

GAD-7 Anxiety

| Over the <u>last two weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by the following problems? | Not at all | Several days | More than half the days | Nearly every day |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Not being able to stop or control worrying | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Worrying too much about different things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Trouble relaxing | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Column totals _____ + _____ + _____ + _____ =

Total score _____

If you checked any problems, how difficult have they made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not difficult at all

☐

Somewhat difficult

☐

Very difficult

☐

Extremely difficult

☐

Source: Primary Care Evaluation of Mental Disorders Patient Health Questionnaire (PRIME-MD-PHQ). The PHQ was developed by Drs. Robert L. Spitzer, Janet B.W. Williams, Kurt Kroenke, and colleagues. For research information, contact Dr. Spitzer at ris8@columbia.edu. PRIME-MD® is a trademark of Pfizer Inc. Copyright© 1999 Pfizer Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission

Scoring GAD-7 Anxiety Severity

This is calculated by assigning scores of 0, 1, 2, and 3 to the response categories, respectively, of "not at all," "several days," "more than half the days," and "nearly every day."

GAD-7 total score for the seven items ranges from 0 to 21.

0–4: minimal anxiety

5–9: mild anxiety

10–14: moderate anxiety

15–21: severe anxiety

How Anxiety Can Induce Depression

1. Chronic Stress and Exhaustion

Persistent anxiety keeps the body in a heightened state of stress. Over time, this leads to emotional and physical exhaustion. This burnout can trigger symptoms of depression, such as hopelessness and low energy.

2. Negative Thought Patterns

Anxiety fuels constant worry and catastrophizing. These thought patterns can shift into feelings of helplessness and worthlessness. Over time, this mental outlook can lead to depression.

3. Avoidance Behaviors

Anxiety causes people to avoid stressful situations. Avoidance can lead to isolation, loneliness, and a lack of positive experiences. These factors increase the risk of developing depression.

4. Sleep Disruption

Anxiety often disrupts sleep due to racing thoughts or tension. Long-term sleep problems significantly increase the risk of depression.

5. Self-Criticism and Guilt

People with anxiety may feel guilt or shame for not coping well. This self-judgment can damage self-esteem and worsen emotional distress. Over time, it contributes to depressive symptoms.

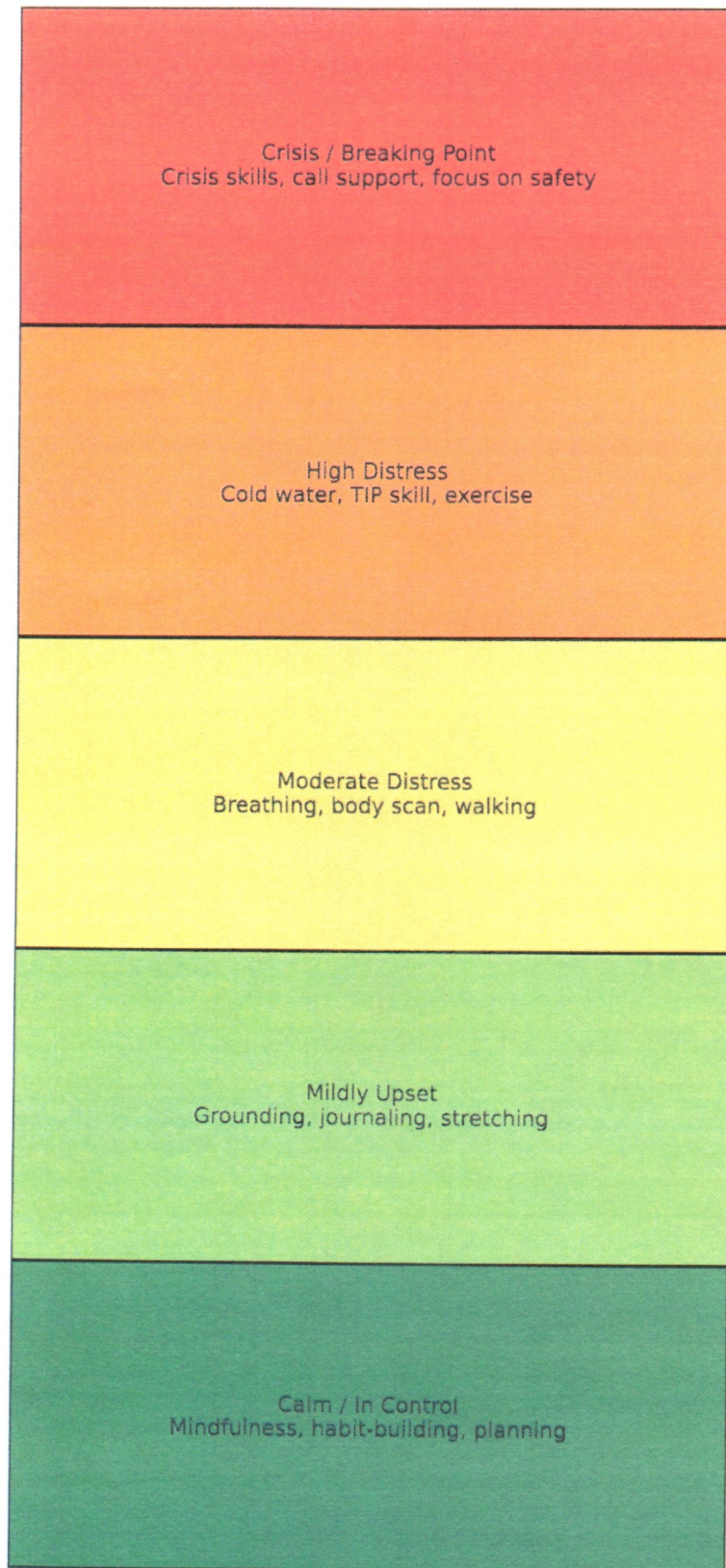
6. Neurobiological Overlap

Anxiety and depression share brain pathways and chemical imbalances. Chronic anxiety can alter brain chemistry in ways that lead to depression.

Summary

Anxiety, especially when untreated, can set the stage for depression through exhaustion, isolation, and self-criticism. Addressing anxiety early with therapy, lifestyle changes, or medication can help prevent or manage depression.

Distress Tolerance Thermometer



My Personal Coping Tools:

Distress Tolerance Thermometer

A self-check tool to recognize your emotional state and choose the right coping strategy.

| Level | Distress Description | Examples of Feelings | Helpful Coping Strategies |
|-------|-------------------------|--|--|
| 0-2 | Calm / In Control | Peaceful, focused, relaxed | Practice mindfulness, build habits, plan ahead |
| 3-4 | Mildly Upset | Worried, distracted, uneasy | Use grounding skills, take a break, journal, stretch |
| 5-6 | Moderate Distress | Frustrated, anxious, overwhelmed | Try deep breathing, body scan, go for a walk, talk to someone |
| 7-8 | High Distress | Angry, panicked, agitated, crying | Cold water splash, TIP skill (DBT), squeeze ice, do intense exercise |
| 9-10 | Crisis / Breaking Point | Out of control, hopeless, dissociating | Use crisis survival skills, call a support person or helpline, focus on safety |

How to Use:

1. Pause & Check In: Ask yourself, "Where am I on the distress scale?"
2. Name Your Emotions: Identify what you're feeling.
3. Choose a Strategy: Use a skill matched to your level.
4. Recheck: After using the skill, reassess where you are.

My Personal Coping Tools:

Distress Tolerance Skills for Anxiety

| Category | Skill/Technique | Description |
|---------------|----------------------|---|
| Distraction | 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding | Name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste. |
| Distraction | Focus on a Task | Clean, organize, draw, or do a hobby to redirect your attention. |
| Distraction | Safe Media | Watch a calming video or listen to uplifting music. |
| Self-Soothing | Warm Bath or Shower | Use warm water to relax your body and reduce muscle tension. |
| Self-Soothing | Aromatherapy | Use calming scents like lavender or eucalyptus. |
| Self-Soothing | Soft Textures | Wrap in a soft blanket or wear comfortable clothing. |
| Mindfulness | Deep Breathing | Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4, out for 6-8. Repeat slowly. |
| Mindfulness | Body Scan | Mentally check in with each part of your body, relaxing as you go. |
| Mindfulness | Present-Moment Focus | Say to yourself: 'Right now, I'm safe.' Focus only on the now. |

Distress Tolerance Skills for Anxiety

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| Radical Acceptance | Accept What Is | Remind yourself: 'I may not like this, but I can handle it.' |
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| Radical Acceptance | Let Go of Control | Focus on what you can control, not what you can't. |
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| Opposite Action | Move Your Body | Go for a walk, stretch, or dance to shift physical energy. |
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| Opposite Action | Smile/Stand Tall | Change your posture to influence your mindset. |
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| Opposite Action | Social Connection | Text or call someone supportive-even briefly. |
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| Crisis Survival | Ice Hold | Hold ice in your hand or splash cold water on your face to 'shock' your system. |
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| Crisis Survival | Intense Exercise | Do jumping jacks, run in place, or other fast movement to burn off adrenaline. |
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| Crisis Survival | TIP Skill (DBT) | Temperature change, Intense exercise, Paced breathing. |
|-----------------|-----------------|--|

Radical Acceptance: An Information Sheet

What is Radical Acceptance?

Radical acceptance is the practice of fully acknowledging and embracing reality as it is, without resistance or denial. It does not mean approving of painful or unjust situations, but rather recognizing them so you can respond skillfully instead of getting stuck in suffering.

Why is it Important?

Resisting reality often leads to added suffering. By practicing radical acceptance, you reduce emotional struggle, find peace in the present moment, and gain clarity to take meaningful action. It is a cornerstone skill in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and can be particularly helpful in coping with loss, trauma, or difficult circumstances.

Key Principles of Radical Acceptance

- 1 Reality cannot be changed by wishing it were different.
- 2 Acceptance does not equal approval.
- 3 Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional.
- 4 Letting go of resistance frees up energy for healing and growth.
- 5 Acceptance is an ongoing practice, not a one-time choice.

How to Practice Radical Acceptance

- 1 Notice when you are resisting reality (e.g., saying 'This shouldn't be happening').
- 2 Remind yourself that reality is what it is in this moment.
- 3 Acknowledge your emotions without judgment.
- 4 Use mindfulness to stay present with what you feel.
- 5 Try phrases like 'It is what it is' or 'I can't change the past, but I can choose my response now.'
- 6 Practice self-compassion while working through difficult emotions.

Benefits of Radical Acceptance

- 1 Reduces emotional suffering
- 2 Increases resilience
- 3 Improves relationships
- 4 Promotes emotional healing
- 5 Helps cope with uncontrollable situations

Radical Acceptance & Anxiety Reduction

Understanding Radical Acceptance

Radical acceptance is the practice of fully acknowledging reality as it is, without denial, resistance, or judgment. Instead of wishing things were different, you allow yourself to face the truth of the present moment. This approach can be particularly powerful for managing and reducing anxiety.

Why Anxiety Increases with Resistance

Anxiety often arises from fighting against reality or fearing what may happen. When we resist reality by thinking 'This shouldn't be happening' or 'I can't handle this,' our stress response escalates. This resistance keeps the mind stuck in worry, rumination, and fear.

How Radical Acceptance Helps Reduce Anxiety

- 1 Stops the mental struggle against 'what is,' reducing emotional distress.
- 2 Allows energy to shift from fighting reality to coping with it more calmly.
- 3 Encourages mindfulness, grounding you in the present moment instead of future 'what-ifs.'
- 4 Promotes emotional balance by reducing rumination and catastrophic thinking.
- 5 Builds resilience by teaching that while pain is unavoidable, suffering can be lessened.

Practical Steps for Anxiety Relief

- 1 Pause and notice when anxiety is triggered by resisting reality.
- 2 Acknowledge the situation with phrases like 'This is the way it is right now.'
- 3 Take slow, mindful breaths to calm the nervous system.
- 4 Shift your focus from control to acceptance of uncertainty.
- 5 Remind yourself: 'I can't always control events, but I can control my response.'

Final Thoughts

Radical acceptance is not about approving or liking anxiety-provoking situations. It is about reducing unnecessary suffering by meeting reality as it is. Through acceptance, anxiety softens, making space for peace, clarity, and resilience.

Distress Tolerance

DBT skills

Radical Acceptance

When you face problems out of your control, it's natural to think "This isn't fair" or "I shouldn't have to deal with this." But these ways of thinking only make the pain worse and add frustration.

Radical acceptance means accepting something fully, both mentally and emotionally. It does not require liking or approving of something. You're just accepting the facts of the situation.

Learning to accept problems that are out of your control softens their emotional impact.

| Situation | Typical thinking | Radical acceptance |
|---|--|--|
| You didn't get a job you wanted. | "This isn't fair—I did everything right. I was the best candidate for the job." | "I'm frustrated, but there's nothing I can do now. They felt someone else was a better fit." |
| You receive an untreatable medical diagnosis. | "I'm too young for this. Everyone else gets to go about their lives and I have to deal with this." | "I have to play the cards I'm dealt. This is awful, but I'll push forward." |

Self-Soothe with Senses

Imagine spending an hour in a room that's too bright, hot, loud, and smelly. It wouldn't be long before it grates on your nerves! Unpleasant sensory experiences have a direct impact on mood.

It might be less obvious, but the reverse is also true. You can **self-soothe with your senses** by finding pleasurable ways to engage them. Doing so will help soothe your distressing emotions.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Vision | Go for a walk somewhere nice and pay attention to the sights. |
| Hearing | Listen to something enjoyable such as music or nature. |
| Touch | Take a warm bath or get a massage. |
| Taste | Have a small treat—it doesn't have to be a full meal. |
| Smell | Find some flowers or spray a perfume or cologne you like. |

Distress Tolerance

DBT skills

Distraction (ACCEPTS)

In the moment, it might feel like a painful emotion will never pass. But given time, emotions lessen in intensity until they disappear. Sometimes you just need to get through the next few minutes or hours.

Distractions help you buy time and make it through an emotional downswing. The acronym ACCEPTS offers tips for how to do this.

| | |
|----------|---|
| A | Activities Engage in activities that require thought and concentration. This could be a hobby, a project, work, or school. |
| C | Contributing Focus on someone or something other than yourself. For example, you can volunteer or do a good deed. |
| C | Comparisons Look at your situation in comparison to something worse. Remember a time you were in more pain, or when someone else was going through something more difficult. |
| E | Emotions Do something that will create a competing emotion. Feeling sad? Watch a funny movie. Feeling nervous? Listen to soothing music. |
| P | Pushing away Push negative thoughts out of your mind. Imagine writing your problem on a piece of paper, crumpling it up, and throwing it away. Refuse to think about the situation until a better time. |
| T | Thoughts Occupy your mind so you don't have room to dwell on painful feelings. Count backwards from 1,000 by 7, recite a poem in your head, or read a book. |
| S | Sensations Find safe physical sensations to distract you from negative emotions. Wear a rubber band and snap it on your wrist, hold an ice cube in your hand, or eat something sour like a lime. |