

Anxiety and worry

Ten original resources for More Than Therapy. Choose a page that fits the client's priorities and review the clinical notes before use. The materials support professional care and are not validated assessments.

ANX01 Worry or Workable Problem

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

ANX02 Reviewing an Anxious Prediction

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

ANX03 Taking One Small Approach Step

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

ANX04 Giving Worry a Defined Time

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

ANX05 Finding an Attention Anchor

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

ANX06 Making Room for Uncertainty

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

ANX07 Understanding the Anxiety Loop

Handout | 10 to 15 minutes

ANX08 Asking About Avoidance Gently

Clinician script | 10 to 15 minutes

ANX09 Choosing One Manageable Approach

Session guide | 50 minutes

ANX10 Writing Through Uncertain Moments

Journal prompts | 10 to 15 minutes

Fillable responses work in compatible PDF readers. Save each completed worksheet separately in an approved record system.

Clinical notes

Anxiety and worry

ANX01 Worry or Workable Problem

Validate realistic threats, discrimination, financial pressure, and unmet needs before discussing worry. Help distinguish solvable barriers from uncertainty without implying that anxiety is caused by faulty thinking alone.

ANX02 Reviewing an Anxious Prediction

Do not debate the client into reassurance. Use collaborative questions and observable details. Where the feared event reflects an ongoing threat, prioritize practical protection and support instead of reframing.

ANX03 Taking One Small Approach Step

Use for collaborative, low risk approach practice. Do not apply to actual danger or substitute for individualized exposure treatment for OCD, panic, or PTSD. Check medical, cultural, and accessibility needs.

ANX04 Giving Worry a Defined Time

Explain that this is an optional attention strategy rather than thought control. Do not substitute it for urgent risk assessment, necessary problem solving, or individualized treatment when obsessive rituals are present. Review its actual effect next session.

ANX05 Finding an Attention Anchor

Offer external, movement based, or conversational anchors when body attention increases distress. Avoid requiring eye closure, deep breathing, or sustained stillness. Ask about sensory and mobility access needs before practicing.

ANX06 Making Room for Uncertainty

Differentiate ordinary uncertainty practice from OCD compulsions requiring individualized treatment. Do not remove health, workplace, or legal safety checks. Validate contexts where reliable information or protection is genuinely unavailable.

ANX07 Understanding the Anxiety Loop

Present this as a collaborative explanation, not a diagnosis. Map the person's context, strengths, protective actions, and barriers. Specialized presentations may need a more specific assessment and treatment plan.

ANX08 Asking About Avoidance Gently

Assess whether avoidance protects against actual danger, discrimination, overload, or inaccessible demands. Do not frame refusal as resistance. Obtain collaboration before any behavioral practice and review the client's experience afterwards.

ANX09 Choosing One Manageable Approach

The agenda is flexible when safety, access, or acute distress requires attention. This is a general session structure, not a complete disorder specific protocol or substitute for an individualized treatment plan.

ANX10 Writing Through Uncertain Moments

Use briefly and review whether journaling promotes flexibility or extends rumination. Offer an oral or visual alternative. Avoid assigning repeated reassurance writing when obsessive checking or compulsions are suspected.

Worry or Workable Problem

Anxiety and worry | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Sort one worry into a practical problem or an uncertainty to carry.

Choose one concern that has been taking up space today. This page helps you decide whether there is a practical action available now or whether you are facing uncertainty that cannot be solved by thinking harder.

Describe the situation

Use one specific sentence. Separate what happened from what might happen. For example, "My application is due Friday" is different from "I will never find work." Both deserve care, but they call for different responses.

Choose the next move

If action is possible, choose a step that takes ten minutes or less. If the outcome is unknown, name what you can carry with you while you return to the present. You do not have to feel certain before taking a useful step.

What has actually happened and what am I predicting?

What part can I influence today?

My next practical step or way to make room for uncertainty

When will I try it and what support would help?

Reviewing an Anxious Prediction

Anxiety and worry | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Examine an anxious prediction and develop a balanced response.

An anxious prediction can sound like a fact. Choose a recent, manageable example and look at it with curiosity. The aim is a fairer view that includes risk, resources, and uncertainty rather than a forced positive statement.

Make the prediction specific

Write what you expect to happen, where, and when. "They will dislike me" is hard to examine; "If I ask a question in this meeting, someone will criticize me" gives you something clearer to explore.

Build a balanced response

Consider what supports the prediction, what complicates it, and what you could do if the feared event happened. A balanced response might be, "Someone could disagree, and I can ask for clarification or take a pause."

The situation and the prediction my mind is making

Evidence that supports the prediction and evidence that complicates it

If it happened, what resources or responses could I use?

A fairer statement I am willing to try

Taking One Small Approach Step

Anxiety and worry | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Plan and review one small step toward a safe activity that anxiety has interrupted.

Avoiding something can bring quick relief while making it harder to return. Choose an ordinary, safe activity you want back in your life. Start with a manageable step and decide together how you will learn from it.

Choose a meaningful activity

Pick something connected to your life, such as asking a routine question, returning a message, or entering a familiar shop. Break it into three possible steps. Choose the smallest step that still moves toward the activity.

Observe without demanding calm

Write your prediction before you begin. Afterwards, record what happened, what you learned, and whether you want to repeat or adjust the step. Success can mean showing up or learning something, even if anxiety remains.

The safe activity I want to return to and why it matters

Three possible steps from easier to harder

The step I choose and what I predict

What happened and what I learned after trying

Giving Worry a Defined Time

Anxiety and worry | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Experiment with a brief planned period for recurring worry.

If worry keeps interrupting your day, you can experiment with giving it a brief, planned space. This is an invitation to redirect attention, not an instruction to suppress thoughts or ignore something urgent.

Make a small appointment

Choose a ten to fifteen minute period that is practical and not right before bed. When a recurring worry appears, jot a few words and gently return to the activity in front of you. A real safety concern needs attention now.

Use the time intentionally

At your planned time, review what still matters. Choose a practical action where possible. For questions without a current answer, name the uncertainty and decide how you want to spend the next part of your day. Adjust or stop if the experiment increases distress.

My planned worry time and a helpful place

A brief worry note without the full story

What needs a practical action and what remains uncertain?

The activity I will return to and how I will know this helped

Finding an Attention Anchor

Anxiety and worry | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Identify a flexible attention anchor and connect it to a useful next action.

When your mind jumps ahead, a simple anchor may help you reconnect with what you are doing. Choose an option that feels neutral or comfortable. You can keep your eyes open, move, change the exercise, or stop.

Pick an anchor

Try looking at the edges of an object, noticing your feet against the floor, listening for a steady sound, or slowly describing a familiar task. Breathing does not have to be the anchor. Notice one detail at a time for about thirty seconds.

Return with flexibility

Your attention will wander. When you notice, name it gently and return if that feels useful. Then take one small action in the present, such as drinking water or opening the document you were working on. The purpose is participation, not perfect concentration.

An anchor I want to try and one option I want to avoid

What I noticed before and during the practice

How I can make it more comfortable or accessible

A present moment action I will take afterwards

Making Room for Uncertainty

Anxiety and worry | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Choose a values guided action while leaving some uncertainty unresolved.

Some decisions come without a guarantee. This page helps you notice the pull to keep checking or delaying and choose a small action guided by what matters to you. You can carry discomfort while choosing your next move.

Notice the demand for certainty

Write the question your mind wants answered completely. Identify the behavior that follows, such as repeated checking, asking again, or postponing. Notice the short term relief and the longer term cost without judging yourself.

Choose a workable boundary

Decide what reasonable information you need, when you will stop collecting it, and what action will follow. For example, read the relevant instructions once, ask one clarifying question, and send a routine email. Keep necessary safety checks in place.

The uncertainty I am facing and how I usually respond

What matters to me in this situation?

The reasonable information I need and my stopping point

My next action and how I will respond to returning doubt

Understanding the Anxiety Loop

Anxiety and worry | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Explain a common anxiety pattern and identify possible points for change.

Anxiety can involve thoughts, body sensations, feelings, and actions. These experiences can influence one another. Learning your own pattern may reveal places to respond differently, while also showing where you need practical help or protection.

A pattern worth noticing

A situation may bring a prediction such as "I will get this wrong." You might notice tension and an urge to postpone. Postponing may bring relief, while the unfinished task makes the next attempt feel harder. This is one possible pattern, not an explanation for every anxious experience.

More than one place to intervene

You can clarify the task, examine a prediction, ask for support, orient to the present, or take a small step toward a safe activity. You do not have to change every part of the pattern at once. Try one response and observe what changes.

When to ask for more support

Seek a fuller assessment when anxiety persistently limits work, school, sleep, relationships, or daily life. New or severe physical symptoms deserve appropriate medical attention. Anxiety tools do not replace checking actual danger, illness, or unmet needs.

One part of my pattern I recognize and one response I want to explore

Asking About Avoidance Gently

Anxiety and worry | Clinicians | 10 to 15 minutes

Explore avoidance with curiosity and collaboratively select a safe next step.

Use this conversation when a client wants something to change but has been postponing or avoiding a safe activity. Begin by understanding what the behavior does for them. Permission and shared choice remain central throughout.

Understand the protection

Clinician: "Would it be okay to look at what happens when this task comes up?" Client: "I keep putting it off." Clinician: "What does putting it off help you avoid or manage in that moment?" Reflect the answer before considering change: "It gives you a break from the fear of criticism."

Explore cost and choice

Clinician: "What does that relief cost you later, if anything?" If the client says there is no cost: "Then we may have a different priority today. What would be useful?" If they want change: "What is the smallest safe step that would move toward what matters to you?"

Protect autonomy

If the client says, "I am not ready," respond: "We can pause. Would understanding the barrier, finding support, or choosing another goal be more helpful?" If they choose practice, agree on a specific step and ask, "What will we learn even if anxiety shows up?"

Client language to reflect and the next choice we agreed on

Choosing One Manageable Approach

Anxiety and worry | Clinicians | 50 minutes

Guide a collaborative session that turns one anxiety concern into a manageable plan.

Outcome: the client leaves with one chosen response to a specific worry and a workable plan for reviewing it. Use only an ordinary, safe target. Offer discussion, writing, drawing, or a pause throughout the session.

Minutes 0 to 15

0 to 5: check current distress, functioning, and immediate safety needs. 5 to 10: ask what would make today useful and obtain permission to work with one concern. 10 to 15: use ANX01 to separate an actionable problem from an uncertain prediction.

Minutes 15 to 40

15 to 25: choose ANX02 to examine a prediction or ANX06 to carry uncertainty; the client may decline either. 25 to 35: use ANX03 to plan one small, safe approach step, or complete a practical problem solving action. 35 to 40: rehearse the step and identify barriers and support.

Minutes 40 to 50

40 to 45: ask what felt useful or uncomfortable and adjust the plan. 45 to 50: agree on when to try the step, what to observe, and how to review it. Invite a brief closing check in and confirm the client feels ready to leave. If distress rises, shift to present orientation or support planning.

Chosen step, timing, support, and what we will review

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Writing Through Uncertain Moments

Anxiety and worry | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Reflect on uncertainty while reconnecting with a chosen direction.

Choose one recent moment when uncertainty pulled at your attention. You may write a few words, draw, or speak your responses. Keep the focus on how you want to relate to uncertainty today rather than solving every possible outcome.

Write with room for complexity

Start with what you know, then name what remains unknown. You can acknowledge real risks and personal strengths in the same entry. If writing becomes a repeated attempt to prove you are safe, pause and choose a present moment activity.

End with a direction

Ask what matters enough to deserve a small action even without certainty. The action can be asking for practical help, setting a boundary, resting, or returning to a meaningful task. Choose a realistic next step rather than a promise to stop worrying.

What is known, what is unknown, and what am I feeling?

What does my mind want me to keep checking or replaying?

Which value or relationship do I want to make space for today?

What small action can I take while uncertainty is still here?

Clinical foundations

These sources inform the general clinical concepts. The original resources in this collection are not validated instruments or publisher-endorsed protocols. Links checked October 26, 2026.

S01 Psychotherapies

National Institute of Mental Health | n.d.

General psychotherapy principles, collaborative goals, skills practice, and choosing care.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies>

S03 Generalised anxiety disorder and panic disorder in adults management CG113

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence | 2011 updated 2020

Adult anxiety assessment, stepped care, and cognitive behavioral approaches.

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg113>

S04 Doing What Matters in Times of Stress An Illustrated Guide

World Health Organization | 2020

Stress coping, present moment awareness, values, and kindness. Original exercises in this library are separate from the WHO guide.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240003927>

S05 TIP 57 Trauma Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration | 2014

Trauma informed principles, cultural context, choice, collaboration, and prevention of retraumatization.

<https://library.samhsa.gov/product/tip-57-trauma-informed-care-behavioral-health-services/sma14-4816>