



What? Me Worry!?!

Module 11

Self Management

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The easiest way to summarise this is by looking at the “Healthy Me” worksheet on the next page. It shows the main areas of your life that you should give some attention to in order for you to continue maintaining your gains.

You will notice that on the “Healthy Me” worksheet, each heading has spaces left blank for you to write in what you will need to attend to. For example, under Self-Care you might write: “I will shop every week and purchase fruit and vegetables, and avoid eating take-out”. Under Social Activities you might write: “I will visit friends at least once each week.” You may want to update this worksheet on a regular basis when you need to extend your goals or modify them. We really encourage you to do this, as it will enable you to keep track of things.



Helpful Thoughts

Social Activities

Pleasant Activities

Healthy



Exercise

Relaxation

Me

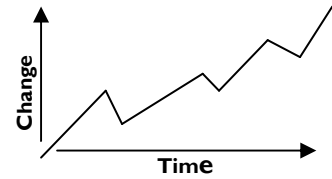
Self-Care

Goals

Social Support

Setbacks

Setbacks or slip-ups in progress can happen at any time and are to be expected. Try not to fall into the trap of believing that you are ‘back to square one’ as this will only make you feel worse. Change is not a steady process, it's more like the old saying: “Two steps forward, one step back” from time to time.



Think about how you learned to ride a bike. It probably took a few unsteady attempts and a few falls before you gained your balance. Even when you get your balance, you might still be unsteady when travelling over new ground, or on different surfaces. In the same way, different situations or times in your life may be more challenging, and may require extra effort and persistence (i.e., more thought challenging, more letting go, more problem-solving, more relaxation, etc). Even after much practice, there may be times when you think you've slipped back and feel a little off balance. Developing new skills is never a smooth process, you're always being faced with new challenges and different situations to apply those skills.

Reasons for Setbacks

There are several reasons for setbacks occurring. There may be an increase in physical or mental stress. Just like riding a bike over challenging terrain, physical and mental stress can be challenges to the new ways of thinking and acting that you have developed. Also, when we are physically unwell, we are less likely to have the mental or physical energy required to challenge or let go of our worries and use helpful strategies.

It may help to remind yourself that most people have ‘down days’ or days where life’s hassles are harder to deal with – its part of being human! Use the skills you learned for dealing with worrisome thoughts to help when this situation occurs. Also, you can use setbacks as a way of learning something new about yourself to help avoid similar problems in the future.

Preventing Major Setbacks

As you are progressing through your goals, try not to focus too much on small setbacks. If you are experiencing several small setbacks then there are some ways of preventing a major setback.

1. Identify Early Warning Signs

The first step is to look at your own early warning signs. Some common examples are:

- Spending increased time worrying about things
- Reverting back to unhelpful strategies (e.g., avoidance or thought control).
- An increase in physical symptoms of anxiety, especially tension.



2. Revise Skills

Think about the skills you have learned and what has been helpful in reducing your worry (e.g., challenging/experimenting with beliefs about worrying, challenging worries, letting go of worries, accepting uncertainty, problem-solving, relaxation). Have you stopped practising these skills consistently? You may wish to revise the modules and techniques you have learned and perhaps increase practising those skills.

3. Social Support

It is wise to find someone with whom you can sit down and have a good talk. This doesn't mean a therapy session where you pour out your heart but rather just a chance to talk through what's going on in your life, what your goals are, and generally just to ventilate with someone you trust. Often, problems seem bigger than they really are when a person tries to deal with them on their own. Hearing yourself talk through something can help to put it into perspective.

On the next page is a self-management plan for you to complete. Make a note of the early warning signs that might signal a setback then write down the strategies and tools you have learnt about that can help you to deal with a setback.

Self Management Plan

What are the early warning signs that tell me that I might be heading for a setback and need to do something about it myself? eg. *I am spending more time worrying* **OR** *I am spending more time avoiding or trying to control my worries* **OR** *I have more physical symptoms of anxiety*

What are some of my negative or positive beliefs about worrying and unhelpful strategies that I need to watch out for?

What situations are potential problems for me?

What are my future support options? Eg, *friends, family, GP, other, etc.*

What strategies/techniques have I found most helpful and need to continue to practise?

Module Summary

- It is important that you keep applying and practising the strategies you learned through reading the modules in the “What? Me Worry!?!” information package
- Consistent and continuous practice will enable you to integrate the strategies into your lifestyle
- Setbacks are expected when we make changes to the way we think and act – challenge any unhelpful thoughts that might get in the way of your progress and repeat the modules to remind you of the skills you have learnt.
- Find some friends with whom you can be with and talk to. A group of friends can be a source of social support and good company for social activities.

To finish up...

We hope that you have found this information package to be of benefit to you and that you will maintain the gains you have made. If you have any questions about medication or psychotherapy for generalised anxiety disorder, do go and see your doctor or an appropriate mental health practitioner. For now, it's goodbye from us at CCI. Take care!

About The Modules

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BACKGROUND

The concepts and strategies in the modules have been developed from evidence based psychological practice, primarily Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy (CBT). CBT for generalised anxiety is a type of psychotherapy that is based on the theory that generalised anxiety and worry is a result of problematic cognitions (thoughts) and behaviours. There is strong scientific evidence to support that cognitions and behaviours can play an important role in generalised anxiety, and that targeting cognitions and behaviours in therapy can help many people to overcome generalised anxiety. Examples of this evidence are reported in:

Barlow, D.H., Raffa, S.D., Cohen, E.M. (2002) Psychosocial treatments for panic disorders, phobias, and generalized anxiety disorder. In P.E. Nathan & J.M. Gorman (Eds.), *A Guide to Treatments that Work* (2nd ed., pp. 301-335). New York: Oxford University Press.

Gould, R.A., Safren, S.A., O'Neill Washington, D., & Otto, M.W. (2004). A meta-analytic review of cognitive-behavioural treatments. In R.G. Heimberg, C.L. Turk & D.S. Mennin (Eds.), *Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Advances in Research and Practice* (pp. 248-264). New York: Guilford Press.

REFERENCES

These are some of the professional references used to create the modules in this information package.

Barlow, D.H. (2002). *Anxiety and Its Disorders: The Nature and Treatment of Anxiety and Panic* (2nd ed.). London: Guilford Press.

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Wells, A. (1997). *Cognitive Therapy of Anxiety Disorders: A Practice Manual and Conceptual Guide*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Wells, A. (2008). *Metacognitive Therapy for Anxiety and Depression*. New York: Guilford Press.

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