



ANXIETY & STRESS

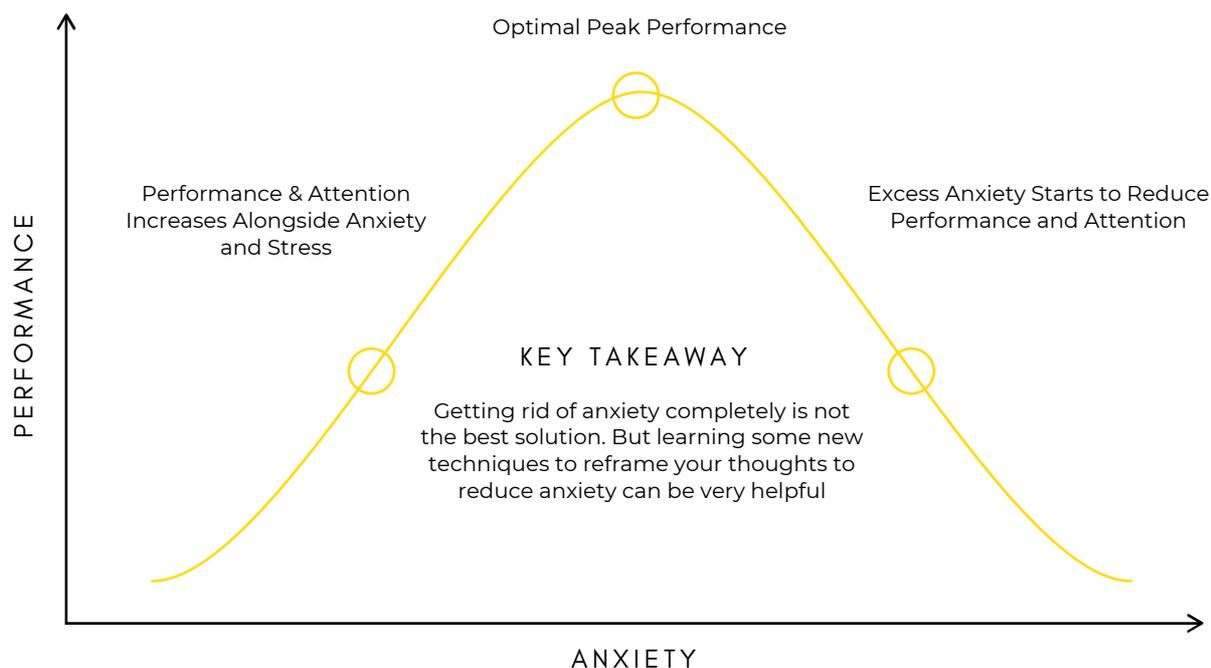
Worksheets

Worksheets and Tools to Help You Manage
Stress and Anxiety in your Everyday Life

TJ RUMLER, MSW, LISW-CP, CCTP

About Stress & Anxiety

A little bit of anxiety can be a good thing, but as with everything else in life - too much of it and it becomes counter productive. Below you can see a visualization of “Yerkes-Dodson Law” that describes how performance (mental & physical) changes as anxiety increases.



COMMON TYPES OF ANXIETY	Health Anxiety	Worrying about an unlikely illness that one might develop.
	Generalized Anxiety	Constantly worrying about everything - the subject of the worry can change constantly.
	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	Having obsessive thoughts about a subject or action. The person might feel the need to take action to alleviate the compulsions
	Social Anxiety	Constantly fearing of other's judgment and looking for ways to avoid certain social situations (to avoid being judged)
	PTSD	Often a result of a traumatic life event that caused a lot of emotional or physical pain . It's accompanied by memories of the traumatic .event



Anxiety Breakdown

01 What events or situation cause you to feel anxious most often?

02 What happens to your body in these situations? What are the physical manifestations?

03 What negative thoughts and feelings do I have in these situations?

04 How do you usually react in these situations?

05 What are some pros and cons of this type of reactions?



Anxiety Assessment

01 List at least 3 ways anxiety has affected your life.

02 How would your life be different if you felt less anxious? What would you do differently?

03 What will happen in the long term (3 months, 1 year, 10+ years) if you do not address you anxiety right now?

04 What steps have you taken to overcome your anxiety?
How did it go and why?



Anxiety & Stress Hierarchy

Use this worksheet to describe what situations, thoughts, people etc. make you most anxious and cause the most stress. Use a 1 to 10 scale to rank each one (10 being the most anxious/stressful)

Event/Situation	How Much Stress or Anxiety Does This Situation Cause Me? (Scale of 1 to 10)



Monitoring Anxiety

Event/Trigger	Thoughts & Feelings	Your Response	Reframing Situation
<p>EX. Tuesday 15.00 - Have to give a 15 minute talk in front of my colleges</p> <p>Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with?</p>	<p>EX. Worried that they're judging my presentation. Feeling incompetent.</p> <p>What Anxious Thoughts and Feelings Did You Observe How Strong were the feelings in the scale of 1 to 10</p>	<p>EX. Tell My Boss That I need more time to prepare for the presentation.</p> <p>What did You do as a Result?</p>	<p>EX. I know I was prepared to give the presentation the first time. Colleges are probably more worried about their presentation then they are about mine. Making a mistake in my presentation is not that big of a deal.</p> <p>How can I react differently in the future? Was my initial response warranted?</p>

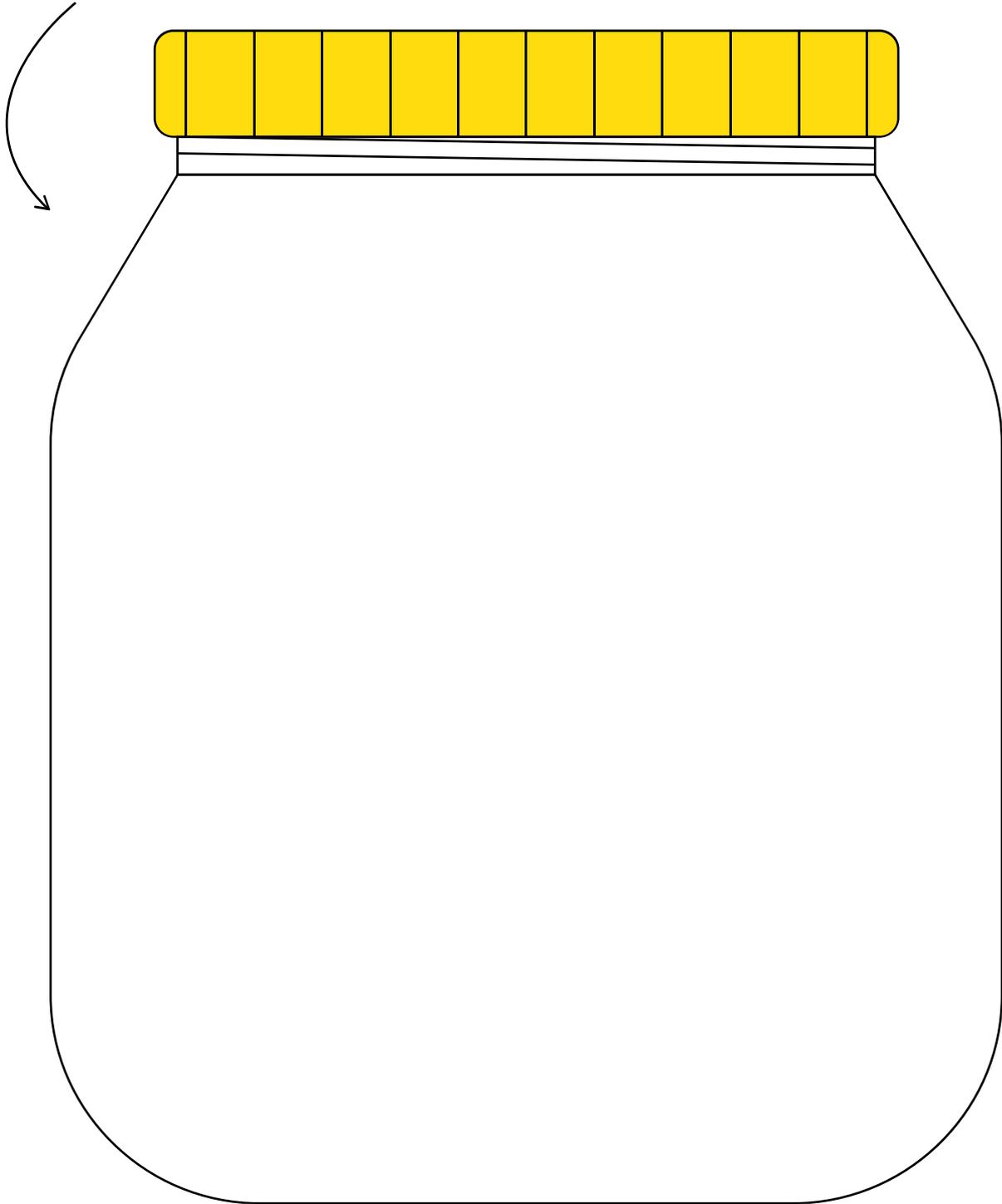


Monitoring Anxiety

Trigger	Your Inner Dialogue	Your Emotions & Sensations	Your Response
<p>Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with?</p>	<p>What Anxious Thoughts and Memories Did You Observe</p>	<p>What Emotions and Sensations in Your Body did You Feel? How Strong were the feelings in the scale of 1 to 10</p>	<p>What did You do as a Result?</p>

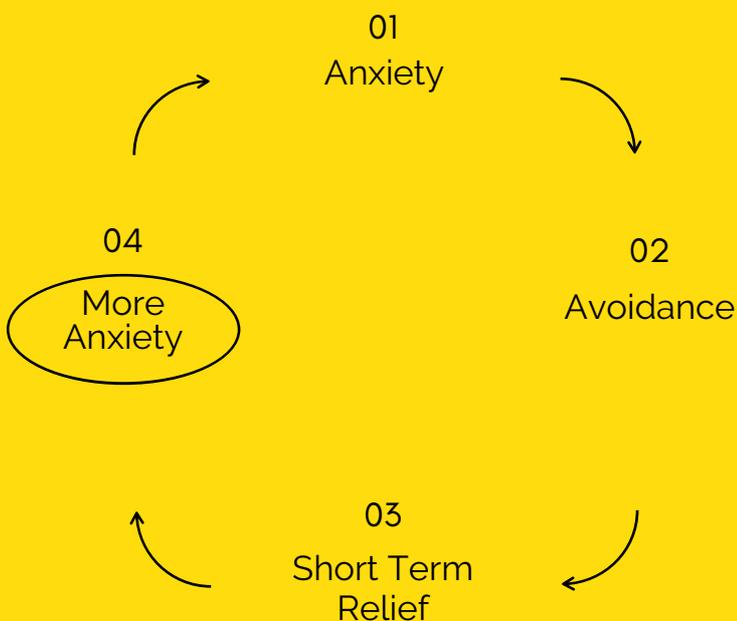
The Worry Jar

Write down all the worries you have and all the things that cause you anxiety and stress. After that, rank your causes for anxiety from 1 to 10. One being least anxious and ten being the most (something you would try to avoid almost every time).



The Cycle Of Anxiety

Anxiety often leads to avoidance (primary coping mechanism) - after all, why would you want to do something that feels bad? This worksheet is designed to help you understand how situations that cause you anxiety push you towards avoidance and how it makes things worse in the long term.



01. Anxiety

A situation comes up that causes you anxiety - racing heart, sweating and worrying.

02. Avoidance

You try to avoid the anxiety producing situation altogether. For example find an excuse to not give the speech you were suppose to give. Or you try to postpone the challenging event into the future.

03. Short Term Relief

You get a short term relief from anxiety. The physical and mental symptoms ease up.

04. More Anxiety

You learn that by avoiding anxiety inducing situations altogether you manage to reduce anxiety, but next time this situation come up you'll have even more anxiety and higher likelihood of trying to avoiding or postponing it further.

Use the next worksheet to identify your main safety behaviors to avoid anxiety >



My Safety Behaviors

Use this worksheet to identify some common safety behaviors you do when you feel anxious. Note that the safety behavior can be productive or counter-productive depending if it helps you confront the anxiety inducing situation and whether it has any long term negative effects.

Situation That is Triggering the Anxiety	How Do I Usually Cope with This? What Actions Do I Take?
01	
02	
03	

Sample Safety Behaviors

Leaving a Situation

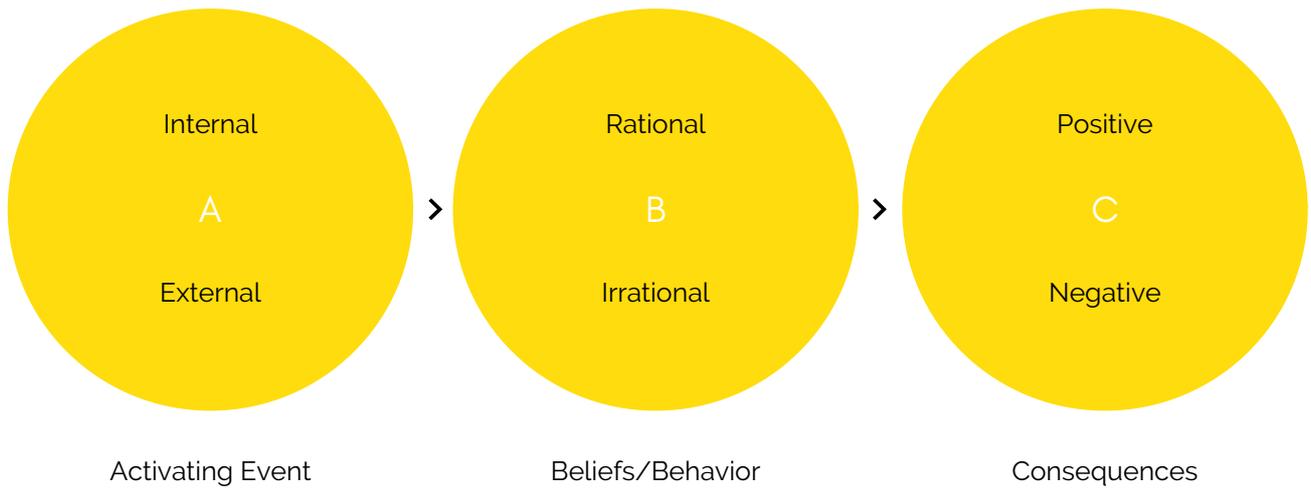
Distraction - Watching TV, Going for a Smoke, Video Games ,etc

Looking for External Reassurance/Validation

ABC Model *Explainer*



The ABC Model by Dr. Albert Ellis was developed to help patients identify negative triggering events and the beliefs and consequences they lead to. Once the ABC pattern of a triggering event is established, the main work lies in altering the Beliefs/Behavior that leads to the consequences. In this case, try to identify the Triggering event for your anxiety and then the beliefs/behavior that lead you to the eventual consequences.



EXAMPLE:

Activating Event	Beliefs/Behavior	Consequences
Boss asks me to give a presentation on the last quarter's results to potential investors.	I get nervous and sweaty when I have to do public speaking. I ask the boss to give the assignment to someone else. I feel like I should not be afraid of public speaking so much.	Negative: Boss might question my capabilities. Deep down I know I could have done it myself but was too afraid. Since I don't get to practice, my public speaking anxiety does not improve. Positive: Avoided an anxiety inducing event.

ABC Model *Part 01*



Activating Event	Beliefs/Behavior	Consequences
<p>Describe the events preceding your actions or thoughts.</p>	<p>What actions did you take? Are your actions or beliefs rational?</p>	<p>What happened? Describe the positive and the negative aspects.</p>

ABC Model *Part 02*



On this worksheet, use the negative beliefs and behaviors you identified on the previous worksheet and try to come up with alternative courses of action or alternative re-frames for your current beliefs that would lead to more desired outcomes.

Current Beliefs/Negative Behaviors	Better Alternatives
<p>EX. I'm not a good public speaker. I get really nervous when I have to talk in public.</p> <p>Is this behavior/belief rational? What does it help me achieve?</p>	<p>EX. I might not be a good public speaker now, but I can become much better through practice. It's a skill just like any other and the more I practice the better I become.</p> <p>I will first practice at home and then get smaller public speaking opportunities to build up my confidence.</p> <p>What would be an alternative belief or action that would lead to a more desired outcome?</p>



Behavioral Experiment

The best way to change our current limiting beliefs is to run experiments with alternative assumptions and then see the results. Often times the beliefs that seem very certain from the get go turn out be falsely held at closer inspection. Use this worksheet to first describe your belief/assumptions, then run an experiment that either helps to confirm or disprove them. This hopefully lead you to question your original belief and come up with something more productive.

Initial Beliefs	Experiment	What I Learned?
<p>EX. I'm not a good public speaker. I get really nervous when I have to talk in public and people will be able to tell.</p> <p>What is your current belief? How sure are that it's true (1 to 10)?</p>	<p>EX. I can give quick talk at my next local community meeting. I'll practice beforehand what I want to say in front of a mirror. I'll have somebody film me when I give the short 2 minute talk.</p> <p>What can you do to check the validity of this belief?</p>	<p>EX. I felt very nervous standing up and speaking to a crowd but as I saw from the video later on, I did not seem that nervous at all while talking. I learned that I might feel more nervous than it's worth and right after the short talk I felt really good. Now I'm less sure that I'm a really bad public speaker and feel like it's something I can practice going forward.</p> <p>What did you learn from running this experiment?</p>



Alternative Perspectives

This worksheet is designed to give you alternative perspectives for the current things that bother you. This will help you re-frame your issues in a more productive way.

01 What situation caused you anxiety or stress?

02 What did you think and feel? What was your thought process like?

03 What more positive ways would there be to look at this? What would a really good friend say about this? What good outcomes might come of this situation? What can you learn from this?



03

What's the worst that can happen?

02

Am I 100% certain this will happen?

04

How important is this in 30 years?

01

What would a good friend say about this thought?

06

Is this thought helping me or making things worse?

05

Is this a catastrophe or just a hassle?

Prompts to Challenge Negative Thoughts

07

Am I overestimating the dangers?

09

Is this thought subject to some cognitive distortions?

08

What would I recommend a friend with a similar problem?

10

What are 3 positive things about this?

11

Am I certain this is even true? How do I know this?

12

What facts support this and what contradict it?

Types of Cognitive Distortions



Over Generalization

Drawing a conclusion based on just a few data points. Ex. All swans are white because I've only seen white swans.



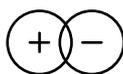
Polarized Thinking

When you think that something can be only black or white - good or bad. Leaving aside any nuances.



Mental Filtering

Focusing only on the positive or negative. Acknowledging the positive side but finding a way to turn it into a negative.



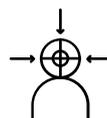
Minimizing/Maximizing

Over exaggerating potential negative event or minimizing potential negative outcomes.



Blaming

Blaming others and always feeling like a victim. Finding ways how others are responsible for one's situation.



Personalization

Taking everything personally. Feeling like everybody's actions are directed for or against you.



Jumping to Conclusions

Assuming you know other people's motivations and making predictions without substantial evidence.



Labeling

Judging others or yourself by a single event (often negative). Not taking into account the nuances.



Emotional Reasoning

Anything that feels a certain way must be true. Taking feelings as a proof of validity of one's own opinions.



Should Statements

"Should" and "Should Not" statements are used to create pressure on yourself or others and are often not followed through.



Challenging Negative Thoughts

01 What is your negative thought that causes you stress/anxiety?

02 How distressed does it make you feel
(scale of 1 to 10)

03 What cognitive distortion does apply to
this thought?

04 Challenge or reframe your negative thought. Use the prompts provided in the previous worksheet.



Worry Exploration

01 What are you worried about?

02 Why do you think this is something to worry about? What evidence do you have that this will happen?

03 What's the worst thing that will happen if this comes true?

04 What's an alternative outcome or a more likely scenario if your worry does come actually true?

05 Does this worry matter in the long term? (1 month, 1 year, 10 years?)



Healthy vs. Unhealthy Coping

Coping mechanisms are things we do to reduce stress and anxiety and can happen both consciously or unconsciously. What's more, since coping mechanisms can have a great impact on our quality of life and relationships, it's important to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy coping strategies. Healthy strategies are things that help us reduce stress and anxiety without having a long term harmful impact while negative strategies do have negative side effects. See the list below for some examples.

Unhealthy Coping Strategies	Healthy Coping Strategies
⊗ Staying Angry	✓ Exercising
⊗ Prolonged isolation	✓ Seeking Help
⊗ Self Harm	✓ Talking About Your Problems
⊗ Drug/Alcohol Abuse	✓ Problem Solving Techniques
⊗ Social Withdrawal	✓ Eating Healthy
⊗ Overeating	✓ Relaxation Techniques
⊗ Sleeping too much/too little	✓ Taking Time for Yourself

What coping strategies do you usually use?

My Coping Strategies

Part 01



What's the alarm or anxiety about?	What are my coping strategies?	What are the consequences of this strategy?

My Coping Strategies

Part 02



My Current Unhealthy Coping Strategy	A Healthier Coping Strategy I can Replace it with

My Current Unhealthy Coping Strategy	A Healthier Coping Strategy I can Replace it with

My Current Unhealthy Coping Strategy	A Healthier Coping Strategy I can Replace it with

Relaxed Breathing *Exercise*

Deep breathing is an effective technique to break your body's automatic stress response - rapid shallow breathing, muscle tension and racing heart. This exercise helps you relieve these physiological symptoms fast and effectively. As the bodily sensations of anxiety ease, so does the actual stress and anxiety.

Note: If deep breathing practice is new to you, it may result in discomfort and increased feelings of anxiety. Listen to your body and stop the practice at any time.

Instructions

To begin, sit in comfortable position. You can close your eyes or keep them open - whatever feels more natural to you. Then follow these simple instructions:

Inhale

- 01 First inhale slowly and deeply for around 4 seconds. Notice how your abdomen fills with air.

Hold

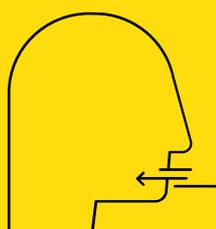
- 02 Pause and hold the air in your lungs for 4-5 seconds. Notice how it feels to hold your breath.

Exhale

- 03 Exhale slowly for 4-6 seconds. Notice how the air exits your lungs and the bodily sensations that it is accompanied by.

Repeat

- 04 Repeat this exercise for 2 to 5 minutes. If you have time then the more you do it, the more effective it is.



Inhale
for 4 Seconds



Hold
for 4-5 Seconds



Exhale
for 4-6 Seconds

My Thought Log



Event/Situation	Thoughts & Feelings	My Response	How could I have reacted differently?

Anxiety Journal



Source of
Anxiety or Stress

My Thoughts
and Feelings

Coping
Strategies Used

	Source of Anxiety or Stress	My Thoughts and Feelings	Coping Strategies Used
MON			
TUE			
WED			
THU			
FRI			
SAT			
SUN			

Activity Tracker



	Reading	Yoga	Mindfulness	Exercising	Walking	Work	Journal	Family Time		
01										
02										
03										
04										
05										
06										
07										
08										
09										
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
16										
17										
18										
19										
20										
21										
22										
23										
24										
25										
26										
27										
28										
29										
30										
31										



New Habits to Reduce Anxiety

Use this worksheet to come up with new habits and coping mechanisms that you can practice to reduce your anxiety. Also write down the things you consciously could stop doing as well to help you alleviate some of the anxiety.

My desired Goal or Outcome:

To achieve this, I will need to:

Stop Doing/ Avoiding	
-------------------------	--

Do Less	
---------	--

Keep Doing	
------------	--

Start Doing	
-------------	--

Do More	
---------	--

