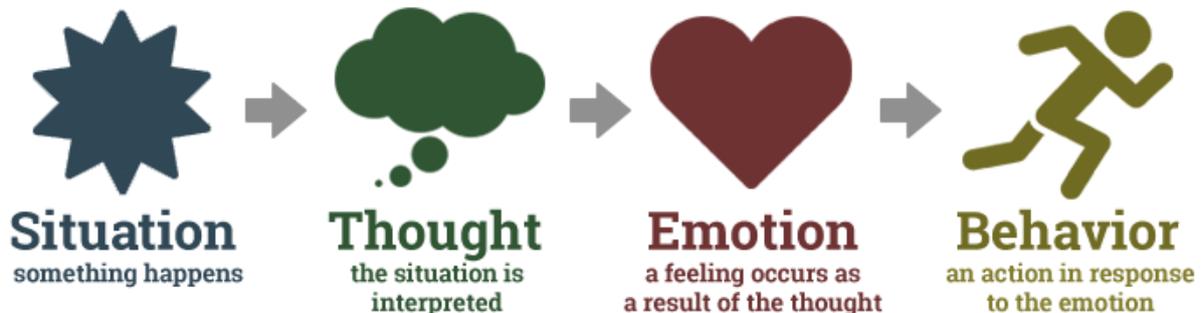


Re-Thinking Anxiety

Tips and techniques for overcoming anxiety

Week Two - Summary



Thinking

The way that we think, can affect the way we feel and the way we behave.

Often our thoughts may not even be true but they can still have a negative impact on how we feel. If we can learn to notice our thoughts, we can learn to deal with them in a more helpful way.

See Week 1 - Unhelpful thinking styles and Week 2 - Overcoming unhelpful thinking styles

Neuroplasticity / 're-wiring your brain'

In the 1960s, it was discovered that neurons could "reorganize" after a traumatic event. Further research (Fuchs & Flügge, 2014) found that stress can change not only the functions but also the structure of the brain itself. When we learn something new, we create new connections between our neurons. We rewire our brains to adapt to new circumstances. This happens on a daily basis, but it's also something that we can encourage and stimulate. There are certain

things you can do to encourage to create new more positive habits and challenge old behaviours.

- Do things differently (see home practice section).
- Face your fear - remember avoiding reinforces anxiety. What steps can you take to face your fears?
- Challenge your thoughts (see home practice section)
- Let go of perfectionism. You don't need to be perfect - mistakes can be a good way to learn and grow
- By getting into the habit of being kind to yourself, you're training your brain to do just that! Keep working on it and it will get easier. Remember the self care ideas we talked about last week.

Attention training is a brilliant way to help us get our thoughts back to the present. Think of your attention as a muscle, if you don't exercise it regularly it will become weak and won't work as well. We need to strengthen it by exercising it. It's not an attempt to control our thoughts or make them go away. It is actually about allowing these thoughts to be present in your mind and at the same time choosing to shift your attention back onto something in the present moment.

Gratitude can be a technique for retraining our brain to go down a positive path rather than entering a negative spiral. It helps build resilience and it's free.

Home Practice - As well as attending the course - It's helpful if you can complete the following exercises. We are all different, so thinking of your own examples will be most useful. It may be useful to use an extra notebook for these practices as you may need to revisit from time to time.

What Unhelpful thinking styles can you identify with?

(please refer to 'Week 2 - Unhelpful thinking styles')

E.g. Over generalising - 'You always', 'everyone'

Can you use these tools to overcome your unhealthy thinking?

(Please refer to 'Week 2 - Overcoming unhelpful thinking styles')

Attention Training

Mundane Task focusing is a great way of practicing bringing your attention back to the present moment by using your 5 senses to notice. You can try this on any basic household task and progress to other activities.

The tasks / activities I will use to mundane task focusing are:

Do Things differently

By changing the mundane things of everyday life and challenging those habits we can get used to a little discomfort and realise that it might even improve your life.

Challenge your daily habits to feel more confident coming out of your comfort zone. You could try;

E.g. Walking a different route / Sitting in a different chair / Cooking a different meal / having a different drink.

The things I will do differently are:

Attention Training

Mundane Task focusing is a great way of practicing bringing your attention back to the present moment by using your 5 senses to notice. You can try this on any basic household task and progress to other activities.

The tasks / activities I will use to mundane task focusing are:

Gratitude

To practice gratitude you can use, (tick the one you could try).

- A gratitude jar (place something you are grateful for each day in a jar).
- Gratitude journal (1-3 things each day or every few days).
- Make a conscious effort to smile and laugh more
- Volunteer
- Take in beauty of nature.

Useful Help lines and Resources

Call helpline (available 24/7 if you need to talk or are in a crisis).

0800132737 text 81066 <https://www.callhelpline.org.uk/>

Samaritans (available 24/7 if you need to talk or are in a crisis).

Call 116123 Jo@samaritans.org.uk

Dan 24/7 Drug and Alcohol support -

0808 808 2234 Or text **DAN** to: **81066**

Gam Care - 08088020133