

# ANXIETY Survival Guide

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

**32%** Of 13-18 year olds have anxiety

**9%** Have social anxiety

**80%** Of youth with anxiety aren't getting help dealing with it

Children's Health Institute. (2017). 2017 Children's Mental Health Report.

## ANXIETY LOOKS DIFFERENT FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Don't want to go to school  
Mind goes blank  
Getting angry  
Worrying about things constantly  
Hard to make new friends  
Butterflies  
Headaches  
Second-guessing answers and homework  
Can't sit still  
Tight chest

## ANXIETY IS DIFFERENT FROM STRESS

← Stress is a response to a threat (a test, performance, etc.)



Anxiety is a response to stress. →



Zazzah B.A (2016) Anxiety. SketchPort  
Watson, A. (2017) Surviving Standardized Tests.

# NO ONE IS BORN WITH ANXIETY

The brain learns to be anxious. It happens over time when someone is afraid of a certain situation. If that situation causes anxiety a few times, eventually the brain learns to be anxious every time.

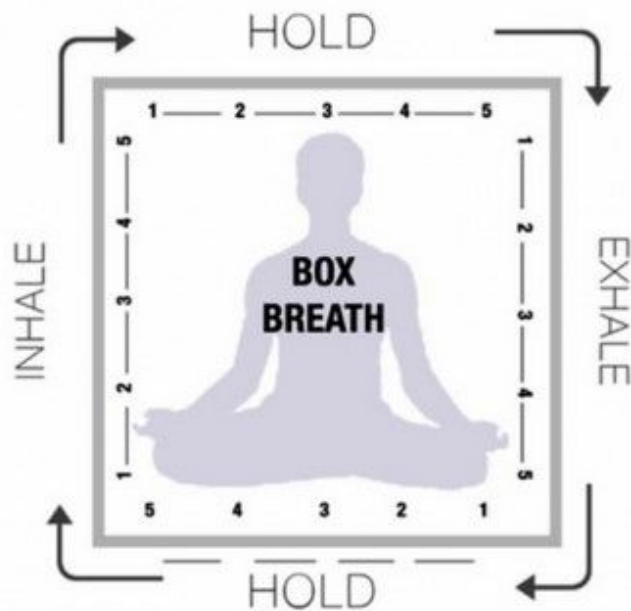
*That means anxiety can be "unlearned"*

# IT TAKES TIME

Cognitive therapy is used to learn new behaviors and ways to deal with anxiety. With practice, eventually these new behaviors will be automatic, just like walking is automatic now that you've done it for awhile. Cognitive therapy is guided by a therapist, but this flipbook has a few techniques that can be used to tackle anxiety right away.



~ BREATHE ~



THE POSES:



Wonder Woman



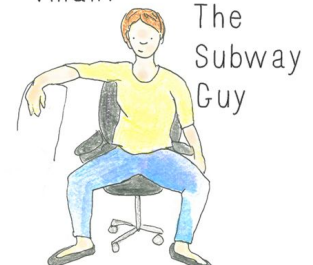
The Victor



The Villain



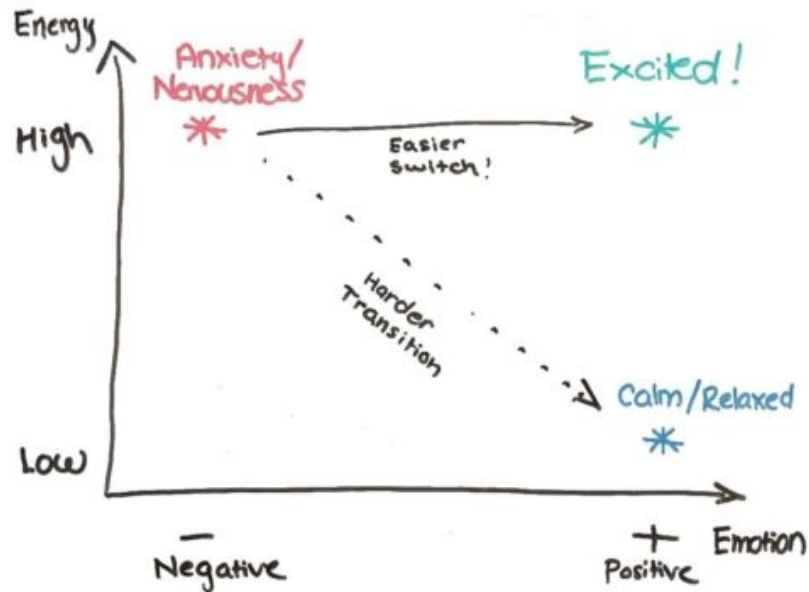
The CEO



The Subway Guy

POWER  
POSE  
FOR 2  
MINUTES

# REDEFINE ANXIOUS FEELINGS



Brooks, A.W. (2014). Get Excited: Reappraising Pre-Performance Anxiety as Excitement. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, Vol. 143(No. 3), 1144–1158.

# REDEFINE ANXIOUS FEELINGS

When anxious feelings creep up, say things like:

“I’m excited to show what I know on this test.”

“I’m excited to share my presentation.”

“I’m going to have fun on this group project.”

Let yourself be excited. Your brain won’t feel as anxious and you’ll perform better.

Brooks, A.W. (2014). Get Excited: Reappraising Pre-Performance Anxiety as Excitement. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, Vol. 143(No. 3), 1144–1158.

# GET IT ALL OUT AND LET IT GO

Take 10 minutes on the day of a task that’s making you anxious and write about those feelings. Maybe you write about the anxiousness while you eat breakfast or the last 10 minutes of a study hall. Just let it all flow out. Then crumple up the paper and throw it away. Let the worries go with it.

Ramirez, G. & Biellock, S.L. (2011). Writing about Testing Worries Boosts Exam Performance in the Classroom. *Science*, Vol. 331(6014), 211-213.

# RECOGNIZE THINKING TRAPS

The Repetitor → It happened once, it’ll always happen

The Fortune Teller → Predicting what will happen

The Mind Reader → Jumping to conclusions that someone is thinking bad things about you

The Catastrophe → Always thinking the worst will happen

Pick, Pick, Pick → Missing the good parts and picking out the potential dangers of a situation

The Perfectionist → Setting expectations that are too high

Kendall, P.C., Choudhury, M., Hudson, J, Webb, A. (2002) *The cat project workbook*. Ardmore, PA: Workbook Publishing.

## USE COPING THOUGHTS

I'll just try and see what happens.

*I've done this before and I survived. I can do it again.*

**What's the big deal?  
This happens to everyone.**

So I'm not perfect, no one is.

Since I can't predict the future. I should wait and see what happens.

Kendall, P.C., Choudhury, M., Hudson, J, Webb, A. (2002) *The cat project workbook*. Ardmore, PA: Workbook Publishing.

## REDIRECT YOUR FOCUS

- Focus on other people (but not their thoughts)
- Listen to what's being said, instead of your inner voice
- Focus on the present moment, not the future or past
- Be genuine and honest, people appreciate it more than perfection
- Remember, anxiety isn't as visible as it feels
- Exercise
- Distract yourself (ex: counting the number of blue cars on the road)

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/social-anxiety-disorder.htm>

## TIPS FOR TALKING TO PEOPLE

- Nod and smile a lot!
- If you notice a shaky voice, keep your comments brief, but not nonexistent
- Maintain eye contact
- Ask questions, even if you think you understand
- If your mouth gets dry, keep a water bottle with you. It keeps your hands busy too.

Kendall, P.C., Choudhury, M., Hudson, J, Webb, A. (2002) *The cat project workbook*. Ardmore, PA: Workbook Publishing.

## TIPS FOR GETTING A JOB OR INTO COLLEGE

- Do your research so you feel prepared.
- Your best effort will put you in the 'right fit' spot for you. Let it happen.
- Not everyone is happy right away in a new place.
- Break work down into smaller pieces. Take it one day at a time.

Kendall, P.C., Choudhury, M., Hudson, J, Webb, A. (2002) *The cat project workbook*. Ardmore, PA: Workbook Publishing.