



Student Counselling Services

# **ANXIETY ALERT WORKSHOP**

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**Nov 18<sup>th</sup> 2009**

# WELCOME!.....



## Aims & Objectives:

This workshop is designed to help you to:

- Explore how anxiety affects us
- Identify how thinking and behaviour patterns maintain anxiety.
- Explore management strategies for coping with anxiety

# Exercise

- Break into threes, after introduction, spend a couple of moments discussing what brings you here and what you would hope to learn through your attendance here
- Feedback

# WHAT IS ANXIETY ?

- A feeling we all experience from time to time.
- A normal response to danger or stress.
- Prepares us for fight or flight.



- Performance enhancing.
- It can cause problems when :
  - the symptoms are severe and unpleasant
  - it occurs when there is no real danger or threat
  - if it goes on long after the stress is over
  - If it stops us doing what we want to do

- Anxiety and worry are normal human emotions.
- Most of us will feel anxious at times.
- Anxiety can present in different ways:
  - Generalised anxiety, 5.2% (lifetime prevalence)
  - Panic disorder with or without agoraphobia 3.6%
  - Phobias, 11.3%
  - Social Anxiety disorder, 13.3%
  - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder 2.5%
  - Post traumatic stress disorder 7.6%
  - Substance induced anxiety disorder

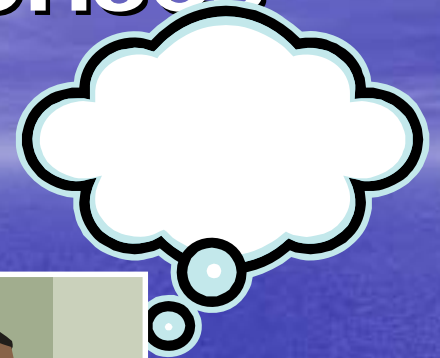
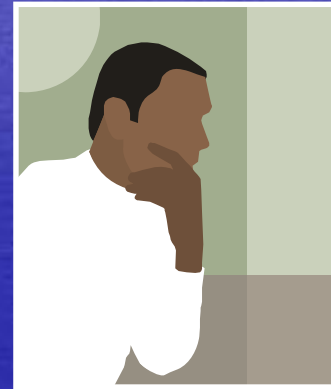


# Prevalence of anxiety

- 15% of U.S population will suffer from an anxiety disorder in their lives (ECA study Robins & Regier 1991)
- Lifetime prevalence 28.7% U.K population (Kessler et al National co-morbidity survey 1997)
- One quarter to one third of G.P consultations relate to mental health issues (Sharp & Morell 1989)
- Anxiety and mixed anxiety /depression are common and need identification and management.

# Exploring Anxiety Responses

- What are typical thoughts that emerge when we get anxious or feel uptight?
- How might anxiety and worry make us feel physically?
- How might our behaviour change?
- How might it affect mood?



# ANXIETY PROFILE

## PHYSICAL REACTIONS

Tense muscles  
Palpitations  
Butterflies in the tummy  
Difficulty breathing  
Shaking  
Sweating



## BEHAVIOURS

Increased eating  
Decreased eating  
Drinking more  
Smoking more  
Avoiding situations  
Take drugs  
Seek reassurance



## THOUGHTS

I'm not coping  
I'm losing control  
I'm going to faint  
I'm having a heart attack



## MOODS

Down  
Anxious  
Panicky  
Nervous  
Tense  
Stressed



# Physiologically whats happening?



The brain interprets a situation as dangerous or threatening



Brain sends a message to the adrenal glands



Adrenalin is released into the bloodstream



The body is preparing for danger and action

## Summary of physical symptoms we can experience:

**Heart rate increases** palpitations

**Blood pressure increases** feelings of pressure in head  
headaches

**Breathing rate increases** overbreathing

- dizziness
- tingling sensations
- light-headedness

tightness in chest  
chest pain  
feelings of shortness of breath

**Muscle tension increases** aches and pains  
trembling  
muscle cramps / spasms  
tightness in chest  
tightness in throat  
headaches



## **Sweating increases**

clamminess of hands / forehead  
hot / cold flushes  
blushing



## **Digestive disturbances**

butterflies  
nausea / vomiting  
indigestion  
poor appetite  
dry mouth  
- difficulty swallowing

## **Body lightens self**

urges to pass urine or open bowels  
vomiting

## **Senses sharpen**

noises in ears  
blurred vision  
sensitivity to noise / light changes

Leads to .....Avoidance behaviour ... need to self protect

# Thoughts and Anxiety

- Anxiety experience can be accompanied by negative thinking
  - over estimate possible dangers.
  - underestimate ability to cope.
  - worrying and thinking catastrophically.
  - feel more vulnerable and less confident
  - increased beliefs that we are under threat
  - future oriented thinking.. What if...?
- Worries often centre on fears of collapsing, dying, fainting or losing control
- Social concerns-humiliation, embarrassment or fears of “making a fool of myself”





### *Thoughts*

I cant cope, I'll do something silly, I'll faint, something bad will happen

### *Physically*

Increased heart rate, breathless, nausea, diarrhoea

### *Mood/Emotions*

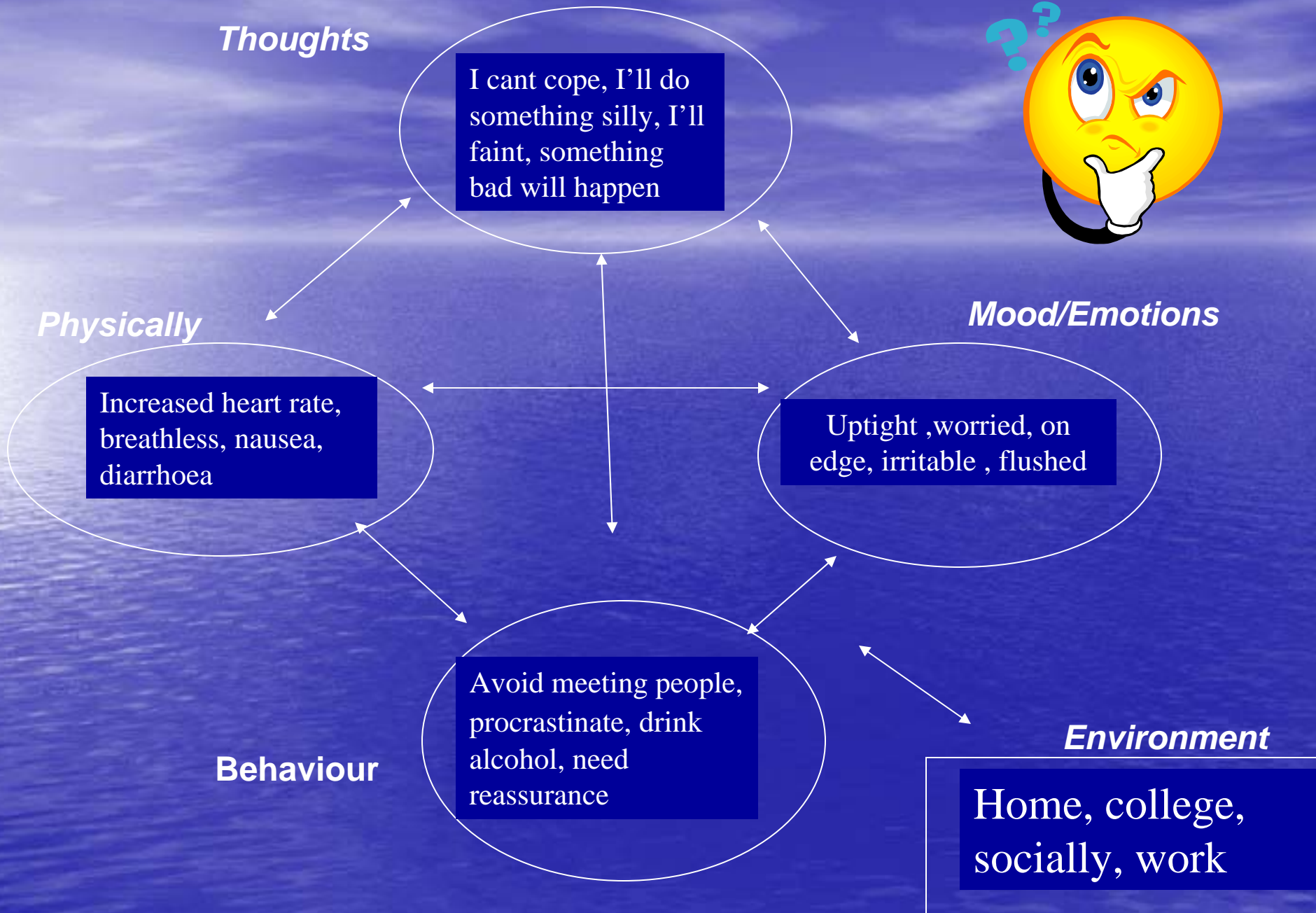
Uptight ,worried, on edge, irritable , flushed

### *Behaviour*

Avoid meeting people, procrastinate, drink alcohol, need reassurance

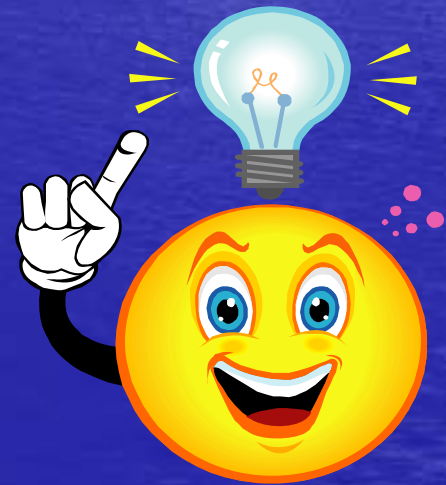
### *Environment*

Home, college, socially, work



# Understanding and managing anxiety

- Talk to the person next to you
- Discuss what might be helpful in managing anxiety
- Feedback



# What might be helpful.....

- Talking to a friend or family member
- Consulting with a general practitioner or counsellor
- Anxiety can be physically and psychologically driven, in some cases combining psychological support and medication can help
- Monitoring thoughts to recognize and challenge negative thinking
- Lifestyle and self care, relaxation techniques
- Tackling avoidance through graded exposure



# THOUGHT RECORD

SITUATION	MOOD	AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS	EVIDENCE SUPPORTING HOT THOUGHT	EVIDENCE NOT SUPPORTING HOT THOUGHT	ALTERNATIVE THOUGHTS	MOOD NOW
In class	tense 90%	I'll say something silly, my voice will shake, <u>I'll look stupid</u>	Two people laughed at me the last time I spoke	My friend told me I didn't sound nervous	Many people get anxious speaking in public, I don't laugh at them or think they are stupid	Tense 50%

# "Musts and shoulds....."

- "I must meet 3 sets of friends this week or they'll be annoyed"
- What is reasonable....
- "I'll meet 1 group midweek, one over the weekend and defer the 3<sup>rd</sup> till next week"
- Change the "shoulds" to "coulds" when you can...

# Do one thing at a time....

- “.. texting, doing an essay, listening to my ipod and having a sandwich....”
- Overloading the system causes stress-attend to one thing at a time, only then move to the next task
- Avoid balancing too many things all at once....

# Exercise....

- Take 20 mins of daily exercise-walk, swim, jog, play a sport
- Releases hydrocortisol, endorphins – improves physical and psychological well being

## CAFFEINE INTAKE

- Caffeine-stimulant produces symptoms
- Contained in tea coffee ,fizzy drinks
- Cut back-watch for withdrawals

# Learn how to problem solve

(Jarvis et al 1995)

- Define the problem
- Brainstorm available possible options
- Choose best option
- Generate an action plan
- Put plan into action
- Evaluate results and review

# Build up a network of support..

- Friends/family
- Hobbies/interests
- Support groups
- Relaxation/yoga/meditation practice
- Local G.P
- Become familiar with online/  
telephone/self help support groups
- Be responsive and attentive to the needs  
of your peers but watch your self care.



# Progressive Muscular Relaxation

Learn the distinction between tense and relaxed muscles, so that you can recognise tension and learn to relax in response.

- Moving systematically through the body, tense your muscles as hard as you can, concentrating on the feelings of tension and slight strain.
- Hold this for 5 seconds and then let go of the tension for 10 – 15 seconds. Notice how your muscles feel as you relax.
- Focus through this relaxation exercise on sensations in different parts of your body.
- When you have finished the exercise, move slowly and stretch gently.

Try to practice regularly to learn this new skill

## Controlled Breathing

Place one hand on your chest and one on your stomach.

Take a breath in through the nose to the count of 4. Feel your stomach being pushed outwards. This means you are using your lungs fully.

Try to keep the movement gentle.

Now, breath out through your nose to the count of 4. Feel your stomach return to its natural resting state.

Continue this for 10 – 15 breaths.

Remember, it takes time to learn how to relax and you may need to put a practice time into your day.

# Mindfulness



Mindfulness is about becoming aware—

Paying attention... on purpose... in the present moment... to what is happening for you as an individual

Accepting thoughts....physical feelings or emotions ....letting them be..... so they don't overwhelm you



# Resources/reading

- *"Mind Over Mood"* by Christine Padesky & Dennis Greenberger
- *"Overcoming anxiety"* by Helen Kennerley
- *"Living with Fear"* by Prof Isaac Marks
- *"Stop Obsessing"* by Edna Foa Reid Wilson
- College Resources:
- Student Counselling ph 8961407 [student-counselling@tcd.ie](mailto:student-counselling@tcd.ie)
- Health Centre ph 8961556 Duty appointments daily
- (PSN) [peer@tcd.ie](mailto:peer@tcd.ie) Student 2 student
- Niteline Thursday-Sunday 9pm-2:30am 1800793793
- Websites: [www.anxietynetwork.com](http://www.anxietynetwork.com)  
[www.phobics-society.org.uk](http://www.phobics-society.org.uk)  
[www.octc.co.uk/html/body-mindfulness.html](http://www.octc.co.uk/html/body-mindfulness.html)

# Questions / comments .....

- Something that struck me was.....
- Something I'd like to learn more about is.....
- The most important thing I learned today was.....