

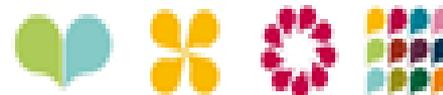
WELLBEING WORKSHOP

MANAGING LOW MOOD AND ANXIETY DURING
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



CONTENT

- ❖ What is anxiety?
- ❖ Tips to manage anxiety
- ❖ What is depression?
- ❖ Tips to manage depression
- ❖ Useful apps, additional tips
- ❖ How can I get further help?



SETTING UP...

- If you haven't already, please put yourselves on mute
 - There will be moments where we can invite comments or questions verbally
 - Please use the meeting notes section to ask questions during the presentation and we will endeavor to answer as we go along
 - Please keep your cameras switched on, unless you have to excuse yourself at any point
 - Try to limit distractions – hard in an online meeting!
 - Confidentiality – any personal information shared should be held within the group and not discussed outside of the session
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SETTING UP...

- Confidentiality
- Non-judgemental environment
- Disclosure/boundaries
- Questions/concerns



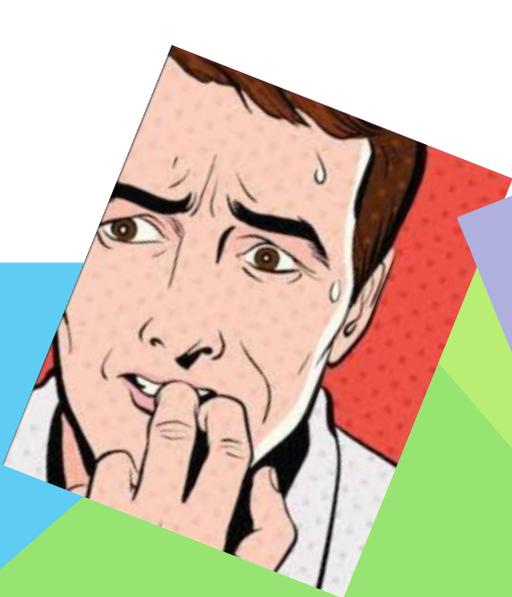
IF YOU NEED URGENT SUPPORT

Brent Talking Therapies Service is not a crisis service. In crisis:

- GP - During office hours (usually 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday - may vary according to GP practice)
- Out of hours Urgent Advice Line 08000 234 650 (Open 24 hours, 7 days a week, incl. Bank holidays)
- Samaritans 116 123 (Open 24 hours, 7 days a week, incl. Bank holidays)
- Brent Samaritans 0208 961 6181 or visit them at Leopold Road, London, NW10 9LN - Visits preferably by appointment
- Saneline 0845 767 8000 (6pm -11pm)
- NHS Direct 0845 4647 (24 hours)
- Papyrus: 0800 068 41 41

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

- Anxiety is a persistent feeling of worry, fear or nervousness. Many people feel anxious at times, especially when faced with stressful events and changes to our lives. It's a natural human response when we perceive that we are in danger.
- In emergency situations anxiety is there to help you survive as best you can. It is not a sign that you aren't coping or that you are suffering with a mental health condition.



COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH FACTS:

- 1.) Living through a challenging time or crisis situation can be unsettling and distressing. Suddenly having to adjust, to strange circumstances can put a strain on you and your mental health. This is a normal reaction to exceptional circumstances.
- 2.) We are creatures of habit and we tend not to like change. Some people can tolerate uncertainty, but most people will feel some anxiety when facing uncertain situations. This is a normal response to your brain picking up the signals that there is danger out there.



COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH FACTS:

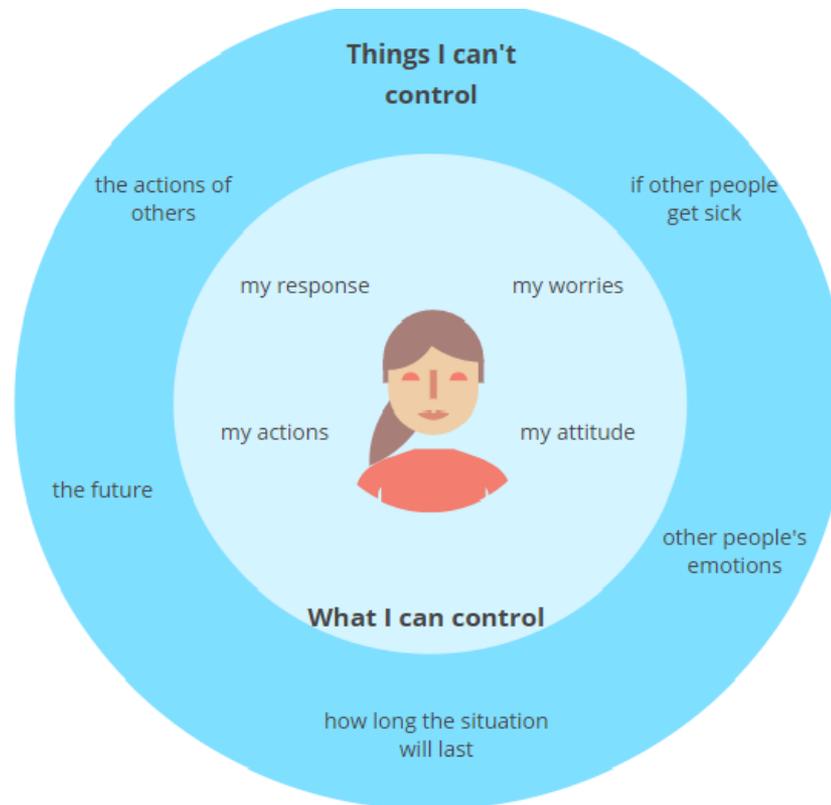
- 3.) In these challenging times you might feel a range of strong and unpleasant emotions on a daily basis. You might worry more than usual. You might have to make some drastic changes to how you live your life, almost overnight.

- 4.) Different people will experience different reactions at different times. There is no right or wrong way to feel.



TIPS TO MANAGE ANXIETY

- Challenging situations can be frustrating and stressful, particularly when you feel like you have no control over what is happening.
- The first step in working through challenging situations is to separate the things you can control from the things you have little or no control over.



SEPARATING ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

Practical worries:

- These are the worries that are often affecting you now and for which there is a practical solution
- For example: I haven't paid for my gas bill yet, I need to speak to my landlord about rent, apply for mortgage holiday etc.

Hypothetical worries:

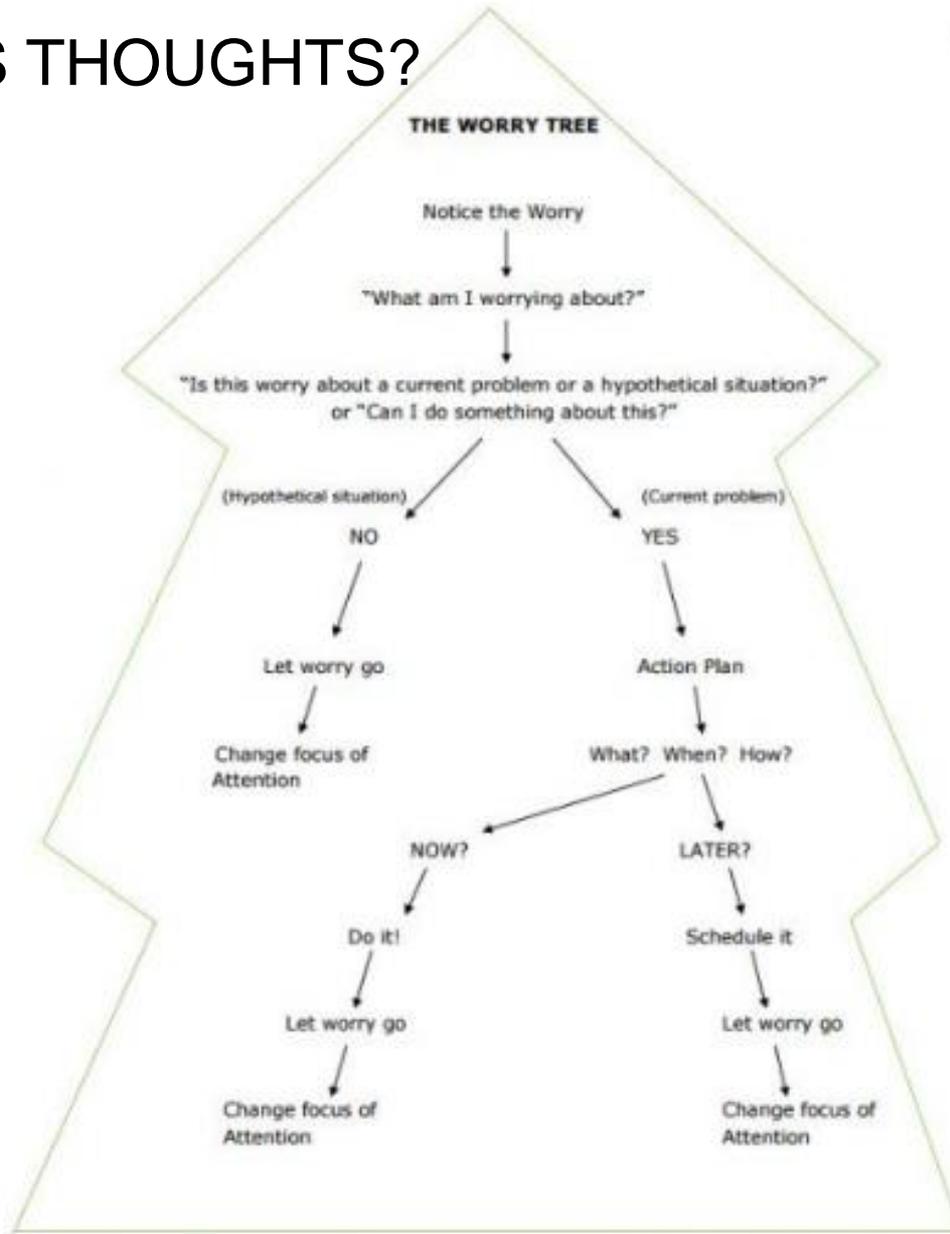
- This type of worry is often about things that hasn't happened yet, and may not have a solution right now no matter how hard you try to find one.
- For example: What if I will lose my job? What if the pandemic will last for a longer than expected?



HOW TO SEPARATE ANXIOUS THOUGHTS?

The worry tree helps you to deal with worrying thoughts and it helps you to put them in the right place at the right time

- 1.) Notice the worry
- 2.) Ask yourself what are you worrying about
- 3.) The worry tree will help you to decide whether your worry is practical or hypothetical and what to do with them



THINGS YOU CAN'T CONTROL

Worrying about what might happen is understandable, but it is not very useful. In fact, it can make us feel more distressed.

Things you have no control over include:

- ❖ The actions and reactions of other people.
- ❖ How long the situation will last.
- ❖ What might happen to things like your job, in the future.



THINGS YOU CAN'T CONTROL

This type of worry can drain a lot of your time and energy if you are not careful.

The key to managing worries about things you have no control over is to focus on coping strategies. This includes finding ways to manage the feelings that you are experiencing (e.g. stress, worry, anxiety).



THINGS YOU CAN'T CONTROL - TECHNIQUES

Set aside time for worrying. Take ten minutes on a regular basis, where your only task is to worry. We call this Worry Time.

How to set up your Worry Time:

Set aside a ten-minute period once or twice a day, at a regular time.

Choose a time when you can devote all of your attention to thinking about the things that are worrying you.

As your worries and concerns arise during the day quickly write them down and set them aside for your Worry Time.



WHAT TO DO DURING YOUR WORRY TIMES

- ❖ Categorise the worries you have written down into worries about things you have no control over, and worries about things you can control.
- ❖ Think about how you would like to cope with the worries that you can't control. How can you let go, learn to accept, or live with. Spend the full ten minutes worrying, even if this means repeating worries over and over. Repeating worries can often take the power out of them.
- ❖ Finish worry time - Once you have made a plan, make sure to end "worry time".



TRY A GROUNDING EXERCISE

Focusing on what is going on for you right now can help you to reset and find calm in moments of distress. Grounding exercises involve reconnecting with your senses and what you are feeling in your body.

Try some of these grounding exercises to bring you back to the here and now:



GROUNDING EXERCISES

Take ten slow breaths

Focus your full attention on each breath. Notice how it fills up your lungs as you breathe in. Observe what it feels like as you breathe out.

Splash some cold water on your face

Notice how this feels and how the towel feels as you dry your face. Try to describe these sensations.

Listen and try to name the sounds around you

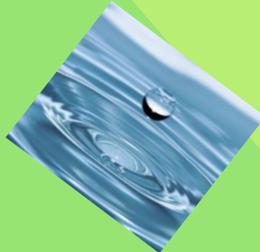
Start with the closest or the loudest sounds and then gradually move your awareness outwards and into the distance.

Step outside or open a window

Notice the temperature of the air and how it is different or similar to the air inside. What new things can you smell?

Put on a piece of music and take a piece of paper and a pen

Start drawing a line as the music plays, following the music with the pen.



COPING WITH THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL:

Problem solving helps you to define exactly what you are worrying about, and it helps you to work out the best way of dealing with a problem, with a simple step-by-step approach. Problem solving can be an effective way of working through worries about things you do have control over.



PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS

- 1.) Define the problem.
- 2.) Think of as many solutions as possible, no matter how silly they may seem.
- 3.) Consider the pros and cons of each solution.
- 4.) Choose a solution to try.
- 5.) Plan how you are going to implement the chosen solution.
- 6.) Carry out the solution.

Review how it went. Were there any problems? Was it the right solution to choose? What did you learn?

Repeat the process if your chosen solution does not solve the problem.



WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression affects different people in different ways

Some signs of depression are feeling low, feeling bad about yourself and not wanting to do things

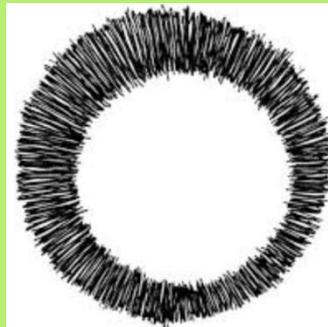
We may notice an increase in negative experiences and a decrease in positive experiences

Low mood is associated with a drop in activity levels and social contact

By not engaging in such activities, we are not giving ourselves a chance to experience positive things- this will also reinforce the belief that nothing positive is happening

Therefore, we will have more space to reflect on the negative things that are happening in our lives

This will create a vicious cycle



TIPS TO MANAGE LOW MOOD

Plan a structure in your day!

Many will have to work/study from home during this public health crisis, it is important to maintain a routine as much as possible.

Maintaining a routine will give you a sense of stability and it will give a structure to your days

The more structured your days are, the less time you'll spend on focusing on the negative things that are happening at the moment



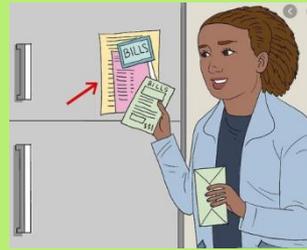
STEP 1: TYPES OF ACTIVITY

- ❖ Routine – things you do on a day to day basis (e.g. getting dressed, shower etc.)
- ❖ Pleasurable - things you enjoy doing (e.g. exercise, reading, chatting to a friend)
- ❖ Necessary – things you have to do (paying bills etc.)

Our activities can be classified into these three groups.

A balance of these activities will create a balanced sense of wellbeing

When we feel low, there is an imbalance of these activities



Alternating activities during the pandemic

Gym/ Fitness class



Home exercise

Cinema

Movie night

Going out with friends

talking to friends remotely

Eating out

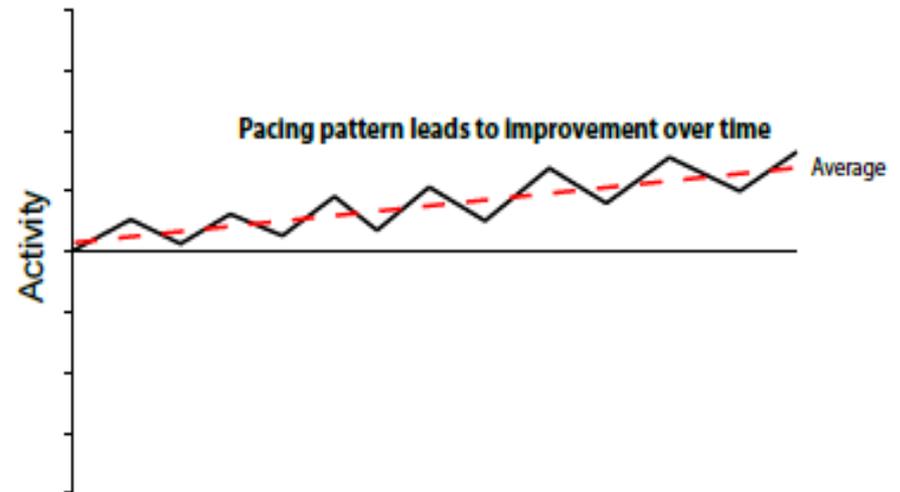
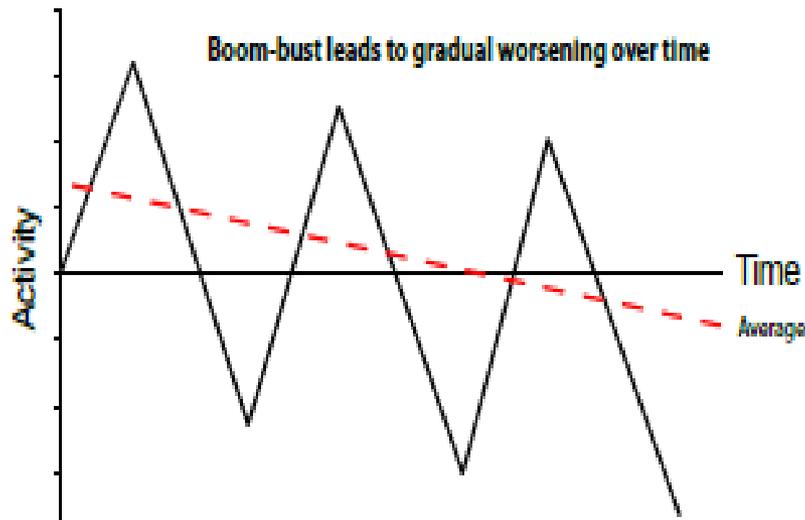
cooking a nice meal at home



STEP 2: BREAKING IT DOWN

- How easy is it to get back into these activities?
 - Easy
 - Medium
 - Difficult
- Think about what's important to you and how confident you feel completing the activity

Important to consider: Give yourself time! This is a step by step approach. By overdoing activities we will eventually feel worse. Increasing activity levels gradually will lead to a steady improvement over time.



STEP 3: PLAN ACTIVITIES INTO A DIARY

- Plan your activities before doing them
 - Try to do 1 routine/day, 1 pleasurable/day, 1 necessary/ week
 - Be specific (i.e. I'll start exercising at some point this week → I'll find a workout video on youtube and will do a workout on Wednesday 6PM)
 - Once your diary is ready, follow the plan, not your mood.
 - The more we build habits the more predictable things become which can help us to cope with the global uncertainty

- When we are engaged in a task it can feel good, provide us with a sense of accomplishment, which increases positive emotions. This helps us to find a healthier balance of emotions.



ACTIVITY DIARY

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Type of Activities							
Length of Activities							
Intensity of Activities							

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SOME ADDITIONAL TIPS

Useful websites, apps:

Relaxation techniques:

<https://www.nhsinmind.co.uk/>

Worry management app:

<https://onboarding.trydaylight.com/daylight/nhs-staff/100#1/1>



SOME ADDITIONAL TIPS

- 1.) Connecting with others by making use of technology
(apps, phone calls)- this will help to reduce feelings of loneliness
- 2.) Physical exercise
- 3.) Connect with nature (if you are able to leave home, take time to notice the greenery, colours of flowers etc. Connecting with nature has a calming effect by reducing stress levels)
- 4.) Mental stimulation (studying, working, playing games, trying something new- it's important to try and keep some variety and interest during this time)
- 5.) Find a “new normal for now” by creating a routine and structure in your days
- 6.) Limit news. It's important to keep informed, but doing this once a day from a trustworthy source is enough



HOW CAN I GET FURTHER SUPPORT?

You can self-refer via <http://cnwltalkingtherapies.org.uk/referral-brent>

Important to note: We are not an emergency service. If you feel that you are in crisis please contact:

- Samaritans (Emotional support): 116 123
- Crisis Team (urgent support): 0800 0234 650
- GP Emergency appointment
- Ambulance/ A&E/ Police: 999
- Papyrus: 0800 068 41 41



ANY QUESTIONS?

