

Anxiety Management, Week #1

Understanding Anxiety: A Self-Assessment

Welcome to this four-week workshop on managing anxiety and stress! Clearly, college is a time of acquiring intellectual knowledge. It is also a time to learn to manage challenging emotions, to develop competence, and to establish healthy adult relationships. The goal of this workshop series is to provide lifelong skills for understanding, managing, and lowering anxiety. With practice and use, these skills can positively impact the quality of your life now and in the future. Throughout these four weeks, you will be encouraged to self-assess, learn new skills, and practice new actions.

Anxiety is real, and there are several types. This seminar is intended to broadly address anxiety – from occasional feelings of anxiety to anxiety disorders. These skills are also aimed at adverse stressful situations, for anxiety and stress can overlap.

Before moving on to specific strategies for lowering anxiety, it is important to understand what anxiety is and how it impacts your life. If you say you are anxious (or stressed), what do you mean? How can you tell? Are there certain situations which make your anxiety worse? What impact does anxiety or stress have on your life? What are you already doing to manage your anxiety? What else might you do?

Because anxiety impacts a person on multiple levels, effective management involves responding on multiple levels as well. After this assessment today, you will move on to managing your anxiety physically, cognitively, and behaviorally over the next three weeks.

How do you know when you are experiencing anxiety? **What happens to you in these areas of your life?**

Physical symptoms: _____

Thoughts: _____

Impact on academics/grades/studying/classes: _____

Impact on relationships/social life: _____

Impact on emotions/feelings: _____

Impact on diet/exercise/sleep: _____

How do you assess your level of anxiety? Catch. It. Early.



How would you rate your current level of anxiety? _____

What is the worst it ever gets? _____

On average, what level of anxiety do you live with? _____

When are times you don't feel anxious? _____

What are your early warning signs of anxiety? _____

What are your advanced warning signs of anxiety? _____

"It is easier to resist at the beginning than at the end." ~ Leonardo da Vinci

What are some of your anxiety triggers?

What are your theories about why you have anxiety in your life?

*"When you're feeling anxious, remember that you're still you. You are not anxiety.
Whenever you feel otherwise, remember that's just the anxiety talking.
You are still you and hold the power in every moment." ~ Deanne Repich*

Managing your anxiety

What do you do NOW to manage your anxiety/stress? _____

What do you think will help? Are there things you have heard of that you would like to try? _____

Starting this week, what is one thing you will do differently to lower anxiety?* _____

What is something you would like to do in the near future? _____

Setting Goals:

1. Work on noticing anxiety when it is at a lower level (2/3/4). Practice catching it early!
2. Start imagining yourself with less anxiety in the future. Ask, "What will I be *doing* differently when I am less anxious?" "How will I be *thinking* differently when I am less anxious?"
3. At the end of the day, ask, "What helped lower my anxiety today?" Try to identify three things and add them to your written list. Bring this to next week's workshop.
4. Notice times each day when you are either not anxious or significantly less anxious than usual. What is different about these times? What are you *doing* differently from times when you are anxious? How are you *thinking* differently?
5. Experiment with what you committed to try for the week. Notice what happens.

"Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, and less than perfect conditions. So what? Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self-confident, and more and more successful." ~ Po Bronson

Please join us for another class!

Week #1: Understanding Anxiety: A Self-Assessment

Week #2: Calming Your Body

Week #3: Calming Your Mind

Week #4: Creating a Lifestyle for Managing Stress

Central ideas from Wehrenberg, M. (2008). *The 10 Best-Ever Anxiety Management Techniques*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Eunie Alsaker, LICSW, CT, Winona State University Counseling & Wellness Services, ealsaker@winona.edu