

Exploring Anxiety Manifesto

At the heart of the **Exploring Anxiety Manifesto** is removing the stigma associated with anxiety by creating supportive communities and spaces to share resources, experiences and conversations.

Many people identify with feelings of increased worry, overwhelm, perfection, restlessness and lack of motivation before they even recognise that it's manifesting as anxiety. The manifesto encourages both individuals and organisations to be proactive about their mental health and access support and engages with their local community as early as possible.

By creating more open conversations and collaborative working, we can start to understand the root causes of anxiety and focus resources to change the system, rather than just treating the symptoms.

My Organisation's Commitment

- Promote a culture where people can speak up early about any concerns that they might have with their wellbeing (or the wellbeing of colleagues).
- Have an awareness of local charitable and volunteer companies and signpost staff to for support and ways to engage with their local community..
- Enable access for all staff to the **Exploring Anxiety Toolkit** and offer the opportunity to train as an **Exploring Anxiety facilitator**.

My Personal Commitment

I Am More Than My Anxiety

Recognise that anxiety is something that you experience and it is not your identity. The more space you can create between yourself and the symptoms of anxiety, the more awareness and choice you create.

Slow Down

Creating space, time and stillness every day to not be focused on 'doing' rejuvenates you and reminds you what it's like to be a human 'being'. Spend time in nature, being creative or meditating are great daily habits to develop.

Connect With Your Community

In the most connected time in history, many are feeling the most alone and isolated. It's really important to feel like you belong and there is no better place to start looking than your local community. By exploring clubs, charities and associations you can build new friendships and develop your talents.... trust us it feels good to do good!



Exploring Anxiety Toolkit

Remember, just because a thought pops into your head doesn't make it true.

Helplines & Counselling

- **Low-cost counselling at Psychosynthesis Trust**
www.psychosynthesistrust.org.uk
- **CALM** www.thecalmzone.net
- **PAPYRUS** www.papyrus-uk.org
- **Rethink Mental Illness**
www.rethink.org
- **Samaritans** www.samaritans.org.uk
- **SANE** www.sane.org.uk
- **The Mix** www.themix.org.uk
- **Mind** www.mind.org.uk
- **Shout** www.giveusashout.org
- **Anxiety UK** www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- **No Panic** www.nopanic.org.uk
- **OCD UK** www.ocduk.org

Support Apps

- **Wysa** - virtual support with panic attacks
- **Headspace** - mindfulness
- **Mindfulness-based Living** - mindfulness
- **Insight Timer** - meditations
- **Calm** - mindfulness activities
- **Slumber** - sleep support
- **Breathe2relax** - breathing techniques
- **Breathing Zone** - breathing techniques
- **My Possible Self** - mental health support
- **Stress & Anxiety Companion**
- **What's Up?** - CBT & ACT support
- **Woebot** - mental health

Suggested Reading

- **Notes On A Nervous Planet** - Matt Haig
- **Futuretense: Why Anxiety Is Good For You (even though it feels bad)** - Tracy Dennis-Tiway
- **The Wisdom Of Anxiety** - Sheryl Paul
- **What We May Be** - Piero Ferrucci
- **Sleep** - Nick Littlehales
- **Untamed: Stop Pleasing Start Living** - Glennon Doyle
- **The Happiness Trap** - Russ Harris
- **The Untethered Soul** - Micheal Singer
- **Underland** - Robert Macfarlane
- **What My Soul Told Me** - Richard Barratt
- **The Design Pathway For Regenerating Earth** - Joe Brewer
- **Mindful Compassion** - Paul Gilbert
- **Finding Peace in a Frantic World** - Mark Williams & Danny Penman
- **The Upside of Stress** - Kelly McGonigal
- **The Anxiety Antidote** - Kamran Bedi
- **Wonderful: Human Navigation For A complex World** - David Pearl
- **Overcoming Health Anxiety** - David Veale
- **The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma** - Bessel van der Kolk
- **A Guide to Eco-Anxiety: How to Protect the Planet and Your Mental Health** - Anouchka Grose

Meditations



- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GURt2pvdAg>

- **4 Elements Meditation:**

<https://www.mindful.org/a-12-minute-meditation-for-connecting-to-your-body/>

- **Body Scanning:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsCVqFr6jlg>
- **Time To Rest: Sleep:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsrYKy5aYKg>
- **Self-soothing:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI_B45DpMLU
- **Noticing & Detaching From Thoughts:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yllZHoiOb0s>

- **Reconnecting With Your Body:** <https://youtu.be/OvNqnlgrPks>
- **Building Connection With Our Planet:**

<https://psychosynthesisistrust.org.uk/earth-meditation/>

- **Loving-kindness For Ourselves:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=mILRWPdQPKs>

- **You Are More:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZI7cyzJYC8&list=PL6d0IjD4WpZ0b_bsLuLGGE3wy.Uugc6NrX&index=2

- **Ho'oponopono Forgiveness Prayer For The Earth:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQP195wVhIQ>



Body Scanning

- Sit in an upright position on a chair. Place both feet on the floor and put your hands in a comfortable position, perhaps resting on your lap, or on the arms of your chair.
- If you feel able to do so, close your eyes.
- Focus on your breathing, pay close attention to each in breath and each out breath.
- Now bring your attention to your head, notice any physical sensations in this part of your body.
- Next scan your neck and the top of your shoulders and see if you are aware of any sensations in this part of your body.
- Bring your attention down your back and notice how the top, middle and bottom of your back feel.
- Now bring your attention to your legs, notice how the top of your legs feel, then bring your attention to the bottom of your legs, finally focusing on your ankles, feet and toes.
- Now direct your attention to your hands, noticing how your fingers and thumbs feel.
- Scan your wrists, lower arms, elbows, and top of your arms and pay attention to any sensations in this part of your body.
- Bring your attention to your tummy area and notice how this part of your body feels.
- Finally pay attention to your chest. Can you notice your heart beating?
- Now take three deep breaths in and out and open your eyes, returning your attention to the room and your surroundings.



Mindful Walking

- First, set your intention to walk mindfully. Take a few deep breaths, and just acknowledge that during your walk you will try to be aware of your environment and your internal state (i.e., thoughts, feelings, sensations). There are no set rules for this walk, and it can be done anywhere.
- As you begin to walk, notice the sensation of your feet hitting the ground. Notice the process of moving your legs. What muscles tense or relax as you move? Notice where you are stepping, the quality of each step (i.e., are you stepping hard or lightly onto the ground), and the feel of the ground beneath your feet or shoes.
- Expand your awareness to notice your surroundings. As you walk, what do you see, smell, hear, taste, and feel? How does the air feel on your skin? What do you notice around you?
- Expand your awareness so that you also become aware of your internal experiences, such as your thoughts and emotions. What thoughts cross your mind as you walk? What emotion or emotions are there right now? Are they intense, or mild? Are these internal experiences pulling you in or can you observe them with a little bit of distance? No need to judge these internal experiences as good or bad, practice just noticing them for what they are.
- If at any point during your walk you notice your mind wandering to the past or the future, or being pulled away from the walk, just gently acknowledge that your mind has wandered and bring yourself back to the present moment and the walk.
- As you complete your walk, congratulate yourself for your intention to practice mindful walking, no matter how many times your mind was pulled away from the walk, or how "well" you thought your practice went today. Just notice that the intention to be mindful is the key to practice, and pat yourself on the back



Compassion Focused Imagery

The aim of this activity is to develop more feelings of compassion and kindness. Don't worry if you struggle with the imagery to start with. Sometimes we need to practice to get used to it. The important thing is to be curious and see what works for you.

Start by sitting comfortably and finding a soothing breathing rhythm.

Allow your mind to focus on and create a place that seems as if it could give you the feeling of safeness and calmness.

Sometimes these feelings may be difficult to generate. The act of trying, and the sense of it being a place that you would like, is the important thing.

Your place may be a beautiful wood where you can feel the wind gently on your face; it may be a beach with a crystal clear blue sea and soft white sand, or a cabin with a log fire. Wherever you imagine it should bring a sense of pleasure to you and a feeling of safeness.

At your imagined place, bring your attention to each of your senses; what you can imagine seeing, feeling, hearing, tasting and smelling.

When you bring your safe place to mind, allow your body to relax.

Imagine this as your own unique safe place, created by you. The place itself can take joy and happiness in you being there.

When you imagine this place, allow yourself to feel soothed.

Compassion Colour

Imagine a colour you associate with compassion or kindness.

Now imagine your compassionate colour surrounding you. Then slowly imagine this entering your heart area, through your body.

As this happens try to focus on the colour as having wisdom, strength and warmth. Create a facial expression of kindness on your own face as you do this.

Grounding



Grounding is an energetic phenomena one experiences when their bare skin directly connects to Mother Earth.

To be grounded is to be energetically centered, to give your energy a point of focus. Life is all about balance and as earthly beings we truly belong in close quarters to the most natural areas of this planet. We simply are not meant to be indoors and wearing rubber soles every time we leave the house. Modern living has definitely limited the raw contact our bodies have to the earth below our feet. Our bodies starve to be in contact with the earth's electricity on a daily basis. The same natural dirt that provides us with a surface to live on, and space to grow our food charges our bodies with much needed negative ions.

We all have energetic bodies and everything around us comes from pure energy. Today's technology has a way of infecting us with "dirty energy" or energy that hurts us instead of helps us. Ironically it's the positive ions that cause us the most harm. Exposing ourselves to more positive ions (electrical energy) than negative ions over a lifetime or less can destroy our health.

Research has found that earthing every day can improve inflammation, immune responses and wound healing. It also found that earthing could improve the quality of sleep, reduce pain, decrease muscle tension, anxiety and lower stress.

Spend 5 minutes everyday with your bare feet on the ground - grass, stones or sand and journal how it feels in your body and how you feel emotionally.

You can also watch '[The Earthing Movie](https://youtu.be/44ddtROXDVU)' for much more science about grounding

Breathwork



Breathing exercises are recommended as a way to cope with anxiety by slowing the heart rate and some even act as natural tranquilisers for the nervous system!

Alternate-Nostril Breathing

- Position your right hand by bending your pointer and middle fingers into your palm, leaving your thumb, ring finger, and pinky extended. This is known as Vishnu mudra in yoga.
- Close your eyes or softly gaze downward
- Inhale and exhale to begin
- Close off your right nostril with your thumb
- Inhale through your left nostril
- Close off your left nostril with your ring finger
- Open and exhale through your right nostril
- Inhale through your right nostril
- Close off your right nostril with your thumb
- Open and exhale through your left nostril
- Inhale through your left nostril

Box Breathing

- Exhale to a count of four
- Hold your lungs empty for a four-count
- Inhale to a count of four
- Hold the air in your lungs for a count of four
- Exhale and begin the pattern anew

4-7-8 Breathing

- Place and keep the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue behind your upper front teeth for the duration of the exercise
- Completely exhale 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

Building Resilience

When you feel anxious, apprehensive or unable to get clarity or make a decision, take some time to ask yourself the following questions, or talk them through with someone.

- Think about specific challenges you have got through in the past:
- How did you get through it?
- What did you do?
- What did you say to yourself?
- Who was supportive or helpful at this time?
- What resources did you use?
- What useful advice did you get from others?
- What did you learn about how to cope with challenges?



Learn More About The Exploring Anxiety Project

If you are interested in exploring anxiety further and joining our 10-week programmes in nature, please visit our website:

www.psychosynthesistrust.org.uk/social-impact

