

Exploring Your Anxiety

Anxiety is a common emotional experience that reacts to a perceived danger and sends off alarm bells. But often, the perceived danger is not actually as threatening as it feels in the moment. And while anxiety can be unpleasant, when we take a moment to understand and work with it, we can be better equipped to manage it. Use this worksheet to guide you in better understanding your anxiety and how you can work with it through these moments.

Example

Think back to moments when you have experienced anxiety. Is there a specific trigger or experience that causes it for you?

- I tend to feel anxious during moments of confrontation, speaking out at work meetings, etc.

What does anxiety look and feel like for you? Explore your thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and behaviours that are associated with anxiety.

Thoughts

- I often get caught up in “what if” thoughts, thinking about all the ways that something could go wrong
- I also tend to feel a bit of self-doubt

Feelings

- I feel anxious, worried, overwhelmed

Body Sensations

- I tend to feel hot and tingling, especially in my face
- Chest pain
- Tenseness in my shoulders

Behaviours

- I typically start avoiding when I feel anxious, whether it be avoiding a person or a particular situation



Anxiety is a normal human experience that we all feel from time to time. Because of this, it can be helpful to have a toolbox that you can pull from during these moments. When you experience anxiety next time, how can you take notice of it when you're starting to feel or feeling anxious?

- I know that when I get anxious, I store a lot of tension in my shoulders, I would say before I can know I'm experiencing anxiety, I do tend to feel physical symptoms of it
- I can use this to notice when I may be feeling anxious and explore why that is

How will you work with your anxiety to manage it? Brainstorm some ways you can cope during anxious moments. This may include personal mantras, grounding exercises, mindfulness exercises, etc., anything that may be helpful for you to stay in the present and ground yourself.

- Remind myself that we all experience anxiety, but it will pass
- Tell myself that while the perceived danger feels real and I can get caught up in all the ways something can go wrong, usually these things do not happen
- Exercises I can use: 5-4-3-2-1 method, box breathing, body scan



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