



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

The Power of Sleep

Action Stations

What to do next...

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Welcome!

Thanks so much for signing up to the session. It was great to meet you if you came, and if not, hopefully this will still be useful.

If you're suffering from an anxiety overload, your mind will come up with lots of reasons why it's a bad idea to seek help. In fact, as many as 70% of those with clinical symptoms won't seek treatment.

My hope with the session was to explain that anxiety disorders are incredibly common, and can start as a natural or even adaptive response to difficult circumstances. If you, or someone you know is experiencing disordered anxiety, there are lots of effective routes to treatment available to help.

Across England you can self-refer into psychological therapies using the national network of IAPT providers (Google your local 'IAPT' service – Improving Access to Psychological Therapies). You could also speak to Occupational Health, to your GP, to a Mental Health First Aider or find a support group.

This handout gives a bit more detail on some of the topics we discussed, and a few other areas..

- You can rate your symptoms of Generalised Anxiety overleaf – remember they will probably change regularly
- Check out some strategies for coping with anxiety/panic attacks
- Log your anxiety symptoms
- Read some cognitive re-framing examples
- Track your sleep using a sleep diary

If you have any questions that I didn't cover, you can reach me on the address below, or on Instagram @drsophiebostock.

Many thanks
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How anxious are you?

The Generalised Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD-7) is a brief self-administered screening and severity measure to help you check in with your anxiety symptoms. Add up your scores for each of the 7 questions. You may find it helpful to discuss your results with a healthcare professional.

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge?	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying?	0	1	2	3
3. Worrying too much about different things?	0	1	2	3
4. Trouble relaxing?	0	1	2	3
5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still?	0	1	2	3
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable?	0	1	2	3
7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen?	0	1	2	3

TOTAL. _____ / 21

Scores of 5, 10, and 15 are usually taken as the cut-off points for mild, moderate and severe anxiety, respectively.

The GAD-7 originates from Spitzer RL, Kroenke K, Williams JB, et al; A brief measure for assessing generalized anxiety disorder: the GAD-7. Arch Intern Med. 2006 May 22;166(10):1092-7

What strategies can you use during an acute anxiety attack?

An anxiety or panic 'attack' happens when we are suddenly flooded with adrenaline in response to a perceived stressor. This rush of adrenaline can cause confusion and misinterpretation – we feel like we're losing control, and feel intense fear, with the thoughts and physical sensations that go along side that.

In reality, we are not being attacked – we're just experiencing a rush of harmless adrenaline. It really is harmless, but it's virtually impossible to think rationally when your amygdala is in high alert mode.

The biggest mistake you can make is to start resisting, putting up a fight or seeking reassurance – when you do that you that, you reinforce to the amygdala that this anxious response is something to be feared, and it may pump out more adrenaline in response!

1. Acknowledge that this is a stress response, and it will pass

I'm stressed and my amygdala has triggered adrenaline just in case I'm not OK.. I'm going to do my best to calmly keep doing what I was doing, and these feelings, thoughts and sensations will pass

Ideally, try and continue doing what you were doing – by not reacting, despite the components of anxiety making us scared, we're sending a message to the amygdala that the threat response isn't needed. It is entirely counterintuitive, but if you try and 'fix' the threat response, it may get worse.

The body will find a way to calm you down – eventually the adrenaline and cortisol will wear out. This usually happens within about 20 minutes, but occasionally may be a bit more or a bit less.

2. Grounding techniques

It may be too difficult not to respond at all. If your anxiety attack is very acute you might want to distract the mind to focus on other things, and bring it back into the present. These techniques can be difficult to do, but try them anyway – the crucial bit is to ignore the stress response and focus on something else.

Try to identify...

- 5 things you can SEE
- 5 things you can HEAR e.g. birds, floorboards, breathing, traffic
- 5 things you can FEEL e.g. clothes on your skin, temperature, chair beneath you, taste in your mouth

Once you've labelled 5 of each, go down to 4, then 3, then 2, then 1.

Look around and say what you see.. Then add 2+ descriptive adjectives. For example..

- I see a tree... >> I see an old, wind-swept tree it would be good to climb
 - I see a cloud >> I see a grey cloud that looks like a river
- Keep going and see how many items you can describe

You will often hear the advice to focus on your breath. Slow controlled breathing, in and out of the belly, sends a strong signal to the amygdala that we're in control. Put one hand on your belly and push your belly out with every inhale. Try to make each exhale one count longer than your inhale.

However, if you're breathing rapidly during an anxiety attack you might find it unhelpful to focus on the breath. We're all different. The attitude to aim for is that willful tolerance – going forward with your day, and your normal activities despite the symptoms of anxiety.

These strategies are taken from the book 'Untangle Your Anxiety' by Joshua Fletcher and Dean Stott (2021) which I found very helpful.

Anxiety attack tracker



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If you experience acute anxiety symptoms, or panic attacks, keep a track of the triggers, symptoms and any helpful strategies which helped you to overcome them

Date & time	Trigger(s)	Physical symptoms	Thoughts & emotions	Intensity 0-10	Duration (min)	Strategies
<i>Example.. Wed 19/1, 10am</i>	<i>Walking to shops, stressed</i>	<i>High HR, sweating, short of breath, dizzy, nausea, chest pain</i>	<i>Fear of heart attack,</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Tried to keep walking, Grounding – identified 5 things to see, hear & feel</i>

Cognitive Reframing

Cognitive reframing is a technique used to shift your mindset so you look at a situation, person, or relationship from a different viewpoint. Try stepping back and viewing the situation with more self compassion – as if you are your own best friend.

This technique is often used in therapy but it's something that you can practice by yourself as well. It can be helpful to recognize some common cognitive distortions, or tendencies and patterns of thinking or believing, that can cause negative thought patterns :

- **All-or-nothing thinking:** Seeing situations in absolute terms
- **Blaming:** Attributing complex problems to a single cause
- **Catastrophizing:** Always imaging the worst thing that can happen in any situation
- **Discounting the positive:** Ignoring or discounting the good things that happen to you
- **Mental filters:** Focusing only on the negatives and never on the positives
- **'Should' statements:** Always feeling like you've failed to live up to expectations of what you "should" do in a situation

Thought of the sleep-deprived mind..	Rational response	Alternative thought
If I don't sleep well tonight, tomorrow is going to be a disaster.	There have been lots of occasions where you haven't slept well. Have they all been truly disastrous? Of course, we all need a chance to recover eventually, but a poor night's sleep is rarely disastrous.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have coped with bad nights before, and will do so again. • After a bad night, sleep the next night is deeper to compensate.
When I have a bad day, I know it's because I didn't sleep well the night before.	Sleep is not the enemy! Sleep is a natural and automatic process. The more we attach negative events and emotions to lack of sleep, the more anxious we feel about it, and the more pressure we put on ourselves to sleep.	It's OK to accept the odd poor night, and remind yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has a bad night sometimes. • You can still have a good day after a bad night's sleep.

Sleep diary & habit tracker

Fill in your planned **wake up** and **ready-for-bed** times at the start of the week. Track up to 3 sleep habits. When you get ready for a new shift, tick successes from the previous day, and feel good about any successes!

Start date: _____	Example	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Target wake up time? (Get out of bed within 10 minutes for a tick)	4pm ✓							
What's your target time to go to bed?	9am ✓							
How many hours have you been in bed, last 24 hours?	9 hours							
How many hours were you asleep for?	6 hours							
What was your Sleep Efficiency? = hrs sleep / in bed * 100 More on this in webinar 3	67%							
1. Light meals/healthy snacks on shift								
2. 30 min physical activity								
3. No technology 1 hr before bed								
How would you rate your energy yesterday? 10=best ever	8, good day!							