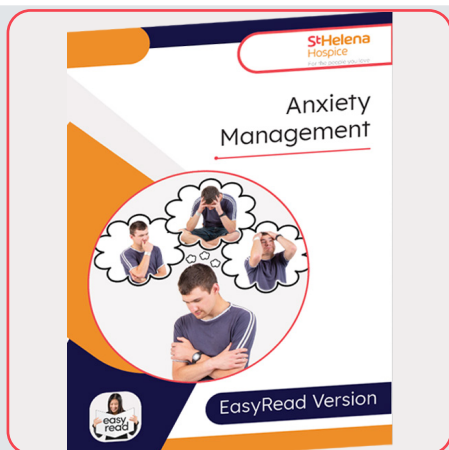


Anxiety Management



EasyRead Version

About this Booklet



This booklet is about learning to manage stress and anxiety.

You will find information about:



What is Stress?



What is Anxiety?



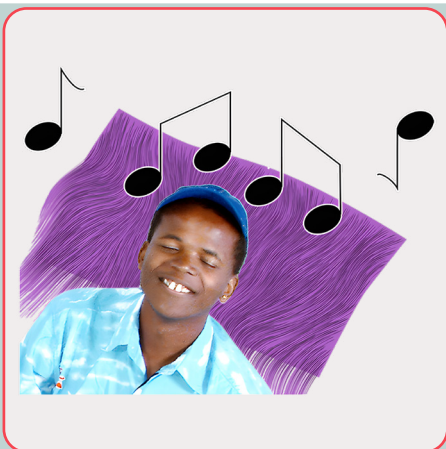
What is a Panic Attack?

About this Booklet

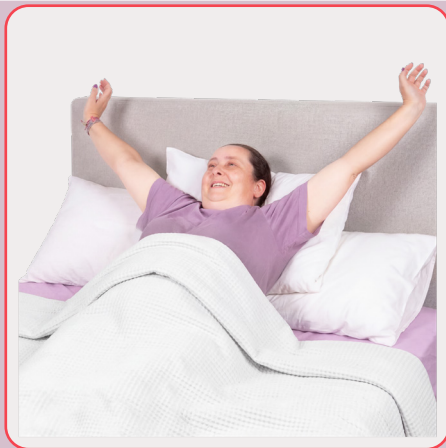


It then gives you information about:

Managing Anxiety



Learning to Relax



Improving Sleep



Basic Advice

What is Stress?



Stress is your body's reaction to a dangerous or frightening situation.

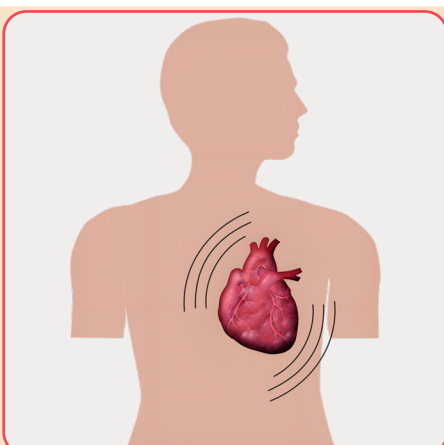


The danger could be real or imagined.

For example, being scared of all dogs even if they are not really dangerous.



We sometimes call this reaction **fight or flight** because the body is getting ready to fight, or to run away from the danger.



When you are stressed you might notice that:

- Your heart beats faster.

What is Stress?



- Your breathing gets faster.



- Your stomach churns.



These feelings can be very strong.



These are all normal reactions to help your body prepare to deal with danger.

What is Anxiety?



If stress continues for a long time, it can sometimes lead to anxiety.



Anxiety can make it difficult to stop worrying or feeling that something bad is going to happen.



Anxiety can change the way you behave. You might:

- Get angry more easily.



- Become frustrated or upset.

What is Anxiety?



- Argue with other people.



- Avoid seeing other people.

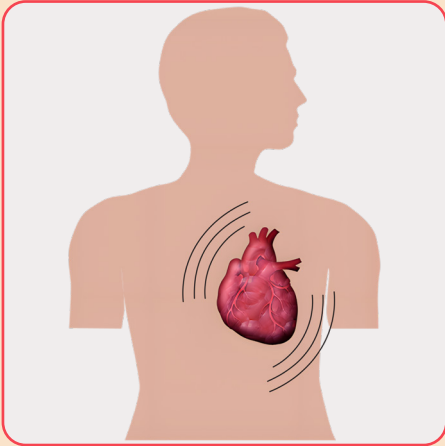


- Want to be on your own.



If you are very anxious you may have a panic attack.

What is a Panic Attack?



A panic attack is when your fear and anxiety take over. During a panic attack you may feel:

- Your heart racing.



- Like you can't breathe.



- Sweating and shaking.



- Stomach ache or feeling sick.

What is a Panic Attack?



- Dizzy.



You may faint.



You may want to hurt yourself.

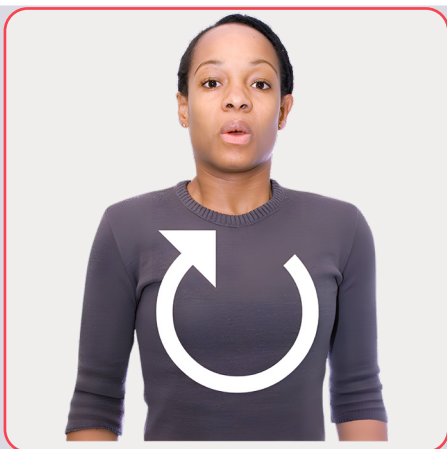


You may feel like you will die soon.

How to Manage Anxiety



There are lots of things you can do to help you relax when you are feeling stressed or anxious. These include:



1. Breathing exercises

This is where you focus on breathing in slowly and then breathing out slowly.



The **calming hand technique** is a way to help you focus on your breathing.

Start by putting your hand on the arm of the chair or somewhere flat with your palm up.



Use the finger of your other hand to trace up the:

Thumb - recognise that you feel anxious and need to calm down.

How to Manage Anxiety



Use the finger of your other hand to trace up the:

Index finger - breathe out slowly



Use the finger of your other hand to trace up the:

Middle finger - breathe in slowly



Use the finger of your other hand to trace up the:

Ring finger - breathe out slowly



Use the finger of your other hand to trace up the:

Little finger - squeeze then relax your hand.

Keep doing this until you start to feel calmer.

How to Manage Anxiety



2. Talking

Talking to someone about what you are worried about can help reduce anxiety.



3. Distraction

Doing something you enjoy, like listening to music can help distract your mind from your worrying thoughts.



4. Gentle exercise

Doing some gentle exercises or going for a walk can help to calm your feelings of anxiety.



5. Massage therapy

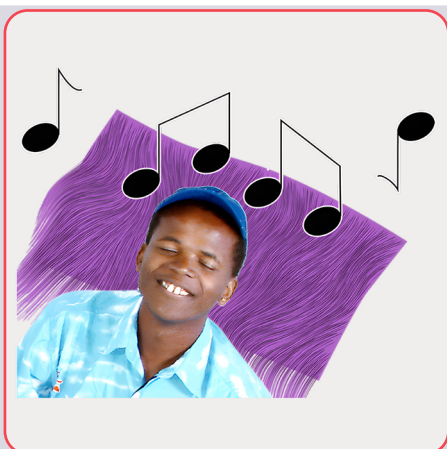
Having a massage helps to relax your muscles and makes you feel calmer.

How to Manage Anxiety



6. Sensory objects

Using sensory toys can help you feel calmer.



7. Relaxation exercises

This aims to reduce the tension you feel in your body because of your anxiety.

The next pages show you some techniques to help you relax.



8. Emergency stop

As soon as you start to feel anxious or have a bad thought say stop loudly to yourself and think about a big red **STOP** sign appearing.

Learning to Relax

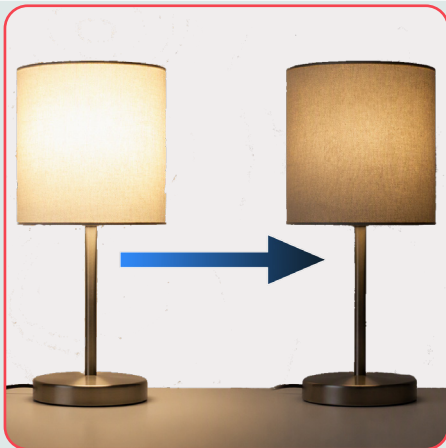


Before starting your relaxation exercises you should do these things to get ready:

- Put your phone on silent.



- Find a quiet place.



- Dim the lights.



- Loosen tight clothing.

Learning to Relax



- Play relaxing music



- Find a comfortable position with your head and shoulders supported.

Use a pillow if this helps.



- Place your arms by your sides or relaxed in your lap.



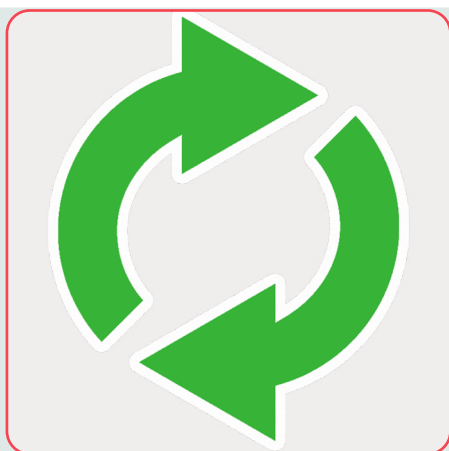
- Close your eyes.

Learning to Relax



Start by breathing in and out slowly. Imagine a balloon:

- filling as you breathe in
- emptying as you breathe out.



Do this again a few times until you begin to feel more calm and relaxed.



Then focus on each muscle group in turn.

You can start at your head and work down, or start at your feet and work up.



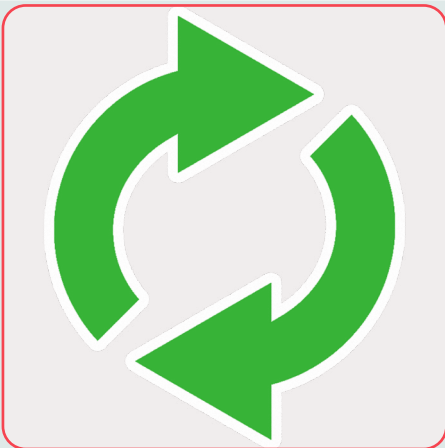
Tense a muscle group for a few seconds.

For example tense both your thighs as these are 1 muscle group.

Learning to Relax



Then relax it. Let it go floppy.



Do this for each muscle group.



When you are anxious you carry tension most often in these muscle groups:

- Jaw.



- Neck.

Learning to Relax



- Shoulders.



- Stomach.

Pay particular attention to these areas as you go through the exercise.



When you have finished, stay still and quiet for a few minutes.



Be careful when you stand up. You might feel a little dizzy.

This is because your blood pressure may have dropped.

Improving Sleep



Sleep is often a problem when you are worried or anxious. This might include:

- Sleeping too much.



- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.



- Having nightmares.



- Still feeling tired when you wake up.

Improving Sleep



These things can stop you from falling asleep at night:

- Not being active enough during the day.



- Sleeping during the day.



- Eating big meals late at night.



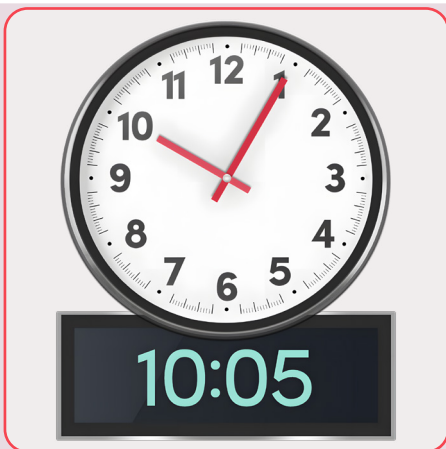
- Drinking alcohol before bed.

Improving Sleep



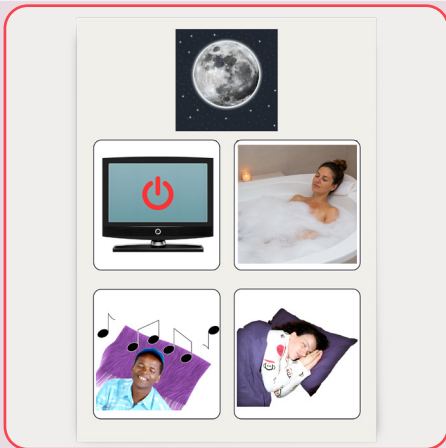
- Drinking caffeine before bed.

This means drinks like tea, coffee or energy drinks.



To improve your sleep you could try these things:

- Going to bed at the same time every day.



- Do the same things before bed.



- Turn off the television 1 hour before you go to bed.

Improving Sleep



- Have a bath or a shower.



- If you have medicine to help you sleep, take it.



- Do relaxation exercises.



- Listen to guided meditation.

This means listening to someone with a calm voice to help you relax.

Improving Sleep



- Make sure you are comfortable in bed.



- If you can't get to sleep, do something relaxing in another room until you start to feel sleepy.



- If you are worrying about something in particular, write it down so that you can talk about it in the daytime.

Basic Advice



Talk to your GP or Hospice Key Worker if you have any worries or concerns.



Think about asking for counselling if you continue to feel anxious.



Talk to someone straight away if you think you want to die.

This could be your GP or Hospice Key Worker.