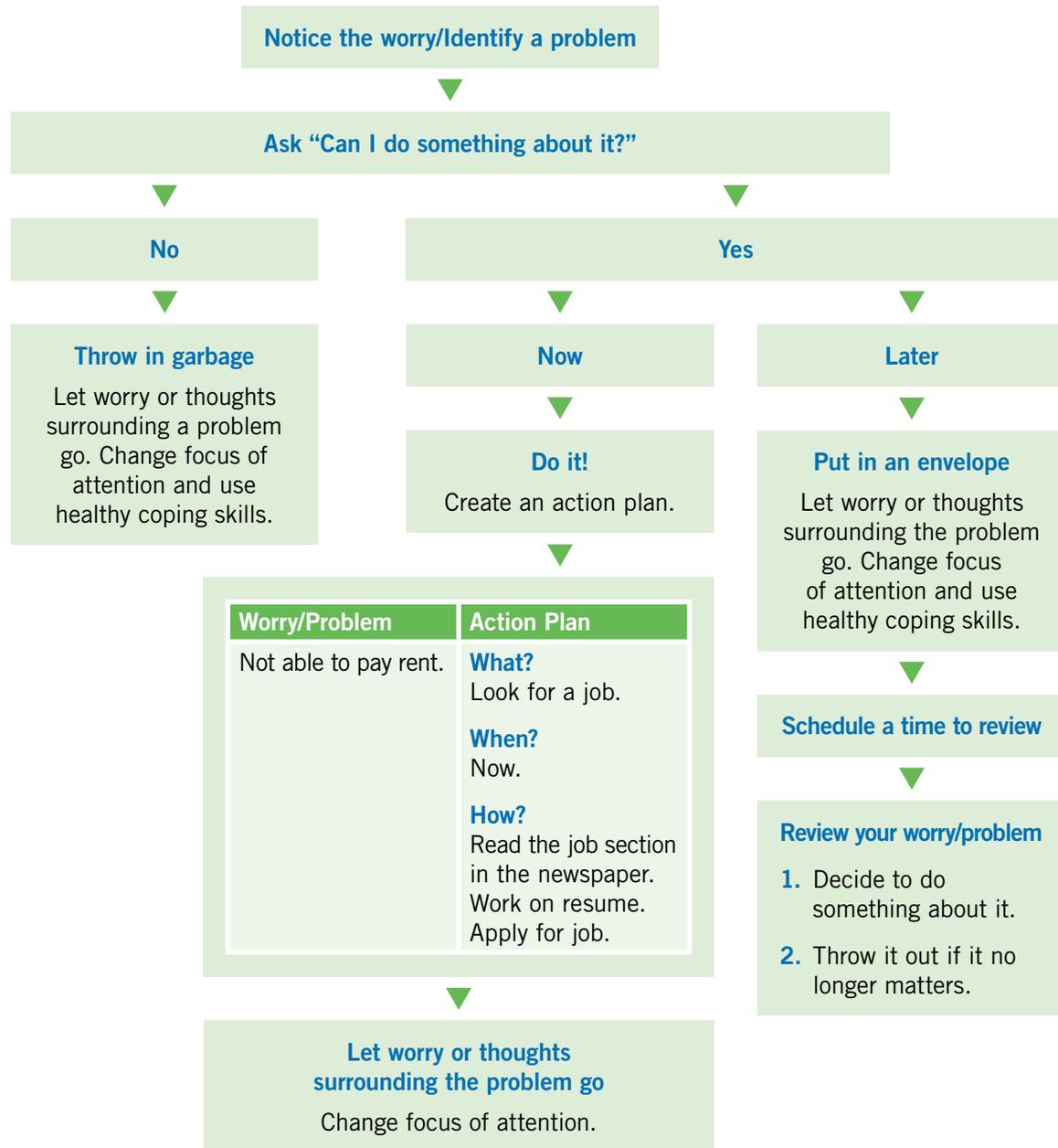
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## Advantages and Disadvantages of Worry

Advantages of Worry	Disadvantages of Worry
It prepares me so that if a bad things happens, I can cope better (avoids disappointment).	It increases anxiety and makes me feel physically ill.
It shows I care.	It can invite trouble.
It motivates me.	It interferes with my ability to concentrate and make decisions.
It helps me solve problems and find solutions.	It can cause procrastination.

Insert some ideas of your own in the free space above.

## The Worry and Problem Solving Tree



## The Worry and Problem Solving Tree

**Worry** can come to your awareness with a **thought, bodily sensation** or **emotion**. The tool we are about to work through will help you to **decide what to do with your worry** with the end result of it causing **less anxiety**.

### Instructions

Pick **3 – 5 worries** and write them down on the strips of paper.

**Sort them into two piles:**

- **No** I can't do anything about it **OR**
- **Yes** I can do something about it.
- The **no** pile – these are things you have no control over-take those pieces of paper and **throw them in the garbage**.

**Take your yes pile. These are worries you have control over. Sort the pieces into two more piles:**

- If you can do something about it **now** create an **action plan**. We will do this in a few minutes.
- If you can do something about it **later** put it in the **envelope**.
- **Later**, put a date on the calendar for when you will review the envelope again. Tell yourself, **“for today, this is back in the envelope.”** It may be that when you next look at it, that worry/problem will already be taken care of.
- Sometimes, putting it back in the envelope isn't enough. What are some ways that we have learned so far in **Anxiety to Calm** class to redirect our attention, relax our nervous system, or tolerate what is uncomfortable?
  1. Let your worry or thought go through **relaxation**. Which one(s) would you use?
  2. **Acceptance**: “There's nothing I can do today to prepare for that” or “I know that's coming but for now I have to work on...”
  3. Identify a **Thinking Trap**. Use my **Awareness Log**.
  4. Other ideas? Look up on the Internet:
    - Worry time
    - Worry script
    - Putting worry in a box or jar
  5. Schedule a time this week to go through this again.

## Action Plan

This should be **very specific**. Make **choices** that **you have the most influence over**. In the example on the worry/problem solving tree you may not have full control over getting a job. So once you have applied, you might have to look at other avenues for money, such as getting a roommate, selling something or getting help like social assistance.

**Take a few minutes to work on an action plan on your worksheet for one or two** of the worries or problems that you can **do something about now**. **If you can't come up with something specific, it tells you about what category it falls into.**

## Action Plan

Situation	Action (if any)
1.	What
	When
	How
2.	What
	When
	How
3.	What
	When
	How
4.	What
	When
	How
5.	What
	When
	How

Schedule a “worry time” at least once this week, and reflect on these questions about letting anxious thought go.

1. How did taking an action step make a difference for me?

---

---

2. How did my worries turn out?

---

---

3. How did I change my focus of attention or let my worry go?

---

---

4. Write down new worries, put all the worries back in the envelope, and repeat again next week.

---

---

## Awareness Log

Thoughts	Is this true?	Other possibilities	Emotions	Behaviour/action

If I really believed these new thoughts or possibilities, what would be different?

---

---

## Skill

### Live Well: Find a Pleasurable Experience

*“Research has shown that more frequent simple pleasures actually provide greater enjoyment than occasional spectacular ones.”*

*- Anxiety and Depression Workbook For Dummies, Charles Elliot and Laura Smith*

**Pleasure** means different things to different people. **What does it mean to you? Write down some words or phrases that describe your definition of pleasure.**

---

---

#### Find a pleasurable experience

##### Connect with your senses

- What you can hear?
- What you can smell?
- What you can feel?
- What you can see?
- What can you taste?

##### What did I find pleasurable?

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---

---

##### What did I learn?

---

---

---

## Skill

### Find Calm:

## Discover the Benefits of Loving Kindness

Often, people who experience anxiety are critical and hard on themselves. We need to learn how to practice **kindness** and **compassion**.

- Antidote to perfectionism (e.g., “I must be perfect”)
- Compassionate and forgiving to self and others
- Generates positive emotion

**What did I notice before the [Loving Kindness Meditation](#)?**

---

---

**What did I notice after?**

---

---

**What did I learn?**

---

---

## Check-out

### My Plan to Practice This Week's Skills

**Challenge Myself: Dealing With Uncertainty.** What is my take away today? How will I put this into my week?

---

---

**Live Well: Find Pleasure.** What is one thing I can try this week to increase pleasure in my life?

---

---

**Find Calm: Loving Kindness.** When will I use this?

---

---

# Week 6

## Self Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** What did I notice as I Tolerated Uncertainty?

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**Live Well:** What did I do to Find Pleasurable Experiences?

---

---

**Find Calm:** When did I use the Loving Kindness Meditation?

---

---

What difference did it make?

---

---

## Week 6 Skills

**3 Minute Breathing Space**

**Challenge Myself: Honour My Emotions**

**Live Well: Use Music To Influence My Mood**

**Find Calm: Self-Compassion Break**

## Skill

### Challenge Myself: Honour My Emotions

**Ignoring, burying or denying** our emotions can cause anxiety. For example, you can feel stressed, lonely and abandoned and have panic attacks every night when these emotions are most intense.

#### How My Car Works...

- When the check engine light comes on, what do you do? Smash it? Ignore it?
- What are the consequences? Cost? Time? Breakdown?
- Dashboard indicators are like your emotions, when you ignore them, sometimes your “car” blows up...

#### The top 4 emotions that cause anxiety

1. **Sadness** – The purpose of sadness: Tells us we have lost something important to us.
2. **Anger** – The purpose of anger: We feel we have been wronged/ unjust or we have had an attack to self-worth.
3. **Fear** – The purpose of fear: A danger of threat alert.
4. **Guilt** – The purpose of guilt: We’ve done something wrong and need to make it right.

**Do you allow yourself to feel these emotions?**

---

**How do you handle these emotions?**

1. **Sadness**

---

2. **Anger**

---

3. **Fear**

---

4. **Guilt**

---

Emotions can give us **direction**. They can often point to something that **needs to be dealt with** or resolved.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 6

Emotions need to be **specific** to **give us direction**. Example “something’s wrong” vs. overheated, out of gas, battery dead.

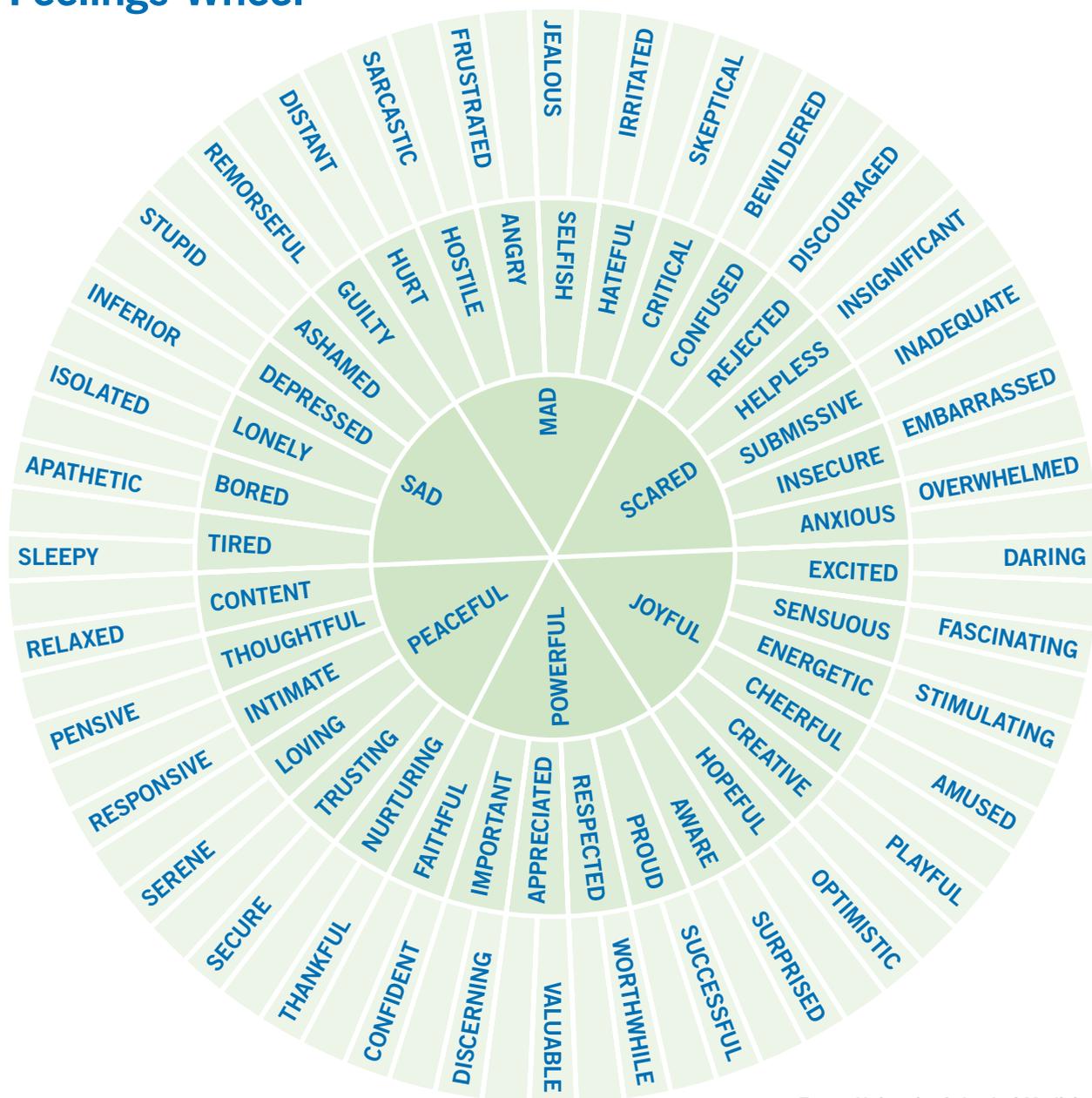
*Emotion example: “I feel mad” vs. “I feel irritated”*

We need to **respond** to our emotions, not run from them, or try to force them to go away or change. These emotions can bubble up in the form of anxiety. **Being specific** about what **emotion** we are feeling can help us **decide what to do**.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 6

We encourage you to be specific by going **beyond** the typical six emotions listed in the centre of the wheel. Use this **Feelings Wheel** to help you **give your feelings a name** and decide how **intense** they are.

## Feelings Wheel



Emory University School of Medicine  
Developed by Dr. Gloria Willcox  
P.O. Box 48363 St. Petersburg, FL 33743

## How to Work Through Your Emotions

### Name the Emotion

I am feeling (e.g. angry, sad, fearful, worried): \_\_\_\_\_

I felt like (describe feeling in a few words): \_\_\_\_\_



### Identify the Cause

I was (where):

\_\_\_\_\_

I remember noticing:

\_\_\_\_\_



### Identify the Behaviour

When I felt: \_\_\_\_\_ I (behaviour/action): \_\_\_\_\_

What I wish I had done was: \_\_\_\_\_



### Challenge the Emotion

Was my feeling appropriate to the situation? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the situation a distress that I can control? \_\_\_\_\_

If it is out of my control, is this a distress I have to accept or tolerate? \_\_\_\_\_

What have you already started doing to sooth your emotions?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Skill

### Live Well: Use Music to Influence My Mood

Music can affect mood. Singing and humming can even help to manage anxiety.

Listen to the music medley in class and jot down your reaction as you listen to each genre.

Type of Music	My Reaction
Rock	
Folk	
Soul	
Electronic Dance	
Blues	
Classical	
Reggae	
Gospel	
Country	
Musical	

Type of Music	My Reaction
World	
Disco	
March	
R&B	
Film Score	
Latin	
Children's	
Funk	
Pop	
New Age	

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 6

How do I currently **Use Music to Influence My Mood?**

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---

What are some of my favourite songs?

---

---

What difference does it make?

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---

Can you think of new ways music can help with emotions?

---

---

# Skill

## Find Calm: Self-Compassion Break

<https://self-compassion.org>

This can be used to cope with a difficult moment to recognize that we all have difficulties.

**What did I notice right before the Self-Compassion Break?**

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**What did I notice after?**

---

---

**What did I learn?**

---

---

## Check-out

### My Plan to Practice This Week's Skills

**Challenge Myself: Honour My Emotions.** I will work on:

---

---

**Live Well: Use Music to Influence My Mood.** How will I use music this week to influence my mood?

---

---

**Find Calm: Self-Compassion Break.** I will continue to use the Self-Compassion Break \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

---

---

When will I have time to work on the **Self Study** this week?

---

---

## Self Study

### Knowing What You Want

You might notice that something feels wrong in a relationship. Look at the feeling wheel to label the emotion. Once you can put words to what you feel, the next question becomes, **what does the emotion make you want to change?**

Here are a series of steps to help this process:

**Label:** Put the feeling into words:

---

---

**Reflect:** How do you want the person/situation to change?

More of:

---

Less of:

---

Stop doing:

---

Start doing:

---

**Respond:** When?

---

Where?

---

Frequency:

---

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 6

Now, put all this information into one or more clear sentences.

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---

Getting clear and specific about your desires can bring up anxiety about how to make requests or if you deserve to ask for things. For more information on [Relationships](#) we have an 8-week group that you could attend.



# Week 7

## Self Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** How did I Honour My Emotions this week?

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**Live Well:** What did I notice when I played music this week? What did I notice about my mood?

---

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**Find Calm:** When did I use a Self-Compassion Break?

---

---

What difference did it make?

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---

## Week 7 Skills

**3 Minute Breathing Space**

**Challenge Myself: Choose Brave Behaviours**

**Live Well: Choose to Eat Well**

**Find Calm: 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique**

## Skill

### Challenge Myself: Choose Brave Behaviours

We have shown you 3 ways of dealing with anxiety:

- **Avoidance:** Back away
- **Acceptance:** Do nothing/tolerate
- **Approach:** Hit it out of the park

**What are some common fears you have?**

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**What position do I take when it comes to my anxiety?**

---

---

**What would you be able to do if you no longer were anxious?**

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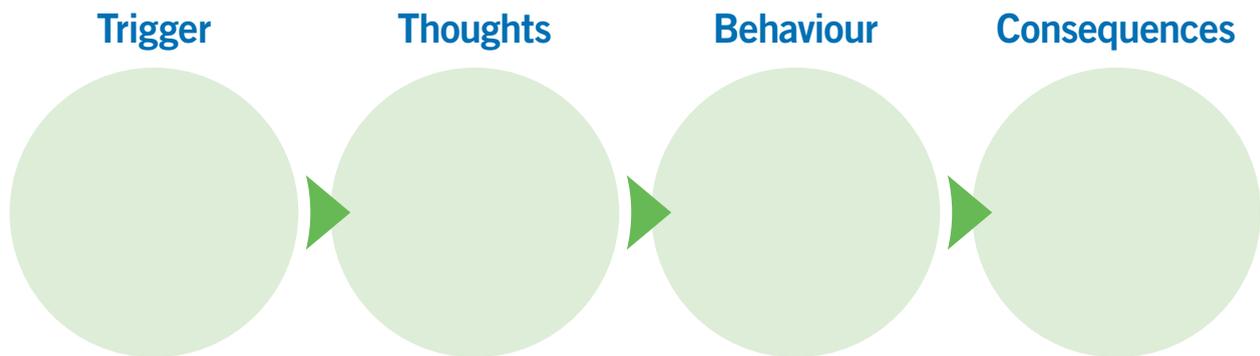
---

We are now going to look at a tool to help you hit your anxiety “**out of the park.**”

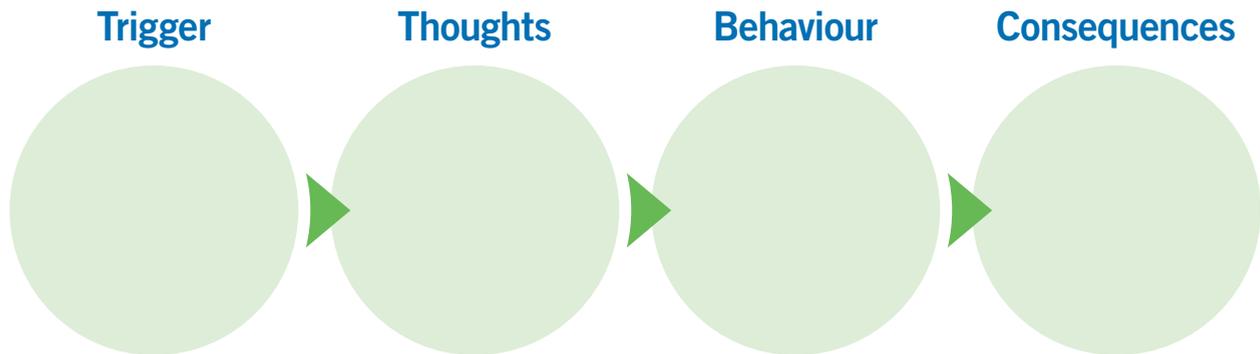
## Avoidance Behaviour Chain

Now, draw your **Avoidance Behaviour Chain** then draw your **Approach Behaviour Chain**. Take a look at your **Awareness Log** example or think of a situation you typically avoid (or are avoiding). Now imagine that you were able to approach it and fill out the Approach sequence.

### Avoidance Behaviour Chain



### Approach Behaviour Chain



## Exploring Change

Look at your **Behaviour Chain**:

**What problem is avoidance creating for me?** Look at your consequences on **page 85**.

---

---

**How does avoidance help me?**

**Now:**

---

---

**How does avoidance help me?**

**In the future:**

---

---

Look at your answers. **Is there more benefit to planning steps to approach?**  Yes  No

If **yes**, you are ready to make that plan.

If **no**, keep working on this. A really big reason “why” helps to push you through the harder steps.

## Exposure Plan

Fill in the following chart as we work through an example in class.

**Estimation of danger/fear** (1 – 10)

**Estimation of my ability** (1 – 10)

**What is my why (goal)?**

---

**What is the first small step I could do?**

---

Step	Action: First step I can manage?	Estimation of danger/fear (0 – 10)	Estimation of my ability (0 – 10)	How: Plan/skills/self-care
5.				
4.				
3.				
2.				
1.				

To fill in your own **Exposure Plan**:

- Identify your goal.
- Pick your first step that has a fear rating of 1 – 3 (**0 = no fear; 10 = tons of fear**).
- Continue to build steps until you would be able to complete your goal.
- You will likely revise your steps based on what you find after your experience.
- To reach success, pick steps you can tolerate and achieve.
- What do you need to be successful? Fill in the final column (How: Plans/skills/self-care).
- Know that this will be uncomfortable. It is part of fixing your alarm. The brain and body need to learn from having a new experience related to what you are anxious about.





## Panic attacks

After having a panic attack, many people fear having another one. Once medical concerns have been ruled out, tools are needed to decrease this fear (of having another one).

## Thoughts

- Panic may be a misinterpretation of body responses (e.g. heart beating fast means danger).
- **Thinking Traps** can lead us to negative imagined outcomes (e.g. I'm having a heart attack).
- Avoidance reinforces the belief that we can't cope and may contribute to ongoing stress.

## Behaviours that help decrease panic attacks

- Approaching panic/feared situations in small steps
- You can create safe situations to tolerate increased heart rate, shortness of breath and other physical sensations through skills you have learned including:
  - Exercise which we talked about in week 1
  - Visualization of approaching avoided places

## Regulating your emotions can help decrease panic attacks by:

- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Practicing breathing strategies
- Grounding to present time through 5 senses

## Tolerating Anxiety

Sometimes we have grown so used to living with our own anxiety that we aren't aware of limits we put on ourselves:

### Thinking Traps and beliefs about ourselves

Examples:

- "I can't handle much stress."
- "My parents always said I was shy."

### Safety behaviours

We may have adopted actions to lessen our anxiety:

- Sitting by exit at movie.
- Avoiding all office social events.

Having a preference is okay, however being limited by anxiety can decrease the quality of your life. It may be worth exploring this by using the [What Are Safety Behaviours?](#) on **page 97** outside of the workshop.

**Where do I tolerate my anxiety?**

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---

## Skill

### Live Well: Choose to Eat Well

**Eating Well** is another aspect of **Self-care** that we want to look at. Eating patterns can affect our **mental wellbeing** and our **mood**. When we look after ourselves by eating well, we **fuel ourselves**, **prepare** our bodies to deal with what lies ahead and give **strength** to the other tools we have for managing our anxiety.

#### Examples of healthy eating habits:

- I eat 3 meals every day.
- I choose to fill half my plate with vegetables and fruits at most meals.
- I choose healthy snacks that nourish my body.
- I plan treats 1 or 2 times a week. Remember the **80/20 Rule**. What you do 80% of the time impacts your health the most so choose to eat healthy 80% of the time.
- I take charge with a meal plan of 10 healthy recipes I love.
- I plan meals and shop with a list.
- I/we sit at the table and enjoy eating together.
- I prepare fruits and vegetables for eating right after grocery shopping.
- I make up healthy snack bags ahead of time for grab and go.
- I drink water as my main beverage.
- I am working on eating out less often.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Week 7

**What do I like about my eating habits? Check off which of the healthy habits above apply to me.**

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---

**Do I have any eating habits I would like to change?**

---

**What do I notice when my eating is healthier?**

---

---

**Does anything get in my way of eating healthier?**

---

---

**Why do you think nutrition is important for reducing anxiety?**

---

---

## Skill

### Find Calm: 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

The first skill today is the **Grounding Technique**. It is a simple tool to **check through** your **entire body** to notice physical sensations. This can help you gain **awareness** of yourself in the **present moment**.

**What did I notice before the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique?**

---

---

**What did I notice after?**

---

---

**What did I learn?**

---

---

## Check-out

### My Plan to Practice This Week's Skills

**Challenge Myself: Choose Brave Behaviors.** Exposure action. I will work on my action goal:

---

---

**Live Well: Choose To Eat Well.** What is one small thing I will do to improve my eating this week?

---

---

**Find Calm: 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique.** I will continue to use this skill \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

---

---

## Self Study: Additional Resource

### What Are Safety Behaviours?

#### What are safety behaviours?

Safety behaviours are used in an attempt to prevent fears from coming true and to feel more comfortable in situations we are anxious about.

If we believe that a situation will not go well, we are likely to feel anxious and to have an urge to avoid the situation. If we can't avoid the situation altogether, we might use subtle forms of avoidance or precautions to try to prevent our fear from coming true. We call these safety behaviours.

Safety behaviours may be very difficult for different people. It is not what you do but why you are doing it that determines whether something is considered a safety behaviour. Here are some examples:

Behaviour	Fear the behaviour is intended to prevent
Staying quiet in social situations	If I talk, I might say something stupid and I would feel humiliated.
Not touching things in public	If I touch something in public, I could get sick and die.
Bringing my water bottle everywhere	If I get anxious, I will get a dry mouth and choke.
Wearing headphones on public transport	If someone tried to speak to me, I wouldn't know what to say and they would think I am an idiot.

Some of these are behaviours people might engage in without anxiety. For example, someone might wear headphones on public transport to listen to music for enjoyment, rather than because they are anxious about speaking to people. This highlights that it is not the behaviour itself, but the function of the behaviour that is important.

If you are uncertain whether something is a safety behaviour or not, ask yourself: "How anxious would I feel if I could not do this?" If you would feel anxious without the behaviour, it is probably a safety behaviour.

#### Why are safety behaviours a problem?

Safety behaviours may seem helpful, because they reduce anxiety in the short-term. Unfortunately they keep anxiety going in the longer term because:

- **Safety behaviours stop us from directly testing our fears.** Although we haven't avoided the situation completely, by using our safety behaviours we are not directly testing our fear. Our untested fears will continue to arise in the future.
- **Safety behaviours can become *self-fulfilling prophecies*.** Safety behaviours can actually cause the outcomes we are trying to prevent by using them. For instance, imagine if I stay quiet at work meetings because I am worried about saying something wrong and my boss being annoyed. My boss might actually get more frustrated with me for not contributing to meetings than they would have if I did contribute from time to time.
- **If our fears don't come true we mistakenly *thank the safety behaviour*.** If we use our safety behaviours and our fears don't come true, we might believe that the safety behaviours *prevented* our fears. As a result, we can become very dependent upon our safety behaviours and start to feel even more anxious if they can't be used. The truth may be that our fears might not have come true even without the safety behaviour, but we never discover this as long as we continue relying on them.
- **Safety behaviours increase our self-focused attention.** Safety behaviours often take our focus off the *task at hand*, and instead our awareness becomes overly focused on ourselves (e.g., our thoughts, how we are feeling), which can lead to further anxiety.

If anxiety stays high after repeatedly confronting a situation, you are likely using safety behaviours that are preventing you from directly testing your fears. It's important to recognise safety behaviours so you can plan to stop using them in anxiety-provoking situations.

Centre for Clinical Interventions: [www.cci.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au) (Stepping-out-of-Social-Anxiety; Module-5; Safety-Behaviours.pdf).



# Week 8

## Self Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** Are you choosing **Brave Behaviours**?

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**Live Well:** How did I improve my **nutrition (eating)** this week?

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**Find Calm:** When did I use **5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique**?

---

---

What difference did it make?

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## Week 8 Skills

**Find Calm:** Find My Safe Place

**Challenge Myself:** Plan For My Future

**Live Well:** Enjoy My Success

**3 Minute Breathing Space**

# Skill

## Find Calm: Find My Safe Place

**Find my safe place** is a **guided imagery practice** that helps you to **self-soothe and create safety whenever you need it.**

What did I notice before **Finding My Safe Place**?

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---

What did I notice after?

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---

What did I learn?

---

---

What is one word to call my safe place?

---

---

## Skill

### Challenge Myself: Plan For My Future

#### How will I do that?

In our first week, we learned that **anxiety** has some **positive functions** and it doesn't necessarily mean there is **something wrong**. It is a **signal** that you **need to pay attention to**. These tools you have experienced are just the beginning. Figure out which ones **work the best** and **continue to practice them**.

You can **write** your **favourite** or most effective tools or skills in the **circles** below.

We will **recap each area** and give you time to write additional info you want to remember.

#### Eight Tools for Finding Calm

1. 3 Minute Breathing Space
2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation
3. Body Scan
4. Mindfulness Blitz
5. Loving Kindness
6. Self-Compassion Break
7. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique
8. Find My Safe Place

#### Six Tools to Challenge Myself

1. Respond To Stress and Coping
2. Thinking About Thinking (Thinking Traps and Awareness Log)
3. Challenge My Beliefs About Anxiety
4. Honour My Emotions (Feelings Wheel)
5. Tolerating Uncertainty
6. Choose Brave Behaviours (Exposure Log/ Behaviour Chain)

#### Eight Tools for Living Well

1. Be Active
2. Create Balance
3. Sleep Well
4. Build Support
5. Find a Pleasurable Experience
6. Use Music To Influence Mood
7. Eat Well
8. Enjoy My Success

## How have I connected to myself?



As life changes it's important to re-evaluate where you are and what you need. **Your recipe for success won't always stay the same.**

**What is my specific plan to use my favourite skills?**

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When priorities **change** or you **adapt**, you need to refresh or **change the tool/skill**. How will I **refresh** my skills when **life changes** or I notice I have **adapted** to them? How will I get new **skills** when I need them?

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## Questions you can ask yourself on an ongoing basis:

**Am I using my skills?**

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**Have I adapted?**

---

---

**Am I facing more stress or change?**

---

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**Do I have realistic expectations?**

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The key is to keep **practicing and tweaking the skills** to make them work in the way that's best for you.

## Skill

### Live Well: Enjoy My Success

You have worked hard and developed tools and skills in many areas over these 8 weeks.

**What have I been able to accomplish in these 8 weeks?**

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**What am I most proud of?**

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**Review page 15 and why you came to this group. Now what else am I looking forward to doing?**

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## 3 Minute Breathing Space

Take a few minutes to reflect on what you have noticed in yourself from doing this exercise for the past 8 weeks.

**What changes have you noticed?**

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**How do you plan to continue using this skill?**

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## Check-out

### My Plan to Practice This Week's Skills

**Find Calm: Find My Safe Place.** I will continue to use find my safe place guided imagery \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.  
When will I use this?

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---

**Challenge Myself: Plan For My Future.** I will use the following skills moving forward:

---

---

**Live Well: Enjoy My Success.** How will I celebrate my success(es) from these 8 weeks?

---

---

*Congratulations on completing eight weeks. Now go out and live!*

# Resources

## Apps

**Think full:** Apple

**MindShift:** Apple and android

## Websites

[www.anxietybc.com](http://www.anxietybc.com) Promotes awareness of anxiety disorders and provides resources.

[www.anxieties.com](http://www.anxieties.com) Self-help for anxiety. Dr. Reid Wilson.

[www.dontpaniclive.com](http://www.dontpaniclive.com) Self-help forms from Dr. Reid Wilson's book by the same name.

[www.reddeerpcn.com](http://www.reddeerpcn.com) Look under patient resource, Groups ► Anxiety to Calm for the PCN relaxation CD.



## Participant Evaluation – Week 8

Date

We welcome your feedback about the **Alberta Anxiety to Calm™** workshop and are interested in your experience with the workshop. Thank you for your time in completing these questions.

### About the Workshop

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
<b>1. Please check the box that reflects your overall satisfaction in taking Alberta Anxiety to Calm™</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Please check the best answer about the Alberta Anxiety to Calm™ workshop:</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>a.</b> The workshop content was relevant to my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> The workshop was easy to understand and follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> The workshop provided opportunities to learn and practice skills to manage my anxiety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> The workshop provided a good mix between listening and group activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>e.</b> The Anxiety workbook is a useful reference in practicing anxiety management skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>f.</b> I am confident I can use the skills learned in my daily life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>g.</b> The workshop environment felt safe and non-judgemental.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>h.</b> The instructors were knowledgeable and prepared.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Continued on page 112 ►

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ Questionnaire

3. What was **most** helpful about this workshop?

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4. What was **least** helpful about this workshop?

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## Personal Changes

	Least										Most
5. On a scale of 1– 10, how distressed did you feel <b>prior to your first</b> Alberta Anxiety to Calm™ workshop?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6. On a scale of 1 – 10, how distressed did you feel <b>after your last</b> Alberta Anxiety to Calm™ group workshop?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

7. Which **three** anxiety management techniques do you intend to use regularly?

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## About You

8. **Are you?**  Male  Female  Transgender Male  Transgender Female  Two-spirit  Non-binary  
 Prefer not to say

Describe yourself \_\_\_\_\_

9. **Age:**  18-24  25-44  45-64  65+

10. How many classes did you attend during this 8 Week workshop?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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**Thank you for completing this survey!**

# Appendix 1

## Awareness Log

Thoughts	Is this true?	Other possibilities	Emotions	Behaviour/action

If I really believed these new thoughts or possibilities, what would be different?

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# Appendix 2

## Exposure Plan

Fill in the following chart as we work through an example in class.

**Estimation of danger/fear** (1 – 10)

**Estimation of my ability** (1 – 10)

**What is my why (goal)?**

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**What is the first small step I could do?**

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Step	Action: First step I can manage?	Estimation of danger/fear (0 – 10)	Estimation of my ability (0 – 10)	How: Plan/skills/self-care
5.				
4.				
3.				
2.				
1.				









Alberta   
Anxiety to  Calm™ 

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