



NHS

Surrey and Borders
Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

Recovery College Newsletter

Week 2: Anxiety

1st April 2020



OUR MESSAGE FOR THIS WEEK

Hi, Rebecca (ROC) and Moira here.

As you may know ROC experiences GAD (Generalised Anxiety Disorder) and this current situation is certainly challenging every part of that. She has noticed more acute episodes and that constant churning in her stomach has been like a washing machine stuck on the spin cycle.

However, after a couple of days of 'giving in to it', she was reminded that she has tools and practises them in the good times so now is the time to get that practice into play during this uncertain time. A few things that have worked for ROC have been:

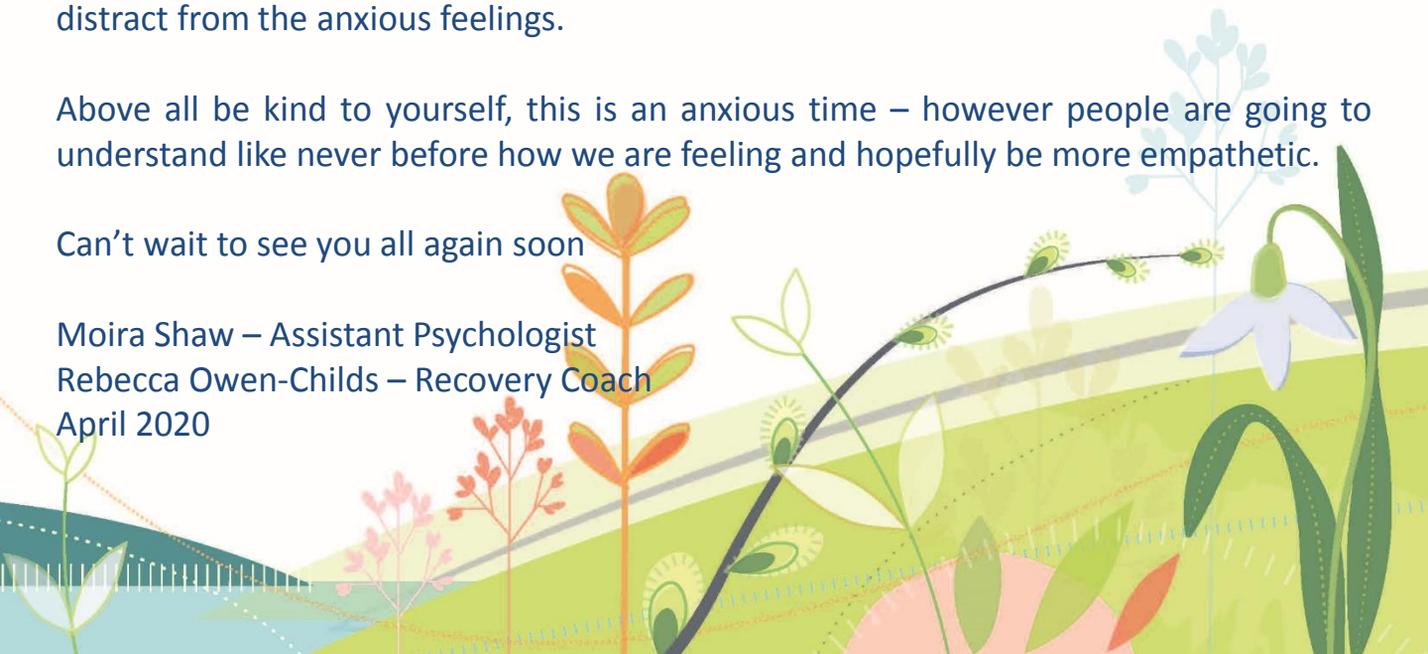
- The Worry Tree (This is ROC's favourite CBT tool). [Click here to download a copy.](#)
- Listening to 'Car Music' playlist very loud (it contains loads of cheesy singalong, leap around music) and subsequently – jumping around and singing.
- Reaching out – ROC reached out to the incredible Recovery College team and they have been wonderful – hence her new ability to now work properly!
- For those of you who have done our Recovery in ACTION (ACT) course – We have been implementing cognitive diffusion and distracting with Active Mindfulness when the worry has become too consistent; with the lovely weather ROC stands in the garden and talks about everything she can see and hear – to herself!

Later on in this update there are ideas for other types of Active Mindfulness to help distract from the anxious feelings.

Above all be kind to yourself, this is an anxious time – however people are going to understand like never before how we are feeling and hopefully be more empathetic.

Can't wait to see you all again soon

Moira Shaw – Assistant Psychologist
Rebecca Owen-Childs – Recovery Coach
April 2020

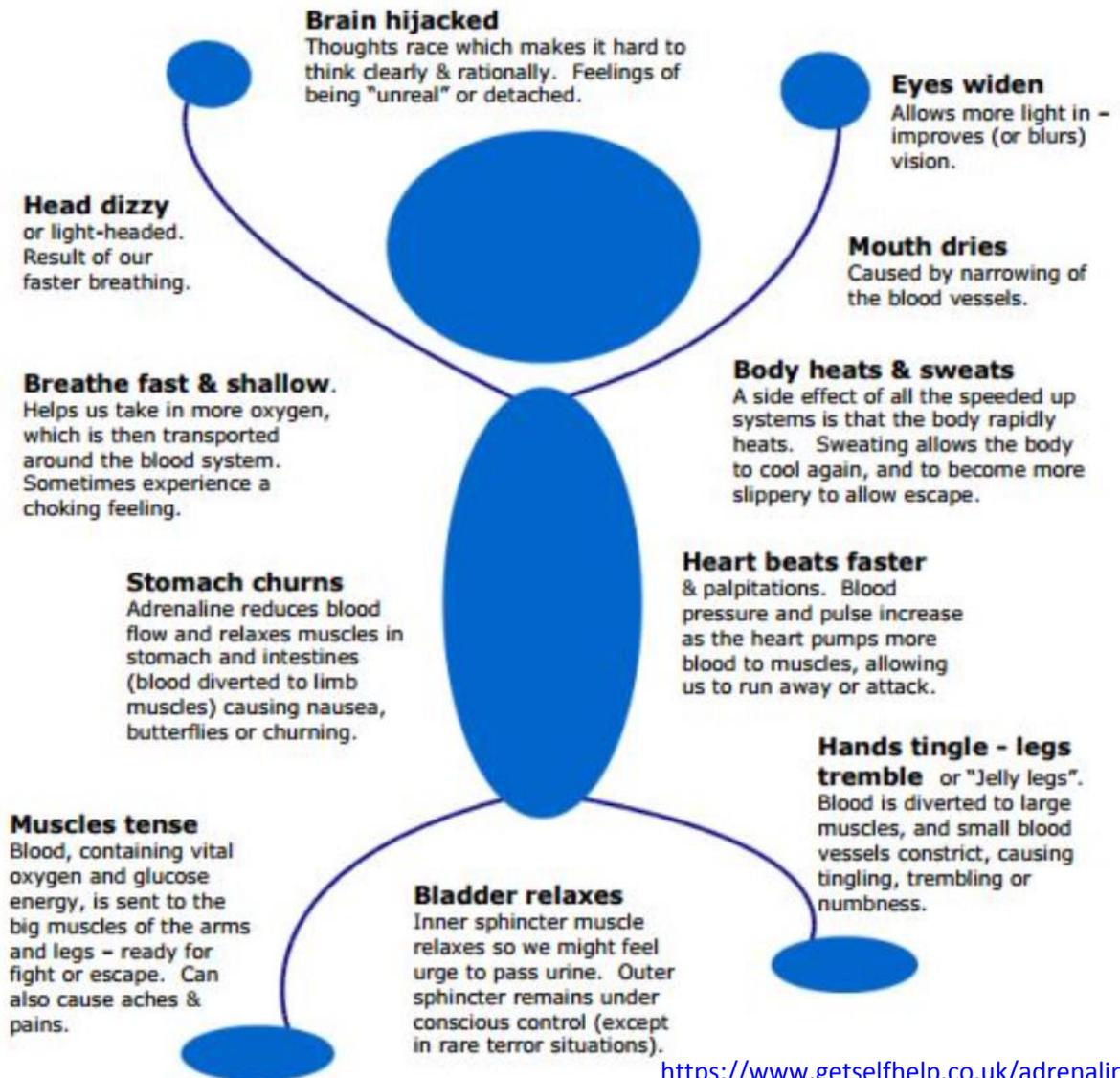




HOW DOES ANXIETY AFFECT US AND WHY IT IS USEFUL?

Anxiety is a natural response to dangerous or unfamiliar situations. It is particularly common to experience anxiety when coping with stressful events or changes especially when these affect your normal daily life. We need a level of anxiety to help us stay alert and aware of danger, but sometimes anxiety can take over and can start to affect our work, relationships and daily functioning.

When our minds perceive a threat, the [fight or flight response](#) is automatically engaged and people can experience one or many of the symptoms below:





Once the danger has passed, the body will release different chemicals to restore equilibrium and calm the body. However, in modern life the mind can perceive constant threats so we are in an exhausting hypervigilant state for extended periods of time.

Some people may also experience [panic attacks](#). These are the flight or fight response in hyperdrive! For those who have never experienced them, it can absolutely feel like you are going to die, but the good news is that you won't die from a panic attack and the sensation **will** pass.

During a panic attack it can help to:

- **Focus on your breathing.** Try counting to five slowly as you inhale or exhale. Another tip from a paramedic friend is to grab anything to hand with writing on and try reading aloud. This will help distract you and help to regain control of your breathing at the same time.
- **Ground yourself.** There are lots of grounding techniques but one of the ones we use a lot at the Recovery College is the 5 senses grounding tool which we've included below.

There are lots of Apps out there that can help with anxiety. Calm and Headspace are a couple of the Recovery College favourites. Although they are subscription apps for the full content, there is still a lot of content that you can access for free – why not give them a go? Click on the icons to find out more....



Want to know more?

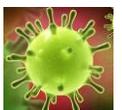
Once we are back up and running, sign up for our Understanding Anxiety and Depression course. If you can't wait until then, Future Learn is running a free online course starting on 4th April. To find out more click [here](#)

GROUNDING IDEAS TO STOP ANXIETY

5 Senses Grounding Tool

-  5 things you can hear
-  4 things you can feel
-  3 things you can hear
-  2 things you can smell
-  1 thing you can taste

If you are struggling at the moment with all that is surrounding us, find specific hints for coping with the Coronavirus, click [here](#).





Tips for Keep Anxiety at Bay



Breathe in, Breathe out and feel the flow of the breath, notice it's coolness on the way in and the warmth on the way out. ROC imagines the words 'peace' on the in-breath and 'calm' on the out-breath

As soon as your mind wanders – bring it back to the breath which is always there!



Practice Non-Judgmental Listening (Maybe very handy right now!!). Listen to listen and not to reply

Be aware of every daily activity (Brushing teeth, cleaning, hanging out washing etc)



Guided Mindfulness

(if opening on a mobile device you will need to open the separate audio file attached to this email)



ROC reading Mindfulness of the Breath



Go easy on yourself – you will get there and forgive yourself for those negative thoughts.



Share your tips for coping with anxiety with other students on our Facebook page!

OUR COURSES

Courses are not currently running, but we are looking at new exciting ways to run courses remotely if the current situation continues for an extended period of time.

When our courses are back up and running, you can learn more about Anxiety on the following courses:

- Understanding Depression and Anxiety
- Confidence and Self-Esteem
- Recovery in Action
- Discovering Self Compassion

We'll let you know as soon as we have dates for running these courses again.

You don't have to be referred to become a student at the Recovery Colleges. We are open to everyone and all you need to do is enrol, which is really easy to do.

To become a student simply complete and return an enrolment form which you can get by contacting us. We would be delighted to see you at one of our courses and look forward to meeting you.

If you have any questions or need guidance on completing the enrolment form please get in touch and one of our team will be happy to help.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE RECOVERY COLLEGE

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/recoverycollege.nehantsfarnham/>

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