



# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

COACH'S MANUAL 2022

6 WEEK WORKSHOP



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# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

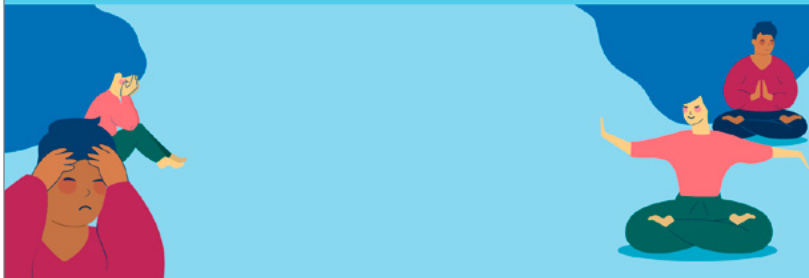
# INTRODUCTION



## Welcome to Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth Introduction

Please display name tent.

Please display if your name and pronouns you wish.



## Welcome

Welcome to **Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth**. Please put your name and pronouns if you wish on the name tag and place it so we can see it, or put it up on your screen (for virtual).

As participants come in, make journal available to each participant. Ask them to tear out the name tag at the front of the journal, fold it to form a tent and write their name on it. Give a few welcoming comments. Introduce coaches and credentials.

We want to give you kudos for getting here. Some people take three to four attempts to get here.

You took a big step in coming here today. Confidentiality can be a concern in a workshop format, so everyone in the group will be tasked with maintaining confidentiality to the best of their ability. If you are feeling overwhelmed, you can get up and walk around. If you look upset, we may follow you to see if you need any help or give you a call.

Before we get into our first session, we want to go over a few housekeeping guidelines to make everyone feel comfortable.



## Housekeeping

Bathrooms

Parking

Bringing your **Alberta Anxiety to Calm for Youth** Journal each week.



## Housekeeping

- Each class will have a Vitality break about halfway through – this is a chance to refresh yourself—walk around, use the facilities and get some water.
- Bring your **Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth** journal each week.
- Bathrooms
- Parking

Take a look at the book you have in front of you. We will refer to this as your **Journal**. This is for you to keep and to work on from week to week so please bring it with you each time you come.

**Page 3** outlines some of these guidelines. Let's look at them now.

In order to make you feel more comfortable and safe in this group, we have come up with some guidelines.





1

## Workshop Guidelines

- Please make every effort to attend on time. If you must come late please slip in quietly and take a seat.
- If you are going to be late or miss a class, please let one of the coaches know ahead of time. We will ask that you review the material before the next class so you can fully participate.
- If you miss more than 2 classes, try booking into another workshop so you don't miss important information.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Confidentiality – keep information that comes up in group private.
- If there will be someone in the room observing the class, we will let you know.
- The PCN cannot control socialization, but intimate relationships outside of workshops are discouraged.
- Bringing snacks/water is permitted but please dispose of garbage afterwards. Please let us know if any severe allergies as soon as possible.
- We encourage participation in class, but private conversations are discouraged until break.
- If you need to leave the room before break, please give us a thumbs up so we know that you are ok. If you are gone for more than 5 minutes, one of us will come to check on you, or give you a phone call if we are running a virtual workshop.
- Please turn off all cell phones or put to silence/vibrate.
- Verbal or physical attacks on the other clients or coaches will not be tolerated in group. Please use your skills to manage angry urges. Anyone who violates this rule will be asked to leave group for that day and will be called to discuss relevant consequences.

Is there anything else that will help you feel more comfortable or safe in the group?

## Land Acknowledgement

We want to start today by doing a land acknowledgement, then we will move into an icebreaker.

Insert your own land acknowledgement here:

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Hand out one small piece of paper per person for the **Icebreaker** activity.

We will be getting to know you over the course of the workshop. In order to help you get to know us better, in small groups, we will get you to come up with one question that you would like to ask us.



## Can Anxiety Be Healthy?

Give participants about three minutes to come up with a question. Have one person from each group share that question with the class. Coaches take about 15 – 20 minutes to answer the questions so people feel comfortable.

We will now have you introduce yourselves. Tell us your name, pronoun and one thing you like to do.

**Alternate ideas:** favourite candy, colour, movie, thing to eat.

Thanks everyone for introducing yourself.

We can talk quite a bit about our anxiety. That is normal and makes us feel good that we are not alone, however, this class is focused on developing tools you can use. We will be focused on the here and now.



Our job is to keep everyone on track as coaches. If the conversation seems to go off track we want you to be aware that while we want to hear what you have to say we have goals for the day and may redirect you accordingly.

2

**Can anxiety be healthy?** Everyone experiences anxiety at times.

For example, it is normal to feel anxiety when you find a bear in your campsite!

This next slide shows what happens in our bodies when we are exposed to real danger. It sets off an alarm which is our “fight or flight response.” The slide shows some of the things that happen in our bodies and the purpose of those reactions.

## How the Body Reacts

- Breathing gets faster to take in more oxygen
- More blood to muscles and limbs; muscles tense up for more strength and speed
- More blood to brain to act more instinctively
- Heart beats quicker, blood pressure increases, blood sugar increases to give us more energy
- Pupils dilate to see clearer
- Sweat to prevent overheating
- Digestion slows down (we don’t need this during fight or flight)

We then jump out of the way to safety and our bodies return to normal.

## What happens when our bodies don’t return to normal?

You may feel:

- Stressed
- Anxious
- Worried
- Nervous
- Overwhelmed



2

## Fight, Flight or Freeze Misfires

You can be triggered to have the fight or flight response from an emotional memory. You get all the symptoms of fight or flight, but there is no real danger present, so we would say this is a misfiring of your alarm. We will help you fix your alarm.

The amygdala in the brain reacts automatically based on emotional experience... you get stuck in the emotional memory which makes your alarm go off! We need to retrain it.

Each time we meet, we'll be looking at these three areas and you will practice skills proven to help you manage your anxiety (**page 3** in **Journal**).



## Structure of Class

**Find Calm:** Learn exercises that will help me to manage my anxiety.

**Challenge Myself:** Challenge my thoughts, behaviours and emotions.

**Live Well:** Learn to improve my lifestyle.



## Structure of Class

**Find Calm:** Learn exercises that will help me to manage my anxiety.

**Challenge Myself:** Challenge my thoughts, behaviours and emotions.

**Live Well:** Learn to improve my lifestyle.

We want to set goals each week to allow you to decide what you want to practice and work on in the next week. No one is going to say anything profound enough in class that it will make everything better for you. **Page 2** of your journal gives a summary of the topics we will be covering over the 6 weeks.

You will have an opportunity to do a **Self Check-in** each week to reflect on how you used the skills throughout the week. You will have a **Check-out** each week to plan how you will practice the skills in the upcoming week.

The practice and the lived experience is where we really see progress. That is why the homework is so important.



## Questionnaire

We ask that you be open to evaluating the group experience so we can learn from you and other participants in order to make the necessary adjustments to the group. Also, you can compare the beginning of the class with the end to see how much improvement you experience. Please tear out the **Questionnaire** at the front of your journal and fill it out; or for virtual classes fill out the survey from the link in the chat box. Mark down the number you scored, as you can refer to it in the last class to see what areas have improved after taking this course. After that, please feel free to take a short **Vitality Break**.

Give them 5 minutes to complete it and a 5 minute break if needed.

We will now get started on our content for today. **Page 5** lists the skills we will be working on this week.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 1



Welcome to  
**Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth**  
**Week 1**



5

## Week 1 Skills

**Find Calm: Breathing Exercises**

**Challenge Myself: How Can I Make These Weeks Count?**

**Live Well: Sleep Well**



## Skill Find Calm: Breathing Exercises



5

## Skill Find Calm: Breathing Exercises

We are going to give you an opportunity to experience some breathing exercises.

5

You can use these when you are feeling anxious and on a regular basis to maintain control over your stress. Practicing breathing exercises regularly can help calm your nervous system and lower your baseline anxiety. Practice daily starting a couple of times a day and build up to 15 times a day.

We are going to watch a short video about the brain and how it is affected by anxiety. You will learn how to use breathing to help you with anxiety. Make sure you practice the breathing at the end of the video.

Before we watch the video, I want you to notice your breath. Put your hand on your stomach and notice are your breathing deeply, shallow, fast, or slow?

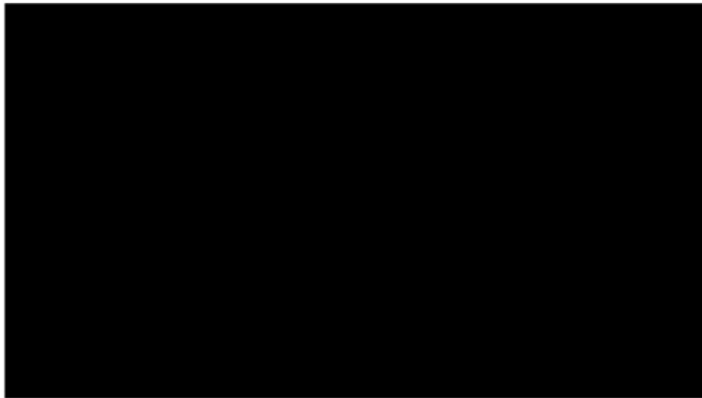


Have participants watch this [video](#) (3:06 minutes).





## Dan Siegel Video



**5** **Reminder!** It will take more than breathing to reach your goal, but this is where we can start.

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on **page 5**.

**5** **What did I notice before the breathing exercises?**

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**What did I notice after?**

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**What did I learn?**

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**Note to Coaches:**  
There are lots of great resources you can search up on your own- search YouTube or Google by typing in Breathing Exercises or calm breathing bubble.  
Apps: Mindshift, Smiles, Calm breathing bubble.



**Skill**  
**Challenge Myself: How Can I**  
**Make These Weeks Count?**



**Skill**  
**Challenge Myself:**  
**How Can I Make These Weeks Count?**



Think about what you want to accomplish by coming to this workshop. For example: I want to come for the full 6 weeks and learn one new skill each week to help my anxiety. Imagine 6 weeks in the future, when worry is not stopping you from your usual activities.

Write your own personal answers on **page 6**.



6

**Why am I here?**

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**What is one goal I want to accomplish in the next 6 weeks?**

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**When I am successful, what else will I be able to do?**

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Keep looking back at this throughout the 6 weeks. It's common for people to adjust their goals as they go.

**Remember:** Try to take time for yourself by limiting the number of sports, get togethers with friends, etc. so you have some down time. Take time for fun, friends and sleep and ask your family, teachers or friends if you need help finding balance.

## Large Group Discussion

Discuss the answers to the questions on the [PowerPoint slide](#). What am I going to do to make these weeks count?



## Skill

### Live Well: Sleep Well



## Skill

### Live Well: Sleep Well

#### Note to Coaches:

"Teens experience a natural shift in circadian rhythm," says Johns Hopkins sleep expert Laura Sterni, M.D. This makes it more difficult for them to fall asleep before 11 p.m.

According to Johns Hopkins pediatrician Michael Crocetti, M.D., M.P.H., teens need more sleep than they needed at age 10. Why? "Teenagers are going through a second developmental stage of cognitive maturation," explains Crocetti. Additional sleep supports their developing brain, as well as physical growth spurts.



7

There is no perfect number of hours you need to sleep per night. Everybody is different. It's important to pay attention to how you feel in the morning. Do you feel rested? Can you focus at school? Are you grumpier and more irritable than usual? Pay attention to your body and it will tell you if you're getting enough sleep.

**Start your day in sunshine.** Have breakfast outside or by a sunny window. This helps your body regulate its biological clock and helps set up your sleep for that night.

**Rethink your schedule.** If you typically do homework after evening activities, try to find other time in the day to get this done. This will allow time to unwind and have your brain prepare for sleep.

**Keep the tech out of your room.** Using devices late at night interferes with your sleep in several ways. The stimulating content can get your brain excited, the light the device emits can stop your brain from producing your sleep hormone (melatonin), and you may stay up later due to the addictive nature of apps, texting, and social media.

**Avoid energy drinks.** These can also have an impact on your sleep, try to avoid drinking these most days to improve your sleep.

**Stick to a consistent sleep schedule.** Even on the weekends! When you go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, it's easier for your brain to get into a routine.

**Practice your breathing techniques:**  
4, 7, 8, zen...

**Make your room dark, quiet, and a comfortable temperature.**

**Are any of the habits or patterns we discussed interfering with your sleep?**

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**What will you try differently this week to help with your sleep?**

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**Note to Coaches:**

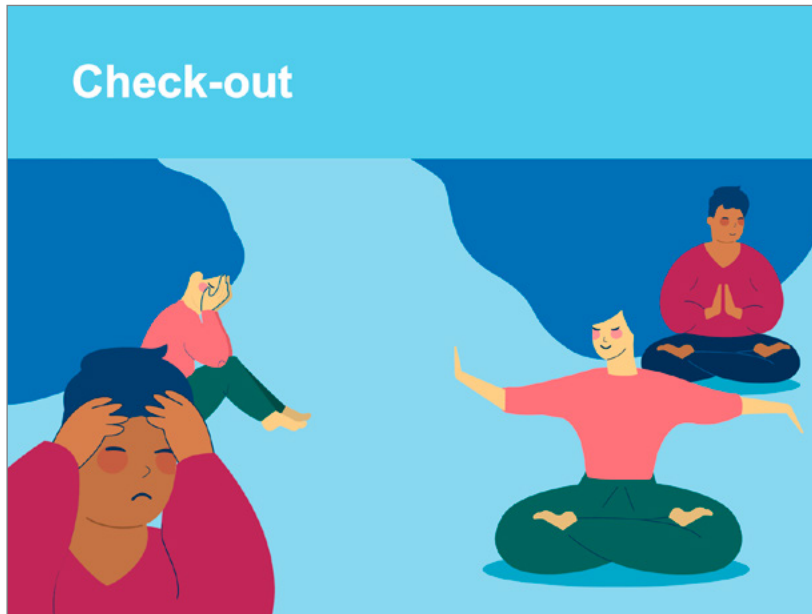
Small goals, easy to do and easy to complete.

Consider sharing the **My Self-care Journey** booklet or PDF which discusses goals.

Feel free to add **My Self Care Journey** on your own website, which is located on the **Red Deer PCN Website**.

Changing your way of thinking and your daily activities doesn't happen by accident, it takes practice. Each week we will allow time to plan your week. This planning time is to direct your efforts to making healthy living choices and to be accountable to your goals. The skills can be tailored to you; each week builds upon the others.

Taking time to plan increases your commitment to your health and the program. What makes goals successful?



## Check-out



**Find Calm: Breathing Exercises.** I will practice the breathing exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use the breathing exercises?

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**Challenge Myself: How Can I Make These Weeks Count?** How will I remind myself and set aside time in my day to make my goal a reality (e.g., tell a close friend, post a note on my mirror)?

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**Live Well: Sleep Well.** I will practice the following good sleep habits:

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Take a few minutes to plan how you will work on the tools you learned this week on **page 8**.



We are going to have you work in small groups to share what you plan to work on this week. As you practice the skills, you will be able to tweak them to work for you. By sharing in your small groups, it is a way to hold yourself accountable, especially when you are trying out a new habit.

Have them work in small groups to say what they plan to work on this week. Give them a few minutes to do this.

Then allow people to share in the large group what they will put in place and practice over the next week.

Thank you for coming and have a good week.





# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 2

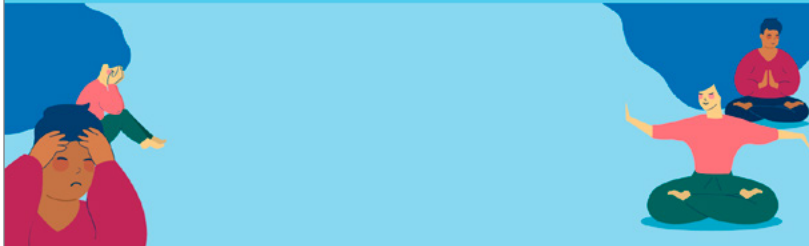


### Welcome to Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth Week 2

Welcome back!

Please display name tent.

Complete Self Check-in.



**Week 2 PowerPoint presentation** up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the **Self Check-in** on **page 9** and be ready for the large group discussion of their homework. Allow about



## Self Check-in

**Stay Calm:** When did I use the **breathing exercises**?

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**What difference did it make?**

---

---



9

**Challenge Myself:** Did I set a goal for myself over the next 6 weeks?

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**Live Well:** What good **sleep** habits did I use?

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## Large Group Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** Did I set a goal for myself over the next 6 weeks?

**Live Well:** Sleep

**Find Calm:** Breathing Exercises



## Check-in

### Large Group Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections with the group. Allow about 10 minutes.

#### Comments and questions for **Large Group Discussion:**

- We do more things right than wrong
- You've had a week of practice
- What was your biggest success last week?
- **Breathing Exercises:** When did you use them? What difference did it make?

**Reminder:** 15 times per day is suggested.

- What is your plan to use these, moving forward? Did you find a way to hold yourself accountable to your goals this week?
- **Sleep Well:** What did you discover about your sleep habits? What good sleep habits did you use? What difference did it make?

*Note to Coaches:*  
Have them focus on sharing successes.  
Build on these.  
Go through each skill, one by one on the slide and have participants share.



## Week 2 Skills

**Find Calm:** Progressive Muscle Relaxation

**Challenge Myself:** Respond to Stress

**Live Well:** Choose to Create Balance



## Week 2 Skills

**Find Calm:** Progressive Muscle Relaxation

**Challenge Myself:** Respond to Stress

**Live Well:** Choose to Create Balance



**Skill**  
**Find Calm:**  
**Progressive Muscle Relaxation**



10

**Skill**  
**Find Calm: Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

We want to give you a variety of ways to relax.

Relaxation is a way to change the focus of attention for managing a wandering mind and the physical symptoms that come with anxiety.

Today you will experience **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**. Last week, we learned about breathing exercises. Find a comfortable position for yourself. I want you to first just notice your body. Is it tense in any spots?



Play **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** video (6:27 minutes).



Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on **page 10**.

10

What did I notice before **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**?

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What did I notice after?

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What did I learn?

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When would I use this skill?

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Once you have the sequence, you can even do parts of the **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**.

If you want a reference back to this skill, it is in your **Journal**: [youtube.com/watch?v=Xv5ouU8FZVc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv5ouU8FZVc).



## Skill

### Challenge Myself: Respond to Stress



11

## Skill

### Challenge Myself: Respond to Stress

This week our challenge yourself message is learn to respond to stress.

How many of you have stress in your life? Put up your hand.

What is the connection between stress and anxiety?

Allow a moment for answers.

What we are looking for: stress is any demand placed on the mind or body. It becomes a problem when life's demands exceed the resources we have to cope. Longstanding stress can turn into anxiety. As it says in their **Journals**, stress can create or magnify anxiety and deplete your resources to deal with it.

*Note to Coaches:*  
Stress is the impact of external pressures we are finding it hard to cope with. We usually know what we are stressed about. The symptoms of stress typically disappear after the stressful situation is over.



11

Stress can cause big problems if you do not recognize and respond to it well. It can create or magnify anxiety and deplete your resources to deal with it.

**What situations or experiences make me feel stressed?**

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**How does my stress show itself?**

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**What are my current ways of dealing with stress? Socially? Emotionally? Behaviourally?**

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**What is a time I was proud of how I responded to stress? What was it about that time I feel good about?**

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**Once I am aware, what will I choose to do differently?**

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**What is my plan?**

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**What additional tools or support do I need to help me deal with the situation?**

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I am going to give you some time to answer the questions on **page 11**. Then you can take a break. When we come back, we can discuss these in a large group. You will have a total of 20 minutes to complete the questions and take your break.

## Large Group Discussion

What are some situations or experiences that you find stressful?

What tells you that you are stressed?

What are common ways of dealing with stress?

Can you share a time in which you were proud of how you responded to stress? What was it about that time that you feel good about?

Have these on flipchart paper or use a whiteboard on virtual platform.

1. Plan
2. Self-care
3. Skills

Amplify positive coping techniques.

Coaches make a statement that these proudest times all share in common that the person approached the stressor instead of avoiding it.

After this discussion is there anything you would like to improve on?

11

Make a plan, use self-care, or gain a skill.

What we did today is a positive way to reflect daily or even weekly on how you respond to stress. This is about creating a new habit over time. Stay persistent.



## Challenge Myself: Respond to Stress

**S:** Stop – Be present

**T:** Take a breath

**O:** Observe my reactions

**P:** Proceed – Choose a healthy response!



There also is a **STOP card** process on **page 12** that can be helpful to slow down your reaction in the moment so you can respond in a manner that's most helpful to you. When you are feeling stressed your brain/body can be reacting like there is danger, as discussed in week 1, so remember this process or have this card with you in the moment.

Take a moment to hand out **STOP cards** or put PDF in email to participants.



### Example

**Example:** I'm at a social gathering with a lot of people. I look around and see that there are a lot of people I don't know. I'm starting to notice that I'm shaking and about to spill my pop.

**S:** Stop!

**T:** Breathe

**O:** My neck is tight, my heart is pounding and I'm sweating and shaking

**P:** I will take a step back, scan the room and see who I know. I will seek that person out and ask, "How is your family doing?"



12

## Slowing Down to Reduce Stress

You can use this **acronym** to remind you of the **steps to take** when you notice you are **feeling stressed**.

**Stop: Be Present**

**Take a Breath**

**Observe My Reactions**

**Proceed: Choose a Healthy Response**

**An example to consider:** I'm at a gathering with a lot of people. I look around and see that there are a lot of people I don't know. I'm starting to notice that I'm shaking and about to spill my pop.

**S:** Stop!

**T:** Breathe

**O:** My neck is tight, my heart is pounding and I'm sweating and shaking

**P:** I will take a step back, scan the room and see who I know. I will seek that person out and ask questions like: *How are you doing? How was school? or What's new?*

Describe to participants that during this section of the program, we will focus on the **O** and **P** parts of **STOP**.



12

## Activity 1: Observe My Reactions

Ask participants to think about being in an anxiety provoking situation. Think about some of the signals their body is giving them that tells them that their anxiety is rising.

12

Write down the signals your body is giving you.

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Explain that when they start to feel some of these sensations to **S-T-O-P**.

13

## Activity 2: Making a Plan

Explain when we feel anxious or worried, we may engage in specific behaviours that will help us feel better and other times, we may engage in behaviours that make things worse.

In the example from above, this person chose to seek out someone they know and initiate conversation with them. This is a behaviour that would likely help to make things better for them at the social gathering. On the other hand, if they chose to leave the party and go home to their bedroom, this behaviour may likely make them feel worse (missing out, upsetting friend who they were supposed to meet, etc.)

13

Think about your anxiety and how you respond to it. In the left column, write down some of the behaviours you engage in or would like to engage in to make things better. In the right column, write down behaviours you engage in that may make you feel worse.



13

Behaviours I do to make things feel better	Behaviours I do in that make me feel worse

Noticing and recognizing these behaviours can help us to shift how we behave and can positively impact our anxiety. The message today is to listen to your internal cues in order to respond to stress. But there are also external factors that you can work on to lower your level of stress. And that is what we will focus on next—creating balance in your life through good self-care.



## Skill

### Live Well: **Self-care**



## Skill

### Live Well: **Self-care**

### What is Self-care?

You can have participants give some examples.

**Self-care** is anything that meets your physical, emotional or psychological needs. For example, it can be as simple as hygiene to spending time with friends. Balancing healthy self-care is having time for the things we need to do and want to do.



## Self-care Worksheet

Self-care category	Why is this important?	How am I already doing this?	What is one more thing I could do to improve this. Give an example.	Do I have control over this?
<b>Self-regulation or self-control</b> e.g. When I get mad at my sister, I leave the room rather than hitting her.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Hygiene and appearance</b> e.g. Brush my teeth, comb my hair, get dressed, have a shower.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Healthy leisure</b> e.g. Paint, read or play outside with my dog.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Healthy eating habits –</b> e.g. I try to follow the Canada Food Guide.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Exercise</b> e.g. 60 minutes of moderate activity daily (run, bike, swim, walk dog, dance, skateboard).				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Inner peace and spirituality</b> e.g. Meditate, go out in nature, church.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Self-improvement</b> e.g. Try something new, be curious, set a goal for myself to accomplish.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Sobriety</b> e.g. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and street drugs.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Health management</b> e.g. Go to the doctor for regular checkups, practice safe sex.				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



15

## Large Group Discussion

What is getting in the way of finding your own **self-care**?

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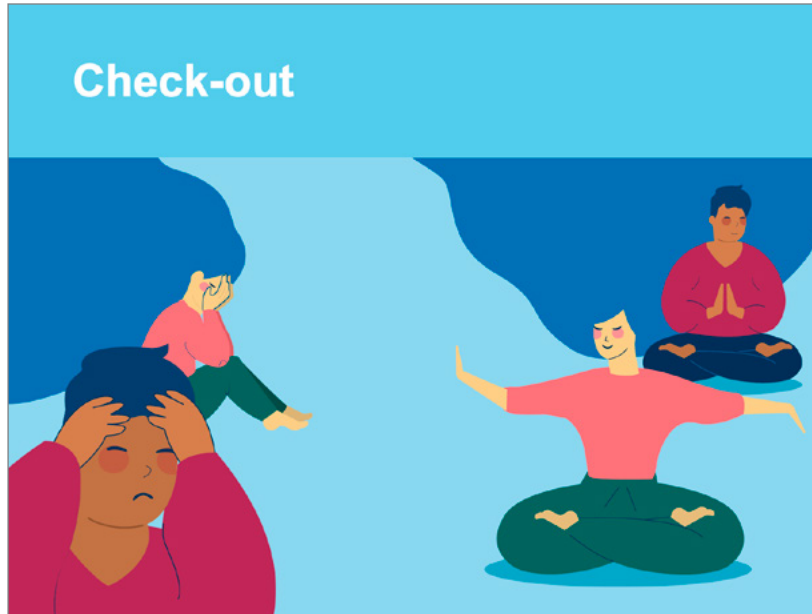
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What is one thing you could work on this week improve your **self-care**?

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## Check-out

The three areas we worked on today are:

- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**
- **Respond to Stress**
- **Choose to Create Balance**

Take a few minutes to complete the **Check-out** on **page 16**.



16

**Find Calm: Progressive Muscle Relaxation.** I will continue to practice progressive muscle relaxation \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

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**Challenge Myself: Respond to Stress.** How will I respond when stressful situations come up?

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**Live Well: Choose Self-care.** What is one small thing I will do to improve my self-care?

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---

We are going to have you work in small groups to share what you plan to work on this week. As you practice the skills, you will be able to tweak them to work for you. By sharing in your small groups, it is a way to hold yourself accountable, especially when you are trying out a new habit.

Have them work in small groups to say what they plan to work on this week. Give them a few minutes to do this.

Then allow people to share in the large group what they will put in place and practice over the next week.

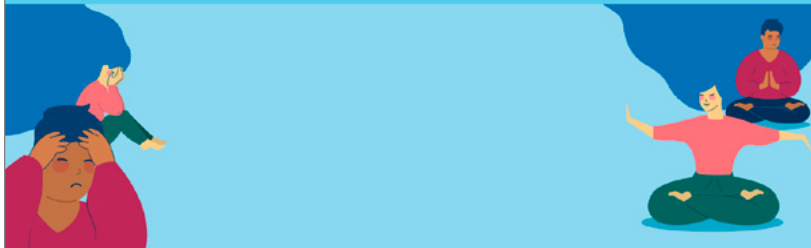
# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 3



### Welcome to Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth Week 3

Welcome back!  
Please display name tent.  
Complete Self Check-in.



**Week 3 PowerPoint presentation** up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the **Self Check-in** on **page 17** and be ready for the large group discussion of their homework. Allow about 5 minutes.

17

## Self Check-in

**Find Calm:** When did I use the **progressive muscle relaxation**?

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**What difference did it make?**

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17

**Challenge Myself:** What did I do differently when a stressful situation came up?

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**Live Well:** What did I do to take care of myself this week?

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## Large Group Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** Progressive Muscle Relaxation

**Live Well:** Respond to Stress

**Find Calm:** Choose to Create Balance



## Check-in

### Large Group Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections with the group. Allow about 10 minutes.

#### Comments and questions for **Large Group Discussion:**

- We do more things right than wrong.
- You've had a week of practice.
- What was your biggest success last week?
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Did you use it? When?
- **Respond to Stress:** What solutions worked for you? What did you do differently when a stressful situation came up?
- **Choose to Self-care:** What are some small things you did to get closer to the balance you want to see in your life?

*Note to Coaches:*  
 Have them focus on sharing successes.  
 Build on these.  
 Go through each skill, one by one on the slide and have participants share.



## Week 3 Skills

**Find Calm:** Take a Mental Vacation

**Live Well:** Thinking Traps

**Find Calm:** Be Active



17

## Week 3 Skills

**Find Calm:** Take a Mental Vacation

**Challenge Myself:** Thinking Traps

**Live Well:** Be Active



## Skill

### Find Calm: Take a Mental Vacation



18

## Skill

### Find Calm: Take a Mental Vacation



Play audio on [PowerPoint presentation](#) or read out the [Mental Vacation](#) below (2:39 minutes).

As we mentioned on previous weeks, we are giving you a menu of options—a broad range of ways to relax, so you have many to choose from. Today you will have a chance to experience guided imagery and help you [Take a Mental Vacation](#). Before we try this exercise, notice how you are feeling today, pay attention to what your body is telling you. Now lets take a few minutes to listen and follow along with the instructions.



18

Close your eyes. Take a slow, smooth breath in through your nose...and breathe out slowly through your mouth. Take another slow, smooth breath in through your nose for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold...and out through your mouth for 1, 2, 3, 4...and hold. And again, in for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold...out for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold. And keep taking nice slow breathes in...and out.

Now, imagine yourself in a peaceful place. A place where you feel calm and safe. Maybe it's a special place that you've been before, or maybe it's somewhere you would like to go. Perhaps somewhere like a beautiful beach, in a forest, beside a little stream, or sitting by a warm crackling fire.

Really picture yourself in this place.

Now, look around you...

Notice what you see...

Notice what you hear...

Notice what you smell...

Notice what you feel...under your feet...on your skin.

Really relax in this place.

Keep imagining yourself in this place while focusing on your breathing. Take a slow, smooth breath in through your nose...and breathe slowly out through your mouth.

Now, keep taking slow, long breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. When you feel ready, gently open your eyes.





Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on **page 19**.

19

**What was your reaction when we played this? What did you notice?**

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**How could you use this? When?**

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---

**What did I notice before the [guided imagery](#)?**

---

---

## Large Group Discussion

- What was your reaction when we played this?
- What did you notice?
- How could you use this?
- When?



**Skill**  
**Challenge Myself:**  
**Challenge My Thoughts**



**Skill**  
**Challenge Myself: Challenge My Thoughts**

Now we will look at our second tool of the day which is to **Challenge My Thoughts**. Last week we looked at how thoughts, feelings and behaviors are connected.



20

## Automatic Thoughts (Thinking Traps)

Our brain is designed to think in patterns. Through time, these patterns become automatic.

Things to know about **Automatic Thoughts (Thinking Traps)**:

- Automatic thoughts are very believable but can be inaccurate. Don't believe everything you think.
- If our automatic thoughts are biased, critical, or negative we can feel anxious without knowing why.

### What's Going On

Thinking only of possible outcomes at either extreme (really good or really bad) and not seeing all the possible outcomes in-between (or the "grey"). Most of life is somewhere in the middle.

**Examples:** One friend gets angry at you. *"Nobody likes me, I'm totally unlovable and selfish."*  
Failing one test. *"I'm obviously a stupid loser."*

Questions to ask to help lead you to more realistic thinking:

**What would a friend say about my thoughts?**

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**What would I tell a friend who was having these thoughts?**

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Is this 100% true?  Yes  No

Today we will look at how our **Automatic Thoughts** contribute to our anxiety.

Have participants listen as you read through the examples of the **thinking traps** on **page 46** of the **Coach's Manual**.

## Automatic Thoughts (Thinking Traps)

### All or Nothing Thinking

Sometimes called “black and white thinking.”

*If I'm not perfect, I have failed.*

*Either I do it right or not at all.*

**Example:** Presentation at school

*I'm going to ace the performance or totally flop.*

#### Challenging the Trap:

- Things don't have to be black and white.
- What is the less extreme way of looking at this?
- Are there any shades of grey or acceptable options between perfect and horrible?
- What is a reasonable option between the two extremes that I can believe in?

### Mental Filter

**Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.**

**Noticing our failures but not seeing our success.**

**Example:** Thinking about the one person you didn't have a good conversation with at the party, rather than the three people with whom you had great conversations.

#### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I only noticing bad stuff and filtering out the good?
- What is going well here?
- What have I done right?
- Am I wearing my “gloomy glasses?”
- What is a balanced view of what is happening?

### Jumping to Conclusions

There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

1. **Mind Reading**  
(imagining we know what others are thinking)

**Example:**

*I now they are talking about me right now. They are thinking about how weird I look.*

2. **Fortune Telling** (predicting the future)

**Example:**

*I couldn't find a job last summer so I won't be able to get one this summer.*

#### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I thinking that I can predict the future?
- Are there other outcomes that may be better or just as likely?
- Am I 100% sure that is what this person is thinking?
- These are my thoughts, not theirs.
- What else might be happening for them?
- Am I assuming the worst possible outcome will happen?
- What is most likely to happen?



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## Emotional Reasoning

Assuming that because we feel a certain way, what we think must be true.

**Example:**

*I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot.*

**Challenging the Trap:**

- Just because it feels bad doesn't guarantee it is bad.
- My feelings are a reaction to my thoughts.
- Is it a false alarm?
- Would another person feel this way in this situation?
- Is it possible that my emotions are colouring how I see the situation?

## Labelling

Assigning labels to ourselves or other people.

**Example:**

*I'm a loser.*

*I'm completely useless.*

*They're such an idiot.*

**Challenging the Trap:**

- Am I telling myself that this label is all I am?
- Is that really fair and accurate?
- What is the evidence that this is true of myself or others all of the time?
- Am I comparing my bloopers to someone else's polished product?
- Am I labelling someone else based on one event?

## Overgeneralizing

Seeing a pattern based on a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw.

*Everything is always bad.*

*Nothing good ever happens.*

**Example:** Missing one soccer goal.

*I never get things right.*

**Challenging the Trap:**

- Am I taking one event and applying it to everything forever?
- What is the likelihood that things could change, be better, or just be different from how they are now?
- Does this thought help me?
- Or am I trapping myself?

## Disqualifying the Positive

Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another.

**Example:** Thinking about the question you couldn't answer on the test, rather than on the ones you could.

**Challenging the Trap:**

- Am I overlooking something good that I have done?
- What is the bigger picture here?
- Am I allowed to feel good about the things I have done well without saying they don't matter or were easy?

## Magnification (Catastrophizing) and Minimization

Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important.

**Example:** Getting one bad grade.

*I won't get into university and I'll end up homeless.*

### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I making this a bigger deal than it needs to be?
- Am I discounting something that should be taken into account as well?
- What is the big picture of what is happening?
- Thinking the worst possible thing is definitely going to happen is not helpful right now.
- What's most likely to happen?

## Shoulds and Musts

Using critical words like *should*, *must* or *ought* can make us feel guilty or like we have already failed.

If we apply shoulds to other people, the result is often frustration.

**Example:**

*I must be on time for school everyday.*

*I should be at volleyball practice everyday.*

### Challenging the Trap:

- Am I putting more pressure on myself setting expectations that are almost impossible?
- What would be a more realistic expectation?
- Can I accept what is happening and where I am without judgement and self-criticism?
- If this is where I am, what is the point in "shoulding" myself?
- Can I make a plan to move more to where I want to be, rather than wasting my energy beating myself up?

## Personalization

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely blaming other people for something that was your fault.

**Example:**

*My boyfriend is upset. I must have done something wrong.*

In reality, he is just tired from a busy week of school.

### Challenging the Trap:

- There's my internal bully again, would most people who really know me say that about me?
- Is this something that I am totally responsible for?
- There was nothing that someone else could have done.
- Can I take responsibility for my role and then allow myself some compassion by viewing the role of others as well?
- Can I get a whole picture rather than just part of it?

## Magical Thinking

You think everything will be better when something happens in your life.

**Example:**

*If I were popular, all my problems would disappear.*

### Challenge the Trap:

- What is the evidence this thought is true? What is the evidence this thought is Not true?
- No one and/or nothing is responsible for your happiness. Your happiness depends on yourself and your choices.
- What do you have that is good or makes you happy? Be grateful for what you do have instead of focusing on what you don't have.
- Am I am 100% certain this is true.



## Group Activity

Now let's try identifying these **Thinking Traps** here by colouring in the traps. Choose a colour to represent each of the following **Thinking Traps** in the key below.

Colour	Thinking Traps
	All or Nothing Thinking
	Personalization
	Mind Reading
	Emotional Reasoning
	Labelling
	Overgeneralizing
	Magnification
	Fortune Telling
	Disqualifying the Positive
	Magical Thinking
	Shoulds and Musts
	Mental Filter

Carefully read the thought bubbles and determine which **Thinking Trap** applies. Then colour each bubble according to the key above. For example, if you have chosen **green** for “blaming” and see a thought bubble with an example of blaming, you will colour that bubble **green**.



## COLOURING THE **THINKING TRAPS**

**All or Nothing Thinking:**  
Tasha didn't sit by me today, so I never want to talk to her again.

**Overgeneralizing:**  
My parents got divorced so I don't think I will have a happy family.

**Labelling:**  
I am an idiot.

**Magical Thinking:**  
If I had a million dollars, my life would be better.

**Mental Filter:**  
You just had a great night out with friends, but when you get home you notice food in your teeth. You think to yourself, “My friends are not going to like me anymore because I am a slob.”

**Shoulds and Musts:**  
I shouldn't have eaten any junk food.

**Mind Reading:**  
I know she hates me and doesn't want to be friends with me.

**Fortune Telling:**  
I am not going to make any friends next year.

**Personalization (Blame):**  
I made a bad grade on a test because the teacher is terrible and the class is stupid.

**Emotional Reasoning:**  
I am feeling confused about my homework, so I am stupid.

**Disqualifying the Positive:**  
I have a great new best friend but she's nothing like my last friend.

**Magnification:**  
She cut in line, so I think I should push her out of line.

Adapted from the original written by Nicole Batiste.



You will need 10 different colours.

Try using these tools and questions regularly to help you challenge your own thinking.





## Skill

### Live Well: Be Active



## Skill

### Live Well: Be Active



*"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live." - Jim Rohn*

Research has shown that regular physical exercise can decrease symptoms of depression and anxiety. It can also improve our sleep and give us more energy to do the things we love to do.

5 minutes of movement can be enough to decrease an anxiety episode. Any movement counts..... going for a walk, shooting hoops, dancing in your room. Whatever movement brings you joy... do that thing!



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## Movement Break

Choose 1 of the 3 options below to experience how activity can improve the way you feel.

1. 4-5 minute virtual [Movement Break](#)
2. 4-5 minute obstacle course in room
3. 5 minute walk outside

What movement activity do you love to do?

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What gets in the way?

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How can you build it into your day?

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Use the link provided in the [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Have each participant pick their favourite activity and do each activity for 10-20 seconds.

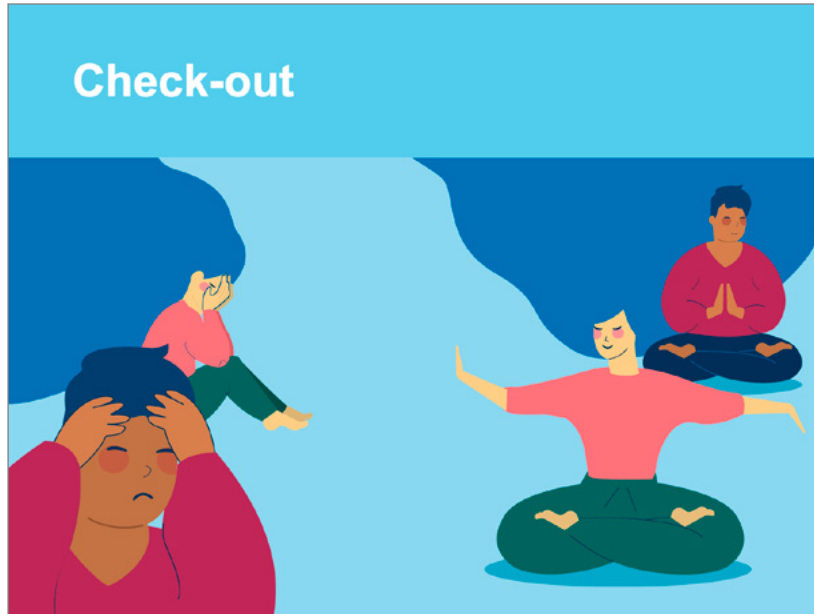
If you're running an in person workshop go outside for a walk.

## Large Group Discussion

What movement activity do you love to do?

What gets in the way?

How can you build it into your day?



## Check-out

The three areas we worked on today are:

- **Take a Mental Vacation**
- **Challenge My Thoughts**
- **Be Active**

Take a few minutes to complete the **Check-out** on **page 26**.



26

**Find Calm: Take a Mental Vacation.** I will continue to practice guided imagery \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. What time will I use this?

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**Challenge Myself: Challenge My Thoughts.** How will I challenge my thoughts?

---

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**Live Well: Be Active.** What is one small thing I will do to be active?

---

---

We are going to have you work in small groups to share what you plan to work on this week. As you practice the skills, you will be able to tweak them to work for you. By sharing in your small groups, it is a way to hold yourself accountable, especially when you are trying out a new habit.

Have them work in small groups to say what they plan to work on this week. Give them a few minutes to do this.

Then allow people to share in the large group what they will put in place and practice over the next week.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 4



**Welcome to  
Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth  
Week 4**

Welcome back!  
Please display name tent.  
Complete Self Check-in.

**Week 4 PowerPoint presentation** up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the **Self Check-in** on **page 27** and be ready for the large group discussion of their homework. Allow about 5 minutes.

27

## Self Check-in

**Find Calm:** When did I use the **mental vacation**?

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---

**What difference did it make?**

---

---



27

**Challenge Myself:** What did I do differently to **challenge my thoughts**?

---

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**Live Well:** What did I do to **be active** this week?

---

---



## Large Group Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** Take a Mental Vacation

**Live Well:** Challenge My Thoughts

**Find Calm:** Be Active



## Check-in

### Large Group Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections with the group. Allow about 10 minutes.

#### Comments and questions for **Large Group Discussion:**

- We do more things right than wrong.
- You've had a week of practice.
- What was your biggest success last week?
- **Take a Mental Vacation:** Did you use it? When?
- **Thinking Traps:** What solutions worked for you? What did you do differently when a stressful situation came up?
- **Be Active:** What are some small things you did to get closer to the balance you want to see in your life?

*Note to Coaches:*  
Have them focus on sharing successes.  
Build on these.

*Go through each skill, one by one on the slide and have participants share.*



## Week 4 Skills

**Find Calm:** Loving Kindness

**Challenge Myself:** Honouring My Emotions

**Live Well:** Build Support



27

## Week 4 Skills

**Find Calm:** Loving Kindness

**Challenge Myself:** Honouring My Emotions

**Live Well:** Build Support





**Skill**  
**Find Calm: Loving Kindness**



**Skill**  
**Find Calm: Loving Kindness**



Often people who experience anxiety are hard on themselves. We want you to learn how to become kinder and more understanding to yourself. We are going to practice a loving kindness meditation now.



Play **video** (3:30 minutes)



**Did you know**

Practicing this meditation can help you be more positive, forgiving and kind and understanding to yourself and others. It can help you to accept who you are without the need to be perfect (antidote to perfectionism).



## Large Group Discussion

28

**What was your reaction to the meditation?**

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**What did you notice?**

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**How would you use this? When?**

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Some people struggle with doing this one in a group—it's personal. You can try this when you are alone at home: [youtu.be/CEk9KvPXKEQ](https://youtu.be/CEk9KvPXKEQ).

Many people struggle with the part about turning the loving kindness back on yourself.

It goes back to our beliefs about ourselves and our interpretation of those beliefs.

Remember that we are giving you a menu of tools to choose from. Try them, practice them and continue using the ones that you get the most from.



## Skill

### Challenge Myself: Honouring My Emotions



29

## Skill

### Challenge Myself: Honouring My Emotions

Let's talk about emotions.

To kick this off we are going to play **Emotions Charades**.

You will need 5 volunteers. You will give each volunteer an emotion to act out and have the other participants guess the emotion.

**For in-person:** Give piece of paper with the emotion.

**For Zoom:** Send them a private message with the emotion.

Use common emotion words such as angry, sad, scared, disappointed, surprised, etc.



29

**Do you think emotions are helpful? Unhelpful?**

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Your emotions are there to tell you about yourself. There is no right or wrong emotion. They just are. They give us information about ourselves. When we learn to identify what we're feeling and have tools to respond, it can positively impact our well-being.



### Our Emotions Can Be Like a Fire Alarm

- What do you do when you hear the fire alarm?
  - Smash it?
  - Ignore it?
  - Look around for a fire?
  - Change the battery?
- What are the consequences?



## Our Emotions Can Be Like a Fire Alarm

What do you do when you hear the fire alarm?

- Smash it?
- Ignore it?
- Look around for a fire?
- Change the battery?

What are the consequences?

Emotions are like alarm bells, when you ignore them, sometimes your *house* becomes a raging fire.

Let's focus on the top three emotions that cause anxiety: **sadness**, **anger**, and **fear**.

29

Do you allow yourself to fully feel these emotions?

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How do you handle these emotions?

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Do you believe that we can increase the intensity of these emotion? What you need to remember is that all of these emotions are natural and serve a purpose. We have already addressed the emotion of feeling scared, which can cause anxiety, in week 1. The purpose is to keep us safe and to survive.

Let's talk about the other two common emotions that cause anxiety:

29

**When would anger be helpful?**

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**How could sadness be helpful?**

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**What would it mean if we didn't feel sadness?**

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## Emotions Give Us Direction

- Emotions need to be specific to give us direction.
  - For example, "Something's wrong" vs. "I feel mad" vs. "I feel irritated."
- We need to respond to our emotions, not run from them or try to force them to go away or change.



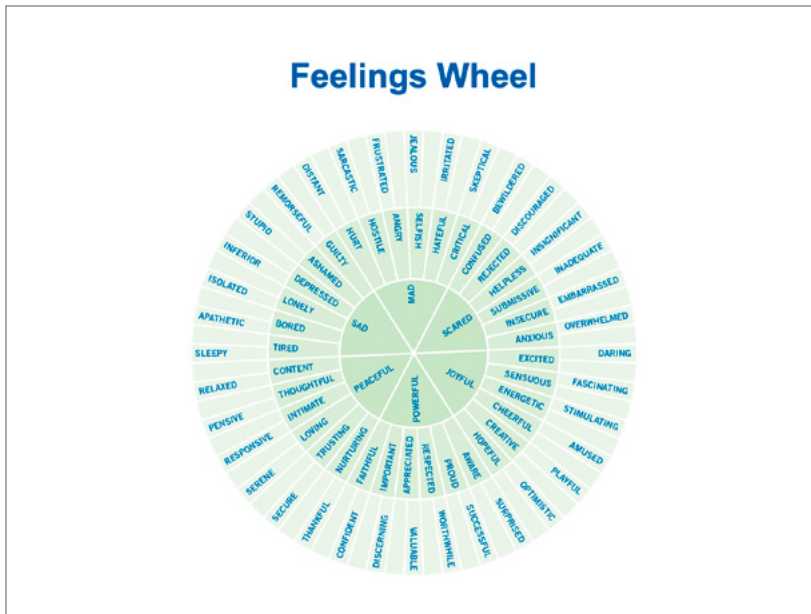
Emotions need to be specific to give us direction (e.g., we need to acknowledge that there is a difference between an alarm that sounds like a ringtone, versus a fire alarm.)

### I feel mad vs. I feel irritated

We need to respond to our emotions, not run from them, or try to force them to go away or change.

Being specific about our emotions can be very helpful. When we don't pay attention and define them, we tend to just force them down. These emotions can bubble up in the form of anxiety. Being specific can help us decide what to do.

If you are aware during the day of where you are at emotionally and those weaker emotions are rising to the simmering point, you generally are able to catch yourself and calm yourself down just like removing the pot from the stove. If you don't notice the water simmering, and let the water continue to boil, it will take a lot longer for the water to cool down—just like it will take you a lot longer to cool down from your stronger emotions.



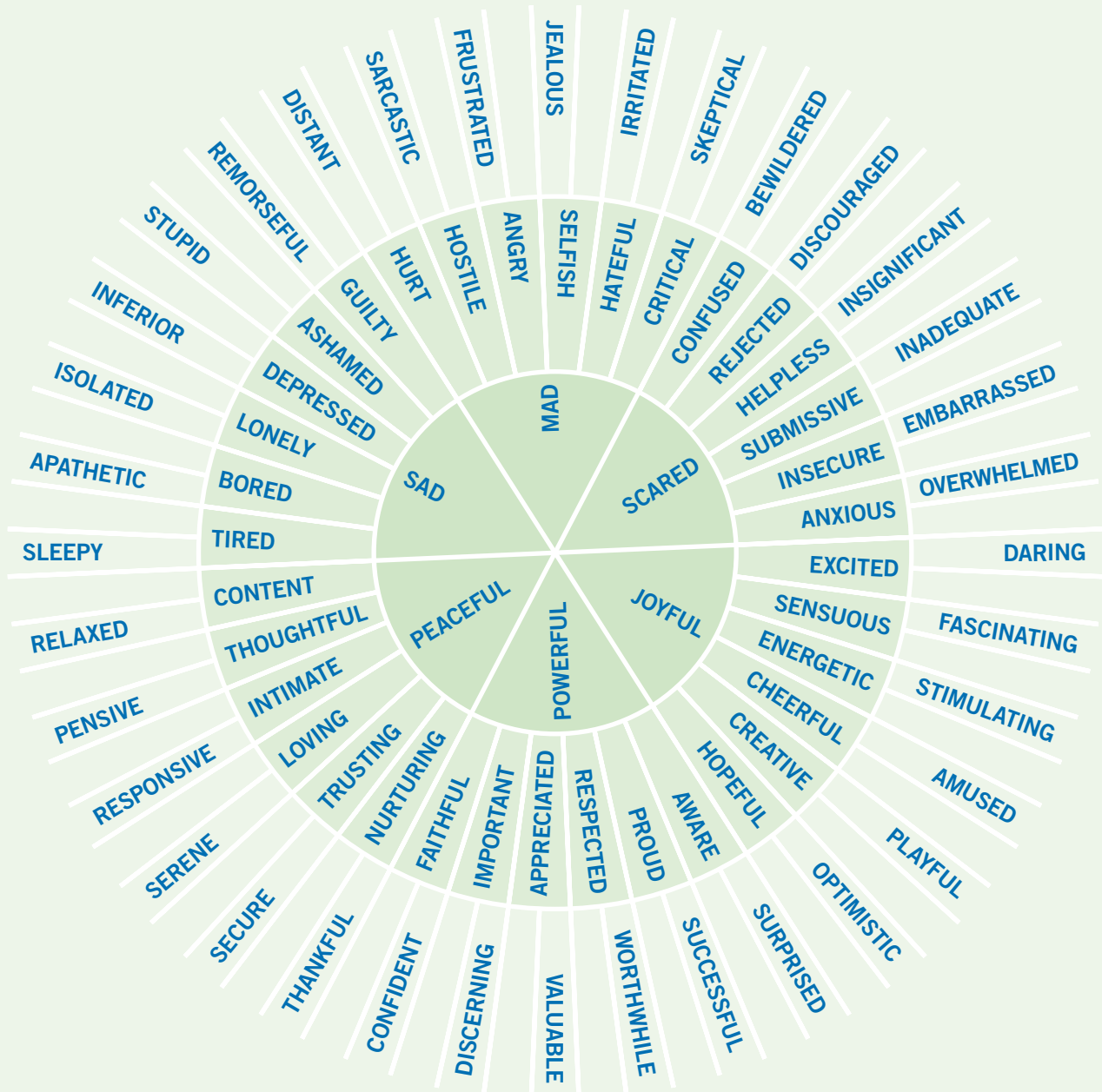
**Feelings Wheels** are helpful to help you identify your feelings more specifically. In the middle is the most common emotions you might feel, and the easiest place to start. After choosing the most accurate core emotion, you can use your finger to identify the more specific emotions that you connect with on the outer edges of the circle.

We encourage you to be specific by going beyond the typical six emotions listed in the centre of the wheel. Use this **Feelings Wheel** to help you give your feelings a name and decide how intense they are. When we identify our feelings specifically, we are able to learn how to respond and take care of those emotions more accurately.





# Feelings Wheel





## Why Label Emotions?

- Brings frontal lobe part of the brain back on-line (this is the reasoning part of your brain). Remember when you flip your lid, you lose your choice, and your response becomes automatic.
- Avoiding emotions from building up (think of a boiling pot).
- Helps you to understanding why you are feeling the way that you do.

Direct and explain the **Feelings Wheel**.



### How to Work Through Your Emotions

**Name the Emotion**  
I am feeling (e.g. angry, sad, fearful, worried): \_\_\_\_\_  
I felt like (describe feeling in a few words): \_\_\_\_\_

▼

**Identify the Cause**  
I was (where): \_\_\_\_\_  
I remember noticing: \_\_\_\_\_

▼

**Identify the Behaviour**  
When I felt: \_\_\_\_\_ I (behaviour/action): \_\_\_\_\_  
What I wish I had done was: \_\_\_\_\_

▼

**Challenge the Emotion**  
Was my feeling appropriate to the situation? \_\_\_\_\_  
Is the situation a distress that I can control? \_\_\_\_\_  
If it is out of my control, is this a distress I have to accept or tolerate? \_\_\_\_\_

## How to Work Through Your Emotions

Now we will look at choices you have once you identify an emotion. Take a few minutes to go through this chart individually or as a large group.



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### Name the Emotion

I am feeling (e.g. angry, sad, fearful, worried): \_\_\_\_\_

I felt like (describe feeling in a few words): \_\_\_\_\_



### Identify the Cause

I was (where):

\_\_\_\_\_

I remember noticing:

\_\_\_\_\_



### Identify the Behaviour

When I felt: \_\_\_\_\_ I (behaviour/action): \_\_\_\_\_

What I wish I had done was: \_\_\_\_\_



### Challenge the Emotion

Was my feeling appropriate to the situation? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the situation a distress that I can control? \_\_\_\_\_

If it is out of my control, is this a distress I have to accept or tolerate? \_\_\_\_\_



## Large Group Discussion

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What have you already started doing to sooth your emotions?

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### Coaches cue

#### Calm:

- Use activities found in the calming sections of your journal to avoid flooding. This helps to reduce physiological arousal.
- What **Calm Activities** from this course have helped you?
- What other coping skills have you used in the past that are helpful for you?

#### Physical care:

- Cue: Look at past weeks such as **Sleep** and **Exercise**.
- Ask yourself if taking action here might help.
- What things have you used from this course to care for yourself physically?



## Skill

### Live Well: **Build Support**



## Skill

### Live Well: **Build Support**

It is important to have a healthy adult you trust to go to for support. Write down on **page 32**.



Who do you have to that you can go to? Is it a parent, teacher, church leader, or a friend's parent?

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## Large Group Discussion

Facilitate group discuss about who they identify as supportive.

Often, youth seek support from their peers. It is important to ensure that the support you receive from peers and adults is be healthy.



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## Group Discussion

### Healthy vs. Unhealthy Peer Support

#### Healthy

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#### Answers we are looking for:

**Respect:** each person values who the other is and understands each other boundaries.

**Honesty:** Builds trust and strengthens relationships.

**Compromise:** Acknowledge different points of view and be willing to give and take.

**Understanding:** Understand what the other might be feeling; a good listener.

**Build self-confidence:** Able to allow others to express themselves and opinions without forcing their own opinions on them. Able to be one's self around the other person.

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#### Unhealthy

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#### Answers we are looking for:

Someone who encourages and influences negative behaviours.

Examples of this would be encouraging unhealthy coping mechanisms to manage anxiety like drinking alcohol, using drugs, self-harm behaviours such as cutting, over-exercising, skipping class, cheating on tests, and copying papers.



## Peers

If you are not feeling supported by your peers, it is ok to distance yourself from them, or to pick what kind of friendship you want from them. Sometimes you need to set boundaries with them. Encourage them to surround themselves with supportive friends, not bullies, or friends that encourage unhealthy behaviours.

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## Reflection Questions

What kinds of friend should you go to for support?

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Do you have any of these in your life?  Yes  No

Have individuals connect with you after class if they do not have these supports. As facilitators you can help connect them to local services in your area.

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## Taking On Other Peer's Problems

### Where can you go for help?

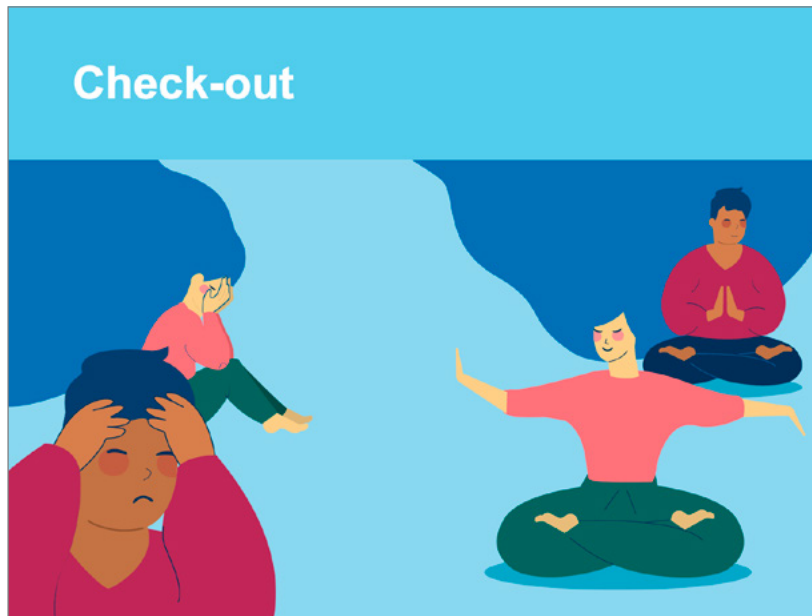
#### Informal

- parents
- teachers
- coaches
- trusting adults in your life

#### Formal

- **CMHA Distress Center:** 1-780-482-4357 (HELP)
- **Kids Help phone:** 1-800-668-6868
- **calgaryconnectteen.com:** phone, text, chat, email
- **AHS Mental Health Help Line:** 1-877-303-2642





## Check-out

The three areas we worked on today are:

- **Loving Kindness**
- **Honouring my Emotions**
- **Build Support**

Take a few minutes to complete the **Check-out** on **page 34**.



34

**Find Calm: Loving Kindness.** I will continue to use loving kindness \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

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**Challenge Myself: Honouring My Emotions.** How will I honour my emotions?

---

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**Live Well: Build Support.** What is one small thing I will do to build support?

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We are going to have you work in small groups to share what you plan to work on this week. As you practice the skills, you will be able to tweak them to work for you. By sharing in your small groups, it is a way to hold yourself accountable, especially when you are trying out a new habit.

Have them work in small groups to say what they plan to work on this week. Give them a few minutes to do this.

Then allow people to share in the large group what they will put in place and practice over the next week.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 5

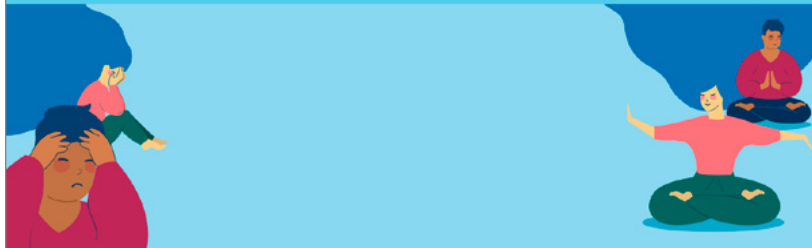


### Welcome to Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth Week 5

Welcome back!

Please display name tent.

Complete Self Check-in.



**Week 5 PowerPoint presentation** up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the **Self Check-in** on **page 35** and be ready for the large group discussion of their homework. Allow about 5 minutes.

35

## Self Check-in

**Find Calm:** When did I use **loving kindness**?

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**What difference did it make?**

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35

**Challenge Myself:** What did I do differently to **honour my emotions**?

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**Live Well:** What did I do to **build support** this week?

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---



## Large Group Check-in

**Find Calm:** Loving Kindness

**Challenge Myself:** Honouring My Emotions

**Live Well:** Build Support



## Check-in

### Large Group Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections with the group. Allow about 10 minutes.

#### Comments and questions for **Large Group Discussion:**

- We do more things right than wrong.
- You've had a week of practice.
- What was your biggest success last week?
- **Loving Kindness:** Did you use it? When?
- **Honouring My Emotions:** What solutions worked for you? What did you do differently when a stressful situation came up?
- **Build Support:** What are some small things you did to get closer to the balance you want to see in your life?

*Note to Coaches:*  
 Have them focus on sharing successes.  
 Build on these.  
 Go through each skill, one by one on the slide and have participants share.



## Week 5 Skills

**Find Calm:** 3 Minute Breathing Space

**Challenge Myself:** Challenging My Worry (Worry Tree)

**Find Calm:** Use Music to Influence My Mood



35

## Week 5 Skills

**Find Calm:** 3 Minute Breathing Space

**Challenge Myself:** Challenge My Worry (Worry Tree)

**Live Well:** Use Music to Influence My Mood



## Skill

### Find Calm: 3 Minute Breathing Space



36

## Skill

### Find Calm: 3 Minute Breathing Space

Each week we are going to start our skill section by practicing a **3 Minute Breathing Space**.

This is an audio recording that helps with **Mindfulness**. **Mindfulness** helps to get you ready for the group and allows you to leave behind all that happened before or what is coming after. There is no right or wrong way of doing this.

Make yourself comfortable. Have your feet on the ground, your back supported or you may want to lie down or sit on the floor.



Play Track 3 of PCN CD from the Red Deer PCN website – **3 Minute Breathing Space (3:27.86)**.

On **page 36** in your **Journal**, you will find instructions on how to do this without an audio recording, so you can do this breathing anytime, anywhere.



36

To practice the **3 Minute Breathing Space** without a recording, use these instructions:

- **First minute:** focus on here and now, your mood, emotions and thoughts. Don't try and change anything, just notice.
- **Second minute:** move your awareness to your breath. Focus on breathing into your abdomen. If your mind wanders acknowledge where it went and gently guide it back to your breath.
- **Third minute:** notice your breath moving through your entire body. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Open your eyes and bring your attention back to the here and now. Continue on with your day.

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on page 36.

36

What did I notice before the **3 Minute Breathing Space**?

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What did I notice after?

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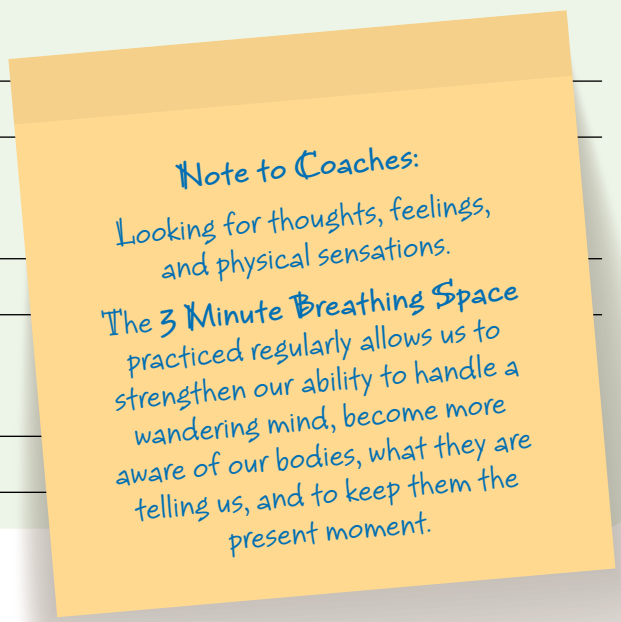
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What did I learn?

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## Group Discussion

What was your reaction when we played this?

Is your reaction to this activity a common reaction when you are going into a new situation (using humour, pushing chair back, feeling frustrated)? You can say to yourself, "I notice I do that but it's okay."

How is this different from how you normally pay attention?

Start once a day for two weeks. It resets your breathing and helps calm your nervous system. Check in to notice what you are thinking and feeling. No matter what stressors are coming into your life you can **return to the present moment**.

**Heads up:** We will continue practicing this skill each week to help you start to **rewire your brain signals**.





**Skill**  
**Find Calm:**  
**Challenge My Worry**  
**(Worry Tree)**



**Skill**  
**Challenge Myself:**  
**Challenge My Worry (Worry Tree)**

Worry can be both helpful and unhelpful.

Let's look at why we worry.



37

Good	Challenge
Shows I am caring	How else do I show I care?
Helps me prepare and solve problems	How can I solve a problem without overthinking it?
Motivates me	Does worry actually help me get more done? Or does it lead to procrastination? How can I act rather than worry?
Protects me from feeling bad	Being upset after a bad situation is ok. If something bad happened before, did worry really prepared me to feel less terrible?
Prevents bad things from happening	Has anything bad happened to me even though I worried about it?

**How can we worry less?**

---

---



38

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Worry

Advantages of Worry	Disadvantages of Worry
It prepares me so that if a bad things happens, I can cope better (avoids disappointment).	It increases anxiety and makes me feel physically ill.
It shows I care.	It can invite trouble.
It motivates me.	It interferes with my ability to concentrate and make decisions.
It helps me solve problems and find solutions.	It can cause procrastination.

Insert some ideas of your own in the free space above.



## Accepting Reasonable Uncertainty Using The Worry and Problem Solving Tree

We have different choices we can make when uncertainty is activating our anxiety. By doing something different, we are refocusing from, “What if,” to “What is?” We are now accepting the limits of what we do know and what we have control over. The tool we are about to work through allows you to challenge your uncertainty. With practice it will help increase your problem solving skills and reduce your fears in general.

39

### The Worry and Problem Solving Tree

Thoughts of “what if,” having trouble solving a problem, or making a decision due to uncertainty can activate the stress response.

Situations can be a **problem** when there seems to be no solution and previous attempts of resolving things have not worked. These situations can create a great deal of anxiety. Since these situations can be linked with anxiety, we can avoid, ignore, procrastinate, and try to control difficult issues.

A common way to cope with uncertainty is to worry.

**How does worry help us to deal with our fears?**

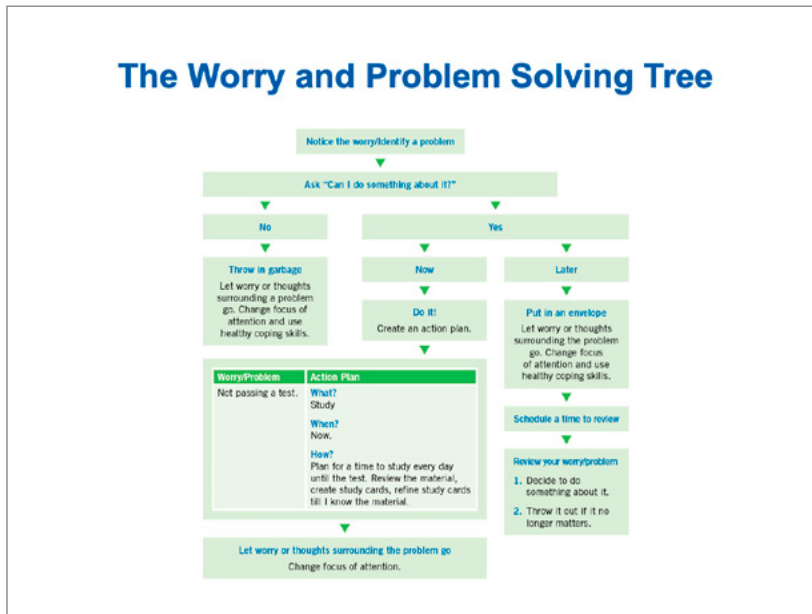
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**What are the advantages of worry?**

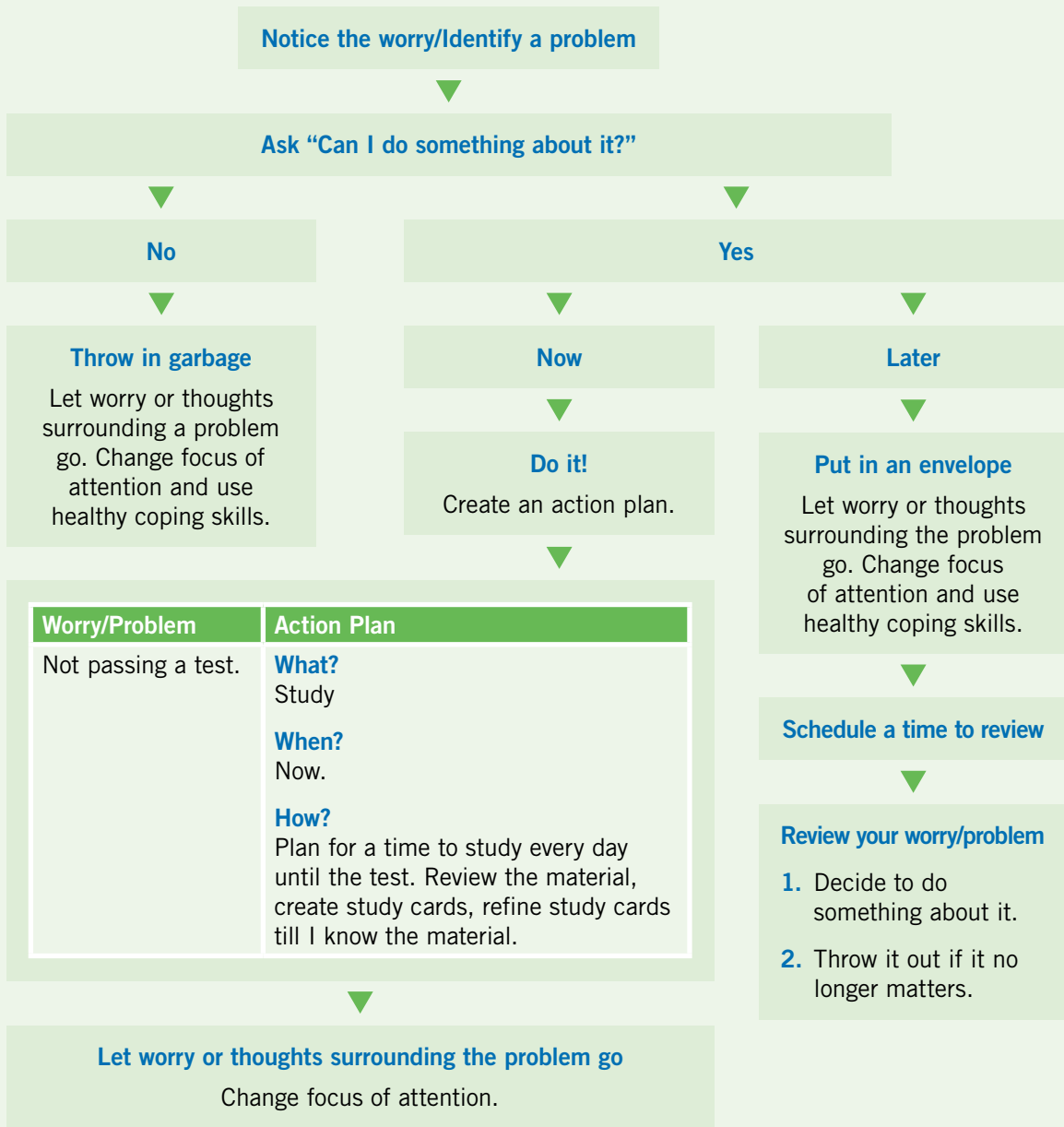
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A great tool for tolerating uncertainty is the **Worry and Problem Solving Tree**, which is pictured on **page 40** for your reference.

## The Worry and Problem Solving Tree





Now you will work through your own worries.

Coach hand out an envelope with 5 strips of paper to each participant or ask participants to rip up 5 strips of paper for a virtual class.

*Note to Coaches:*  
 Work through example on the slide of how to use the Worry and Problem Solving Tree.  
 The thought is: I will not pass my test.

Read through instructions below with participants on **page 41** of the **Journal**.

41

## Instructions

Pick **3 – 5 worries** and write them down on the strips of paper.

Sort them into **two piles**:

- **No** I can't do anything about it **OR**
- **Yes** I can do something about it.
- The **no** pile – these are the things you have no control over. Take those pieces of paper and **throw them in the garbage**.

Take your **yes pile**. These are worries you have control over. Sort the pieces into **two more piles**:

- If you can do something about it **now** create an **action plan**. We will do this in a few minutes.
- If you can do something about it **later** put it in the **envelope**.
- **Later**, put a date on the calendar for when you will review the envelope again. Tell yourself, **“for today, this is back in the envelope.”** It may be that when you next look at it, that worry/problem will already be taken care of.
- Sometimes, putting it back in the envelope isn't enough. What are some ways that we have learned so far in **Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth** class to redirect our attention, relax our nervous system, or tolerate what is uncomfortable?
  1. Let your worry or thought go through **relaxation**. Which one(s) would you use?
  2. **Acceptance**: “There's nothing I can do today to prepare for that” or “I know that's coming but for now I have to work on...”
  3. Identify a **Thinking Trap**. Use my **Awareness Log**.
  4. Other ideas? Look up on the Internet:
    - Worry time
    - Worry script
    - Putting worry in a box or jar
  5. Schedule a time this week to go through this again.



## Self Study

Answer the questions on **page 42** after taking action in your areas of worry before next class.

42

**Schedule a “worry time” at least once this week, and reflect on these questions about letting anxious thought go.**

1. How did taking an action step make a difference for me?

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2. How did my worries turn out?

---

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3. How did I change my focus of attention or let my worry go?

---

---

4. Write down new worries, put all the worries back in the envelope, and repeat again next week.

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---

## Group Discussion and Summary

Start doing something different when uncertainty comes around or you notice you feel overwhelmed or stuck in a problem that increases your anxiety. Use the **Worry and Problem Solving Tree** or change your focus through mindfulness/relaxation. With practice you will realize that you are capable of dealing with things even if they don't go perfectly.

**You might also notice that some of your worries are **Thinking Traps**. Remember, you can challenge your traps. On your own time this week you can look back at Week 3 and see if this too can help you.**





**Skill**  
**Live Well:**  
**Use Music to Influence My Mood**



**Skill**  
**Live Well: Use Music to Influence My Mood**



Music does affect mood and the different genres can affect people in different ways.

43

**Music can affect mood.  
Singing and humming can even help to manage anxiety.**

Listen to the music medley in class and jot down your reaction as you listen to each genre.

Type of Music	My Reaction
Rock	
Folk	
Soul	
Electronic Dance	
Blues	
Classical	
Reggae	
Gospel	
Country	
Musical	

Type of Music	My Reaction
World	
Disco	
March	
R&B	
Film Score	
Latin	
Children's	
Funk	
Pop	
New Age	

**Activity 1: Large Group Discussion**

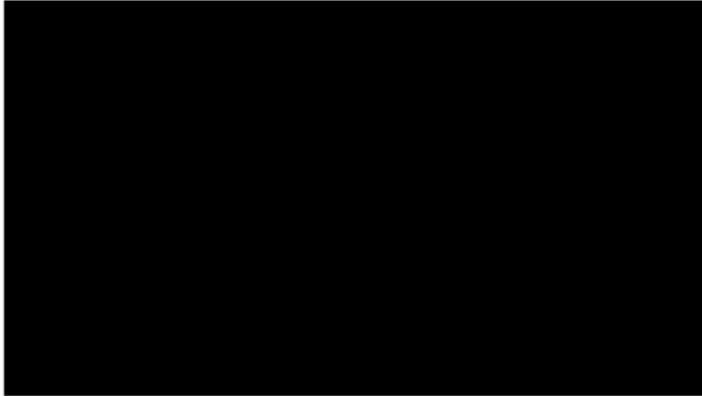
Call out the different types of genres you listen to.

Share if there are specific situations that you like to listen to specific genres over others.

Share how the different genres make you feel.



### Drawing to Music



## Activity 2: Drawing to Music



Play video (start at 30 second)

We will be listening to a music clip that moves through multiple genres of music.

You can choose to listen and write down how you're feeling or how body sensations change with the change in genre or doodle on your page as the music plays and notice how the doodles change as the music changes.

44

### Drawing to Music



## Large Group Discussion

What changes did they notice, was there a specific genre that they felt calmer while listening to.

**Time depending:** This activity can be done more than once.

45

How do I currently **Use Music to Influence My Mood?**

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What are some of my favourite songs?

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What difference does it make to my mood?

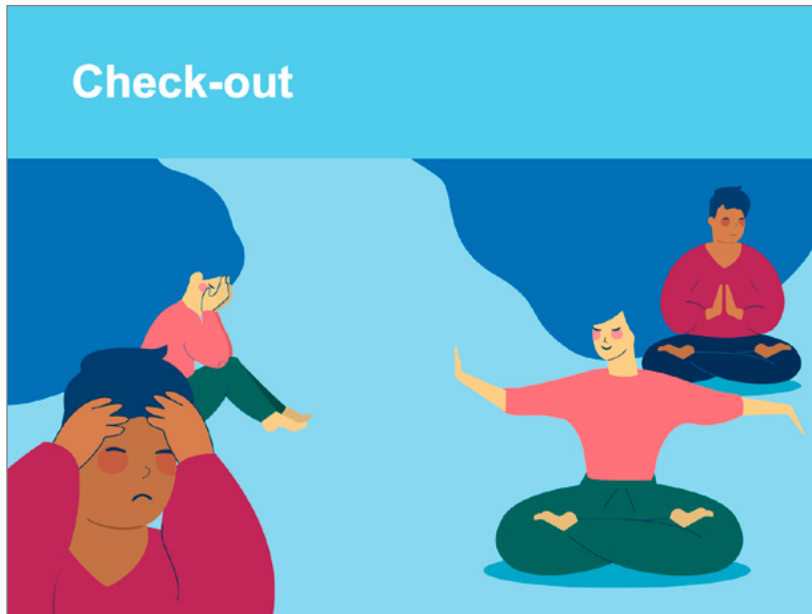
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Can you think of new ways music can help with emotions?

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46

## Check-out

The three areas we worked on today are:

- **3 Minute Breathing Space**
- **Challenging My Worry (Worry Tree)**
- **Use Music to Influence My Mood**

Take a few minutes to complete the **Check-out** on **page 46**.



46

**Find Calm: 3 Minute Breathing Space.** I will continue to use 3 Minute Breathing Space \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

---

---

**Challenge Myself: Challenging My Worry (Worry Tree).** How will I challenge my worry?

---

---

**Live Well: Use Music to Influence My Mood.** What is one small thing I will do to use music to influence my mood?

---

---

We are going to have you work in small groups to share what you plan to work on this week. As you practice the skills, you will be able to tweak them to work for you. By sharing in your small groups, it is a way to hold yourself accountable, especially when you are trying out a new habit.

Have them work in small groups to say what they plan to work on this week. Give them a few minutes to do this.

Then allow people to share in the large group what they will put in place and practice over the next week.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

## WEEK 6



**Welcome to  
Alberta Anxiety to Calm For Youth  
Week 6**

Welcome back!  
Please display name tent.  
Complete Self Check-in.

**Week 6 PowerPoint presentation** up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the **Self Check-in** on **page 47** and be ready for the large group discussion of their homework. Allow about 5 minutes.

47

## Self Check-in

**Find Calm:** When did I use **3 Minute Breathing Space**?

---

---

**What difference did it make?**

---

---



47

**Challenge Myself:** What did I do differently to challenge my worry?

---

---

**Live Well:** What did I do to use music to influence my mood this week?

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## Large Group Check-in

**Challenge Myself:** 3 Minute Breathing Space

**Live Well:** Challenge My Worry (Worry Tree)

**Find Calm:** Use Music to Influence My Mood



## Check-in

### Large Group Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections with the group. Allow about 10 minutes.

#### Comments and questions for **Large Group Discussion:**

- We do more things right than wrong.
- You've had a week of practice.
- What was your biggest success last week?
- **3 Minute Breathing Space:** Did you use it? When?
- **Challenging My Worry (Worry Tree):** What solutions worked for you? What did you do differently when a stressful situation came up?
- **Use Music to Influence My Mood:**  
What are some small things you did to get closer to the balance you want to see in your life?

*Note to Coaches:*  
Have them focus on sharing successes.  
Build on these.  
Go through each skill, one by one on the slide and have participants share.



## Week 6 Skills

**Find Calm:** 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

**Live Well:** Social Media

**Challenge Myself:** Planning For the Future



47

## Week 6 Skills

**Find Calm:** 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

**Live Well:** Social Media

**Challenge Myself:** Planning For the Future



**Skill**  
**Find Calm:**  
**5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique**



*Note to Coaches:  
Play the video and then  
practice together.*

48

**Skill**  
**Find Calm:**  
**5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique**

You are going to experience a recorded version of a **5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique**. This can help you when your anxiety is getting the better of you. Get comfortable in your seat. We ask that you set aside your thoughts and judgments about what this exercise will be like and give it your best effort. Just see what happens.



**Play video (2:42 minutes).**



Now lets try this together:

Take a deep breath, hold it, then let it out.

1. Look around and name 5 things.
2. Stretch your fingers and feel 4 things.
3. Tune into your ears to 3 different sounds around you.
4. Think of 2 of your favourite smells or see if you can smell 2 things in your environment.
5. Name your favourite tasty treat.

Take one breath in, hold it, then let it out.

**Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on page 48.**

48

The first skill today is the **Grounding Technique**. It is a simple tool to **check through** your **entire body** to notice physical sensations. This can help you gain **awareness** of yourself in the **present moment**.

**What did I notice before the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique?**

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**What did I notice after?**

---

---



48

**What did I learn?**

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What was it like to take time to check in with yourself? How is this different from how you normally pay attention?

You may have had different reactions when we asked you to do this.

**Some answers that might come up:** I don't want to do this, I need to do this right, I want to do this for me, I don't want to be judged.

Is this the way you usually react in new situations?

**Allow time to share.**

How was that for you? How did you deal with that?

When do you think you would do this **5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique**?



## Skill

### Live Well: Social Media



## Skill

### Live Well: Social Media

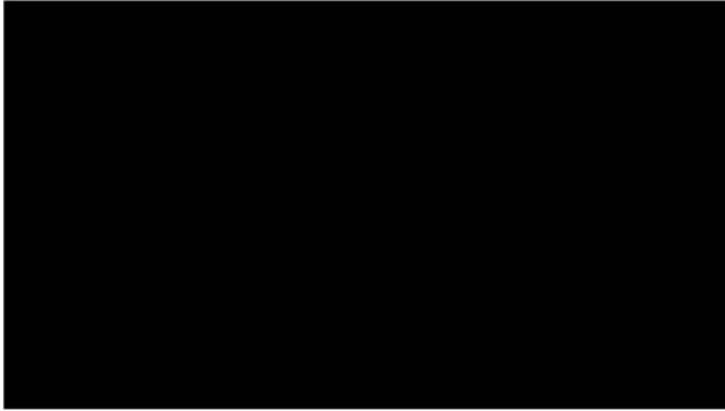


YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Tik Tok, etc.

We are going to learn more about how social media can affect your mental health on the video we watch next.



### Benefits and Risks of Social Media Use



Play video: Benefits and Risks of Social Media Use (8:00).

## Game Show

What are the benefits vs. the risks of social media?

**In person:** Give participants cards with yes and another card for no and undecided on them. Have them hold up the card they think is the correct response.

**If running virtually:** If running virtually, have them indicate their response in the chat box or use a thumb up, or down to answer the questions.

We are going to throw out some different ideas about social media, we want you to decide is this something good that social media does for us or something not so good. Put your thumb up if it is a benefit. Put your thumb down if it is a risk, or put your thumb in the middle if your not sure. Then on **page 50** of your **Journal**, you can circle the correct response in your book after we have discussed this.



49

Circle the thumb you think is the most correct for the statement:

= A benefit    = A risk    = Not sure

Response	Things social media does
	Helpful in developing relationships/social networking
	Building of valuable support
	Self-expression
	Exposure to current events
	Healthy learning about a large variety of topics
	Positive effect on cognitive function – depending on high quality of learning and low quantity of time spend on it
	Increase self-esteem
	Self-identity exploration
	Inspiration
	Negative impact on sleep
	Increase in anxiety

Response	Things social media does
	Increase social isolation
	Negative impact on cognitive function – if poor quality learning and large quantity of time spent on it
	Increase in depression
	Exposure to developmentally inappropriate context
	Stranger danger – exploitation, sex trafficking
	Body image expectations and shaming – impossible body standards
	Objectified self-concept – judging self-based on how others see you
	Validation and encouragement of risky behaviours
	Envy





50

## Facts Regarding Social Media and Screen Time

### Negative Impacts

**Can negatively impact self-esteem and body image.**

Seeing **perfection** being constantly posted online can lead to pressure to conform and fit in. These pressures may lead to anxiety, low mood, and a feeling of inadequacy. This can ultimately lead to low satisfaction with our own lives.

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)

### Harmful Advice

The internet allows anyone to upload and share pictures and videos, many of which can be Photoshopped or edited in other ways. This misinformation as well as other types of fake news can encourage you to make unhealthy decisions. It is important to understand the difference between what is true and useful and what is fake. If you are unsure ask a trusted adult or teacher.

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)

### Addiction and Compulsive Checking

Social media addiction is real and is thought to affect around 5% of teenagers.

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)

If you spend more than 3 hours per day on social media, this may lead to poor mental health

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)

Compulsive checking of social media because you have *fear of missing out* has been linked to poor sleep and difficulty relaxing.

[nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-trusted-adults-need-to-know-about-social-media-mental-health)



51

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when someone uses technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. It happens on devices like smartphones, computers, tablets, and gaming systems. Cyberbullying hurts people, and in some cases is against the law.

[kidshealth.org/en/parents/cyberbullying.html](https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cyberbullying.html)

## Effects of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying that is severe or long-lasting, can cause anxiety, depression, and other stress-related disorders in victims and bullies. In rare cases, some kids have attempted or died from suicide due to feeling cyberbullying have caused.

Tell an adult right away if someone says something to you online that makes you uncomfortable. Also tell an adult if you see someone bullying or saying strange things to other kids online.

[kidshealth.org/en/kids/online-id.html](https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/online-id.html)



## Skill Challenge Myself: Planning For the Future



52

## Skill Challenge Myself: Planning For the Future

The third skill we are introducing today is **Planning For My Future**. We wish we could walk away and say that all of your anxiety has disappeared but challenges will come up. There will be times you feel you need to go back to the skills you learned.



## Group Discussion

52

How will you know when you need to reconnect with the skills you found helpful or need to seek support?

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What would that look like?

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What signs would you look for?

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**Answers we are looking for:** Making snide remarks, critical of self and others, getting caught in thinking traps, being worried or stressed about upcoming events, deterioration in sleep.

In our first week, we learned that anxiety has some positive functions and it doesn't necessarily mean there is something wrong. It is a signal that you need to pay attention to. These tools you have experienced are just the beginning. Figure out which ones work the best and continue to practice them.

We will recap each area and give you time to write anything else that was helpful for you and you want to remember. You can also circle your favourite skills on **page 52** as we review.



## Six Tools for Finding Calm

1. Breathing Exercises
2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation (Lemon Squeezy)
3. Take a Mental Vacation
4. Loving Kindness
5. 3 Minute Breathing Space
6. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique



Just to recap, the tools under **Finding Calm**:

52

## Six Tools for Finding Calm

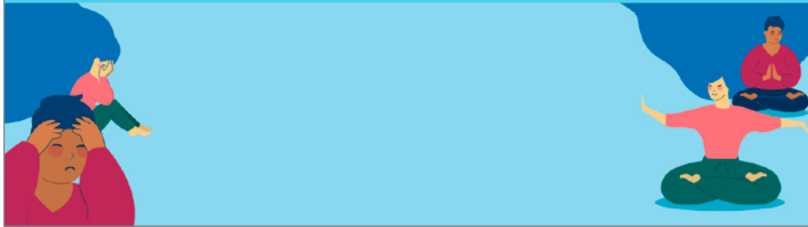
1. Breathing Exercise
2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation (Lemon Squeezy)
3. Take a Mental Vacation
4. Loving Kindness
5. 3 Minute Breathing Space
6. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

Take a few minutes to fill in the **Find Calm** section/circle. Record the ones that you liked or were most effective for you.



## Five Tools to Challenge Myself

1. Respond To Stress (STOP)
2. Thinking Traps
3. Honour My Emotions (Feelings Wheel)
4. Worry Tree
5. Plan For the Future



To recap for **Challenge Myself**:

52

## Five Tools to Challenge Myself

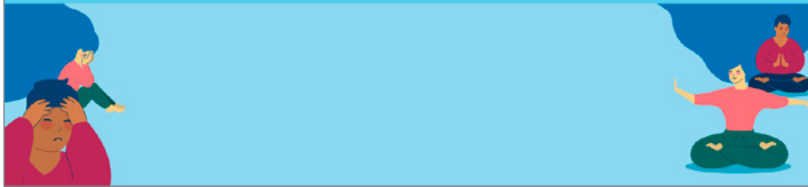
1. Respond To Stress (STOP)
2. Thinking Traps
3. Honour My Emotions (Feelings Wheel)
4. Worry Tree
5. Plan For the Future

Take a few minutes to fill in the **Challenge Myself** section/circle with the tools you liked.



## Six Tools to Living Well

1. Sleep Well
2. Create Balance (Self-care)
3. Be Active
4. Build Support
5. Use Music to Influence Mood
6. Social Media



To recap for **Living Well**:

52

## Six Tools for Living Well

1. Sleep Well
2. Create Balance (Self-care)
3. Be Active
4. Build Support
5. Use Music To Influence Mood
6. Social Media

**Take a few minutes to fill in the **Live Well** section/circle with the tools you liked.**

You now have an opportunity to reflect on your favourite tools. You can write or circle your favourite or most effective tools or skills on **How I Have Connected to Myself** on **page 49**. As we go, there are extra lines in case there are skills you learned that are not already indicated on this page.



## Summary

When our anxiety is activated, it's much more difficult for us to live according to our values and to who we really are. When anxiety gets out of the way, it allows us to behave as our true selves.

It's important to make sure you continue to practice the skills you have learned in class in order to keep anxiety from getting the better of you. Remember you need to also notice what you are doing and how you are feeling as well, in order to change your relationship with anxiety. How are you going to create a new pathway?

It will get easier as you build new, healthier ways of managing anxiety (pathways in the brain). In the beginning, it takes a lot of effort. You might go back to old habits, your job is to redirect yourself back to healthier ways of managing anxiety which you learned in class. This will help you to eventually start using this new path. The new, healthier path will eventually become your default.

Today is a bit of a celebration. We're celebrating that you have been open to trying new tools and putting tools into action outside of class. You have worked hard. Let's take a moment to do the evaluation's for this course. Take a look at the score you had on your first day and notice , have there been positive changes? Be proud of the accomplishments you have made. Are there some areas you are still struggling with? How can you continue to make improvements and keep the momentum going.

53

### Other Resources and/or Websites

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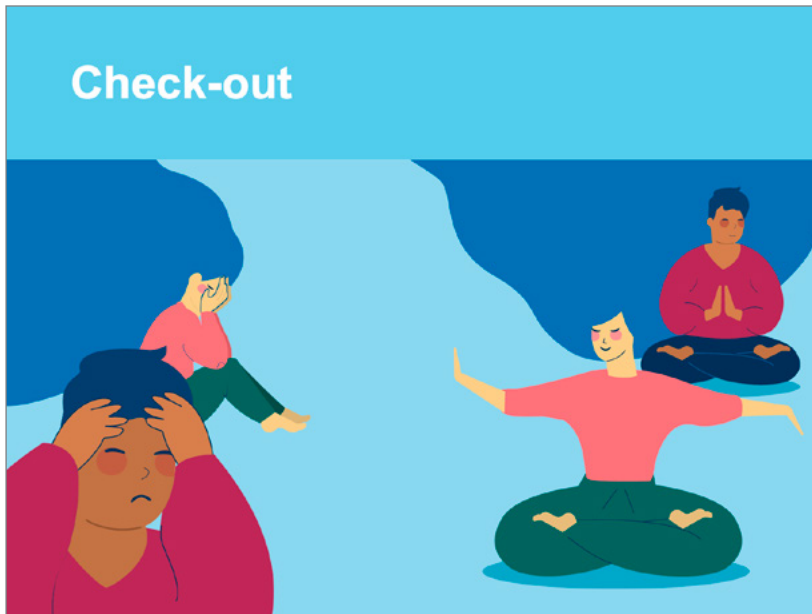
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**Note to Coaches:**  
 Take note of your participants results and if you notice any areas that your participants are struggling with, help them to find the resources needed, such as individual counselling with AHS.





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## Check-out

The three areas we worked on today are:

- **5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique**
- **Social Media**
- **Planning For the Future**

Take a few minutes to complete the **Check-out** on **page 52**.



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**Find Calm: 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique.** I will continue to use grounding exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. When will I use this?

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**Challenge Myself: Social Media.** How will I change how I use social media?

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**Live Well: Planning For the Future.** What is one small thing I will do to plan for the future?

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We are going to have you work in small groups to share what you plan to work on this week. As you practice the skills, you will be able to tweak them to work for you. By sharing in your small groups, it is a way to hold yourself accountable, especially when you are trying out a new habit.

Have them work in small groups to say what they plan to work on this week. Give them a few minutes to do this.

Then allow people to share in the large group what they will put in place and practice over the next week.

# ALBERTA ANXIETY TO CALM FOR YOUTH

# RESOURCES



## Resources

### Apps

Calm

Mindshift

Smiles

### Websites

[anxietycanada.com](http://anxietycanada.com)

[calgaryconnectteen.com](http://calgaryconnectteen.com)

Clark Goldstein: [growthpsychology.net](http://growthpsychology.net)

[heretohelp.bc.ca](http://heretohelp.bc.ca)

**YouTube:** type in breath exercises, calm breathing bubble, meditations for teens

### Websites

CMHA Distress Centre

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

AHS Mental Health Help Line: 1-877-303-2642

## Apps

Calm

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## Websites

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**YouTube:** type in breathing exercises, calm breathing bubble, meditations for teens

## Help Lines

CMHA Distress Centre

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

AHS Mental Health Help Line:  
1-877-303-2642

# APPENDIX 1: KEY TIPS FOR PARENTS



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## 1. The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety, but to help a child manage it.

None of us wants to see a child unhappy, but the best way to help kids overcome anxiety isn't to try to remove the stress that causes it. It's to help them learn to tolerate their anxiety and function as well as they can, even when they're anxious. And as a result of that, the anxiety will decrease or fall away over time.

## 2. Don't avoid things just because they make a child anxious.

Helping children avoid the things they are afraid of will make them feel better in the short term, but it reinforces the anxiety over the long run.

## 3. Express positive—but realistic—expectations.

You can't promise a child that their fears are unrealistic—that they won't fail a test, that they'll have fun ice skating, or that another child won't laugh at them during show and tell. But you can express confidence that they'll be okay, they will be able to manage it, and that, as he faces his fears, the anxiety level will drop over time. This gives them confidence that your expectations are realistic, and that you're not going to ask them to do something they can't handle.

## 4. Respect their feelings, but don't empower them.

It's important to understand that validation doesn't always mean agreement. So if a child is terrified about going to the doctor because they're due for a shot, you don't want to belittle their fears, but you also don't want to increase them. You want to listen and be empathetic, help them understand what they're anxious about, and encourage them to feel that they can face her fears. The message you want to send is, "I know you're scared, and that's okay, and I'm here, and I'm going to help you get through this."

## 5. Don't ask leading questions.

Encourage your child to talk about their feelings, but not to ask leading questions—"Are you anxious about the big test? Are you worried about the science fair?" To avoid feeding the cycle of anxiety, just ask open-ended questions: "How are you feeling about the science fair?"

## 6. Don't reinforce the child's fears.

What you don't want to do is be saying, with your tone of voice or body language: "Maybe this *is* something that you should be afraid of." Let's say a child has had a negative experience with a dog. Next time they're around a dog, you might be anxious about how they will respond and you might unintentionally send a message that they *should* be worried.

# APPENDIX 2: COPING CARDS



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## Developing and Using Cognitive Coping Cards

An important tool in your child or teen's anxiety toolbox is the ability to change anxious thoughts to more relaxed and balanced thinking. However, it can be very difficult for children and teens to **remember to use coping tools** when they are anxious. They are so focused on their feelings of being in danger that they forget they have a way of telling whether or not danger actually exists (and it usually doesn't).

With practice, however, your child can learn to use coping thoughts on their own. This is really helpful as you might not always be there to remind your child to use the tools (for example, when at school, or sleeping over at a friend's house).

**A good tool to help your child or teen is [Cognitive Coping Cards](#)!**

## What are Cognitive Coping Cards?

Cognitive coping cards can be small index cards with short sentences of some of the coping skills your child can use when experiencing anxiety. The cards are portable reminders for your child to take control of their anxiety.

### What sorts of things are helpful to put onto a coping card?

- A reminder that physical symptoms (e.g., sweaty palms, stomach-aches) are just anxiety
- The name your child has given to anxiety (e.g. "Mr. Worry," "the pest," "the bug")
- A reminder that anxiety is not dangerous and doesn't last forever
- Positive coaching statements (e.g. "I can get through this!")
- A reminder to use some coping skills (e.g. I can do relaxed breathing)
- Some calming facts your child or teen has used before (e.g. the odds of getting kidnapped are really low)

## How To Do It

### STEP 1: Make sure your child is involved

In order for coping cards to be useful, your child needs to feel that the coping statements will actually be **personally** helpful! Children and teens are more likely to use them if they have been involved in developing them. It is NOT a good idea for you to simply write them up and hand them over.

### What to say to get your child involved

*“You have been really good at managing your anxiety these days! Now we can learn another way for you to be the boss of your anxiety. Why don’t we try to figure out some things you can tell yourself when your anxiety is acting up? We can write down some things on cards that can help you feel calm. These cards will be another tool in your anxiety-fighting toolbox!”*

### For teens

Although you should encourage your child to develop coping statements, older children and teens can be more independent when writing out their coping cards. They can decide what skills are most helpful for them. You can explain that when we feel anxious it is sometimes difficult to remember all the skills we’ve learned to battle that anxiety. Writing out those skills on coping cards might help them remember what has been helpful for them in the past, and what skills they would like to use next time.

### STEP 2: Make it a game!

Making up the cognitive coping cards should not be a chore! Have fun trying to come up with good statements that your child will find helpful in managing their anxiety. Here are some ways you can make this tool a fun task:

- **Get the family involved!** Like all the tools in the anxiety toolbox, the whole family should work together on the goal of tackling anxiety. Parents and siblings can all get involved in making these coping cards!
- **Make it an art project!** Decorate the cards with coloured ink, sparkles, stickers, gold stars, and different colours of poster board cardboard. This turns developing and using coping cards into a fun project.

### STEP 3: Remember to praise your child

As always, it is very important that you give lots of praise whenever your child is successful at managing anxiety, or whenever he or she tried to manage anxiety (but was not quite able to do it). This can include saying, “You are doing a great job! I’m so proud of you”, but it might also involve small, simple rewards (story time; playing a fun board game together; having a fun family day; or getting a new video game if your child has been working hard to boss back anxiety for a while).



## Some examples of coping cards

### Coping Card #1: Billy

Billy has panic attack and is afraid he is going to have a heart attack. He has started to manage his anxiety by doing muscle relaxation, and facing his fears about his panic attack symptoms.

#### My Coping Card to Beat Anxiety

1. Anxiety is not dangerous. It can't hurt me! It's just a bully!
2. I can manage my anxiety. I have done it before!
3. If my heart is racing, I get sweaty, and my tummy hurts. That means that my anxiety is acting up. I'm not in danger.
4. I could do some relaxation now.
5. Am I falling into a **Thinking Trap**?\*

\*For more information on Thinking Traps, see Realistic Thinking for Teens.

### Coping Card #2: Susan

Susan gets very anxious when she is at school. She is worried that the other kids don't like her and that, if they knew she had anxiety, that they would laugh at her and make fun of her. She has been learning to recognize her anxious thoughts and to try to challenge them and think of more realistic thoughts.

#### My Coping Card to Beat Anxiety

1. My face is getting hot and my head is getting dizzy! My anxiety is acting up again!
2. Maybe I need to use the **STOP** plan now!\*
3. If I'm feeling anxious, I could do some calm breathing to calm down.
4. I have lots of friends at school and they like me even when I get anxious. They told me so.

\*For more information on the STOP plan, see Healthy Thinking for Young Children.



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#WakeUpWednesday

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## What Trusted Adults Need to Know About Social Media and Mental Health

Social Media is often scrutinised as having a negative impact on children's mental health. Children and young people are now growing up in a technology dominated world, and social media plays a major role in their social lives. This balanced guide focuses on both the positive and negative impacts that social media can bring to young people and their mental health.

### Positive Impacts

#### Easy Access to Support and Help

Due to delays in young people getting help for mental health, such as experiencing low mood, or suffering from anxiety, they may sometimes reach out to access support from others online. Sharing problems or issues with friends, peers and broader social networks can be met with positive reaction, with nearly 7 in 10 teens reporting to receive support on social media during tough or challenging times. Where there are moderated communities which offer support and guidance, children can be provided with a great source of support.

#### Sustaining Friendships and Making Connections

There is evidence to suggest that strong adolescent friendships can be enhanced by social media interaction, allowing children to create stronger bonds with people they already know. Online friendships can actually make children more relationship-oriented, thoughtful and empathetic. By sharing comments on pictures, videos and posts, it can create long-term friendships as they can continually keep in touch, even with a distance between them.

#### Sense of Belonging

Support can be found in various places online. Online platforms and groups can provide a wonderful sense of belonging for children. They can find peers with similar interests and circumstances which can sometimes be difficult to find in real-life. As a result, this can create stronger connections and help to build confidence.





## Negative Impacts

### Self-esteem and Body Image

There are 10 million new photographs uploaded on Facebook alone every hour, providing an almost endless potential for young people to be drawn into appearance-based comparisons whilst online. No one is the same as how they portray themselves online as we tend to only show the best of ourselves. The pressure to fit-in and conform is huge, which can become a driving force for children to replicate what they see from friends, celebrities and sponsored adverts. This pressure may contribute to anxiety, low mood and a feeling of inadequacy. As a result, it can lead to a feeling of low satisfaction with their own lives.

### Harmful Advice

The online world provides the opportunity for anybody to upload and share photoshopped pictures, edited videos, fake news and even unvetted advice. Children may stumble upon this, which could potentially encourage them to make wrong decisions and not get the help that they need. It's important that you teach your children to differentiate between what is true and useful information and what is fake.



### Meet Our Expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.

### Addiction and Compulsive Checking

Social media addiction is thought to affect around 5% of teenagers. The Office of National Statistics found that children who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media or more than twice as likely to support poor mental health. Furthermore, compulsive checking due to “Fear of Missing Out” has been linked to poor disturbed sleep, as well as difficulty to relax during evenings. One in five young people say they wake up during the night to check messages on social media, leading to them to be three times as more likely to feel constantly tired at school than their classmates who don't use social media during the night.

### Cyberbullying

One recent large-scale UK study showed that cyberbullying is one of the biggest challenges for young people. Other studies suggest that cyberbullying has a bigger effect on wellbeing and mental health than other types of bullying. 7 in 10 people have experienced cyberbullying, with 37% of young people saying they experience cyberbullying on a high-frequency basis. Young people are twice as likely to be bullied on Facebook than any other social network.

### Helpful Apps

- **Hub of Hope:** [hubofhope.co.uk](http://hubofhope.co.uk)
- **Mindshift**
- **Smiling Mind**

### Sources of Help

- [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)
- **Twitter:** [@natonlinesafety](https://twitter.com/natonlinesafety)
- **Facebook:** [/NationalOnlineSafety](https://www.facebook.com/NationalOnlineSafety)

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 19.06.2019

Sources: <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/social-media-young-people-and-mental-health>, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-10-1>, <https://www.rspg.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/62be270a-a55f-4719-ad668c2ec7a74c2a.pdf>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201505/5-warning-signs-mental-health-risk>







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