



# SELF HELP RESOURCES

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*LSE Student Counselling Service*

2015

# Self Help Handbook

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# Anxiety

## *Helpful Resources*

### **Links:**

[www.nopanic.org.uk](http://www.nopanic.org.uk)

[www.cci.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au)

<http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/freedownloads2.htm>

<http://psychology.tools/cbt.html>

### **Books:**

Panic Attacks by Christine Ingram

Overcoming Anxiety by Chris Williams

### **What is it?**

Anxiety is a natural adaptive response. Our body reacts automatically to prepare us for action. Known as the flight or fight response, adrenalin is pumped into our blood streams which triggers energetic, quick reactions and acute reactions. There are several situations/factors which might cause anxiety such as:

*Starting University*

*Coping with exams*

*Starting a new relationship/ being in a relationship*

However, specific situations can lead to specific types of anxiety such as:

*Speaking in public*

*Interacting/engaging with people in social situations*

*Fears pertaining to one's health*

*Panic about giving a presentation*

This is by no means an exhaustive list, and the experience of anxiety can range from mild to severe. Severe anxiety can sometimes lead to panic.

It is important to note that experiencing some anxiety is normal. In fact, anxiety can be both helpful and unhelpful. Examples of when anxiety can serve a helpful purpose include:

-You have to write an exam in forty minutes

-You have to run a race

-Going out on a date

Unhelpful Anxiety can occur in situations where the flight or fight effect is not necessary. Examples of these can include feeling anxious in a social gathering or experiencing high levels of anxiety in a work setting.

Anxiety usually comprises an emotional component (e.g. fear), a physiological component ('butterflies', sweating, heart racing, faintness) and a cognitive component (I'll make a fool of myself, something bad is going to happen).

Thoughts associated with anxiety are usually characterised by danger or vulnerability. We can have fears about being embarrassed, humiliated or hurt in some way. In these instances, we

may also adopt certain behaviours such as avoidance, overcompensation, perfection, escaping and finding safety mechanisms.

Anxiety can be reinforced and maintained through behaviours and beliefs.

e.g.

Situation: Feel highly anxious when giving a presentation

Belief: If I give a presentation or speak in public, I will have a panic attack

Behaviour: Avoid speaking in public or giving presentations

### **How do I begin to address my anxiety?**

#### **Are there particular factors contributing to anxiety?**

There may be certain things which may be causing stress and anxiety in your life. It is important to review what these situations/factors are and to think about ways to address these. For instance, it may be you have taken on too much, or are struggling with your academic work. There may be practical solutions to solve these situations, such as devising a manageable work plan, or talking to tutors/lecturers.

It is important to try and take care of yourself, through trying to maintain a healthy work/life balance. Try to engage in enjoyable/pleasurable activities as much as try to look after your health through healthy eating and exercise. Surround yourself with supportive people and try to seek support from the services in the university where needed.

#### **Challenge your negative thoughts**

As mentioned before, certain thoughts accompany anxiety and may maintain anxious states. Sometimes, when people feel anxious, thoughts can be distorted by the emotional state they are experiencing. Additionally, when people are anxious, it is not unusual for them to exaggerate the threat of the situation and to underestimate their ability to cope with it. In these instances, although it may be difficult, taking a step back and trying to realistically assess the situation (by modifying thinking) can help to reduce anxiety. Some of these thinking styles include:

##### *Catastrophic thinking*

Catastrophising occurs when one consistently predicts the worst will happen

##### *Putting a negative slant on things*

Focusing on the negative in the situation and seeing things through dark tinted glasses

##### *Predictive thinking*

Predicting how a situation will turn out, usually in a negative manner.

##### *Mindreading*

Assuming one knows what others are thinking, usually negative thoughts

##### *Biased Thinking*

Overlooking strengths and focusing on weaknesses, downplaying achievements and underestimating ability to cope

##### *Ways you can challenge these thoughts*

Ask yourself, what is the evidence that this thought is true?

Am I being fair or realistic in the way I am assessing this situation?

Example:

Distorted Thought: I am going to make such a fool of myself in my seminar. People will notice I'm anxious, and they'll think I'm weak and stupid

Balanced Thought: I have given presentations before, and they have gone well. Also, it is a topic I know a lot about and others in my seminar have expressed their nervousness at giving presentations, so I'm not alone

**Distraction:**

When anxious, sometimes it is helpful to distract yourself. This helps to reduce focus on the fearful aspects of the anxiety provoking situation. Distraction techniques come in different forms such as visualising a calming image, repeating a calming phrase, or focusing on a positive aspect of the situation.

**Relaxation**

Utilising relaxation techniques can also be useful in reducing anxiety. Breathing techniques are useful in this instances (regulate breathing whilst tensing muscles), as are imagery techniques (trying to imagine a safe, relaxing place and immersing yourself in this scene). Relaxation classes and Yoga classes may also aid the development of coping strategies in anxiety provoking situations.

**Test Your Fears**

One of the most effective ways to overcome anxiety is to challenge the fears underpinning it. This may mean facing anxiety provoking situations and dropping the behaviours one employs when anxious (such as avoidance, over-concentration, over preparation). Sometimes, we have learned responses to situations, and these need to be modified as a way of eliminating anxiety. For instance, previously, in a social situation, you might have prepared ahead of time what you were going to say and how you would act. By modifying some of these behaviours and giving yourself permission to just enjoy yourself, you may develop a new way to approach social situations because you have evidence to disprove your original beliefs/fears.

## Stress

### *Helpful Resources*

#### **Links:**

[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress\\_signs.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm)

<http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/>

[www.mind.org.uk/information](http://www.mind.org.uk/information)

#### **Books:**

Total Stress Relief by Vera Pfeiffer

Palmer, S and Puri, A Coping with Stress at University: A Survival Guide London: Sage Publications

#### *What is it?*

Some stress is important in our lives to help us cope with certain challenges. It is a normal physical response to events that may make us feel threatened or upset our balance in some way. In a sense, stress is the body's way of protecting us. Much like anxiety, when stress is functioning properly, it can help us to feel energetic, enthused and alert.

However, stress can become problematic when there is too much or too little of it. A lack of stress can leave you feeling under stimulated, whilst too much stress can result in a range of health problems, such as:

*Headaches*

*Palpitations*

*Panic Attacks*

*Stomach Aches*

*Dizziness*

*Exhaustion*

*Muscle Tension*

*Hair Loss*

*Irritability*

*Low Motivation*

*Poor Concentration*

These symptoms can have an effect on our functioning, mood and behaviours. It can affect our work, relationships and sense of self-worth. Feeling stressed can also cause us to experience

*Low mood*

*Weight gain/Weight loss*

*Disrupted Sleep*

*Anxiety*

*Fear*

People experience stress for different reasons. Sometimes, it can be due to negative factors or events (e.g. loss of a loved one, relationship breakdown, failing an exam) but can also develop as a result of positive experiences (starting a new relationship, beginning university, starting an internship). Stress can both be acute (e.g. dealing with the loss of a job) and chronic (e.g. Existing in a bad relationship)

Individuals deal with stress in different ways. Some people use drink, drugs, smoking, food and denial. Although these may seem to help in the short term, they can exacerbate stress and cause further problems in the long term. There are other ways to deal with/reduce stress which can be beneficial to you:

**Identify the trigger:** Sometimes triggers exist without our awareness. Take some time to write down the things in your life which are problematic, or may be causing stress. Is there a practical solution to deal with it? Might there be other ways you can tackle or approach these situations? Are there people who can help?

**Concentrate on the Present:** Try to concentrate on the here and now. Immerse yourself in the present and try to disengage from past worries or events, or from thoughts about things you do not have control over

**Take a step back:** Sometimes, we can get so stuck in the complexities of a situation, it is hard to see the bigger picture. STOP and take a step back. Try and evaluate the situation from a different perspective. Are there different ways to manage? Devise an action plan which might help you deal with the problem in a step by step fashion.

**Take care of yourself:** Sounds simple, but it is something we can easily forget to do. Take time out for yourself, engage in pleasurable activities, socialise with friends and family. Try and eat a balanced diet, and engage in light exercise where you can. Try and be compassionate to yourself, use encouraging words and commend yourself.

**Relaxation:** Try utilising relaxation techniques. This can include deep breathing, muscle relaxation, imagery techniques. You can also aid relaxation by getting a massage or relaxation exercise. Yoga and meditation can also be helpful.

**Laugh!** : Laughter is one of the best cures for stress. Try to engage with things and people who make you happy and distract you. Take in a comedy show, watch funny movies and shows.

**Balance:** Try to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Try and make a list of things you have to tackle during the week, and cross them off as you go along. Reward yourself when you have achieved your goals and completed tasks. Try and engage in an equal amount of pleasurable activities. If it initially feels too difficult to do, schedule some 'me' time in your diary. Much like you would try and attend lectures etc, attend to yourself.

**Manageable Goals:** Set yourself manageable and realistic goals. Sometimes we take on too much without realising it, or we aspire to unrealistic standards.

**Time management:** It is important wherever possible to manage your time. Try and devise a schedule for yourself and compose a list of priorities. Know that if you can't get to everything, it won't be the end of the world, and acknowledge the things you have done well or have been able to complete.

**Communicate:** If you are feeling overwhelmed, try and talk to someone about it. It is important not to suffer in silence as this can also exacerbate stress and distort thinking. Talk to a friend, a colleague, a tutor, your lecturer, or a counsellor. They may help you to develop a different perspective and think of practical ways to manage your stress.

# Depression

## *Helpful Resources*

**Links:** [www.mindgym.com.au](http://www.mindgym.com.au)  
[www.studentsagainstd Depression.org](http://www.studentsagainstd Depression.org)  
[www.cci.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au)  
[www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)

**Books:** Mind over Mood by Christine Padesky and Dennis Greenberger  
Beat Depression and Reclaim Your Life by Alexander Massey  
Feeling Good by David Burns  
Overcoming Depression by Paul Gilbert  
Overcoming Mood Swings by Jan Scott

## *What is it?*

As individuals, we may experience low periods from time to time. Naturally, our mood varies and we may feel under the weather, fed up or experience periods of sadness for a variety of reasons. However, this differs from clinical depression, which is more intense, lasts for a longer period of time and can severely affect day-to-day functioning, relationships, self-esteem and work. Depression can be experienced by any individual at any point in their life, so it is important to remember you are not alone in experiencing this.

Depression can include a persistent low mood and a loss of interest or pleasure in life. Other symptoms which may be associated with depression include:

- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Loss of Appetite
- Increase in Appetite
- Persistent low mood
- Low motivation
- Decrease in energy levels
- Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness
- Reduced sexual drive
- Negative thoughts and beliefs about oneself, others and the world
- Feeling irritable, short-tempered, tearful, angry or deflated
- Anxiety

It is important to note that some people may experience some or all of these symptoms for a brief period of time, and this may or may not be symptomatic of depression. An individual who is depressed will experience these symptoms for a persistent period of time.

### ***What causes depression?***

Depression can be a response to an event or situation which seems particularly difficult, distressing or threatening. Sometimes these situations can seem unmanageable or ‘unfixable’ and can trigger feelings of hopelessness.

Sometimes, depression may not have an apparent trigger and could be attributed to hormonal and chemical changes in our bodies. Conversely, it may be that depression is experienced as a result of a past event which may not have been processed and resurfaces at certain periods of our life.

Depression can also be experienced following the end of a relationship, disappointing outcomes in academic and personal life, loss of loved ones, or the occurrence of major changes in one’s life. Whilst it is natural to experience feelings of sadness, as mentioned before, it is important to seek help if the symptoms are intense, persistent and affecting day to day functioning.

### ***What maintains Depression?***

#### **Negative Thinking**

Individuals who are depressed think in particular ways which may be taken as absolute truths. They may have negative thoughts about themselves, others, the world and their situation, often thinking that things will never change and everything is hopeless. Negative thoughts can affect the way we feel and behave; these maintain depression by affecting perception and exacerbating symptoms.

Examples of these negative thoughts include:

‘I’m a failure; I can never get anything right’  
‘People dislike being around me, I’m not fun to be around’  
‘I’m unlucky; the world is a dark, gloomy place’  
‘I’ll never amount to anything, I’ll never succeed’

#### **Behaviours**

Often, when we are depressed, we can engage with certain behaviours which may exacerbate or maintain the way we feel. These behaviours can include:

**Isolation:** When an individual feels depressed, they may isolate themselves from others. A common concern depressed individuals have is ‘I don’t want to bring others down or have the way I’m feeling affect them’ Other thoughts may be ‘Others don’t care about me’ or ‘Nobody wants to be around a depressed person’

**Avoidance:** Similarly, avoidance of situations can be common in depression, especially if it seems too difficult or overwhelming to engage with.

### ***How do I begin to address this?***

As mentioned before, depression is experienced by many individuals, and there are some steps one can take and things one can try which can help to lift depression. These involve addressing some of the maintaining factors of depression

### **Modification of Negative Thinking**

Often, individuals who experience depression engage in unhelpful or distorted thinking. They may adopt certain thinking patterns/styles which affect the way they feel and the way in which they engage with certain situations. In these instances, it is helpful to begin to develop a balanced way of thinking through challenging negative thoughts and developing a different perspective:

*Become aware of your negative thinking:* It may be useful to keep a thought log, particularly at times when you are feeling low. This will help to increase awareness of negative thought patterns

*Recognise Thought Patterns:* It is important to recognise that sometimes, the thoughts we have about ourselves, others or particular situations may be distorted and unfair perceptions. This is even more prevalent when one is experiencing depression. In these instances, it may be useful to learn how to challenge these thoughts so that thinking is more balanced. An example is given below:

**Situation:** Friend walked by without saying hello.

**Thought:** She ignored me because she does not want to be around me.

**Alternative/Balanced Thought:** She was on the opposite side of the street and may not have seen me. She also might have had a lot on her mind and did not notice me. I saw her two days ago and she was very attentive and caring. She did tell me she had several interviews to attend this week.

**Situation:** Receiving feedback from manager

**Thought:** I can't ever get anything right. I am such a failure

**Alternative/Balanced Thought:** Although my manager pointed out that I needed to improve in an area, she also emphasised my enthusiasm and hard work. I can get help for the areas I need to improve in, and feedback for my work has been consistently good in the past.

Sometimes, it may be difficult to challenge these thoughts on our own. Talk to someone you trust, or speak to a counsellor who can help you to balance your thoughts.

### **Changing your Behaviours**

Sometimes, when we are depressed, it may be difficult to find pleasure in things we used to do or engage with people.

As a starting point, it might be useful to engage in small, enjoyable activities which can help to elevate mood and help to gain a sense of achievement. Exercise is a good example of this, but it is important to tailor these activities to your preferences and interests.

#### **Activities Proven to Make You Feel Better:**

**1/ Express gratitude. Keep a gratitude journal. Once or twice a week write down three to five things you are grateful for.**

**2a/ Visualise a future in which everything has turned out exactly the way you want it to be. Do this regularly. Close your eyes and imagine you have achieved everything you want. Visualisation is proven to be a very powerful tool.**

**2b/Spend five minutes every few days visualising/ seeing yourself as confident, relaxed and happy. Sit somewhere where you can relax. Close your eyes. Imagine yourself walking in the park; happy, relaxed, smiling, looking at the sky. Make the visualisation as real as possible. Include your five senses: what are you touching, smelling, seeing, hearing, and tasting in the visualisation?**

**3/ Be positive. Repeat, write down and surround yourself with positive, self-affirming statements about yourself and your life.**

**4/ Make time for supportive, caring, kind friends. Nurture relationships.**

**5/ Keep busy. Immerse yourself in activities you *enjoy* and especially in activities you can lose yourself in and relax in the moment.**

**6/ Do voluntary and charity work. Help others.**

**7/ Engage in physical exercise.**

**8/ Savour life's simple joys; enjoy and be present in the moment. Practice mindfulness. Taste the food you are eating, enjoy the sun on your face, take notice of and appreciate nature. Experience and appreciate the moment. Once a day pause for a moment to look around and try to focus on your present surroundings with all your senses. What can you see, hear, taste, smell, and feel?**

**9/ Get involved in spirituality and religion.**

**10/ Spend time in Nature. It has a calming effect.**

**11/ Be kind to yourself. Practice forgiving yourself and others.**

**Ultimately lasting happiness depends on understanding ourselves and truly accepting ourselves and knowing what our values are and what makes us feel fulfilled.**

**Then trying to create the sort of life we want; work we enjoy and find meaningful, a living situation we feel best suited to, leisure activities which we enjoy and make us feel happy and surrounding ourselves with like-minded people who make us feel good about ourselves. In order to achieve the above we need to know ourselves. This can be**

**accomplished by writing our thoughts and feelings down, by attending counselling, therapy groups and self-improvement courses and workshops.**

**Much recent research has shown that regularly doing some of the above mentioned activities hugely improves our daily sense of well being and contentment.**

It is also important to pace yourself when completing tasks. Set yourself manageable goals, and break each task down into steps or chunks. Also, start by completing easier tasks and work your way up to the more difficult ones. Track your progress.

Give yourself permission to do less. You don't have to do everything all at once. Take your time and reward yourself/acknowledge when you have achieved a personal goal

Try to engage with people and situations as much as you can, but again, pace yourself. Reducing isolation and avoidance is important to overcoming depression

Utilise your support network. Talk to people you can trust and who are supportive of you.

## Low Self-Esteem

### *Helpful Resources*

#### **Links:**

[www.student.counselling.co.uk](http://www.student.counselling.co.uk)

[http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info\\_ID=47](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=47)

[www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)

#### **Books:**

Overcoming Low Self Esteem: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques  
by Melanie Fennell

Self-esteem Bible: Build Your Confidence Day by Day by Gael Lindenfield

Improving Social Confidence and Reducing Shyness Using Compassion Focused Therapy by  
Lynne Henderson

365 Steps to Self-Confidence- David Lawrence Preston

#### ***What is it?***

Low self-esteem is having an overall negative view of yourself, judging oneself, or placing a negative value on oneself as a person

#### ***People with low self-esteem may....***

Have deep rooted negative beliefs about themselves/identity: Such as '*I'm not good enough*' and '*I'm unlovable*'. These types of beliefs are taken as fact rather than being recognised as opinions they have of themselves.

Frequently criticise themselves: They may put themselves down frequently, or joke about themselves in a negative way. They may also constantly blame themselves when things go wrong or doubt themselves

Ignore their positive qualities: People with low self-esteem may not accept compliments, instead, attributing their achievements to good luck or downplaying them/brushing them aside. Additionally, they may focus on what they didn't do or haven't achieved, and mistakes they may have made.

They may also experience emotions such as anger, frustration, sadness, anxiety and may feel depressed, guilty or ashamed

Their feelings and beliefs about themselves may impact on their relationships and work, their ability to engage in activities and their personal care. They may isolate themselves, become upset or distressed by criticism, or always try to please others. They may be unable to stand up for themselves in their interactions with others; conversely they may be overly aggressive in their interactions with others.

*Low self esteem can be maintained by a number of factors:*

**Negative thinking:** People with low self esteem may adopt unhelpful thinking styles which maintain their low sense of self worth. They may focus on the negative aspects of a situation and ignore the positives. They may also anticipate the worst possible outcome, or place blame on themselves when things go wrong.

**Unhelpful behaviours:** Certain behaviours we adopt may worsen or maintain low self-esteem. These may involve avoidance of certain situations due to negative beliefs one might hold.

*How do I begin to address this?*

Low self-esteem is commonly experienced by many individuals, and the good news is, we develop healthier self-esteem through many different avenues. As a first step, it might be helpful to talk with someone to make sense of your individual experience and think together about ways to address this. There are also some tips one can adopt to begin the journey to healthier self-esteem:

**Start with a list of positive qualities:** Whilst this may initially be difficult to do, try and list all your positive qualities, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem. You can ask yourself questions such like ‘What positive characteristics do I have?’ ‘What are some skills or talents I have?’ ‘If someone shared my identical characteristics, what would I admire in them?’

**Maintain a positive ‘you’ journal:** In a positive ‘you’ journal, note down daily examples where you have demonstrated the positive qualities you have listed above. Start to notice your qualities on a daily basis

**Challenge unhelpful thinking:** You can do this by utilising thought diaries, question unhelpful thinking, and try to develop an alternative more balanced approach. Ask yourself ‘Am I being fair to myself in thinking in this way?’ ‘What might be a different way I can think about this?’

**Adjust Beliefs:** Try to develop more balanced beliefs and behave in ways which support these new beliefs. For instance, developing a belief of ‘I am good enough’ might correspond with more compassionate behaviour such as asserting yourself in interactions with others.

**Engage in enjoyable activities:** Try new things, try to engage in hobbies and interests which allow you to explore your identity and elevate your mood

**Take care of yourself:** Try to do nice things for yourself, be considerate and compassionate to yourself.

**Test your fears:** Avoid ‘avoidance’ and isolation, approach situations with an open mind. Try and engage with life, live in the moment, and take note of the small steps you make

## Perfectionism

### Helpful Resources

#### Links

<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/perfectionism.htm>  
[http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info\\_ID=52](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=52)  
<http://anxietybc.com/sites/default/files/Perfectionism.pdf>

#### Books

Never Good Enough: How to Use Perfectionism to Your Advantage without Letting It Ruin Your Life by M.R. Basco (Simon & Schuster)

Perfectionism: What's Bad about Being Too Good? By M. Adderholdt-Elliott, M. Elliott, & J. Goldberg (Monarch Books)

M Anthony and RP Swinson: 'When Perfect isn't Good Enough: Strategies for Coping with Perfectionism', Raincast books. New edition 2.09

Overcoming perfectionism by Roz Shafran, Sarah Egan and Tracey Wade

### What is Perfectionism?

**I must give 110 percent at all times, otherwise I am a failure**

**Nothing I ever do is good enough**

**Put things off or keep on amending chapters, sentences, paragraphs because it isn't right, needs more work.**

Perfectionism refers to self-defeating thoughts and behaviours associated with high and unrealistic goals. Perfectionism is often mistakenly seen as desirable or even necessary for success.

What causes Perfectionism?

Although not the case across the board for perfectionist individuals, one of the cause for perfectionism can be linked to earlier experiences. It is possible that at some point early in life, you were mainly valued for your achievements. As a result of this, you may have learned to value yourself on the basis of other's approval or on external factors. It is possible then that your self-esteem and sense of self-worth is based primarily on validation for others, which may leave you sensitive and vulnerable to criticism. In this case, perfectionism becomes your defence mechanism.

- **Fear of failure.** Perfectionists often equate failure to achieve their goals with a lack of personal worth or value.
- **Fear of making mistakes.** Perfectionists often equate mistakes with failure. In building their lives around avoiding mistakes, perfectionists miss opportunities to learn and grow.
- **Fear of disapproval.** If they let others see their flaws, perfectionists often fear that they will no longer be accepted. Trying to be perfect is a way of trying to protect themselves from criticism, rejection, and disapproval.
- **All-or-nothing thinking.** Perfectionists frequently believe that they are worthless if their accomplishments are not perfect. Perfectionists have difficulty seeing situations in perspective. For example, a straight 'A' student who receives a 'B' might believe, *'I am a total failure'*.
- **Over-emphasis on 'should', 'must' and 'ought'.** Perfectionists often live with an endless list of rigid rules for what they must accomplish. With the emphasis on how everything **has** to be done, perfectionists rarely listen to what they really feel like doing.
- **Never good enough.** Perfectionists tend to see others as achieving success with a minimum of effort, few errors, little emotional stress, and maximum self-confidence. At the same time, perfectionists view their own efforts as unending and forever inadequate.

### **Strategies for Changing Perfectionist Thoughts**

#### ***Cost benefit analysis:***

Look at the benefits and negative consequences of lowering standards  
 Realise that perfectionism is undesirable and an unattainable illusion

#### ***Examine the evidence:***

How would I survive getting a lower than expected grade in this piece of work?  
 If I did badly does it always mean I will do badly – have I always done badly?

#### ***How do others view the situation:***

How do others deal with this stress?  
 Can they put up without knowing, without telling themselves they are stupid?  
 Maybe I am wrong comparing myself to more experienced people, rather than seeing the bigger picture  
 This is just a small part of what I do here and at this stage of my career

#### ***Coping statements:***

Try to use positive thinking; “*this exam will go well, I will enjoy it*”

***Tolerating uncertainty:***

Prepare for different alternatives, try to live without knowing and ambiguity  
Remember negative thoughts and beliefs may have been around for a while and it can take time to get used to challenging these

**Strategies for Changing Perfectionist Behaviours**

Behaviours both maintain our beliefs and by avoiding the things we fear they prevent us from moving forward.

***Identify your goals:***

General – to feel less perfectionist with essays and assignments  
Specific – read fewer references, prepare first draft structure after 2 days reading  
Schedule with a diary planner and realistic goals

***Exposure based strategies:***

Particularly on fear and anxiety – may need to do a few times; make a hierarchy list of feared anxiety-provoking situations and rate fear (0-100%)

- Giving a presentation in front of people I don't know (90%)
- Asking someone to repeat themselves at a meeting (60%)
- Talking to people (30%)

Start by visualising experiments, repeating till anxiety decreases – you will experience discomfort/limit avoidance strategies and positive thinking

***Response prevention:***

Reduce problematic behaviours which are not helpful e.g. checking

***Overcoming procrastination:***

Break down into small tasks as these are easier to complete e.g. main headings/ subsections to overcome the fear of not knowing where to start or not completing the tasks well; these are easier to complete

***Self-care timetable:***

Regular meals, breaks, sleep, exercise and social contacts  
Use positive affirmations and reward yourself when you complete mini tasks

# SLEEP

## Helpful Resources

### Links

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/mental-health-a-z/S/sleep-disorders/>  
<http://thesleepschool.org/insomnia-cure/products/>

### Books

Tired but wired: How to Overcome Sleep Problems: the Essential Sleep Toolkit - Dr Nerina Ramlakhan

The Sleep Book - Dr Guy Meadows

### Tips for better sleep

**Have a regular sleep schedule. Your body recognises routine, creating a regular sleep pattern enables your body clock to fall into a rhythm, thereby helping with the sleep process.** In fact, the greatest promoter of being able to sleep is being in sync with your internal clock or your circadian rhythms.

**Write down your worries — earlier in the day.** For about 10 to 15 minutes a day, Write down what's on your mind at an earlier time and what you're doing about it. To kick-start your worry session, simply asking yourself, "What are the things that come to my mind when I'm lying in bed at night?"

If a worrying thought comes up right before bed, you "can mentally check it off," and either say to yourself "I've dealt with that," or "I'm dealing with it," she says. This usually helps to create a "sense of relief."

**Create an optimal environment.** Create a clear association between your bed and sleep, Similarly, experts suggest not watching TV in bed, using your computer, doing paperwork or texting on your phone. These activities stimulate your brain, instead of relaxing you. Use your bed for sleep and intimacy

**Busy your brain with mental exercises (to stop worry cycles).** Being able to distract yourself from your worries can be enough to help you fall asleep. A mental exercise helps your brain focus away from your worries, she says. It can be as simple as "thinking of fruits and vegetables with a certain letter."

**Focus on the positive.** When you're lying in bed worrying, it helps to turn to more positive thoughts. Focus on happy memories and thoughts.

**Practice relaxation exercises.** Relaxation exercises are very helpful in reducing anxiety and racing thoughts. Exercises to try include progressive muscle relaxation (going through each muscle group and tensing and relaxing it) and deep breathing.

Think about what's stealing your sleep and boosting your anxiety. It could be caffeine, alcohol, stress, worry. Try and address the stressors which may be preventing good sleep.

**Exercise during the day**, preferably in the late afternoon before dinner. Aerobic exercise, not necessarily "aerobics," but the type that gets your heart beating, gets you sweating and panting for 20 minutes or more is better, but 45 minutes to an hour of brisk walking will suffice.

**Go to bed and get up at regular times**, even if you're tired in the morning. Don't vary your time of going to bed or getting up. However, if you have consistent sleep problems, then try getting up half an hour earlier in the morning than your usual time; it may help you get to sleep that night.

**Don't try to make yourself sleep.** If you're unable to fall asleep after 20-30 minutes in bed, leave your bed, engage in some relaxing activity (such as watching TV, sitting in a chair and listening to a relaxation tape, or having a cup of herbal tea), and do not return to bed until you're sleepy.

**Avoid heavy meals before bedtime**, but also avoid going to bed hungry. A very small snack about an hour before bedtime may be helpful.

**Avoid any alcohol consumption** or use of other substances in the evening. Avoid moderate-to-heavy use during the day. If you continue to have problems, stop use completely.

**Reduce caffeine and nicotine consumption** as much as possible. If you must have coffee, try and have it only in the morning and have no more than two cups.

**Develop a sleep ritual before bedtime.** This is some relaxing activity you do every night in the same order at about the same time before you get into bed. Avoid vigorous physical or mental activity and emotional upsets. A hot shower or bath may help you relax.

**Avoid napping during the day**, unless you want to take a quick "power" nap no longer than 20 minutes and no later than the afternoon.

**Reduce noise** if needed through the use of ear plugs or a noise-masking machine

**If you can't sleep, do not get too upset;** do not fight, resist, or fear sleeplessness. This will make it harder to fall asleep. Figure that the next day you will be somewhat tired but will still be able to do what you need to do.

# Eating Disorders

## Helpful Resources

### Links

**BEAT Website:** [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)

**Anorexia & Bulimia Care (ABC):** [www.anorexiabulimiare.org.uk](http://www.anorexiabulimiare.org.uk)

**MGEDT (Men Get Eating Disorders Too):** [www.mengetedstoo.co.uk](http://www.mengetedstoo.co.uk)

### Books

Eating Disorders: The Path to Recovery by Kate Middleton

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Eating Disorders by Christopher Fairburn

Care for a loved one with an Eating Disorder – The New Maudsley Way by Janet Treasure and Grainne Smith

Eating Disorders for Dummies by Susan Schulherr

Getting Better Bit(e) by Bit(e): A Survival Kit for Sufferers of Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorders by Ulrike Schmidt and Janet Treasure

## Understanding Eating Disorders

An eating disorder may begin as a way of coping with life, which becomes increasingly problematic. Rather than using food to satisfy hunger a person with an eating disorder will use food as a way of dealing with difficult feelings and thoughts or as a way of coping with stressful events and situations.

Men and women with eating disorders are preoccupied with food and/or their weight and body shape, and are usually highly dissatisfied with their appearance. The majority of eating disorders involve low self-esteem, shame, secrecy and denial.

Eating disorders range from those that may receive a medical diagnosis (such as anorexia and bulimia), to those that are not formally diagnosable but still cause great distress to many people. This former group of problems may be referred to separately as “disordered eating” problems.

### **Anorexia nervosa**

Anorexia is when someone either starves themselves or exercises excessively in order to keep their weight as low as possible. Anorexia is arguably the most well-known of the eating disorders, but the least common of the main three disorders. It is also the one with the highest mortality rate. People with anorexia live at a low body weight, beyond the point of slimness and in an endless pursuit of thinness by restricting what they eat and sometimes compulsively over-exercising.

### **Symptoms of anorexia include:**

- severely restricting daily food and drink intake
- engage in excessive exercise to burn off further calories.
- Having an inaccurately large self-perception of body size
- Being extremely frightened of gaining weight.

## **Bulimia**

Bulimia involves a condition where someone tries to control their weight by binge eating and then deliberately being sick or using methods of emptying their bowels, such as taking laxatives. In contrast to anorexia, people with bulimia have intense cravings for food, secretly overeat and then purge to prevent weight gain by vomiting or using laxatives.

People who suffer with bulimia nervosa are often a normal weight for their height and build which makes it less likely that the condition is noticed by others, this can mean that the problem can continue undetected for many years. A person with bulimia will binge not because they are physically hungry but as a way of coping or of filling an 'emotional void'.

### **Symptoms of bulimia include:**

- being preoccupied with food and feeling out of control around it
- having an inaccurately large self-perception of body size
- skipping meals as a way of restricting calorie intake
- bingeing on large amounts of fatty or sugary foods
- purging by vomiting, taking laxatives, diuretics or enemas to rid yourself of food
- engaging in excessive exercise to prevent weight gain

## **Binge Eating Disorder**

Binge Eating Disorder is a pattern of disordered eating that is the most common of all eating problems. It is similar to bulimia in that sufferers feel compelled to binge, but there is no subsequent purging action to rid the binged food, resulting in problems with being overweight or obese.

Unlike compulsive overeaters, a person with binge eating disorder will eat constantly throughout the day, eating when they are not hungry but feeling unable to stop. As with bulimia, this is due to use food as an attempt to deal with unpleasant emotions.

### **Symptoms of binge eating disorder include:**

- feeling out of control around food
- the inability to stop eating, even when full
- feeling embarrassed about the quantities of food eaten

## **Acknowledging that eating is a problem**

The first step in treatment is to acknowledge that eating is a problem and that food is being used to manage difficult feelings. If you are struggling with eating problems, you will have to want to change your life to give up your illness. Ambivalence – which is part of the process but can be overcome to help overcome an eating problem. This is done by acknowledging the unhealthy thoughts that resist help.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

### **National Institute of Clinical (NICE) Excellence:**

The NICE eating disorders clinical guideline covers physical and psychological treatments, treatment with medicines, and what kinds of services best help people with eating disorders.

**NICE Website:** <http://publications.nice.org.uk/eating-disorders-cg9>

### **Kings College London (KCL) Eating Disorder Toolkit:**

**These web pages from KCL contain a range of information for eating disorder sufferers, carers, family and friends, as well as healthcare and education professionals.**

**KCL Website:** <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/iop/depts/pm/research/eatingdisorders/index.aspx>

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Books available in the library

<b>Alcohol</b>	Overcoming problem drinking: A self help guide to using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques	Spada, Marcantonio	RC565.S73
<b>Anger</b>	Managing Anger	Lindenfield, Gael	BF575.A5 L74
	Overcoming Anger and Irritability	Davies, William	BF575.A5D25
<b>Anxiety</b>	Panic Attacks	Ingram, Christine	RC531.141
	Overcoming Anxiety	Williams, Chris	RC531.W72
	Overcoming OCD	D Veale and R Willson	RC533.V39
	Overcoming Social Anxiety and Shyness: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques	Butler, Gillian	RC552.B98
<b>Body Image</b>	Overcoming Body Image Problems including Body Dysmorphia	D Veale and R Willson	RC569.5.B65.V39
<b>CBT</b>	Cognitive Therapy for Dummies	R Willson and R Branch	RC489.C63.W74
<b>Depression</b>	Beat Depression and Reclaim Your Life	Massey, Alexander	RC537.M41
	Feeling Good	Burns, David D.	RC537.B96
	Overcoming Depression	Paul Gilbert	RC537.G46
	Overcoming mood swings	Scott, Jan	RC516.S42
<b>Eating Disorders</b>	Getting better bit(e) by bit(e)	Schmidt, Ulrike Treasure, Janet	RC552.B84.S35
	Eating without Guilt: Overcoming compulsive Eating	A Katz	RC552.C65.K11
<b>Relationships</b>	Teach Yourself Emotional Intelligence (Teach Yourself: Relationships & Self-Help)	<u>Christine Wilding</u>	BF567.W67
	Loving Yourself, Loving Another: The Importance of Self-esteem for Successful Relationships	Julia Cole, Relate	HM1106.C68
<b>Self-Esteem</b>	Gael Lindenfield's Self-esteem Bible: Build Your Confidence Day by Day	Gael Lindenfiel	BF697.5 S46
	Overcoming Low Self-esteem: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioral Techniques	<u>Melanie Fennel</u>	RC489.S43.F33
<b>Self-harm &amp; Suicide</b>	Self Harm: The Path to Recovery	Kate Middleton and Sara Garvie	RC552.S4.M62
	Silent Grief: Living in the Wake of Suicide	Christopher Lukas; Henry M. Seiden	HV6548.U5.L95
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	The Courage to Heal	Bass and Davies	HQ72.U53 B31
<b>Sleep</b>	Sleep Deep: Wake Refreshed Day after Day	Williamson, Karen	RA547.W73
<b>Stress</b>	Total Stress Relief	Pfeiffer, Vera	RA785.P52
<b>Other titles</b>	Bad Childhood, Good Life: How to Blossom and thrive in spite of an unhappy childhood	L Schlessingere	BF637.S8.S34
	Reinventing Your Life	J Young	RC455.4.S43.Y71
	Families and how to survive them	R Skinner and J Cheese	HQ728.S62

## Other useful Books

### **Trauma**

Soul without Shame- Byron Brown

You Can Heal Your Life Hay House, 1984- Louise L Hay

The Courage to Heal Cedar Books, 1988 - Ellen Bass and Laura Davies

### **Relationships**

Toxic Parents; Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy and Reclaiming Your Life Bantam Books, New York 1989- Susan Forward

The Relate Guide to Better Relationships, Vermilion, London 1992. - Sarah Litvinoff

Eating Disorders

Understanding Your Eating: How to eat and not worry about it”- Julia Buckroyd

Eating Without Guilt; Overcoming Compulsive Eating Self-Counsel Press; USA 1986 - Alice Katz

### **Perfectionism**

The Drama of the Gifted Child– Alice Miller

### **Sexuality**

The New Male Sexuality- Bernie Zilbergeld – excellent for understanding sexual problems (for men)

Becoming Orgasmic – Julia Heiman, J LoPiccolo (for women)

### **Self Esteem**

365 Steps to Self-Confidence how to books, 2007 - David Lawrence Preston

Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway Arrow Books, London 1991 - Susan Jeffers

## Useful Web links for relaxation and mindfulness techniques

### **Relaxation:**

[www.ul.ie/counselling/bodymind.shtml](http://www.ul.ie/counselling/bodymind.shtml)

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/podcasts/stress-relaxation-quick-fix/?view=Standard>

### **Mindfulness**

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/podcasts/what-is-mindfulness/?view=Standard>

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/podcasts/mindfulness-10-minute/?view=Standard>

### **Progressive relaxation**

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/podcasts/progressive-relaxation-sleep/?view=Standard>

### **Relaxation for sleep**

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/podcasts/wellbeing-sleep-quick-fix/?view=Standard>

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/podcasts/progressive-relaxation-sleep/?view=Standard>

## Positive Statements and Affirmations for mood management and self esteem

### Positive Statements and Affirmations:

- All is well.
- I, (your name) am calm.
- I, (your name) am relaxed.
- I, (your name) am in control.
- I, (your name) can do anything.
- I, (your name) am more than good enough.
- I accept and love myself exactly as I am.
- I approve of myself completely.
- I trust myself completely.
- I am creating everything I want easily and effortlessly.
- I allow my mind to relax and I let go (of the issue which is causing you stress).
- (Whatever you are finding difficult or stressful) is easy. For example, these exams, this presentation, this essay, this interview is so easy for me.
- I now take responsibility to make my life work.
- My future is full of interesting surprises and wonderful opportunities.
- I forgive myself completely (if you are feeling angry with yourself).
- I now know I deserve more peace of mind, relaxation, fun, laughter, happiness, success (whatever you would like to include) in my life.
- Every day I see myself as a confident person and I feel myself becoming more and more confident.
- I am becoming more and more confident every day.
- It is safe to be me. I am wonderful just as I am.
- I choose joy and self-acceptance.
- I accept, love and approve of myself completely. I trust the process of life.
- I am at peace with my own feelings. I am safe where I am. I create my own security.

Get into the habit of repeating and/ or writing positive statements at regular times of the day. For example, in the morning and the evening or before you go off to sleep so it becomes a part of your daily routine just like brushing teeth.

Get a notebook which is specifically dedicated to writing positive statements, daily self-praise and lists of achievements you have accomplished. Every day you can choose two or three positive statements and write them down 10 or 20 times. The notebook can also be a journal where you write down and process your thoughts and feelings.

It can also be helpful to write down your favourite positive statement on a piece of paper and put it up somewhere where you can see it throughout the day; the mirror, the fridge, a

cupboard or on your bedside table. Some people write down their favourite statements and carry them around with them in their purses, diaries, bags or mobiles or laptops. The idea is to immerse your mind in positive messages to counteract the negative messages you may be repeating to yourself throughout the day without even realising it.

At the end of the day get into the habit of writing down at least three things you have achieved that day. It doesn't matter how small your achievements are. **Big changes can only happen by taking many small steps.**

**Remember if you are feeling depressed, unmotivated, and anxious or stressed just getting out of bed is a major achievement and it is vital to view it as such.**

It is also important to think of some self-praise at the end of each day and write it down in your journal.

Schedule in a daily treat/ reward for yourself. This works best when it is planned in advance, for example, weekly. Many people find it useful to spend some time every week looking at the week ahead and planning a daily treat or reward. This will be different for everybody.

For example, it could be anything from taking time to see a movie or a play, going for a walk in the park or to a museum. It could be doing some sport, having a relaxing bath or eating your favourite food. It could be listening to your favourite music, contacting a friend, doing something creative, buying yourself something or just allowing yourself time to relax, sleep, read or watch a movie.

It is vital to allow yourself time to relax and to do what you enjoy most, because it will make you feel much less anxious and overwhelmed. All of the above strategies (positive self-talk, giving yourself daily rewards and self-praise, listing your achievements, looking at yourself and your life positively) will make you feel less anxious and stressed. You will begin to feel more relaxed and calm. This is all a part of good self-care. **It is important to begin treating yourself with KINDNESS, the way you might treat your own best friend.**

### Inspirational Quotes

- **‘No-one can make you feel inferior without your consent.’** Eleanor Roosevelt
- **‘If you think you can do a thing or think you can’t do a thing; you’re right’.**  
Henry Ford
- **‘Poor is the person whose pleasures depend on the permission of another.’**  
Virginia Woolf
- **‘I have an everyday religion that works for me; love yourself first and everything else falls into line.’** Lucille Ball
- **‘You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.’** Eleanor Roosevelt
- **‘It’s not what you are that holds you back, it’s what you think you are not.’**  
Denis Waitley
- **‘A person cannot be comfortable without his own approval.’** Mark Twain
- **‘The mind is its own place and in itself can make heaven of hell and hell of heaven.’** John Milton
- **‘You must do the thing you think you cannot do.’** Eleanor Roosevelt
- **‘If you don’t run your own life, someone else will.’** John Atkinson
- **‘This above all; to thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou can not then be false to any man.’** Hamlet
- **‘Man is what he believes.’** Chekov
- **‘Love is the miracle cure. Loving ourselves works miracles in our lives.’** Louise Hay
- **‘Without self-confidence we are as babes in the cradle.’** Virginia Woolf
- **‘Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.’** Seneca
- **‘Remember you are the only person who thinks in your mind. You are the power and authority in your world.’** Louise Hay
- **‘Before all else each of us must take a risk to be true to ourselves.’** Webb
- **‘Be gentle with yourself; learn to love yourself, to forgive yourself. Only when we have the right attitude towards ourselves can we have the right attitude towards others.’** Peterson
- **‘The person who has confidence in themselves gains the confidence of others.’**  
Hasidic saying

- **‘There’s only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving and that’s your own self.’** Aldous Huxley
- **‘He that respects himself is safe from others; he wears a coat of iron that none can pierce.’** Longfellow
- **‘You are your thoughts. Don’t ever let anyone else have dominion over them.’** Helmstetter
- **‘They can conquer who believe they can.’** Virgil
- **‘It is hard to fight an enemy who has outposts in your head.’** Aldous Huxley
- **‘A man can stand a lot as long as he can stand himself.’** Axel Munthe
- **‘Just trust yourself. Then you will know how to live.’** Goethe
- **‘You have the greatest chance of being happy when the voice you respond to is your own voice.’** Sonya Freidman
- **‘Our lives improve only when we take chances and the first and most difficult risk we can take is to be honest with ourselves.’** Anderson
- **‘Just be what you are and speak from your guts and heart – it’s all a man has.’** Hobert Humphrey
- **‘Power is strength and the ability to see yourself through your own eyes and not through the eyes of another.’** Agnes Elk
- **‘If you do not believe in yourself, do not blame others for lacking faith in you.’** Brendan Francis
- **‘You have to whistle your own tune. You have to walk along the track yourself. Nobody else can lead you. Nobody else can really help you. Once you get the feeling that your life is your responsibility, it is the most freeing thing in the world.’** Pat Carol
- **‘Only I can change my life. No-one can do it for me.’** Carol Burnett
- **‘Happiness is having a sense of self. Not a feeling of being perfect, but of being good enough and of knowing yourself.’** Leo Buscaglia
- **‘No matter what kind of journey we make of life, where we started out will always be a part of us. But only a part.’** Dr Nathaniel Branden
- **‘You can’t have a better tomorrow if you’re thinking about yesterday all the time.’** Charles F. Kettering
- **‘Whatever our upbringing has been, as adults our self-esteem is in our own hands.’** Dr Nathaniel Branden

- **‘If you do not know your own identity, who is going to identify you?’** Thomas Merton
- **‘The way you treat yourself sets the standard for others.’** Sonya Friedman
- **‘Risk-taking is not easy – and the greatest risk of all is to try and know oneself and be true to oneself.’** Anderson
- **‘God grant me the serenity to accept things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.’** Reinhold Niebuhr