



FOCUS
ANXIETY



Focus is a tutor time resource which explores a different topic over 4 sessions and brings different aspects into focus. The sessions are designed to be around 15-20 minutes, with a clear aim set out for each one. The sessions include questions for discussion, a video to watch or an activity to be creative, a time to reflect, and a take-home focus point and challenge for students to remember. Resources are available at the back to aid the session content.

This **focus** is on the topic of **Anxiety**.

We are continually adding to this resource to make it the best and most helpful for both students and teachers. We would love your feedback by completing this short feedback [form](#).



Aim



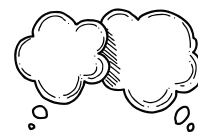
Discuss



Watch



Create



Reflect



Focus



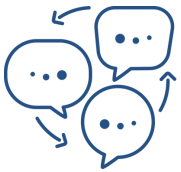
SESSION 1

What is Happening to my Body?



Aim:

- The session will look at the physiological effects of anxiety on the body, and help students gain an understanding of what is happening in their body if they feel anxious.
- By understanding what is happening in the body it can then help students learn how to manage anxiety better when they feel it.
- **Resources needed:** Video link



Discuss (In pairs or small groups):

How would you describe anxiety? *Feeling of unease, worry or fear, can vary in amounts. Experiencing some level of anxiety is normal, especially if trying something new or sitting an exam.*

What can make people feel anxious? Some examples may include: *spiders, heights, being late, getting things wrong, large groups of people, change, sitting an exam.*

What can happen when people feel anxious? Some examples may include: *heart beating faster, sweaty palms, legs shaking, muscles tense and crying.*

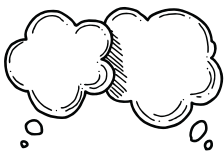


Watch:

Watch this short [video](#) about what is happening in our body when feeling anxious.



The video is 2:41 minutes long and gives an overview of what is happening in the body when feeling anxious, and some of the physiological effects that might be experienced in the body.



Reflect:

Either as a class, in small groups or individually, draw an outline of a person on a piece of paper or list some of the things that people can feel when anxious?

Students can use some of the ideas from the video to help with this. Examples may include heart beating faster, sweaty palms, legs shaking, muscles tense, head dizzy and shallow breathing.



Take Home Focus and Challenge:

Focus: *By understanding anxiety and being aware of what is happening in your body, it helps you to be able to manage it better.*

Challenge: *Recognise one time when you experience any of the above feelings and take notice about what was happening at the time.*



SESSION 2

How to Calm my Body (Part 1)



Aim:

- The session we will look at both breathing and grounding techniques as a simple but effective way of being able to calm the body down from the physiological effects being experienced when feeling anxious.
- **Resources needed:** Video link



Discuss (In pairs or small groups):

Why do you think breathing exercises might be helpful when someone is feeling anxious? (Encourage students to think back to the first session). Breathing helps to calm the heart rate down and reduce some of the physiological feelings.

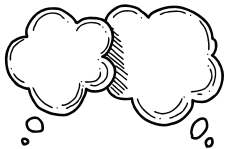
Do you know any breathing exercises that you find helpful? *Examples could include deep breathing, 7/11 breathing, shape breathing and hand breathing.*



Watch:

Watch this short [video](#) of some simple breathing exercises and grounding techniques from the Phase team, explaining some different and easy exercises that you can try out.

After watching the video try out some of the examples from the video in small groups for 5 minutes.



Reflect:

Ask students to think for 30 seconds and then tell the person next to them which 1 breathing exercise and grounding technique that they are going to try out over the next week. Encourage students to think about when it might be helpful to use.

Take Home Focus and Challenge:



Focus: Anxiety is reminding me to slow down my breathing.

Challenge: Practice using their chosen breathing technique and grounding exercise over the next week.



SESSION 3

How to Calm my Body (Part 2)



Aim:

- This session will look at how engaging our different senses can be an effective way of being able to calm the body down.
- Students will think practically about what they can do to help and create their own toolkit.
- **Resources needed:** A4 Sheet of paper/Chrome book



Discuss (In pairs or small groups):

How did you find the breathing exercise and grounding technique that you chose?

Where do you enjoy being that helps you feel relaxed? What is it about that space that makes you feel relaxed?

What are the five senses? Why could be using our senses be helpful? Your senses help to ground you in the moment and help you to know how is around you.

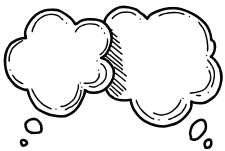


Create:

Either as a class or in small groups create a toolkit for how to calm the body down using the different senses.

The different senses include; touch, sight, hear, smell and taste.

*Examples can include: **Touch** - cuddly toy, soft blanket, stroking a pet, squeezing a pillow. **Sight** - being outside, watching youtube. **Hear** - listening to music, your favourite sound, listening to somones voice who you love. **Smell** - Candle, lavender. **Taste** - mints, chocolate.*



Reflect:

Ask students to think for 30 seconds and then tell the person next ot them which one tool they are going to try out this coming week.



Take Home Focus and Challenge:

Focus: By engaging different senses it can help ground you in the present moment.

Challenge: Practice 1 new tool using your senses this week.



SESSION 4

How to Calm my Thoughts



Aim:

- This session will look at how to calm our thoughts.
- We will look at some of the thinking traps that we can fall into and some helpful questions we can ask ourselves when we do.
- **Resources needed:** Video link, Thought Patterns sheet (extra)



Discuss (In pairs or small groups):

How did you find practising engaging your senses?

How many thoughts do you think we have a day? Do you think that they are mainly positive or negative? (*On average we have over 10,000+ thoughts a day, with more of them negative than positive.*)

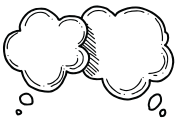
Can you control your thoughts? Can you think of an example?



Watch:

Watch this short [video](#) on thinking traps. As you are watching it think whether there is anything that stands out to you?

This video is 2:43 minutes long and gives an overview to some of the unhelpful thinking patterns that we can all fall into and how we can challenge some of our thinking. The video also gives students opportunity to reflect on some questions.



Reflect:

Did you recognise any of the thinking traps? Are there any other questions that you could ask yourself instead that would be more helpful?

Some helpful questions can include: *What advice would I give to a friend in this situation? What is the most likely outcome? Have I done this before, and has it been ok? What is the evidence for my thoughts?*

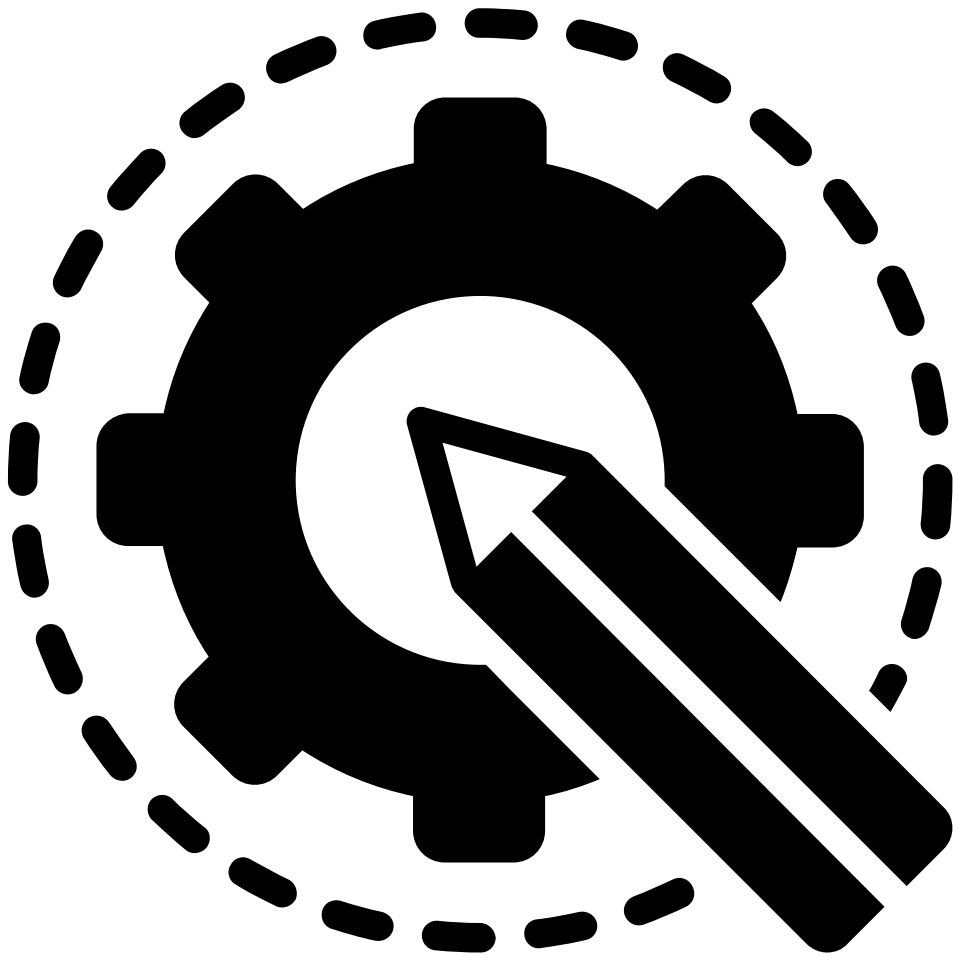


Take Home Focus and Challenge:

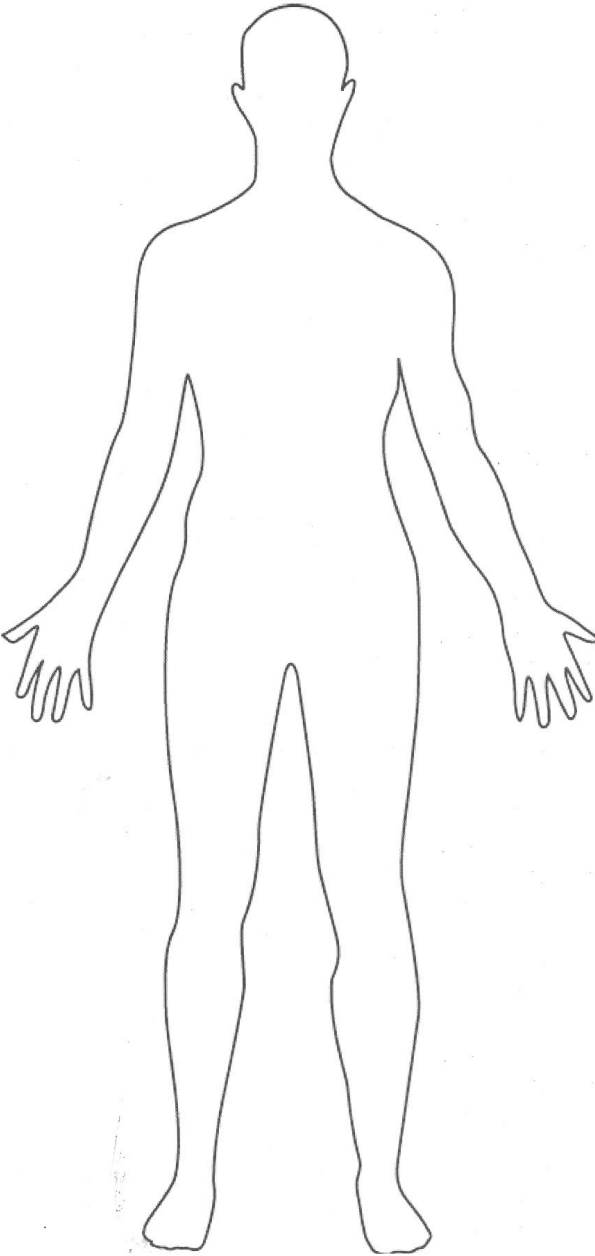
Focus: *Just because you think it doesn't make it true.*

Challenge: *Ask yourself a helpful question e.g. What advice would I give to a friend in this situation? Have I done this before, and has it been ok? What is the most likely outcome?*

RESOURCES



My Anxious Body





Breathing Techniques



Taking time to regularly practise slow breathing has lots of health benefits and is especially useful if you have anxiety as it helps to regain control of the body. Practice these techniques when you're feeling calm so that the next time you feel anxious you are familiar with what to do.

Healthy breathing should use your whole lung capacity by filling up from the bottom of your lungs, causing your belly to rise not just your chest. You can place hands on your belly to make sure that this is happening. Before starting any breathing techniques, make sure you breathe out to empty your lungs first, making more room for the next inhalation. Some techniques get you to breathe slowly or just observe your breath, but lots of them involve counting in your head, which helps to focus you and also gets the rational part of your brain back in charge.

7/11 Breathing

Start by breathing out to empty your lungs, then breathe **in** for a count of **seven** through your nose & **out** for a count of **eleven** through pursed lips. The important thing here is to breathe out for longer than you breathe in as the "out-breath" is what triggers the relaxation response in the body making all your muscles relax. If 7/11 is too hard then try counts of 5/9.

Belly breathing

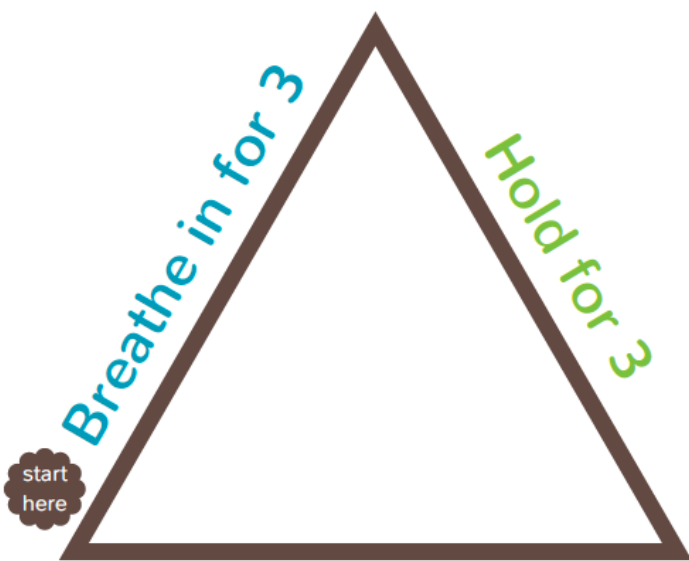
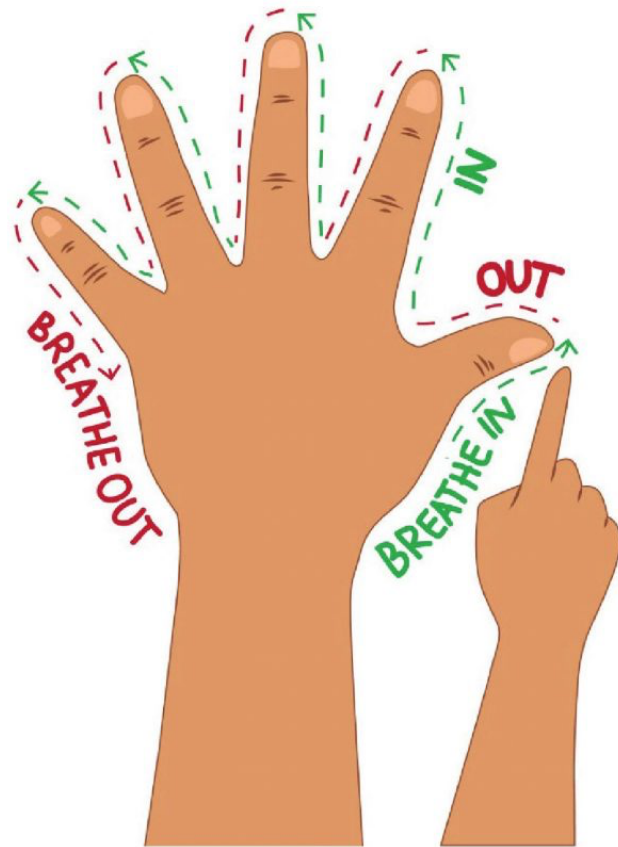
Open your mouth to sigh and relax your muscles. Then inhale slowly through your nose by pushing your stomach out. Let the movement of your stomach pull the air in until you are full. Then exhale through your mouth by pulling your stomach in and squeezing out as much air as you can. Repeat letting your muscles guide you.

4-7-8 breathing

- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.
- Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of **eight**.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle.

MANAGE YOUR BREATH

with your hand



Breathe out for 3



Grounding Techniques



Breathe

Different breathing techniques:

Hand Breathing - breath in and out as you go up and down your fingers.

Square breathing - breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds and repeat.

Go through your 5 senses

Name **5** things you can **see**, **4** things you can **touch**, **3** things you can **hear**, **2** things you can **smell** and one **1** you can **taste**.

Hold something and focus on it

Hold something like a pebble that you can focus your attention on.

The Alphabet Game

Name something for every letter of the alphabet e.g. animals, people's names, foods etc.



Managing Anxiety Toolkit

What could you do to help your body feel relaxed. Write some ideas under each heading.

Sight

Sound

Touch

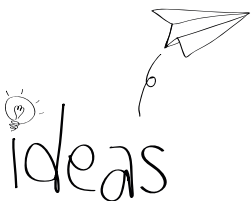
Breathing

Connect

Other

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We are continually adding to this resource to make it the best and most helpful for both students and teachers, so if you see a need that you think would value from focus topic sessions- let us know. We would love to hear from you!