

Managing Your Anxiety – Sam Nordberg PhD

Welcome to the group!

I am a clinical psychologist and fellow anxious person. I am excited to bring some of the best science from anxiety research into this course to help you gain some mastery over your anxiety.

Managing anxiety is a skill. While some anxiety can be helpful, too much can become difficult to bear. This course will teach participants about the nature of anxiety – why we have it, what its purpose is, and how it impacts us physically and emotionally. Additionally, the work will focus on learning and practicing methods of managing anxiety. Much like a fitness program, we will focus on developing and practicing techniques which can be applied in the real world, and on increasing participants' abilities to live full and healthy lives in the presence of anxiety. Much of the research this course is based on was conducted here in the Boston area, and topics are continually updated to reflect cutting edge science.

Ground Rules:

1. **Attendance:** We all agree to be here on time and ready to work. A treatment like this only works if attendance is consistent. Showing up is one of the hardest things for many people with anxiety, but it is critical for this treatment to have a chance at working.
2. **We work hard to treat one another respectfully:** Group needs to be a place where each of us can feel comfortable asking questions and sharing struggles. We all agree to be respectful of one another, knowing that each of us struggles with different challenges.
3. **Work gets done:** One hour of group is insufficient to change a lifetime of thoughts and behaviors. We all agree to work outside of the group hours to follow through on agreed-on tasks.
4. **What happens in group stays in group:** We agree not to share disclosures made in the group with people outside the group. We do this to help promote a safe environment.

What to expect:

This is not a sharing group; this is a get-to-work program designed to give people the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their anxiety better. Therefore, you can expect to have work to take home every week, and assignments to practice, but you won't be asked to share intimate details about your life. I do want everyone to participate in the group – discussing material, asking questions, and discussing success or failure with take-home work. Think of this more as a class. We are here to learn about anxiety and then build the skills necessary to become expert at managing it. As is the case in any training program, we will start out simple and take on harder and harder tasks as we go along.

Syllabus:

Date	Topic	Skill	Take Home Work
Session 1	Welcome; group overview		Treatment goals and What Is Anxiety
Session 2	Psychoeducation - Response Curve	Diaphragmatic/Calm breathing	Physiological Observation worksheet
Session 3	Psychoeducation - Response Curve	Grounding technique	Physiological Observation worksheet
Session 4	Physiological Relaxation	Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Exercise Handout PMR 1x/day
Session 5	Physiological Relaxation	Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Try out Exercise routine/plan PMR 1x/day
Session 6	Physiological Relaxation	Mindfulness; Awareness/Acceptance Describe/Nonjudgmentally	Mindfulness; practice 1 skills/day
Session 7	Observing Cognitions	Thinking Traps	Thinking Traps
Session 8	Observing Cognitions	Mindfulness Watching Your Thoughts	ABC sheets Watching Your Thoughts
Session 9	Observing Cognitions	Mindfulness	ABC sheets
Session 10	Core and Automatic Thoughts	Mindfulness Self-compassion break	ABC sheets Self-compassion break
Session 11	Stopping the Worry Cycle	Distraction, Mindfulness, Self-care	ABC sheets Own list of skills
Session 12	Behavioral Activation	Multi-skill review	Practice different skills Short list of possible exposures
Session 13	Behavioral Activation	Multi-skill Review Self-Talk, from negative to positive	Create Exposure protocol
Session 14	Behavioral Activation	Multi-skill Review	1st Exposure Attempt
Session 15	Behavioral Activation	Multi-skill Review	2nd Exposure Attempt
Session 16	Behavioral Activation	Multi-skill Review	None