



# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

JOURNAL 2022

6 WEEK WORKSHOP



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**Name**

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# YP-Core Week 1

Date		
First name	First letter of your last name	Age
Are you? <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Binary <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to describe _____		

These questions are about how you have been feeling **over the last week**. Please read each question carefully. Think how often you have felt like that in the last week and then put an **X** in the box you think fits best.

Over the last week...	Not at all	Only occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time
1. I've felt edgy or nervous.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
2. I haven't felt like talking to anyone.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
3. I've felt able to cope when things go wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
4. I've thought of hurting myself.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. There's been someone I felt able to ask for help.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
6. My thoughts and feelings distressed me.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
7. My problems have felt too much for me.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
8. It's been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0				
9. I've felt unhappy.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0				
10. I've done all the things I wanted to do.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0

Thank you for answering these questions.

We are collecting this information in accordance with the Health Information Act of Alberta, section 27 (1)(a), (g).

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# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

# INTRODUCTION



## Workshop Guidelines

- Please make every effort to attend on time. If you must come late please slip in quietly and take a seat.
- If you are going to be late or miss a class, please let one of the coaches know ahead of time. We will ask that you review the material before the next class so you can fully participate.
- If you miss more than 2 classes, try booking into another workshop so you don't miss important information.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Confidentiality – keep information that comes up in group private.
- If there will be someone in the room observing the class, we will let you know.
- The PCN cannot control socialization, but intimate relationships outside of workshops are discouraged.
- Bringing snacks/water is permitted but please dispose of garbage afterwards. Please let us know if any severe allergies as soon as possible.
- We encourage participation in class, but private conversations are discouraged until break.
- If you need to leave the room before break, please give us a thumbs up so we know that you are ok. If you are gone for more than 5 minutes, one of us will come to check on you, or give you a phone call if we are running a virtual workshop.
- Please turn off all cell phones or put to silence/vibrate.
- Verbal or physical attacks on the other clients or coaches will not be tolerated in group. Please use your skills to manage angry urges. Anyone who violates this rule will be asked to leave group for that day and will be called to discuss relevant consequences.



## Can Anxiety Be Healthy?

**Can anxiety be healthy?** Everyone experiences anxiety at times.

For example, it is normal to feel anxiety when you find a bear in your campsite!

This next slide shows what happens in our bodies when we are exposed to real danger. It sets off an alarm which is our “fight or flight response.” The slide shows some of the things that happen in our bodies and the purpose of those reactions.

### How the Body Reacts

- Breathing gets faster to take in more oxygen
- More blood to muscles and limbs; muscles tense up for more strength and speed
- More blood to brain to act more instinctively
- Heart beats quicker, blood pressure increases, blood sugar increases to give us more energy
- Pupils dilate to see clearer
- Sweat to prevent overheating
- Digestion slows down (we don't need this during fight or flight)

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

### What happens when our bodies don't return to normal?

You may feel:

- Stressed
- Anxious
- Worried
- Nervous
- Overwhelmed

### Fight, Flight or Freeze Misfires

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, so we would say this is a misfiring of your alarm. We will help you fix your alarm.



## Structure of Class

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

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

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





# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 1



## Week 1 Skills

Find Calm: **Breathing Exercises**

Challenge Myself: **How Can I Make These Weeks Count?**

Live Well: **Sleep Well**

## Skill

### Find Calm: **Breathing Exercises**

You can use these when you are feeling anxious and on a regular basis to maintain control over your stress. Practicing breathing exercises regularly can help calm your nervous system and lower your baseline anxiety. Practice daily starting a couple of times a day and build up to 15 times a day.

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

Take a few moments to answer the following questions.

**What did I notice before the breathing exercises?**

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**What did I notice after?**

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**What did I learn?**

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# Skill

## Challenge Myself:

### How Can I Make These Weeks Count?

Think about what you want to accomplish by coming to this workshop. For example: I want to come for the full 6 weeks and learn one new skill each week to help my anxiety. Imagine 6 weeks in the future, when worry is not stopping you from your usual activities.

**Why am I here?**

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**What is one goal I want to accomplish in the next 6 weeks?**

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

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Keep looking back at this throughout the 6 weeks. It's common for people to adjust their goals as they go.

**Remember:** Try to take time for yourself by limiting the number of sports, get togethers with friends, etc. so you have some down time. Take time for fun, friends and sleep and ask your family, teachers or friends if you need help finding balance.



# Skill

## Live Well: Sleep Well

There is no perfect number of hours you need to sleep per night. Everybody is different. It's important to pay attention to how you feel in the morning. Do you feel rested? Can you focus at school? Are you grumpier and more irritable than usual? Pay attention to your body and it will tell you if you're getting enough sleep.

**Start your day in sunshine.** Have breakfast outside or by a sunny window. This helps your body regulate its biological clock and helps set up your sleep for that night.

**Rethink your schedule.** If you typically do homework after evening activities, try to find other time in the day to get this done. This will allow time to unwind and have your brain prepare for sleep.

**Keep the tech out of your room.** Using devices late at night interferes with your sleep in several ways. The stimulating content can get your brain excited, the light the device emits can stop your brain from producing your sleep hormone (melatonin), and you may stay up later due to the addictive nature of apps, texting, and social media.

**Avoid energy drinks.** These can also have an impact on your sleep, try to avoid drinking these most days to improve your sleep.

**Stick to a consistent sleep schedule.** Even on the weekends! When you go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, it's easier for your brain to get into a routine.

**Practice your breathing techniques:** 4, 7, 8, zen...

**Make your room dark, quiet, and a comfortable temperature.**

**Are any of the habits or patterns we discussed interfering with your sleep?**

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**What will you try differently this week to help with your sleep?**

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## Check-out

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

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**Challenge Myself: How Can I Make These Weeks Count?** How will I remind myself and set aside time in my day to make my goal a reality (e.g., tell a close friend, post a note on my mirror)?

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**Live Well: Sleep Well.** I will practice the following good sleep habits:

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# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 2



### Self Check-in

**Stay Calm:** When did I use the **breathing exercises**?

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**What difference did it make?**

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**Challenge Myself:** Did I set a goal for myself over the next 6 weeks?

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

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### Week 2 Skills

**Find Calm:** Progressive Muscle Relaxation

**Challenge Myself:** Respond to Stress

**Live Well:** Choose to Create Balance



# Skill

## Find Calm: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Today you will experience **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**. Last week, we learned about breathing exercises. Find a comfortable position for yourself. I want you to first just notice your body. Is it tense in any spots?

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

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**What did I notice after?**

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**What did I learn?**

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**When would I use this skill?**

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You can watch this video again on YouTube at [youtube.com/watch?v=Xv5ouU8FZVc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv5ouU8FZVc).



# Skill

## Challenge Myself: Respond to Stress

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.

**What situations or experiences make me feel stressed?**

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**How does my stress show itself?**

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**What are my current ways of dealing with stress? Socially? Emotionally? Behaviourally?**

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**What is a time I was proud of how I responded to stress? What was it about that time I feel good about?**

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**Once I am aware, what will I choose to do differently?**

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**What is my plan?**

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**What additional tools or support do I need to help me deal with the situation?**

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Make a plan, use self-care, or gain a skill.



## 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

### Activity 1: Observe My Reactions

Write down the signals your body is giving you.

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### Activity 2: Making a Plan

Think about your anxiety and how you respond to it. In the left column, write down some of the behaviours you engage in or would like to engage in to make things better. In the right column, write down behaviours you engage in that may make you feel worse.

Behaviours I do to make things feel better	Behaviours I do in that make me feel worse



# Skill

## Live Well: Self-care

### Self-care Worksheet

Self-care category	Why is this important?	How am I already doing this?	What is one more thing I could do to improve this. Give an example.	Do I have control over this?
<b>Self-regulation or self-control</b> e.g. When I get mad at my sister, I leave the room rather than hitting her.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Hygiene and appearance</b> e.g. Brush my teeth, comb my hair, get dressed, have a shower.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Healthy leisure</b> e.g. Paint, read or play outside with my dog.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Healthy eating habits –</b> e.g. I try to follow the Canada Food Guide.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Exercise</b> e.g. 60 minutes of moderate activity daily (run, bike, swim, walk dog, dance, skateboard).				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Inner peace and spirituality</b> e.g. Meditate, go out in nature, church.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Self-improvement</b> e.g. Try something new, be curious, set a goal for myself to accomplish.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Sobriety</b> e.g. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and street drugs.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Health management</b> e.g. Go to the doctor for regular checkups, practice safe sex.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



## Large Group Discussion

What is getting in the way of finding your own **self-care**?

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What is one thing you could work on this week improve your **self-care**?

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## Check-out

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

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**Live Well: Choose Self-care.** What is one small thing I will do to improve my self-care?

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# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 3



## Self Check-in

**Find Calm:** When did I use the **progressive muscle relaxation**?

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**What difference did it make?**

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

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**Live Well:** What did I do to take care of myself this week?

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## Week 3 Skills

**Find Calm:** Take a Mental Vacation

**Challenge Myself:** Thinking Traps

**Live Well:** Be Active



# Skill

## Find Calm: Take a Mental Vacation

Close your eyes. Take a slow, smooth breath in through your nose...and breathe out slowly through your mouth. Take another slow, smooth breath in through your nose for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold...and out through your mouth for 1, 2, 3, 4...and hold. And again, in for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold...out for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold. And keep taking nice slow breathes in...and out.

Now, imagine yourself in a peaceful place. A place where you feel calm and safe. Maybe it's a special place that you've been before, or maybe it's somewhere you would like to go. Perhaps somewhere like a beautiful beach, in a forest, beside a little stream, or sitting by a warm crackling fire.

Really picture yourself in this place.

Now, look around you...

Notice what you see...

Notice what you hear...

Notice what you smell...

Notice what you feel...under your feet...on your skin.

Really relax in this place.

Keep imagining yourself in this place while focusing on your breathing. Take a slow, smooth breath in through your nose...and breathe slowly out through your mouth.

Now, keep taking slow, long breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. When you feel ready, gently open your eyes.



**What was your reaction when we played this? What did you notice?**

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**How could you use this? When?**

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**What did I notice before the [guided imagery](#)?**

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# Skill

## Challenge Myself: Challenge My Thoughts

### Automatic Thoughts (Thinking Traps)

Our brain is designed to think in patterns. Through time, these patterns become automatic.

Things to know about **Automatic Thoughts (Thinking Traps)**:

- Automatic thought are very believable but can be inaccurate. Don't believe everything you think.
- If our automatic thoughts are biased, critical, or negative we can feel anxious without knowing why.

### What's Going On

Thinking only of possible outcomes at either extreme (really good or really bad) and not seeing all the possible outcomes in-between (or the "grey"). Most of life is somewhere in the middle.

**Examples:** One friend gets angry at you. *"Nobody likes me, I'm totally unlovable and selfish."*  
Failing one test. *"I'm obviously a stupid loser."*

Questions to ask to help lead you to more realistic thinking:

**What would a friend say about my thoughts?**

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**What would I tell a friend who was having these thoughts?**

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**Is this 100% true?**  Yes  No



## 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.*

**Example:** Presentation at school

*I'm going to ace the performance or totally flop.*

#### 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.**

**Example:** Thinking about the one person you didn't have a good conversation with at the party, rather than the three people with whom you had great conversations.

#### 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)

**Example:**

*I now they are talking about me right now. They are thinking about how weird I look.*

#### 2. Fortune Telling (predicting the future)

**Example:**

*I couldn't find a job last summer so I won't be able to get one this summer.*

#### 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.

**Example:**

*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.

**Example:**

*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.*

**Example:** Missing one soccer goal.

*I never get things right.*

**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.

**Example:** Thinking about the question you couldn't answer on the test, rather than on the ones you could.

**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.

**Example:** Getting one bad grade.

*I won't get into university and I'll end up homeless.*

### 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.

**Example:**

*I must be on time for school everyday.*

*I should be at volleyball practice everyday.*

### 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.

**Example:**

*My boyfriend is upset. I must have done something wrong.*

In reality, he is just tired from a busy week of school.

### 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?

## Magical Thinking

You think everything will be better when something happens in your life.

**Example:**

*If I were popular, all my problems would disappear.*

### Challenge the Trap:

- What is the evidence this thought is true? What is the evidence this thought is Not true?
- No one and/or nothing is responsible for your happiness. Your happiness depends on yourself and your choices.
- What do you have that is good or makes you happy? Be grateful for what you do have instead of focusing on what you don't have.
- Am I am 100% certain this is true.



## Group Activity

Now lets try identifying these **Thinking Traps** here by colouring in the traps. Choose a colour to represent each of the following **Thinking Traps** in the key below.

Colour	Thinking Traps
	All or Nothing Thinking
	Personalization
	Mind Reading
	Emotional Reasoning
	Labelling
	Overgeneralizing
	Magnification
	Fortune Telling
	Disqualifying the Positive
	Magical Thinking
	Shoulds and Musts
	Mental Filter

Carefully read the thought bubbles and determine which **Thinking Trap** applies. Then colour each bubble according to the key above. For example, if you have chosen **green** for “blaming” and see a thought bubble with an example of blaming, you will colour that bubble **green**.



## COLOURING THE **THINKING TRAPS**

Tasha didn't sit by me today, so I never want to talk to her again.

My parents got divorced so I don't think I will have a happy family.

I am an idiot.

If I had a million dollars, my life would be better.

You just had a great night out with friends, but when you get home you notice food in your teeth. You think to yourself, "My friends are not going to like me anymore because I am a slob."

I shouldn't have eaten any junk food.

I know she hates me and doesn't want to be friends with me.

I am not going to make any friends next year.

I made a bad grade on a test because the teacher is terrible and the class is stupid.

I am feeling confused about my homework, so I am stupid.

I have a great new best friend but she's nothing like my last friend.

She cut in line, so I think I should push her out of line.



Adapted from the original written by Nicole Batiste.



# Skill

## Live Well: Be Active

*“Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live.” - Jim Rohn*

Research has shown that regular physical exercise can decrease symptoms of depression and anxiety. It can also improve our sleep and give us more energy to do the things we love to do.

5 minutes of movement can be enough to decrease an anxiety episode. Any movement counts..... going for a walk, shooting hoops, dancing in your room. Whatever movement brings you joy... do that thing!

### Movement Break

Choose 1 of the 3 options below to experience how activity can improve the way you feel.

1. 4-5 minute virtual **Movement Break**
2. 4-5 minute obstacle course in room
3. 5 minute walk outside

**What movement activity do you love to do?**

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**What gets in the way?**

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**How can you build it into your day?**

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# Check-out

**Find Calm: Take a Mental Vacation.** I will continue to practice guided imagery \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. What time will I use this?

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**Challenge Myself: Challenge My Thoughts.** How will I challenge my thoughts?

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**Live Well: Be Active.** What is one small thing I will do to be active?

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# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 4



## Self Check-in

**Find Calm:** When did I use the **mental vacation**?

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**What difference did it make?**

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**Challenge Myself:** What did I do differently to **challenge my thoughts**?

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**Live Well:** What did I do to **be active** this week?

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## Week 4 Skills

**Find Calm:** Loving Kindness

**Challenge Myself:** Honouring My Emotions

**Live Well:** Build Support



# Skill

## Find Calm: Loving Kindness

Often people who experience anxiety are hard on themselves. We want you to learn how to become kinder and more understanding to yourself. We are going to practice a loving kindness meditation now.

### Did you know

Practicing this meditation can help you be more positive, forgiving and kind and understanding to yourself and others. It can help you to accept who you are without the need to be perfect (antidote to perfectionism).

**What was your reaction to the meditation?**

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**What did you notice?**

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**How would you use this? When?**

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Some people struggle with doing this one in a group—it's personal. You can try this when you are alone at home: [youtu.be/CEk9KvPXKEQ](https://youtu.be/CEk9KvPXKEQ).



# Skill

## Challenge Myself: Honouring My Emotions

Do you think emotions are helpful? Unhelpful?

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Do you allow yourself to fully feel these emotions?

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How do you handle these emotions?

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When would anger be helpful?

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How could sadness be helpful?

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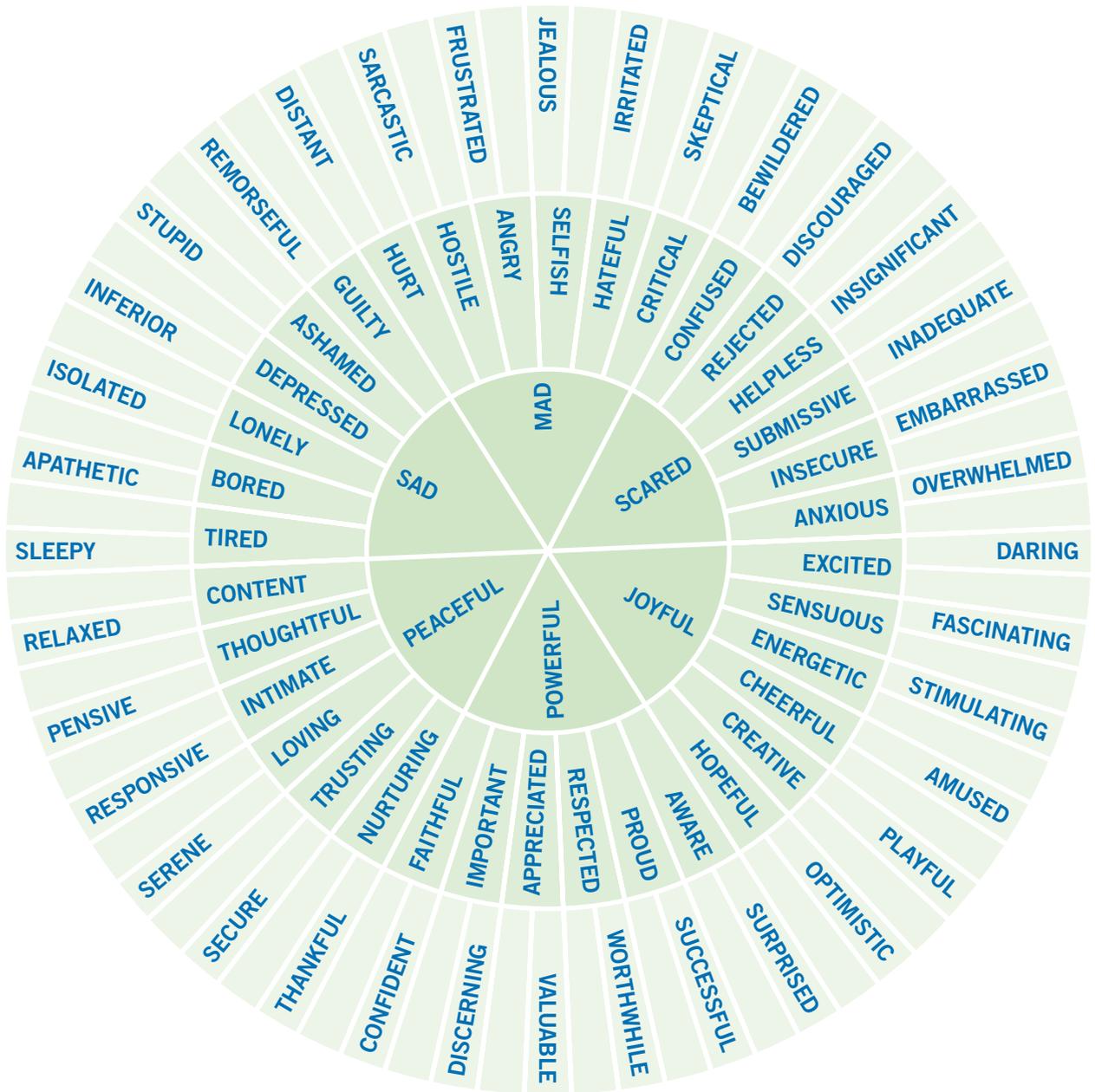
What would it mean if we didn't feel sadness?

---

---



# 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: Build Support

Who do you have to that you can go to? Is it a parent, teacher, church leader, or a friend's parent?

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---

### Group Discussion

#### Healthy vs. Unhealthy Peer Support

Healthy

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Unhealthy

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---

### Reflection Questions

What kinds of friend should you go to for support?

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Do you have any of these in your life?  Yes  No



## Taking On Other Peer's Problems

### Where can you go for help?

#### Informal

- parents
- teachers
- coaches
- trusting adults in your life

#### Formal

- **CMHA Distress Center:** 1-780-482-4357 (HELP)
- **Kids Help phone:** 1-800-668-6868
- **calgaryconnecteen.com:** phone, text, chat, email
- **AHS Mental Health Help Line:** 1-877-303-2642



## Check-out

**Find Calm: Loving Kindness.** I will continue to use loving kindness \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

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---

**Challenge Myself: Honouring My Emotions.** How will I honour my emotions?

---

---

**Live Well: Build Support.** What is one small thing I will do to build support?

---

---

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 5



## Self Check-in

**Find Calm:** When did I use **loving kindness**?

---

---

**What difference did it make?**

---

---

**Challenge Myself:** What did I do differently to **honour my emotions**?

---

---

**Live Well:** What did I do to **build support** this week?

---

---

## Week 5 Skills

**Find Calm:** 3 Minute Breathing Space

**Challenge Myself:** Challenge My Worry (Worry Tree)

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



# Skill

## Find Calm: 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**?

---

---

What did I notice after?

---

---

What did I learn?

---

---



# Skill

## Challenge Myself: Challenge My Worry (Worry Tree)

Good	Challenge
Shows I am caring	How else do I show I care?
Helps me prepare and solve problems	How can I solve a problem without overthinking it?
Motivates me	Does worry actually help me get more done? Or does it lead to procrastination? How can I act rather than worry?
Protects me from feeling bad	Being upset after a bad situation is ok. If something bad happened before, did worry really prepared me to feel less terrible?
Prevents bad things from happening	Has anything bad happened to me even though I worried about it?

**How can we worry less?**

---



---



## 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

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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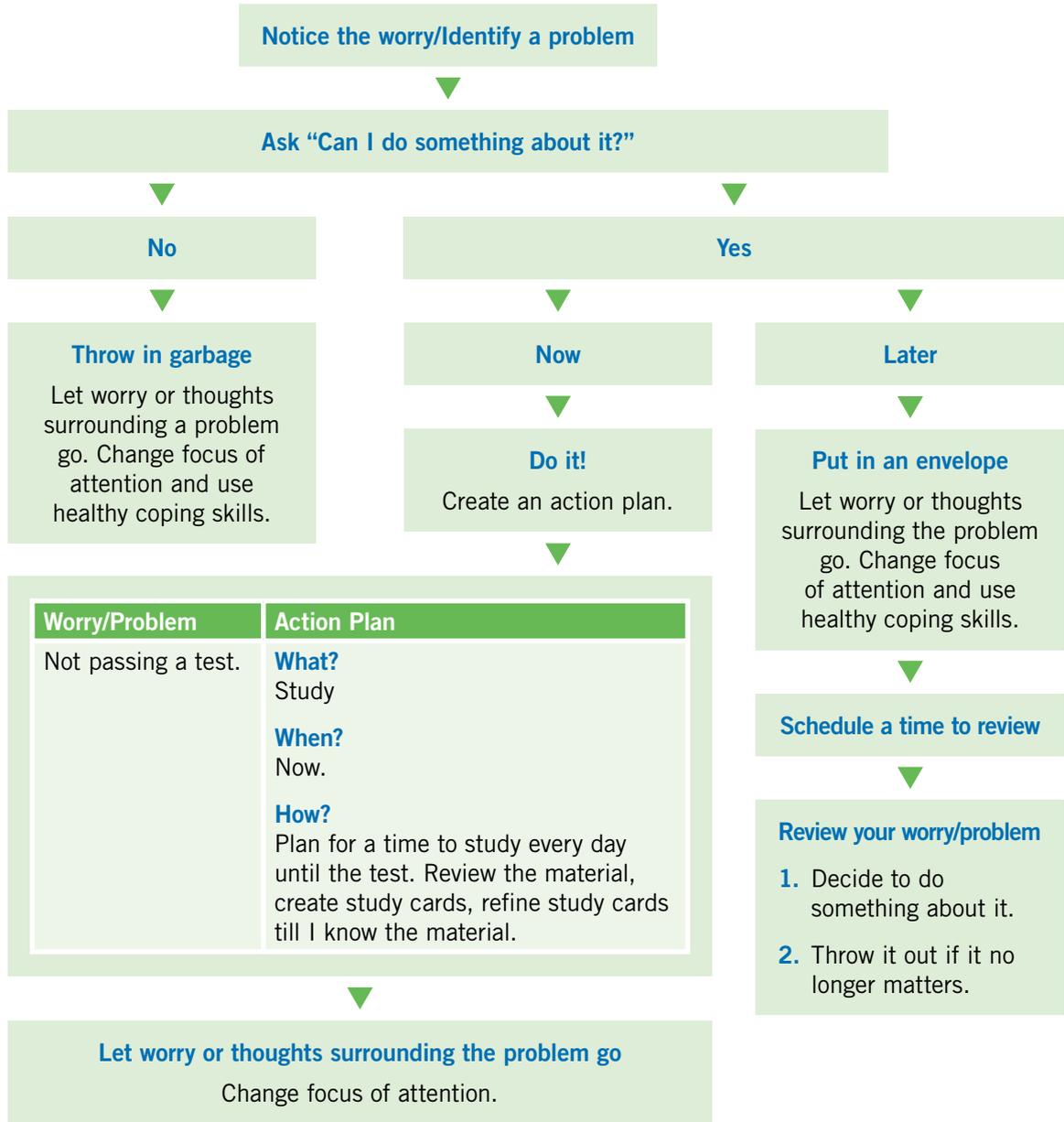
**What are the advantages of worry?**

---

---



# 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 to reduce 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 the 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 **Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth** 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.



**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?**

---

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**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.**

---

---



# 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	



## Drawing to Music



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 to my mood?

---

---

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

---

---



## Check-out

**Find Calm:** 3 Minute Breathing Space. I will continue to use 3 Minute Breathing Space \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.  
When will I use this?

---

---

**Challenge Myself:** Challenging My Worry (Worry Tree). How will I challenge my worry?

---

---

**Live Well:** Use Music to Influence My Mood. What is one small thing I will do to use music to influence my mood?

---

---



# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 6



## Self Check-in

**Find Calm:** When did I use 3 Minute Breathing Space?

---

---

What difference did it make?

---

---

**Challenge Myself:** What did I do differently to challenge my worry?

---

---

**Live Well:** What did I do to use music to influence my mood this week?

---

---

## Week 6 Skills

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

**Live Well** Social Media

**Challenge Myself:** Planning For the Future



# 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?**

---

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**What did I notice after?**

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---

**What did I learn?**

---

---



# Skill

## Live Well: Social Media

YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Tik Tok, etc.

Circle the thumb you think is the most correct for the statement:

= A benefit    = A risk    = Not sure

Response	Things social media does
	Helpful in developing relationships/social networking
	Building of valuable support
	Self-expression
	Exposure to current events
	Healthy learning about a large variety of topics
	Positive effect on cognitive function – depending on high quality of learning and low quantity of time spend on it
	Increase self-esteem
	Self-identity exploration
	Inspiration
	Negative impact on sleep
	Increase in anxiety

Response	Things social media does
	Increase social isolation
	Negative impact on cognitive function – if poor quality learning and large quantity of time spent on it
	Increase in depression
	Exposure to developmentally inappropriate context
	Stranger danger – exploitation, sex trafficking
	Body image expectations and shaming – impossible body standards
	Objectified self-concept – judging self-based on how others see you
	Validation and encouragement of risky behaviours
	Envy



## Facts Regarding Social Media and Screen Time

### Negative Impacts

**Can negatively impact self-esteem and body image.**

Seeing **perfection** being constantly posted online can lead to pressure to conform and fit in. These pressures may lead to anxiety, low mood, and a feeling of inadequacy. This can ultimately lead to low satisfaction with our own lives.

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)

### Harmful Advice

The internet allows anyone to upload and share pictures and videos, many of which can be Photoshopped or edited in other ways. This misinformation as well as other types of fake news can encourage you to make unhealthy decisions. It is important to understand the difference between what is true and useful and what is fake. If you are unsure ask a trusted adult or teacher.

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)

### Addiction and Compulsive Checking

Social media addiction is real and is thought to affect around 5% of teenagers.

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)

If you spend more than 3 hours per day on social media, this may lead to poor mental health

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)

Compulsive checking of social media because you have *fear of missing out* has been linked to poor sleep and difficulty relaxing.

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)



## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when someone uses technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. It happens on devices like smartphones, computers, tablets, and gaming systems. Cyberbullying hurts people, and in some cases is against the law.

[kidshealth.org/en/parents/cyberbullying.html](https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cyberbullying.html)

## Effects of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying that is severe or long-lasting, can cause anxiety, depression, and other stress-related disorders in victims and bullies. In rare cases, some kids have attempted or died from suicide due to feeling cyberbullying have caused.

Tell an adult right away if someone says something to you online that makes you uncomfortable. Also tell an adult if you see someone bullying or saying strange things to other kids online.

[kidshealth.org/en/kids/online-id.html](https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/online-id.html)



# Skill

## Challenge Myself: Planning For the Future

How will you know when you need to reconnect with the skills you found helpful or need to seek support?

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What would that look like?

---

---

What signs would you look for?

---

---

Circle your favourite skills below.

### Six Tools for Finding Calm

1. Breathing Exercise
2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation (Lemon Squeezy)
3. Take a Mental Vacation
4. Loving Kindness
5. 3 Minute Breathing Space
6. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

### Five Tools to Challenge Myself

1. Respond To Stress (STOP)
2. Thinking Traps
3. Honour My Emotions (Feelings Wheel)
4. Worry Tree
5. Plan For the Future

### Six Tools for Living Well

1. Sleep Well
2. Create Balance (Self-care)
3. Be Active
4. Build Support
5. Use Music To Influence Mood
6. Social Media





## Check-out

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

---

---

**Challenge Myself: Social Media.** How will I change how I use social media?

---

---

**Live Well: Planning For the Future.** What is one small thing I will do to plan for the future?

---

---



# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

# REFERENCES



## Anxiety Canada

[www.anxietycanada.com](http://www.anxietycanada.com)

## Child Safe Canada

[childsafecanada.com/programs/youth\\_ages\\_8/internet\\_safety\\_for\\_youth\\_ages\\_813](http://childsafecanada.com/programs/youth_ages_8/internet_safety_for_youth_ages_813)

## Clark Goldstein

## Community Education Service

[community.hmhc.ca](http://community.hmhc.ca)

## Edmonton North PCN

[www.enpcn.com](http://www.enpcn.com)

## Here to Help

[www.heretohelp.bc.ca](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca)

## Online Scams and Fraud

Be aware and mindful of phishing scams, identity fraud, or other types of fraud

[www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cycp-cpcj/is-si/osf-efel-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cycp-cpcj/is-si/osf-efel-eng.htm)



# YP-Core Week 6

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**First name** \_\_\_\_\_ **First letter of your last name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you?**  Male  Female  Non-Binary  Prefer to describe \_\_\_\_\_

These questions are about how you have been feeling **over the last week**. Please read each question carefully. Think how often you have felt like that in the last week and then put an **X** in the box you think fits best.

<b>Over the last week...</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Only occasionally</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Most of the time</b>
1. I've felt edgy or nervous.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
2. I haven't felt like talking to anyone.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
3. I've felt able to cope when things go wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
4. I've thought of hurting myself.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. There's been someone I felt able to ask for help.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
6. My thoughts and feelings distressed me.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
7. My problems have felt too much for me.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
8. It's been hard to go to sleep or stay asleep.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0				
9. I've felt unhappy.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0				
10. I've done all the things I wanted to do.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0

Thank you for answering these questions.

We are collecting this information in accordance with the Health Information Act of Alberta, section 27 (1)(a), (g).

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# Participant Evaluation – Week 6

Date

Tell us about your experience in the [Alberta Anxiety to Calm for Youth](#) workshop.

## About the Program

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
<b>1. Please check the box that reflects your overall satisfaction in taking Alberta Anxiety to Calm for Youth.</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 for Youth 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> I had a chance to learn and practice skills to manage my anxiety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> There was 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 useful for 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> I feel safe to express my thoughts in the workshop.	<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 58 >



3. What did you like best about this workshop?

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4. What did you like least about this workshop?

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## Personal Changes

	Least <span style="float: right;">Most</span>									
5. On a scale of 1– 10, how distressed did you feel <b>prior to your first</b> Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth group class?	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 For Youth group class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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

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## About You

8. Are you?  Male  Female  Non-Binary  Prefer to describe \_\_\_\_\_

9. Age:  12  13  14  15  16  17  18

10. How many classes did you attend during this 6 week workshop?	1	2	3	3	5	6
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Thank you for completing this survey!

# APPENDIX 1: KEY TIPS FOR PARENTS



## 1. The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety, but to help a child manage it.

None of us wants to see a child unhappy, but the best way to help kids overcome anxiety isn't to try to remove the stress that causes it. It's to help them learn to tolerate their anxiety and function as well as they can, even when they're anxious. And as a result of that, the anxiety will decrease or fall away over time.

## 2. Don't avoid things just because they make a child anxious.

Helping children avoid the things they are afraid of will make them feel better in the short term, but it reinforces the anxiety over the long run.

## 3. Express positive—but realistic—expectations.

You can't promise a child that their fears are unrealistic—that they won't fail a test, that they'll have fun ice skating, or that another child won't laugh at them during show and tell. But you can express confidence that they'll be okay, they will be able to manage it, and that, as he faces his fears, the anxiety level will drop over time. This gives them confidence that your expectations are realistic, and that you're not going to ask them to do something they can't handle.

## 4. Respect their feelings, but don't empower them.

It's important to understand that validation doesn't always mean agreement. So if a child is terrified about going to the doctor because they're due for a shot, you don't want to belittle their fears, but you also don't want to increase them. You want to listen and be empathetic, help them understand what they're anxious about, and encourage them to feel that they can face her fears. The message you want to send is, "I know you're scared, and that's okay, and I'm here, and I'm going to help you get through this."

## 5. Don't ask leading questions.

Encourage your child to talk about their feelings, but not to ask leading questions—"Are you anxious about the big test? Are you worried about the science fair?" To avoid feeding the cycle of anxiety, just ask open-ended questions: "How are you feeling about the science fair?"

## 6. Don't reinforce the child's fears.

What you don't want to do is be saying, with your tone of voice or body language: "Maybe this is something that you should be afraid of." Let's say a child has had a negative experience with a dog. Next time they're around a dog, you might be anxious about how they will respond and you might unintentionally send a message that they *should* be worried.

# APPENDIX 2: COPING CARDS



## Developing and Using Cognitive Coping Cards

An important tool in your child or teen's anxiety toolbox is the ability to change anxious thoughts to more relaxed and balanced thinking. However, it can be very difficult for children and teens to **remember to use coping tools** when they are anxious. They are so focused on their feelings of being in danger that they forget they have a way of telling whether or not danger actually exists (and it usually doesn't).

With practice, however, your child can learn to use coping thoughts on their own. This is really helpful as you might not always be there to remind your child to use the tools (for example, when at school, or sleeping over at a friend's house).

**A good tool to help your child or teen is [Cognitive Coping Cards](#)!**

## What are Cognitive Coping Cards?

Cognitive coping cards can be small index cards with short sentences of some of the coping skills your child can use when experiencing anxiety. The cards are portable reminders for your child to take control of their anxiety.

### What sorts of things are helpful to put onto a coping card?

- A reminder that physical symptoms (e.g., sweaty palms, stomach-aches) are just anxiety
- The name your child has given to anxiety (e.g. "Mr. Worry," "the pest," "the bug")
- A reminder that anxiety is not dangerous and doesn't last forever
- Positive coaching statements (e.g. "I can get through this!")
- A reminder to use some coping skills (e.g. I can do relaxed breathing)
- Some calming facts your child or teen has used before (e.g. the odds of getting kidnapped are really low)



## How To Do It

### STEP 1: Make sure your child is involved

In order for coping cards to be useful, your child needs to feel that the coping statements will actually be **personally** helpful! Children and teens are more likely to use them if they have been involved in developing them. It is NOT a good idea for you to simply write them up and hand them over.

#### What to say to get your child involved

*“You have been really good at managing your anxiety these days! Now we can learn another way for you to be the boss of your anxiety. Why don’t we try to figure out some things you can tell yourself when your anxiety is acting up? We can write down some things on cards that can help you feel calm. These cards will be another tool in your anxiety-fighting toolbox!”*

#### For teens

Although you should encourage your child to develop coping statements, older children and teens can be more independent when writing out their coping cards. They can decide what skills are most helpful for them. You can explain that when we feel anxious it is sometimes difficult to remember all the skills we’ve learned to battle that anxiety. Writing out those skills on coping cards might help them remember what has been helpful for them in the past, and what skills they would like to use next time.

### STEP 2: Make it a game!

Making up the cognitive coping cards should not be a chore! Have fun trying to come up with good statements that your child will find helpful in managing their anxiety. Here are some ways you can make this tool a fun task:

- **Get the family involved!** Like all the tools in the anxiety toolbox, the whole family should work together on the goal of tackling anxiety. Parents and siblings can all get involved in making these coping cards!
- **Make it an art project!** Decorate the cards with coloured ink, sparkles, stickers, gold stars, and different colours of poster board cardboard. This turns developing and using coping cards into a fun project.

### STEP 3: Remember to praise your child

As always, it is very important that you give lots of praise whenever your child is successful at managing anxiety, or whenever he or she tried to manage anxiety (but was not quite able to do it). This can include saying, “You are doing a great job! I’m so proud of you”, but it might also involve small, simple rewards (story time; playing a fun board game together; having a fun family day; or getting a new video game if your child has been working hard to boss back anxiety for a while).



### Some examples of coping cards

#### Coping Card #1: Billy

Billy has panic attack and is afraid he is going to have a heart attack. He has started to manage his anxiety by doing muscle relaxation, and facing his fears about his panic attack symptoms.

#### My Coping Card to Beat Anxiety

1. Anxiety is not dangerous. It can't hurt me! It's just a bully!
2. I can manage my anxiety. I have done it before!
3. If my heart is racing, I get sweaty, and my tummy hurts. That means that my anxiety is acting up. I'm not in danger.
4. I could do some relaxation now.
5. Am I falling into a **Thinking Trap**?\*

\*For more information on Thinking Traps, see Realistic Thinking for Teens.

#### Coping Card #2: Susan

Susan gets very anxious when she is at school. She is worried that the other kids don't like her and that, if they knew she had anxiety, that they would laugh at her and make fun of her. She has been learning to recognize her anxious thoughts and to try to challenge them and think of more realistic thoughts.

#### My Coping Card to Beat Anxiety

1. My face is getting hot and my head is getting dizzy! My anxiety is acting up again!
2. Maybe I need to use the **STOP** plan now!\*
3. If I'm feeling anxious, I could do some calm breathing to calm down.
4. I have lots of friends at school and they like me even when I get anxious. They told me so.

\*For more information on the STOP plan, see Healthy Thinking for Young Children.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM™ FOR YOUTH

## APPENDIX 3: SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH



#WakeUpWednesday

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## What Trusted Adults Need to Know About Social Media and Mental Health

Social Media is often scrutinised as having a negative impact on children's mental health. Children and young people are now growing up in a technology dominated world, and social media plays a major role in their social lives. This balanced guide focuses on both the positive and negative impacts that social media can bring to young people and their mental health.

### Positive Impacts

#### Easy Access to Support and Help

Due to delays in young people getting help for mental health, such as experiencing low mood, or suffering from anxiety, they may sometimes reach out to access support from others online. Sharing problems or issues with friends, peers and broader social networks can be met with positive reaction, with nearly 7 in 10 teens reporting to receive support on social media during tough or challenging times. Where there are moderated communities which offer support and guidance, children can be provided with a great source of support.

#### Sustaining Friendships and Making Connections

There is evidence to suggest that strong adolescent friendships can be enhanced by social media interaction, allowing children to create stronger bonds with people they already know. Online friendships can actually make children more relationship-oriented, thoughtful and empathetic. By sharing comments on pictures, videos and posts, it can create long-term friendships as they can continually keep in touch, even with a distance between them.

#### Sense of Belonging

Support can be found in various places online. Online platforms and groups can provide a wonderful sense of belonging for children. They can find peers with similar interests and circumstances which can sometimes be difficult to find in real-life. As a result, this can create stronger connections and help to build confidence.



## Negative Impacts

### Self-esteem and Body Image

There are 10 million new photographs uploaded on Facebook alone every hour, providing an almost endless potential for young people to be drawn into appearance-based comparisons whilst online. No one is the same as how they portray themselves online as we tend to only show the best of ourselves. The pressure to fit-in and conform is huge, which can become a driving force for children to replicate what they see from friends, celebrities and sponsored adverts. This pressure may contribute to anxiety, low mood and a feeling of inadequacy. As a result, it can lead to a feeling of low satisfaction with their own lives.

### Harmful Advice

The online world provides the opportunity for anybody to upload and share photoshopped pictures, edited videos, fake news and even unvetted advice. Children may stumble upon this, which could potentially encourage them to make wrong decisions and not get the help that they need. It's important that you teach your children to differentiate between what is true and useful information and what is fake.

### Addiction and Compulsive Checking

Social media addiction is thought to affect around 5% of teenagers. The Office of National Statistics found that children who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media or more than twice as likely to support poor mental health. Furthermore, compulsive checking due to "Fear of Missing Out" has been linked to poor disturbed sleep, as well as difficulty to relax during evenings. One in five young people say they wake up during the night to check messages on social media, leading to them to be three times as more likely to feel constantly tired at school than their classmates who don't use social media during the night.

### Cyberbullying

One recent large-scale UK study showed that cyberbullying is one of the biggest challenges for young people. Other studies suggest that cyberbullying has a bigger effect on wellbeing and mental health than other types of bullying. 7 in 10 people have experienced cyberbullying, with 37% of young people saying they experience cyberbullying on a high-frequency basis. Young people are twice as likely to be bullied on Facebook than any other social network.



### Meet Our Expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.

### Helpful Apps

- **Hub of Hope:** [hubofhope.co.uk](http://hubofhope.co.uk)
- **Mindshift**
- **Smiling Mind**

### Sources of Help

- **www.nationalonlinesafety.com**
- **Twitter:** [@natonlinesafety](https://twitter.com/natonlinesafety)
- **Facebook:** [/NationalOnlineSafety](https://www.facebook.com/NationalOnlineSafety)

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Sources: <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/social-media-young-people-and-mental-health>, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-10-1>, <https://www.rspsh.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/62be270a-a55f-4719-ad668c2ec7a74c2a.pdf>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201505/5-warning-signs-mental-health-risk>





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