

The *Center for Adolescent  
Research in Schools* Cognitive  
Behavioral Treatment (CBT)  
For Anxiety Manual



CENTER FOR ADOLESCENT  
RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

*Moving Youth Toward Success*

# The *Center for Adolescent Research in Schools* Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT) For Anxiety Manual

## Acknowledgements

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These materials have been developed to assist school personnel in their efforts to improve support for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities and those at high risk. Downloading single personal copies is permissible; however, photocopying multiple copies of these materials for sale is forbidden without expressed written permission by the Center for Adolescent Research in Schools. To obtain a personal copy of this and related manuals and materials, visit [www.ies-cars.org](http://www.ies-cars.org).

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# MANUAL OVERVIEW

## Introduction

In this manual, you will find a set of activities taken from evidence-based interventions for students with anxiety-related problems. The CBT Anxiety intervention should be provided by professionals with a graduate degree in a mental health discipline (counseling, social work, psychology). The procedures in this manual are based on the assumption that the student has already mastered the concepts in phase one of the ISG manual (i.e., they understand the problem-solving process and have identified ideal self-goals).

This intervention is divided into three phases. Within each phase, you will find several topics and activities. The topics do not have to be completed in separate sessions, but they should be completed in the sequence listed. Within each topic, you will see the objectives that you should achieve, the materials needed and the time frame for each activity.

You will also see **bold face type** and *italicized type*. **The bold face type indicates what you (the counselor) should say to the students.** *The italicized type offers you additional information and ideas that you can use if you choose.* All other type is general information.

The first phase involves students learning about anxiety and how it can be managed (Knowledge Acquisition). The second phase involves teaching the students specific skills for coping with their anxiety (Skills Acquisition) and the third phase involves helping students apply these skills in their daily lives (Skills Application). The first two phases may be provided to students in a group or individual meetings. The exposure activities in the third phase require brief individual sessions (15 to 30 minutes) with individual students or student dyads. More details about each phase are provided below.

### **Phase 1**

During the first phase, students learn about the nature of anxiety; understand the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and develop a vocabulary for each; learn to rate the intensity of their anxiety,

and create a hierarchy of their fears. After students have demonstrated the above knowledge and have created a fear hierarchy, they move to Phase 2.

### **Phase 2**

During the second phase, students learn several skills to help them better manage anxiety. The skill set includes relaxation techniques; identifying and modifying negative self-talk; and self-evaluation and reward. Skill development will occur through discussion, modeling of skills by the group leader, and through role plays. After students have demonstrated each of these skills in mildly anxiety-provoking situations (e.g., role plays or real situations), they move to Phase 3.

### **Phase 3**

During the third phase, students will apply and practice the newly learned skills during exposures to the anxiety-provoking situations that are listed on their fear hierarchy. The practice of new skills takes place through role plays and in vivo (real life) exposure tasks and continues until the student can (a) apply the skills in highly anxiety-provoking situations, (b) has reduced avoidance of such situations, and (c) has improved functioning in previously-impaired domains.

## Homework

It is common for CBT groups like this one to have homework for students. These homework assignments frequently include asking students to complete worksheets in between sessions when confronted with anxiety-provoking situations. **We recommend that you do not give such handwritten assignments in these school-based groups.** The information on these sheets can be very confidential and quite embarrassing for a student if discovered by a peer. In addition, many students are fairly careless with their belongings and this increases the risk of a breach of confidentiality. Although we realize that homework completion can increase the effectiveness of this intervention, we believe that in a school setting the risks outweigh the benefits. Despite this recommendation, we also give school mental health professional the flexibility to make exceptions to this rule on a case-by-case basis. For example, in some cases, the student is agreeable, the risks have been discussed with the student, and a plan to minimize those risks has been developed.

Nonetheless, having students think about and implement therapeutic concepts in between meetings with you is important and can facilitate treatment success. **Thus, instead of having students complete worksheets independently, you are encouraged to conduct brief “check-ins” with each student once between each session.** This can occur flexibly, for example, when the student arrives in the morning before the first class, in between classes, during a study hall, during a lunch period, or 15 minutes before the student leaves school. During these brief “check-ins”, counselors should engage in a process, called **ReCCaP** (which stands for **R**eview, **C**omplete the Log, **C**onnect to Treatment, and **P**lan). The ReCCaP activities are described in more detail below. If you are unable to complete a ReCCaP Log with students between sessions, start each session by having students complete a ReCCaP Log. These logs will be reviewed by the CARS SMC during your weekly consultation and data review sessions.

### Student Folders

Because students will be completing worksheets during sessions and between sessions (i.e., with you, during ReCCaPPs), each student should have a folder for their work.

## ORIENTATION SESSION

The purpose of the orientation session is to introduce the students to the format of the group and to each other. The counselor should use this session to set the tone for the group (informal, supportive, interesting, and fun).

Time: 15-30 minutes (depending on the ice breaker activity you choose)

### Objectives for this Orientation Session

- Students will understand the goal of the group
- Students will be able to describe group rules
- Students will understand what confidentiality is and its limits

### Materials

- Optional: Student Folders (to show where confidential work will be kept)
- Optional: White board/Chalk Board (for highlighting important concepts)
- Materials for Icebreaker Activity (see Appendix page 74)

### Welcome

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Welcome to the first day of group! The goals of this group are (1) to learn how our thoughts, feelings and behaviors work together, and (2) to learn how to cope with things that are stressful in our lives. We are going to talk about these things in a couple of minutes. Before we do I want to go over a few things.**

### *Review with group members:*

- *Group Rules: Group rules should be set before the first session. Rules and related consequences should be explained and may be role-played. A sign listing the rules may be posted in the room to serve as a reminder.*
- *Confidentiality: Confidentiality should be defined and its importance discussed with members of the group. The basic expectation is that students do not discuss or mention anything that is shared in group outside of the group sessions. Students who break this trust may be asked to leave the group.*

- *Logistics of group sessions: Review the standing time and location for the group meetings, how the leader will communicate changes to students, expectations for attendance and informing the group leader of conflicts.*

## Introductions

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Let's take the next couple minutes to introduce ourselves to each other. Please just state your first name and anything else you wish to say about yourself. I will begin. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.** *Continue with introductions.*

*At this point you may wish to do an ice breaker activity. There are some examples of these activities in the Appendix for Orientation Session (page 74), but you may use one of your own if you wish. The activity should be designed simply to get the students talking, enjoying their interactions and feeling comfortable.*

## Overview of CBT Anxiety

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: As you know, there are many types of feelings or emotions. Sometimes we feel these emotions very intensely and other times we do not feel them at all.**

*[With Group]: Brainstorm types of emotions.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Sometimes these emotions help us do wonderful things. For example, if you can care about another person and feel happy or sad about their happiness or sadness, you are likely to treat them well and do nice things for them. On the other hand, sometimes people lose control of some of their emotions and do things that they regret or get them into trouble. For example, if someone gets very angry about something a teacher says, that person may say things or do things in class that get them into serious trouble.**

*[With Group]: First, identify situations in which a feeling or an emotion helped someone do something nice or helpful. Then, identify other situations in which a feeling or an emotion led to inappropriate behavior. Sometimes it is easier for students to identify these situations in others rather than in themselves. Thus, you can have student report situations about others they have observed (e.g., family*



*members, friends, characters on TV). As participation increases, have students try to report situations about themselves.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: As I said before, the goals of this group are (1) to learn how the thoughts, feelings and behaviors associated with stress and anxiety, as well as how thoughts, feelings and behaviors are connected, and (2) to learn how to cope with stress and anxiety in our lives so that we can achieve our Ideal Self Goals**

*[With Group]: As needed, review ideal self goals from ISG.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: We're going to complete three phases together. In the first phase you learn all about anxiety (what happens when you're anxious and why).**

*If the students are referring to anxiety with another word, such as stress, panic, nervousness, it may be helpful to use that term as well.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: In the second phase, we're going to learn skills for managing the uncomfortable thoughts and feelings that go with anxiety. In the third phase, we'll put these new skills into practice.**

*Convey that throughout this process, you will work as a team, within the group and with you. You will offer up some new terms and ideas. They should share their reactions to these ideas. They should also practice the skills and then offer feedback about what works and what doesn't work. You will support them as they try out their new skills and tweak them to fit their unique situation.*

*Optional Activity to build engagement and motivation for change (~30-45 minutes)*

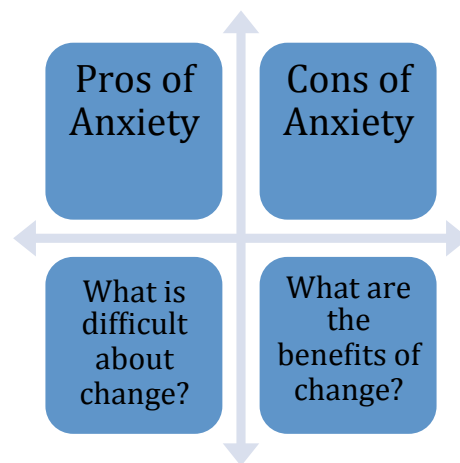
**Motivational Interviewing Four-Square Discussion:** As the group leader, divide a large paper or white board into fourths by drawing a vertical and horizontal line through the middle of the paper. (See figure below). As you ask the following questions, write the student's responses in the corresponding box and be sure to make the lists of students' responses longer for boxes 2 and 4.

For box 1 (upper left quadrant), ask the students "What are some of the 'pros' of feeling anxious? Examples include "it could help you study for a test," "it could help you move out of the way of danger," "a little bit of anxiety could help you practice more of perform better"

For box 2 (upper right quadrant), ask the students "What are some of the 'cons' of being feeling anxious and avoiding situations? Examples include "too much anxiety can make you perform poorly" "if you avoid situations because of anxiety you will miss out on fun activities" "too much anxiety can make you procrastinate/avoid doing any work" "anxiety can make you freeze up in a situation and make you look stupid" What are some of the unfortunate consequences?

For box 3 (lower left quadrant), ask the students "What is difficult about changing the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors associated with anxiety? What do you not like about having to change?"

For box 4, ask the students (lower right quadrant) "What might be good about changing the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors associated with anxiety? What are some benefits of changing?" Then engage them in a discussion that elicits change talk and builds and/or reinforces their motivation for changing. Focus on reflecting the positive possibilities of change. Reflect that the work may be difficult but that the benefits may outweigh the costs. The therapist should ask students what they noticed when they went through each list and compared the list. Point out that boxes 2 and 4 are longer, and that a small amount of anxiety can be helpful, but too much anxiety is problematic/gets in the way of good performance. Note: this can be a long discussion for students. We have found that some sort of movement break is helpful to break it up!



*To end the group, give any instructions for attending the next meeting or proceed to Phase 1 activities.*

## PHASE 1: KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

There are four topics in this section

- Understanding Anxiety
- Understanding the Connection between Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors
- Feeling Intensity Ratings
- Creating a Fear Hierarchy

The topics do not have to be completed in separate sessions, but they should be completed in the sequence listed. Each will likely take 15-30 minutes, depending on the activities you choose to complete for each topic.

### Objectives of Phase 1:

- Students will state in their own words how anxiety can be helpful and harmful
- Students will identify thoughts, feelings, physiological symptoms, and behaviors associated with anxiety
- Students will provide examples of how thoughts influence feelings and behaviors
- Students will rate the intensity of their anxiety across a variety of situations
- Student will create a fear hierarchy of the situations that will be addressed through exposure tasks

To determine if each student is ready to move to Phase 2, Counselors/Group facilitators will have students complete the End of Phase 1 Assessment (see page 86).

## Topic 1: Understanding Anxiety

Time: 15 minutes with no activity; 30 minutes with an activity (recommended)

### Outline

- Define anxiety
- Normalize anxiety and discuss how it helps us
- Describe the components of anxiety
  - Physiological Symptoms
  - Feelings
  - Thoughts
  - Behaviors

### Materials Needed (See Appendix pages 76-77 for handouts)

- White board/chalk board
- White paper and colored pens/pencils/markers
- Optional: Poster board/butcher paper
- Optional: Upside Down U-Shaped Curve of Anxiety Handout (page 76)
- Optional Physiology of Anxiety Handout (page 77)

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Welcome back! In order to better cope with anxiety, we need to first understand what it is. How would each of you define or describe anxiety?**

*[With Group]: Let students offer ideas. You could write the ideas on a white board to show that each idea is valid and important. You could use the following definition to summarize their responses.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Anxiety has been defined as a sudden rush of intense fear or nervousness often associated with feelings of impending doom or negative thoughts, and accompanied by several physical symptoms (e.g., muscle tension, sweaty palms, rapid heart rate, shortness of breath, chest tightness,).**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Although there are commonalities in the way people experience anxiety, anxiety can also look and feel really different for different people.**

*[With Group]: Use their examples to show commonalities across students as well as how each student reported unique thoughts experience when anxious.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: I want us to talk about three things related to anxiety.**

**First, anxiety and stress are common.**

*Write this on the board under #1.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Everyone experiences stress every day, and up to one in four teenagers has significant difficulty with anxiety, probably even more so than adults. What are ways that people experience anxiety and stress every day? The good news is that we now know a lot about anxiety and we can help you learn some strategies to better manage it.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]; Second, you may not know this, but anxiety is actually a *good* thing.**

*Write this on the board under #2.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: It probably doesn't seem like it to you now or when you're in the middle of a panic. But can anyone guess how anxiety might be helpful to us?**

*[With Group]: Let students offer ideas.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Anxiety serves two good purposes. One purpose is to motivate us.**

*Write this on the board as part of #2.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Think about a test, a job interview, a project, or a sports performance. If we have just the right amount of anxiety (a little nervousness, a little apprehension), this will serve to help us study, practice and prepare. If you have too little anxiety, you won't care and you won't prepare. If you have too much anxiety, you may be overwhelmed and stuck, not sure what to do. So there is an optimal amount of anxiety. Too little is not good and too much is not good.

*Show the handout of Upside Down U-Shaped Curve of Anxiety (see Appendix page 76).*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Right now, you can probably think of many situations where you have too much. The skills you learn in this group will help you move your anxiety levels back to the helpful range.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** The other purpose of anxiety has to do with safety. Anxiety actually protects us.

*Write this on the board as part of #2.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Does anybody know how? When our body needs to prepare to fight something or flee from something (e.g., like a woolly mammoth in cave man times), all of the systems in our body work together to help us take action to survive. This is called the fight or flight system. Think about if you were crossing the street, and all of a sudden you noticed that a large truck was coming your way. What would you do? Your anxiety or fear of being run over would motivate you to run to the side of the road (flee). If you didn't have anxiety about this situation, you would linger in the road and get run over. If you have too much anxiety, you may panic and not make a quick decision.

*Again, refer to the Upside Down U-Shaped Curve of Anxiety.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** So, anxiety, when it's working well, alerts us to danger in the environment and helps us body prepare to bring us to safety. We'll get back to what our body is doing in a moment.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Third, anxiety has four main components

*Write this on the board #3.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Whenever you are anxious, you have physiological symptoms, feelings/emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.**

*Write each on the board as part of #3.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Let's talk about each one.**

Optional activities to help student understand the components of anxiety

1. Lay out a large piece of butcher paper. Have someone drawn the outline of a body. Once the body outline is finished, start discussing the physiological symptoms associated with anxiety and the fight/flight system. Allow students to use different colored markers to visually depict the location and the experience of the symptoms. Leave a space to the side of the body to be able to write down several emotion words associated with anxiety (e.g., nervous, terrified, frightened, afraid). Discuss the thoughts associated with anxiety and allow students to put thought bubbles above its head. Leave a space to the side of the body to be able to write down several behaviors associated with anxiety (e.g., avoidance, freezing, refusal). Once the diagram is complete, reflect on how frazzled and stressed the figure looks. This serves to validate the student's feelings of anxiety and panic. You could also discuss how the calming system/parasympathetic system turns off all of these physiological symptoms. Keep this drawing because it is helpful to refer to it at various other points in the treatment. For example, with each new coping skill, you can discuss which symptoms, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that the skill addresses. Or you can create another figure later to show the coping thoughts and the improvements that the students are making (can lengthen the session by 10-15 minutes)

2. Give each student their own piece of paper and markers. Have them drawn a person or an outline of a person. As you discuss each component of anxiety, have each student depict, on the person or on the page, their own experience. At the end, have each student show their page. This can demonstrate the commonalities of anxiety across students, but also that each person has their own unique experience of anxiety (can lengthen the session by 5-10 minutes).



**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Physiological symptoms are the sensations you get in your body when you are anxious. Remember when you were running away from the truck in the road? When you get to the side of the road, what sensations are you likely to feel in your body?

*[With Group]:* Have the students describe what their body feels like after this, or another similar, threatening event. They can indicate these sensations on the drawing described in the activity box. Have the students participate in labeling the symptoms. Alternatively, you may show students the figure of the Physiology of Anxiety (see Appendix page 77).

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Common symptoms are

- heart pounding
- heart racing
- dizziness
- nausea
- smothering sensations
- feeling a lump in the throat
- feeling a knot in your stomach
- shakiness (hands, head, knees)
- sweating
- blurred vision
- headaches
- muscle tension or aches
- tightness or pain in the chest
- ringing in the ears
- shortness of breath
- diarrhea
- flushing, blushing
- tingling in the fingers, toes, face
- chills

*Show students the Physiology of Anxiety Handout (see Appendix page 77) if that would help them better understand these sensations.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: All of these symptoms occur because your body detected a threat and reacted to it. This is known as the fight or flight response. The technical reason that this happens is because your Sympathetic Nervous System turns on. From here on out, we're going to refer to this as the ACTIVATION SYSTEM.**

*[With Group]: Ask students what they know about the fight or flight response.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Any time your body detects a threat, it activates all the systems of your body. In most situations, this is a good thing. When you're in the road and the truck is coming, adrenaline surges through your body, your heart beats harder, and your lungs help you breathe more rapidly to get oxygen and blood to your large muscles to help you flee. This is why you experience pounding heart and shortness of breath. Because the blood in your body is going to your large muscles (thighs and upper arms), there is less blood in your head, hands, and feet. This is why you may experience tingling sensations or dizziness. So, you can see, all of these symptoms are there to protect you and bring you to safety.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: The problem for many of you right now is that your ACTIVATION SYSTEM is starting when there is not a real threat (e.g., in a social situation). Instead your body is telling you that there *is* a threat when there really isn't a threat, at least not like getting run over by a truck.**

*[With Group]: Ask students what they think about this idea.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: It's important to understand that your body also has a CALMING SYSTEM (the technical term is the parasympathetic nervous system). Eventually, your body will say "Okay, we're safe now, it's time to calm down" and the CALMING SYSTEM takes over. Because there is still a lot of adrenaline in your system, this process can take 15-20 minutes, but the body will not let the ACTIVATION SYSTEM go on forever. It's important that you understand these two systems, because the skills we're going to learn are going to help you make sure that your ACTIVATION SYSTEM only turns on when there is a real threat for safety, and that you can activate your CALMING SYSTEM when you need to cope.**

*[With Group]: Ask students repeat what they have learned about both systems.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Now, we're going move on and talk about the feelings or emotions associate with these physical symptoms.**

- **The feelings or emotions associated with anxiety are typically stated with one word.** *[With Group]: Have the students participate in labeling the symptoms anxiety. Common feelings are*
  - **anxious, nervous, terrified, frightened, afraid, stressed, dread, worry, panic, irritability.**
- **The thoughts associated with anxiety are often stated as a sentence and often characterized by worry and predictions that bad things are about to happen. Has anyone ever noticed thoughts like this that go through our heads when we're anxious?**

*Praise students for their contribution and awareness. Create thought bubbles on the activity drawing and insert their statements.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Yes, when we're anxious, our minds tend to focus on the potentially threatening aspects of situations (e.g., what if \_\_\_\_\_ happens?), we expect the worst to happen, we worry about ability to cope, our performance, or what someone else might think about us. Sometimes the thoughts are true but more often they represent our worst fears, rather than what actually happens.**

*Common thoughts are "Something bad will happen and I won't be able to handle it"; "I'll stumble over my words and look dumb"; "He'll think I'm stupid"; "They'll think I'm boring"; "I know I'll mess up," "I'm going to freak out."*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: A behavior is what we do when we're anxious; like our actions. What are some of the common behaviors associated with anxiety?**

*Behavioral symptoms of anxiety may include avoidance, nail biting, shuffling feet, reduced eye contact, thumb sucking, compulsions, and an exaggerated startle response.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** The most common and important behavior associated with anxiety is avoidance. Avoidance involves either not doing something that frightens you or doing it in a way that you stay away from the most frightening aspects of the anxiety-provoking situation. There are several reasons that avoidance is important to understand.

**First**, if you avoid the anxiety-provoking situation you never get to test out if your thought (“I know I’ll mess up”) is accurate or actually going to happen. You never get to try it and see what actually happens. Thus, you continue to believe it and your body continues to perceive these situations as a threat, which means it continues to trigger your **ACTIVATION SYSTEM**.

**Second**, avoiding the stressful situation is very rewarding because you can’t mess up if you never try. So, in the short run this really seems like a good strategy. But a funny thing happens. The more you avoid something, the bigger your fear about that situation gets. It tends to build and build.

**Third**, when you avoid situations, you never get to practice coping skills. Think about your favorite sports star. He/she did not get to be as good as they are at that sport without practice. So you’ll need to practice coping skills to get better at them.

*If you have time at the end of the session or you want an interactive activity in a separate session to help students gain repetition with these concepts, select an additional activity from the box on the next page.*

Activities to help students distinguish thoughts, feelings and behaviors

1. Blow up a beach ball that has different colored panels. With a permanent marker, write each of the following words on each panel: situation, thoughts, feelings, behavior. Throw ball back and forth (or around the group). Tell the students that whatever word their thumb lands on, they have to give an example of that component. This activity can be particularly good for students who have difficulty sitting still or need some physical activity (10 minute activity).

2. Have students write a poem or song that expresses their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in a given situation. When complete, have them and/or the group of students identify which parts represent thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This activity can be good for groups that have students who are more introverted and have difficulty speaking up (20 minute activity).

3. Have scissors, glue, a poster board, and several age-appropriate magazines available. Have students cut out pictures or words from magazines and paste them on the poster board to represent thoughts, feelings and actions (additional drawings, words, or art can be added). Discuss it with the student as he/she is making it or have them share it with the group. This activity can be particularly good for students who respond less well to didactic lectures. They often speak up more while they are engaged in this activity (20-30 minute activity).

4. Play a game of charades. Have a pile of index cards, each of which has a feeling word written on it. Take turns (either student and counselor, or the group of students), picking a card and acting it out. After each turn, discuss the cues (facial features, body language, actions) that helped to communicate each emotion. Discuss which cues are similar across emotions and which are more unique to specific emotions. Play another round. During this round, after each emotion is identified, have each student create a thought that might go with this emotion. Help the group can identify thoughts that are helpful and thoughts that are harmful. This activity can be particularly good for students who have difficulty sitting still or need some physical activity (10-15 minute activity).

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: So hopefully now you can state in own words what anxiety is and how anxiety can be helpful and harmful. It might be a good task to see if you could describe this to a friend or a relative. I hope also that you now can identify the thoughts, feelings, physiological symptoms, and behaviors associated with anxiety. Even if you're not having any trouble with stress at the moment, this program provides useful strategies for dealing with everyday life stresses.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: One way to help you make progress in this group, is to start applying the concepts learned in group to your everyday activities. To help you do this, my goal is to find a time each week that you and I can meet briefly to connect what was discussed in group to your daily activities. Once we get good at it, it should only take 5 minutes. We're going to call these brief meetings a "ReCCaP" because these letters will help remind us what to do.**

*[With Group]: Describe what ReCCaP stands for and show them the Phase 1 ReCCaP Log (see Appendix page 78).*

**ReCCaP for Topic 1:**

1. **Review:** Have the student pick and review a situation (e.g., that made them nervous)
2. **Complete the Log:** Have the student identify the thoughts, feelings, physiological sensations, and actions associated with his/her that occurred in this situation.
3. **Connect to Treatment:** Have the student connect this to what he/she learned about anxiety in session, highlighting the body's reaction and the purpose of anxiety.
4. **Plan:** Have the student describe how he/she may pay attention to these components of anxiety during the next situation.

*Group Leader/Counselor should always offer praise and encouragement for students who complete a ReCCaP. Focus on praising their effort in completing the task and discussion, rather than on the accuracy of the information that they remember from the session.*

## **TOPIC 2: Understanding the Connection Between Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors**

Time: 30 minutes

### Outline

- Using an example, describe a situation and the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in that situation
- Describe how our thoughts (not the situation) determine our feelings and behaviors

### Materials Needed (See Appendix Phase 1 for Handouts)

- White board/chalk board
- Situations, Thoughts, Feelings, and Behavior Table (one for each student; see page 79)
- Spiral of Anxiety Handout (one for each student; see page 80)
- Pens for students

*[With Group]: Start this section with a review of the information in the last session. Ask questions of the group to assess their understanding and memory of the details. Praise students for any information they remember and provide a brief summary of the concepts.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Today, we're going to discuss the connections between thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and the situation. To do this, I'd like you to imagine the following situation.**

*Use the Situations, Thoughts, Feelings, and Behavior Table in the Appendix (page 79) and the table below to guide the discussion. You can provide handouts to each student or replicate the table on the board.*

Situation	Thought	Feeling	Behavior
Phone Rings	It's my teacher		
	It's my (girl)friend calling about a party this weekend		
	It's the doctor with news about my Grandma		

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** You are at home and the phone rings. Ok, so the phone ringing is the situation. Let's say that your first thought is "It's my teacher/principal." Some people might feel scared or nervous if this is what they thought.

*Write this in the feelings box.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** And if they thought this, they might leave the room/house and not answer the phone or so their Mom couldn't find them easily after the call.

*Write this in the behavior box.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** How about you? What would you feel if you thought it was your teacher/principal? What would you do?

*[With Group]: Allow student discussion.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Okay, so now let's say you had a different thought about who was calling. Who else could be calling?

*[With Group]: Allow students to offer ideas and select one idea (e.g., girlfriend/boyfriend, grandparent who is sick).*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** What feeling would you have?



*Write one of the feelings box [be sure to select one that is different than the feeling that was written following the teacher/principal example].*

*Questions to help elicit feelings*

*How would you feel?*

*What emotion would you have?*

*If your body/stomach could talk, what would it say?*

*If your body/stomach had a voice, how would she say she is feeling?*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: What might you do?**

*Write this in the behavior box. Repeat several times with other ideas, writing each down.*

Activity for repetition: You can complete the task again with the following situation: You just went through the lunch line. You're walking with your tray over to a table where there is one seat left. You know some of the students at that table and have sat with them before, but you don't sit there every day. When you arrive, the student closest to the seat says "Sorry, this is saved for someone else" and goes back to eating their lunch and talking with friends. As you walk away, what thought/s do you have? Have the student identify a negative thought (e.g., they don't like me anymore), and a more positive, coping thought (oh, well, I guess I need to get their earlier tomorrow). Then discuss the impact of the thoughts on feelings and behaviors.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Great. Now we have several examples. Let's look back and see if we notice any patterns in what we wrote down.**

*[With Group]:*

- *Discuss which happens first, thoughts or feelings? Feelings or behaviors?*
- *Discuss whether there were different situations or the same situation that produced all of these different feelings.*
- *How did we get to so many different feelings and actions from the same situation?*
- *Praise students for any insights and shape their contributions to point out the following:*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** So, the same situation produced a variety of different feelings and behaviors, all based on the thought that emerged from the situation or the interpretation of the situation. So it's not the situation that determines our feelings and behaviors, it's *our interpretation* or thoughts about the situation that determine how we feel and act. That's interesting. What do you think about that?/What does that mean?

*[With Group]: If the students are having difficulty making this connection, consider using the analogies in the analogies box below.*

Analogies that can be helpful:

**1. The baseball diamond** (draw as you describe it): Home plate represents the situation. First base represents thoughts. Second base represents feelings. Third base represents behaviors. In every situation, "we're going to cover all the bases" to understand how to cope.

Activity: For active students, you can have students make big diamonds out of poster board (label and decorate them). Distribute them around the room. Have the student physically stand on each one as he/she describes each component.

**2. The Flower Garden** (draw as you describe it): The soil/ground represents the situation/what happens to you (Girls were whispering when you entered the classroom). The stem represents the thought that stems from the situation (I know they are talking about me. I know I'm going to say something stupid). The flower represents the feeling that is produced by these thoughts (i.e., worried, anxious, nervous) *Draw a drooping or frazzled flower*. Our job together is figure out how you can grow pretty and colorful flowers. We're going to work on changing our thoughts about a situation to produce better feelings.

Activity: Have the student create a flower (with soil, stem, and flower) based on a positive situation, identifying all the components and the connections between the two). Have the student create a flower (with soil, stem, and flower) based on a negative situation, identifying all the components and the connections between the two). Discuss the different flowers that are produced. Then return to the negative situation. Work together to discuss alternative stems (thoughts) that could occur in that situation. Discuss how those different thoughts could produce different flowers.

*Connect this concept to the student's anxiety.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** This connection applies to your anxiety.

*Show them the Spiral of Anxiety Handout (see Appendix page 80).*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** There is a situation and something about this situation makes us think it's dangerous or bad things are going to happen. These thoughts trigger our ACTIVATION SYSTEM and we start to feel all sorts of uncomfortable physiological sensations. We take these symptoms as evidence that there must be some threat present, even if we are not aware of exactly what it is that we are perceiving as threatening. Then, given the distressing thoughts and feelings, we leave the situation or avoid it. Remember, although these sensations can be quite unpleasant and distressing, they are just sensations and they are not dangerous. We need to help teach our body and brain that they are not dangerous and that we can cope with whatever is happening in the situation.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Do you think that if we could figure out how to change our thoughts, that we might be able to change how we feel, feel less anxious or nervous? In fact, that's exactly what this program/group is about. We're going to help you learn how to identify the situation, your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. And when there is a thought or an interpretation of a situation that makes you feel nervous, you're going to learn how to change these negative thoughts into more positive ones to help you reduce your anxiety.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Because this activity is so important, we're going to use this log as often as we can (e.g., in group and during any brief ReCCaPs). Eventually, this tool, along with the other skills we're going to work on, will help you learn how to manage your anxiety *before* it spins out of control *and* how to calm yourself down if you've gotten really worked up.

*Work with each student to identify a time to meet to do this. Put all completed sheets in the student's folder.*

**ReCCaP for Topic 2:** Meet with the student before the next session.

1. **Review:** Have the student pick and review a situation (e.g., that made them nervous)
2. **Complete the Log:** Have the student identify the thoughts, feelings, physiological sensations, and actions associated with his/her that occurred in this situation.
3. **Connect to Treatment:** Have the student connect this to what he/she learned about anxiety in session, highlighting the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
4. **Plan:** Have the student describe how a different thought may have lead to different feelings and behaviors.

*Group Leader/Counselor should praise the student for any progress on the above, reminding him/her that recognizing the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behavior is an important step in the treatment process.*

## TOPIC 3: Rating Feeling Intensity

Time: 15 minutes

### Outline

- Describe the anxiety rating scale
- Connect different ratings to situations from the student's life
- Have students report on anxiety when calm and after thinking about an anxious event

### Materials Needed (see Appendix Phase 1 for Handouts)

- Anxiety Rating Scale (one for each student; see Appendix page 81)
- "What's Your Anxiety Rating Now?" Handout (one for each student; (see Appendix page 82)
- Pens for students

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Now that you understand the difference between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as how they are each connected to each other, we're going to start to learn how to gain more control over all three of them. Remember how in the beginning, we talked about how anxiety is actually adaptive, how it's important that we have *some* anxiety, but not too much, and not too little? So one way to gain control of our anxiety is to become better at knowing *how much* anxiety we are feeling. To do this, we need learn how to rate the intensity of anxiety. Look at this Anxiety Rating Scale.

*Distribute copies of scale; see Appendix page 81.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** On the top, there is a rating of 100. A rating of 100 represents the most anxious or panicked you've ever been. Can you think of that or situation?

*[With Group]:* Have student write that down.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** What are some of the cues that tell you that you're at a 100 rating (e.g., physiological sensations, feelings, thoughts, behaviors)?

*[With Group]:* Have students write that down.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** On the bottom, there is a rating of 0. This represents the calmest, most relaxed you've ever been. Can you think of that situation or time?

*[With Group]: Have students write that down.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** What are some of the cues that tell you that you're at a 0 rating?

*[With Group]: Have students write that down.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Now, there are probably some situations that make you a little nervous, but it's not that bad. These might fall in the 20-40 range.

*[With Group]: Have students write down a few situations that fall in this range.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** When you're feeling a level of nervousness that starts to get bothersome, then you're moving into the 50-60 range.

*[With Group]: Have students write down a few situations that fall in this range.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** And then when you're really nervous and panicky, although it's not the most anxious point, you're in the 70-90 range.

*[With Group]: Have students write down a few situations that fall in this range.*

*You could also use the analogies in the box below to help students understand intensity.*

Analogies that can be helpful:

**1. Traffic Light:** To think about the intensity of your anxiety, you could think of a traffic light. The green light represents when you're calm and things are going well for you, "all systems go". The yellow light represents when you're getting warning signals. Your anxiety is rising, you're feeling it in your sweaty palms, your pounding heart, your shortness of breath, "look out I might blow". The red light represents alarm or panic. You're feeling out of control, overwhelmed, dizzy, like you might lose it or pass out.

**2. Feeling Thermometer:** Think about a thermometer. When you're calm and things are going well for you, the temperature is low. As you start to get warning signs of anxiety (sweaty palms, pounding heart, shortness of breath, dizziness), the temperature rises. And when you're panicked, the temperature is high, in the fever zone or at the boiling point.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** So let's stop for a minute. We are going to make some ratings of our own anxiety. We're going to spend a few minutes calming ourselves down so we can notice what it feels like when we are calm.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Everyone take a few deep breaths to start to relax. I'd like to you to close your eyes and imagine the scene that I am going to describe.

*Guide the students through a brief relaxation script. You may make up your own or follow the ideas in the script below.*

*[In a slow, relaxing voice] Take a deep breath in...now let it out. Take another breath in...and has you let it out...let your body relax. Good. Continue to take slow, deep breaths in, and each time you exhale, let your body relax even more. Imagine that all your stress and worries are leaving your body every time you exhale....Good. Feel more and more relaxed.*

*Imagine that you are lying on a beautiful warm beach. You can feel the sun warming your face. As you take another deep breath in, you can smell and taste the fresh salty air. There's a nice warm breeze that blows fresh across your face. As you take another deep breath in, you can hear in the distance birds chirping, and the ocean waves gently crashing. Continue to enjoy this scene an allow yourself to stay relaxed. [Allow the students to enjoy this for another few minutes]. Now I'm going to ask you to slowly open your eyes. Remain relaxed and pay attention to how your body is feeling.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** I'm going to give you this worksheet called *What's Your Anxiety Rating Now*. I'd like you to write down how nervous you feel right now on a scale from 0 to 100. Remember, 0 represents the calmest, most relaxed you've ever been and 100 represents the most anxious or panicked you've ever been.

*Distribute the "What's Your Anxiety Rating Now?" Handout (see Appendix page 82).*

*Let students write down their rating.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Now, think about your rating. Why did you make that rating? What cues did you base it on?

*[With Group]: Discuss the students' responses.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Ok, now we're going to try something different. This time, I want you to close your eyes and start to think about a situation that makes you nervous. Maybe it's an upcoming test or speech. Maybe you get invited to a party and you're terrified of how to act when you get there.

*[With Group]: Mention ideas that you know are relevant to students in the group.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Can everyone think of a situation? Ok, so close your eyes and think about it. Think about all the potential things that could go wrong or the bad things that might happen. Allow your worries to spiral from one to the next. As you think about this situation, pay attention to what's happening in your body. How does your heart feel? What is your breathing like? Are you feeling warmer than before? Are your muscles tense at all? Continue to think about this situation for a minute.

*[With Group]: Allow the students to think about this for another few minutes*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Ok, now open your eyes and rate how nervous you feel right now on a scale from 0 to 100.

*Let students write down their rating.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** What happened? Did your rating change? Why? What cues did you base it on?



**[Group Leader/Counselor]: This is interesting. Nothing changed in this situation. We're all still sitting in the same places we were a minute ago. Yet, our ratings changed. Why is that? What do you think about that? What does that say about the power of our thoughts? Just thinking about something bad can make us feel worse. Remember the connection between thoughts and feelings that we discovered before? Now, you've just proven/demonstrated that it's true.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: At this point, this seems like bad news. Our thoughts can make us more anxious. However, there is also good news. If our thoughts are this powerful, we can also learn to use our thoughts to make ourselves less anxious. Now that you understand this, you are on your way to gaining this control. During the upcoming week, I would like you to think about your anxiety as you are in different situations and practice giving your anxiety a rating. We have one more topic before we move into Phase 2. In Phase 2, we will start to learn skills that help us better manage our anxiety.**

**ReCCaP for Topic 3:** Meet with the student before the next session.

1. **Review:** Have the student pick and review a situation (e.g., that made them nervous)
2. **Complete the Log:** Have the student identify the thoughts, feelings, physiological sensations, and actions associated with his/her that occurred in this situation.
3. **Connect to Treatment:** Have the rate his/her anxiety using the anxiety rating scale used in group.
4. **Plan:** Have the student describe what about the situation kept his/her ratings lower and what about the situation made his/her ratings rise.

*Group Leader/Counselor should praise the student for any progress on the above, reminding the student that learning how to rate the dimensionality of their anxiety is an important step in the treatment progress.*

## Topic 4: Developing a Fear Ladder

Time: 30 minutes

### Outline

- Introduce the concept of a fear hierarchy/fear ladder
- Create a list of feared situations
- Rank order the feared situations using anxiety ratings
- Discuss what makes these situations easier or harder
- Select one category of fears, and using the dimensions and ratings, create a final fear hierarchy

### Materials Needed (see Appendix Phase 1 for Handouts)

- Fear Ladder Brainstorming Example Handout (one for each student; see page 83)
- Fear Ladder Brainstorming Worksheet (one for each student; see page 84)
- Final Fear Ladder Worksheet (one for each student; see page 85)
- Optional Activity (see box below): Index Cards (10 to 20 for each student)
- Pens for students

*If you would like to observe a video of a counselor describing a fear hierarchy, link to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHEi8wpUnic>. When the counselor describes the Subjective Units of Distress (SUDS ratings), replace this with the Anxiety Rating Scale from this manual. This video may help you understand how to identify the dimensions that make anxiety ratings higher or lower for a given situation and how to construct the hierarchy using these dimensions.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: So, now that we know how to rate our anxiety, we're going to create a fear ladder. Each step on the ladder represents a situation that gives us anxiety. Situations that give us less anxiety are on the lower steps and situations that produce the most anxiety are on the higher steps. There are four activities involved in making a fear ladder: (1) brainstorming; (2) rating the situations; (3) discovering what makes situations easier or harder; and (4) creating a final ladder. We will work through all of these activities together first with an example and then using your own fears.**

*Distribute the Fear Ladder Brainstorming Example Handout (see page 83)*

*Refer to Part 1.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Step 1: Brainstorming: The first activity is to brainstorm by listing as many situations that make you anxious as you can.**

*Refer to Part 1 of the Fear Ladder Brainstorming Example Handout.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Here we have an example of situations for Mary, a high school student. You can see on the list many situations at school that make her feel nervous (e.g., talking to other students and things related to taking quizzes and tests), but there are also some things at home that cause her difficulty (talking to her parents about grades). You can also see that Mary listed both general categories such as “talking with other students” and very specific situations such as “taking an open book pop quiz.” It is okay to have a mixture like this. We’re not going to worry about her ratings at this point.**

*Distribute Fear Ladder Brainstorming Worksheet (page 84).*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Now, I’d like you to start brainstorming the situations that make you anxious. During the brainstorming phase be sure to include a wide range of situations. Not all of them will make it onto the final ladder, but brainstorming helps assure that you do not miss any important situations. You will want to list at least eight to ten situations. Don’t worry about putting the list in any order right now. Be sure to include some situations that make you very anxious as well as others that only cause moderate to mild anxiety.**

*For students having difficulty thinking of enough situations, offer situations that make many high school students anxious.*

- *speaking in front of the class*
- *taking an exam*
- *asking someone out on a date*
- *going to a new social event*
- *driving*

*It may helpful for some students to complete this brainstorming task by writing down these situations on separate note cards (see box below) so that they can move them around, sort them by categories (e.g., fears related to social, school related, or driving situations) and add others as they think about dimensions and their ratings (steps 2 – 4).*

Activity using note cards

In order to create the fear hierarchy, have the students write down each feared situation on separate note cards and have them make an anxiety rating for each situation. Have the students sort the cards according to the type of situation. For example, Mary would have a stack for test taking, a stack for talking with parents, and a stack for talking with other students. For Mary, the stack with the most cards would be situations regarding test taking. Counselors should choose the situation with the most cards in its stack. Next, counselors should count the number of cards currently in that stack. If the student has less than 6 cards, the counselor should encourage the student to make more levels for that situation. Counselors can do this by using the questions used in Step 3. Optimally, each student should have one situation with around 6 to 10 different levels of that situation. Next, have the student put the cards in order from lowest to highest anxiety rating. Next, the student should transcribe their cards onto the Final Fear Ladder Worksheet and make an anxiety rating for each row.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Step 2: Rating the Situations: Great! Now that we all have a list of situations, we need to put an anxiety rating next to them so that we can put them in order from situations that make you least nervous to those that make you the most nervous. You'll see on your worksheets that there is a column on the left that says Rating.**

*Refer back to the Fear Ladder Brainstorming Example Part 1.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Let's look back at Mary's worksheet. You can see that Mary finds taking the State Graduation Test as the most anxiety provoking, so she rated that at a 90. She feels that taking an open book quiz produces the least amount of anxiety, so she rated that at a 30.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Now, I'd like you to add ratings to the situations that you have listed so far. As you're doing this feel free to add new situations to help you make your ratings.**

*If students have trouble assigning a rating to a particular situation because they remark that "it depends on certain aspects of the situation," that's great because*

*the student is recognizing that some dimensions of the situation matter. Praise the student for this and have them create several new situations by breaking one situation into small situations with varying elements (e.g., taking an open book quiz is a 30, but taking a closed book quiz is a 60).*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Step 3: Discovering What Makes Situations Easier or Harder: Now that we have generated these situations and rated them, we can look at each of the situations and try to figure out what makes some easy and what make some situations hard. Let's look at Mary's list. We can see that how big the test is really affects how worried she gets about it. She is much more comfortable with open book quizzes than big standardized tests that can affect graduation. She is also more comfortable taking quizzes when they are scheduled verses when they are not scheduled (pop quizzes).**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: So look at your lists. For each situation that you have listed, I would like you to come up with a new, but related situation that has a lower rating because you varied one element or dimension of the situation to make it easier on you (e.g., doing the tasks alone or with a friend, completing the task when there are few people around or many people). Also see if you can come up with a new, but related situation that has a higher rating because you varied one element to that makes you more anxious.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: So for example, if you were afraid of driving at night and you rated that a 60. You might lower the rating to 40 or 50 if you were with a friend or only had to drive a short distance on a familiar road. But you might raise the rating to 70 or 80 if you were driving alone or were driving on a new road where you've never been before.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: So think about what dimensions or elements result in a change in anxiety ratings. Do you see any patterns that make situations easier or harder? Everyone will likely come up with different answers and that's okay. I'm going to go around the room and see what you all have come up with.**

*Give the students some time to make these changes. Work with each student on identifying these elements.*

*Here are some examples of common elements or dimension:*

- *You are alone verses with a friend*
- *The situation is familiar verses unfamiliar*
- *There are many people present verses few people present*
- *It is day time or night time*
- *The situation is short verses longer in duration*
- *The person in the situation with them is a man or woman*
- *The person is of higher status than you (e.g., teacher or parent vs. peer)*
- *The situation is less or more predictable*
- *There are great or minor consequences*
- *The situation is less or more avoidable (e.g., voluntary or required)*

*It may be difficult for students to identify these dimensions. Counselors should ask students what makes the situations worse/more scary or better/less scary. The common elements listed above are good starting points for counselors to have their students think about. For example, if a student is worried about taking tests, the counselor may want to ask if the student becomes more anxious is the test is worth a lot of points or just a few points (e.g., great or minor consequences). Then the counselor could ask if there is a particular subject that makes tests scarier and which subjects are less scary. The counselor could also ask about types of tests (e.g., multiple choice, true or false) that are more or less scary.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Why is it important that we identify these dimensions? Because by understanding them you will be better able to predict how much anxiety you will experience in new situations that may be similar to those you listed. Later, when we work together on facing our fears (exposure activities), it is helpful to be able to make these predictions about situations.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: Step 4: Refining and Finalizing Your Hierarchies: Now that we have examined several situations, as well as several dimensions within a given situation, we will create your final fear ladder that we will be using during Phase 3 of the program. We want our final fear ladder to have a few situations that have lower anxiety ratings, a few situations that have moderate anxiety ratings and a few situations that have high anxiety ratings. See how in Part 2 of the example sheet, Mary has focused on her fear of tests and has finalized her fear ladder so that she has a situation for each rating. So, let's think about the fear category that is most important to you or that has the most**

**situations in it and create a final ladder so that you have at least one situation for each rating.**

*Distribute the Final Fear Ladder Worksheet (see page 85). Work with each student to finalize their ladder.*

*If students have multiple fears and want to create more than one ladder that is acceptable (give them a second worksheet). Alternatively, students could have multiple categories on one ladder if there are not enough dimensions within a given category for that student.*

*Put the final ladders in the student folders.*

*Before moving onto Phase 2, have students complete the End of Phase 1 Assessment (see page 86). If students do not pass 80% of the questions, review these concepts with them and have them retake the assessment before moving onto Phase 2.*

## PHASE 2: SKILLS ACQUISITION

After completing Phase 1, the students should have a basic knowledge about anxiety and understand the general ideas involved in cognitive behavioral theory and how it may apply to their anxiety. Specifically, they should understand the relationship between situations, thoughts, feelings, physiological sensations and behaviors and how these can work together to increase or decrease anxiety.

During the second phase, students learn several skills to help them better manage their anxiety.

There are 4 skills/topics in this phase

- Relaxation techniques
- Identifying automatic thoughts and thinking errors
- Challenging automatic thoughts and replacing them with rationale responses
- Self-evaluation and reward

Skills development will occur through discussion, modeling of skills by the counselor, engagement in activities and through role plays. After students can demonstrate the application of these skills in mildly anxiety-provoking situations, they move to Phase 3.

### Important Notes:

1. During this phase, students learn best through models. Thus, the group leader/counselor should model each skill, briefly and clearly describing each part of the skill. Then, as students start to develop the skill, they can serve as models for each other.

2. When group leaders/counselors are modeling skills for students, it is important to model using a “coping model” rather than a “mastery model.” This means that counselors should model the skill with some hesitancy and doubt that the skills will work, as well as some optimism for giving the skill a try. In a coping models, the group leader/counselor should make the skill look difficult to apply rather than easy to apply.

For example the group leader/counselor may think out loud for the students *“Oh, no; the teacher said that our projects are due by the end of*



*the week. That totally spiked my anxiety. I'm probably at a 50 or 60. I know I'm supposed to try deep breathing, but I'm worried that others will see me do it and laugh. Oh, I remember someone else saying that they go to the bathroom to do it. I'll ask the teacher to go and give it a try. At least that would be better than having a panic attack right here."* Then demonstrate deep breathing techniques.

2. Frequent praise and encouragement of each student is important. Group leaders/counselors are encouraged to praise effort rather than accomplishments, particularly when learning new skills so that students feel success and motivation to continue practicing the skill.

Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate relaxation skills (i.e., deep breathing and/or muscle relaxation)
- Students will identify automatic thoughts and thinking errors.
- Students will challenge automatic thoughts and replace them with a more rational response
- Student will demonstrate self-evaluation and self-reward skills

These objectives can be assessed in group sessions and during ReCCaP meetings. To determine if each student is ready to move to Phase 3, Counselors/Group facilitators will have students complete the End of Phase 2 Assessment (see page 100).

## Topic 1: Relaxation Techniques

Time: 30 minutes

### Outline

- Introduce Phase 2 as a phase focused on a set of skills to reduce anxiety
- Describe the rationale and benefits of deep breathing
- Model deep breathing
- Allow the students to practice deep breathing for 5-10 minutes
- Describe the rationale and benefits of muscle relaxation
- Model muscle relaxation
- Allow the students to practice muscle relaxation for 5-10 minutes

### Materials Needed

- Space for students to lie down recline

*Because it's helpful to have a place to lie down, consider conducting this meeting in a room with more space (e.g., the gym or on the theater stage, outside).*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Up until now, we've been learning about anxiety, how our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected, and how to rate our anxiety. We also have our own fear ladders. Because thoughts and feelings determine how we act, in this second phase, we are going to learn how to gain more control over our thoughts and feelings. The strategies we learn will help to reduce our anxiety, cope with our anxiety, and succeed in the activities that we're currently afraid of or are avoiding. It's important to understand that no one skill is likely to address all of your challenges; however the combination of these skills is very helpful in addressing your challenges. So you may want to think about building a toolkit or toolbox. We're going to learn several tools to put in your box and then in each situation, you can decide which ones you're going to use for that situation.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** The first skill we're going to learn is relaxation.

*You could seek student's initial reactions to this. They may not buy into it either because they say they've tried it and it doesn't work, or because they think it*

*sounds silly. If this is the case, you can address this by asking them to try the techniques as an experiment and report back on their experiences.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Sometimes students do not believe this will help. However, we have found that once students better understand *how* these skills address anxiety and *how* to do the skill correctly, that the skills do seem to help.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** So the relaxation skills we're going to talk about are (1) deep breathing and (2) muscle relaxation. Does anyone know why these are so important and helpful?

*[With Group]: Let students offer ideas.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Remember how we learned that our bodies have a natural flight or flight system, the ACTIVATION SYSTEM? Does anyone remember what the activation system is called?

*[With Group]: Let students answer.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Yes, the Sympathetic Nervous System. Does anyone remember what the calming system is called?

*[With Group]: Let students answer.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Yes, the Parasympathetic Nervous System. The reason that these two relaxation skills are so important is that they activate your calming system. They trigger the parasympathetic system. So they tell your body "There's no reason to be alarmed, so it's time to cool down".

*If you previously used butcher paper of individual student drawings to depict the activation and calming system (See Phase 1), you could pull these out now to remind the students of how this skills addresses some of the components of anxiety.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Relaxation is a technique or exercise designed to create physiological calming. The two relaxation techniques that we're going to use are deep breathing and muscle relaxation.

## Rationale and Benefits of Deep Breathing

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** The reason we focus on deep breathing is that slow, deep breathing serves to activate your CALMING SYSTEM. It tells the body to turn off all those unpleasant physiological symptoms.

In addition, deep breathing

- Can be used in class without anyone noticing
- Can be used during stressful moments such as taking an exam or while trying to relax at home
- Can enhance other relaxation techniques or be used on its own
- Provides relief from troubling sensations, feelings and thoughts
- Can be used with a pleasant, calming mental image (e.g., the beach, park, forest, playing with a favorite pet)

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** First, I will describe how to do deep breathing and show you how to do it. Then, you will practice it. After 5 minutes, we'll take a break. You can ask questions and we can discuss how each of you felt. Then we'll practice it again. The only way to get good at this and feel comfortable doing it, is to practice.

## Deep Breathing Steps

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Follow these steps with me

1. Lie down on your back, bend your knees, and move your feet about eight inches apart. Make sure that your spine is straight. (Or, if they are not able to lie down-- sit comfortably with your legs uncrossed and arms down at your sides or in your lap.)
2. Place one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest
3. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen to push up your hand as much as feels comfortable. Your chest should move only a little and only with your abdomen.
4. When you feel comfortable with step 3, smile slightly and inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, making a quiet, relaxing, whooshing sound like the wind as you blow gently out. Your mouth,

tongue, and jaw will be relaxed. Take long and slow deep breaths that raise and lower your abdomen.

5. Focus on the sound and feeling of breathing as you become more and more relaxed.
6. Continue breathing for about 5 minutes.
7. When you become at ease with breathing into your abdomen, practice it any time during the day when you feel like it or when you feel yourself getting tense. You can practice it sitting down or standing still.

*You may choose to share the following additional tips with the students*

### **Extra Deep Breathing Tips**

- Focus just on breathing and try to clear your mind of other thoughts or feelings
- Breathe from the stomach rather than from the chest
- Breathe in slowly through the nose, and out through the mouth
- Children should breathe in to the count of 5, and out to the count of 5
- “Breathe in, two, three, four, five, and out, two, three, four, five” (at a rate of about one count per second or two)
- Adolescents should breathe in and out to the count of 8
- If uncomfortable, have them take 3 normal breaths in between deep breaths
- Have them imagine a balloon filling with air, then totally emptying

### **Rationale for Muscle Relaxation**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Good. Now we’re going to practice another relaxation strategy, called muscle relaxation. Most people do not realize which of their muscles are chronically tense. Alternating between states of muscle tension and relaxation helps the body tell the difference between the two states and helps relax muscles that are tense. A key goal is to notice the difference between the feelings of tension and relaxation.

## **Muscle Relaxation Steps**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** So get in a relaxed position again. Try to follow my instructions while staying in this relaxed state.

- 1. Lie on your back or get in a comfortable position. Allow your arms to rest at your sides.**
- 2. Clench your left hand into fist and hold it tightly for 15 seconds. As you do this relax the rest of your body.**
- 3. Then let your hand relax. Feel the looseness in your hand, and notice the difference from the tension. Always notice as you relax that this is the opposite of tension. Relax and feel the difference.**

*[With Group]:*

- 4. Repeat this procedure two more times with the left hand*
- 5. Repeat this procedure three times with the right hand*
- 6. Have the students tense and relax the following parts of the body in the order below. Hold each part tensed for 15 seconds and then relax the body for 30 seconds. Repeat this process three times before going on to the next part:*
  - a. Face (squeeze lips toward your nose and furrow your brow)*
  - b. Shoulders (bring chin to your chest, and shoulders toward your ears)*
  - c. Stomach*
  - d. Legs*
  - e. Feet and toes (curl toes underneath your feet).*
- 7. Finish the exercise by shaking your hands and imagining any remaining tension flowing out of your fingertips.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Good job. Just like any skill, you need to practice this in order to get good at it or for it to help you when you are stressed. Thus, between now and the next meeting, I would like each of you to practice deep breathing and muscle relaxation two times. You can report back to the group what it was like for you and teach others how you got it to work for you. In addition, I will try to see each one of you between now and the next meeting for a ReCCaP. At this time you can tell me about when you used the skill and how it went.

**ReCCaP for Topic 1:** Meet with the student before the next session.

1. **Review:** Have the student pick and review situation in which they used deep breathing or muscle relaxation
2. **Complete the Log:** (*Use Phase 1 ReCCaP Log*) Have the student identify the thoughts, feelings, physiological sensations, and actions associated with his/her that occurred in this situation.
3. **Connect to Treatment:** Have the student describe his/her experience in implementing the skill and the impact that it had on their anxiety.
4. **Plan:** Have the student describe how he/she will continue to use this skill when anxious. What will he/she do again or change?

*Group Leader/Counselor should praise the student for any progress on the above, reminding the student that practice makes the skill work better during stressful situations.*

## Topic 2: Identifying Automatic Thoughts and Thinking Errors

Time: 15-20 minutes with one activity

### Outline

- Describe an automatic thought
- Discuss common thinking errors
- Complete the Automatic Thoughts Handout

### Materials Needed (see Appendix Phase 1)

- Thinking Errors Handout (one for each student; see page 88)
- Automatic Thoughts and Thinking Errors Handout (one for each student; see pages 89-92)

*[With Group]: Start the group session by having students discuss their experiences with deep breathing and muscle relaxation. Help them help each other problem solve any challenges that they are having in using the skills. Instruct them to continue practicing these skills each week.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Sometimes we have negative thoughts that just pop into our heads. We're going to call these automatic thoughts because they usually pop up automatically. Everyone has them, but sometimes these thoughts can really bother us and create more anxious feelings. An automatic thought can be a negative, unhelpful or irrational (not in line with reality) thought about us, the world, or the future. For example an automatic thought about us might be "I know I'll mess up." An automatic thought about the world might be "Nothing ever goes right." Finally, an automatic thought about the future might be "things will never get better."

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** There are different types of automatic thoughts. Our thoughts can sometimes get the better of us and almost take over our feelings and our behaviors. We call these thinking errors. There are several thinking errors that are common in automatic thoughts.

*Distribute Thinking Errors Handout (see page 88).*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Here is a list of some common themes that automatic thoughts can fall under.



*[With Group]: Describe each error and have the students come of with examples that fit that error.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: The good news is that as people learn to change their automatic thoughts, they feel less anxious. But because they're automatic and we have them without really noticing, these thoughts can be hard to identify. Let's practice identifying these thoughts and then we can work on how to change these thoughts.**

*Distribute the Automatic Thought and Thinking Errors Handout (see pages 89-92).*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: On the handout titled *Automatic Thought and Thinking Errors*, you'll see several different people in different situations. After each, we're going to identify possible automatic thoughts that these people are having and see if we can label the thinking errors that are associated with those thoughts.**

*[With Group]: You can work through this as a group, or let the students complete this individually and return for a group discussion. Consider doing half of the worksheet in one session and completing the other half in another session so that students get distributed practice with this skill. With each situation, have the group consider how this thinking error will affect that persons feelings and next actions, highlighting how negative thinking errors often make us feel worse and result in us avoiding people or a potentially fun situation. Also mention that in many cases we came up with very different answers and that's okay because everyone has different thoughts in different situations.*

*Most students need more repetition with the task. Thus, complete the additional activity in the box below as you have time.*

Additional Activity for Identifying Automatic Thoughts and Thinking Errors

**Nick's Story:** Working through an example story of someone with automatic thoughts and linking those to emotions. **Let's look at an example of the automatic thoughts that a student reported having in a situation that made him pretty anxious.** Nick wanted to run for class president. Each candidate was required to give a speech to the entire school during an assembly. Nick was terrified of giving the speech in front of the whole school. During the speech, Nick was to describe how he would help the student body and why people should vote for him. About a week before he was scheduled to speak, Nick started to get very nervous. Nick knew that if he was feeling anxious, he must be having some automatic thoughts. He wrote down several things he was thinking when feeling anxious. He thought "They will think I'm a complete idiot" (*mind reading*), "I shouldn't be getting this nervous" (*should statements*), "I'll get up there and pass out" (*fortune telling*), and "I don't have anything to say" (*black and white thinking*)." Write these thoughts (but not the thinking errors) on the board or provide them in a handout. **Now, last time we talked about thinking errors. Let's go through each of these thoughts and see if it matches any of the thinking errors we discussed. Have students work through all the thoughts and debate which thinking trap they match. Now let's talk about each thought and what kind of emotions those thoughts might cause. Have the students discuss the kinds of emotions that might be evoked by those thoughts. Alright, now if Nick is having all these automatic thoughts, how do you think he might act or behave? What might Nick do now?**

*Begin Using the Phase 2 ReCCaP Log (see Appendix page 93)*

**ReCCaP for Topic 2:** Meet with the student before the next session.

1. **Review:** Have the student pick and review situation that made them nervous
2. **Complete the Log:** (Only complete the top row of boxes this week). Have the student identify the automatic thoughts that they had and have them identify the thinking error associated with those thoughts (also complete the feelings, anxiety ratings, and behavior boxes on the top row).
3. **Connect to Treatment:** Have the student identify the automatic thoughts that they had and then classify them according to the common thinking errors.
4. **Plan:** Have the student describe how he/she will identify automatic thoughts in the future.

*Group Leader/Counselor should praise the student for any progress on the above, reminding them, that with practice, this skills will help cope with anxiety.*

### **Topic 3: Challenging Automatic Thoughts and Thinking Errors**

Time: 15-20 minutes with one activity

#### Outline

- Introduce the concept of challenging our thinking
- Identify labels that the group can use for positive self-statements and negative self-statements
- Complete one or more activities that help develop the skill of challenging automatic thoughts and producing more helpful responses

#### Materials Needed (see Appendix Phase 2)

- Challenging Your Automatic Thoughts Handout (one for each student, see page 94)
- Optional Handouts:
  - Talking Back to Fear Handout (page 95)
  - “What If” Thinking Handout (page 96)
  - Coping Response Handout (page 97)
  - Experimenting to Test Your Thoughts Handout (page 98)

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: We’ve been working on identify our automatic thoughts and putting them into categories or thinking errors. We can refer to this as self-talk. Self-talk is what we say to ourselves in a given situation. We’ve discussed how our automatic thoughts are often negative and can lead us to feeling bad about ourselves or a situation and often lead us to avoiding situations that could be fun.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: So now, we are going to learn how to change those negative statements that are harmful into more positive statements that are helpful.**

*[With Group]: Ask the group how they want to refer to this, some examples are helping thoughts and hurting thoughts; or thinking errors and rationale responses. But the student may want to come up with more creative names that are meaningful to them.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: We are going to do this by challenging our negative thoughts. We are going to have to examine each thought that we have and find**

out if it's accurate or helpful, and if not, then we are going to replace this negative thought (*hurting thought/thinking error*) with a more positive thought (*helping thought/rational response*). There are many ways to go about challenging our thoughts. We are going to do several activities so that you can get the hang of this. There will be some strategies that you like and others that you don't. Once you've sampled several, and have come up with the ones that work for you, then you can start using these strategies in our exposure tasks and in real situations.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: We will start with this first activity.**

*[With Group]: Distribute the Challenging Your Automatic Thoughts Handout to each student and have students complete the worksheet either as a group or individually with group discussion to follow. Select additional activities from the box below and continue working through them until the students have developed this skill.*

Activities for repetition

**Talking Back to Fear Worksheet.** This is a worksheet that also guides students in developing a mantra or coping statement which they can say to themselves when they are feeling anxious or nervous. Once the students have completed the worksheet, provide them with index cards to write their talking back thoughts on. Encourage the students to keep these index cards somewhere they can get to them easily (e.g., binder, book bag, pocket, wallet) and tell them to read over these cards when they are feeling anxious.

**“What if” Thinking Worksheet.** Often our worries begin with “What if.” For example, what if I fail this test? This worksheet will help students learn how to challenge their what if thinking and to produce a rational response.

**Rational Response Handout.** This is a worksheet that requires students to list an automatic thought which comes from their “anxious self” and then respond to that thought with a statement from the student’s “coping self.” This worksheet should look like a dialogue between the two parts of ourselves.

**Experimenting to Test Your Thoughts Handout.** At the beginning of each day, students record how worried they are that bad things will happen. At the end of the day, they record any bad things that actually happened during that day and rate how bad the day actually was. Encourage the student to notice that many times the worry rating is higher than the actual rating, and that many bad things do not happen.

**ReCCaP for Topic 3:** Meet with the student before the next session.

1. **Review:** Have the student pick and review situation that made them nervous
2. **Complete the Log:** (Complete the top and bottom rows of boxes this week). Have the student identify the automatic thoughts that they had and have them identify the thinking error associated with those thoughts (also complete the feelings, anxiety ratings, and behavior boxes on the top row). Then have the student challenge the thought and provide a more rational response. Discuss the impact of this new thought on feelings and behaviors.
3. **Connect to Treatment:** Have the student identify the automatic thoughts that they had and then provide disputes and rational responses to challenge or combat those automatic thought.
4. **Plan:** Have the student describe how he/she can use this rationale response in the future.

*Group Leader/Counselor should praise the student for any progress on the above, reminding them, that with practice, these skills will help cope with anxiety.*

## Topic 4: Self-Evaluation and Self-Reward

Time: 15 minutes

### Outline

- Define rewards and discuss why self-reward is important
- Define and describe self-evaluation
- Emphasize that self-reward should happen following good effort not just good outcomes

### Materials Needed (see Appendix Phase 2)

- My Rewards List Handout (see page 99)

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Everyone has been working very hard in learning the skills of relaxation, identifying automatic thoughts, and changing negative self-talk into positive self-talk. In the next phase of our work, you're going to learn how to start using all of these tools together in real life situations. Because you are working so hard on this, it is important to reward yourself for hard work or difficult tasks. What do I mean when I say reward yourself?

*[With Group]: Let students respond.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Why is it important to reward yourself when you've worked hard?

*[With Group]: Let students respond.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Yes, a reward is something you given when you are pleased with the work that is done. It helps people take pride in what they've done and motivates them to do it again.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** For example, if a group of student complete all of their in class work, the teacher may reward them by giving that group free time on the computer.

*[With Group]: Describe that in the beginning, teachers may reward students for doing part of the work right, and then gradually require them to do all of the work in order to get the reward. Ask students why the teacher might do this.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** In order to determine if you deserve a reward, you have to decide if you are pleased or satisfied with what you've done. This is called a self-evaluation.

*[With Group]: Describe that self-evaluation and self-reward happen frequently, although people might not know they are doing it. See if the group can come up with some examples of this.*

*Some examples:*

- *After completing homework, a student plays video games at home*
- *A student who plays soccer, scores a goal to help his team win. He and his teammate go out for ice cream afterward to celebrate the win.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Now, do you think we should reward ourselves only when we show perfect performance?

*[With Group]: Let students respond.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** No, why not?

*[With Group]: Point out that expecting perfect performance (Getting an "A" on every assignment, scoring a goal every game) is unrealistic.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** In fact, when something is very difficult or new to us, it's important to reward ourselves for trying and/or for doing just slightly better than the time before. So I want you to start practicing rewarding yourself for *trying* to implement these skills. Each week, when we meet, I'll ask you to mention one of the skills that you tried and how you rewarded yourself for trying.

*[With Group]: One by one, describe each sample situation below. After you read the situation, ask the students to discuss how they would evaluate their behavior in that situation and whether or not they would reward themselves for this behavior. Discuss differences in student responses. Add other examples.*

Situation	Self-Evaluation	Reward or Not?
The student enters a situation on his fear hierarchy that is rated as a 30 (mild anxiety) and copes well with that situation	Positive/Higher Rating	Reward
The student enters a situation on his fear hierarchy that is rated as an 80 (high anxiety). The situation is difficult for him, and he did not use his coping skills	Negative/Lower Rating	No reward
The student enters a situation on his fear hierarchy that is rated as an 80 (trying out for a play). The situation is difficult for him, and he did remember to use his coping skills (e.g., deep breathing), but he was not selected to be in the play.	Positive/Higher Rating	Reward

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Because you’re going to start doing some hard work to face your anxiety, we need to come up with a list of rewards that you can give to yourself. Our task today (or in the upcoming week) is to create a rewards list. How would you like to reward yourself for working hard?

*[With Group]:* Distribute My Reward List Handouts (see page 99) and help students identify small rewards they can provide to themselves. Some examples: earning crazy band bracelets, an hour of video games, an hour on facebook, a walk outside.

**ReCCaP for Topic 4:** Meet with the student before the next session.

1. **Review:** Have the student pick and review situation in which he/she used successfully challenged his/her automatic thoughts.
2. **Complete the Log:** Complete the top and bottom rows of boxes this week to reflect what happened in the above situation.
3. **Connect to Treatment:** Have the student discuss his/her self-evaluation for the above situation as well as her self-reward. If they forgot to self-reward, create a plan for them to do so in the next 24 hours.
4. **Plan:** Have the student describe how he/she will reward herself for using the skill and how he/she plans to use it again in the future?



## PHASE 3: SKILLS PRACTICE

After completing Phase 2, the students should be able to demonstrate the skills of relaxation, identifying and modifying negative self-talk, and self-evaluation and reward. Once students can demonstrate these skills either in group or in ReCCap situations, they move to Phase 3.

The key to Phase 3 is to facilitate therapeutic exposure to feared situations. Exposure means facing the situations that make you nervous. During the third phase, students will apply and practice the newly learned skills in increasingly anxiety-provoking situations. The practicing of new skills takes place through imagined exposures, role plays, and in-vivo exposure tasks and continues until the student can apply the skills in highly anxiety-provoking situations, has reduced avoidance of such situations, and/or has improved functioning in previously-impaired domains.

### Important Notes:

1. Because exposure is so challenging to students, it is important that they understand the rationale for it and that they know that the process will not move at a pace that is faster than they can handle. Although you will gently push them to continually take on more challenging situations, they need to feel safe and know that, ultimately, they can control the rate of the process. This is described in the ORIENTATION TO PHASE 3 below.
2. Although Phase 1 and Phase 2 provide a necessary and critical foundation to success with CBT treatment for anxiety, they are not sufficient to produce lasting change in student behavior. Exposure is a necessary element to treatment success. Thus, group leaders/counselors must not lose interest or allow students to lose interest in the process before completing Phase 3.
3. Most group leaders/counselors do too few exposures. The benefits of exposure (student success, mastery, and confidence) are only achieved through repetition. Thus, just when you think you have done enough exposure tasks, do one or two more to ensure mastery and maintenance of the skills.

Objectives:

- Students will understand the process and rationale for exposure tasks
- Students will demonstrate the processes of planning for an exposure task and reviewing the task after completion
- Students will successfully complete multiple exposure tasks for each situation on their hierarchy

## Topic 1: Orientation to Exposure Tasks

ALL STUDENTS MUST PARTICIPATE IN THIS ORIENTATION SESSION BEFORE ENGAGING IN EXPOSURE TASKS.

Time: 30 minutes to allow for enough discussion

### Outline

- Define exposure
  - Ensure the student that exposure tasks will start with situations that are lower on their fear hierarchy
- Describe the rationale and reason for exposure
  - Habituation
  - Practice of coping skills
  - Identification of automatic thoughts
  - Challenging of automatic thoughts
- Describe the process of preparing for and completing an exposure task
- Give to student and opportunity to discuss their concerns to the point that they feel comfortable preparing for the first exposure task

### Materials Needed (see Appendix Phase 3)

- White board/chalk board
- Understanding Exposure Handout (one for each student; see pages 102-103)
- Sample Exposure Preparation Handout (one for each student; see page 104)

*It is recommended that you give the handout to the students after you have completed the discussion. It's important that they pay attention to your description rather than read ahead on their own.*

### Defining Exposure

**[Group Leader/Counselor]: The key to Phase 3 is therapeutic exposure to feared situations. Exposure means facing the situations that make you nervous.**

*Write this on the board.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** After all, the whole point of this process is to help you do the things that you currently can't/or avoid doing because of your fear or anxiety. Now that you have learned how to calm yourself down and how to modify your negative self-talk, you are ready to start using these tools together in real life situations.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** We will start with the easier situations and work up to the harder ones. We will likely start with role plays and imagined situations, and gradually move to real life situations. And we will move at a pace that you are comfortable with. If you ever think we're moving too fast, just tell me and we'll slow down. The goal is to help you feel and be successful.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** It usually takes several exposures to the same situation for your anxiety to decrease dramatically. Thus, we will repeat each exposure several times until your anxiety for that situation has decreased and you are experiencing some success in using your skills in that situation.

### **Rationale for Exposure**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Before we get started with the exposures, it's important for you to understand why we are going to use this strategy. There are four reasons why exposure is helpful.

#### **1. Habituation:**

*Write this word on the board.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Habituation means that you get used to a situation. If you stay in a situation long enough, your anxiety will eventually level off and decrease. Remember the activation and calming systems? Your activation system can only stay activated for so long, before the calming system steps up and takes control to calm your body down. This is the body's way of taking care of itself. When you stop being as activated in a situation that used to make you nervous, this is called habituation. You may not have noticed this for two reasons, either (1) the situation was too short for the calming system to kick it (e.g., raising your hand and speaking up in class only takes a few minutes) or (2) your negative thoughts keep feeding your anxiety so you keep "telling" your activation system that there is a threat and to stay alert. Exposure tasks

allow you to stay in the situation long enough for you to habituate or start the calming process.

## **2. Practice:**

*Write this word on the board.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Many times your anxiety leads you to avoid or leave the situation. Thus, you never get any better at demonstrating the behaviors that you need to be successful (e.g., like deep breathing or correcting negative self-talk). Would you expect yourself to be able to drive a car well in an emergency (e.g., get a friend to the hospital) if you've never driven a car before? No. So, why expect that of yourself with these behaviors? Exposures give you a chance to practice the needed behaviors in a safe place first (e.g., with me in role plays) and in real situations with your new coping skills and support from me and others.

## **3. Identifying Automatic Thoughts:**

*Write this on the board.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** There are likely some automatic thoughts that only occur when you're right in the middle of an anxiety-provoking situation to feed your anxiety and prevent the calming system from starting up. We need to identify the automatic thoughts that are so powerful in maintaining your anxiety and give you a tool or a weapon to challenge them. Exposures will give you a chance to practice using a weapon against these powerful thoughts so that you can start to break the cycle of anxiety.

## **4. Challenging Automatic Thoughts:**

*Write this on the board.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Right now, you are convinced that your automatic thoughts are accurate (e.g., if you mess up, other students won't hang out with you). And if you are avoiding situations where you might mess up, you have no way to test if this thought is accurate or not. Exposures allow you to try the behavior and test the thought. Two things will likely happen. First, you may learn that more often than not, you

actually don't mess up. Second, even if you do mess up, students will still hang out with you because most people mess up on things every now and then.

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Hopefully now you can see that exposure tasks put it all together. They address the physiology/feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of anxiety and give you a chance to practice and get good at using the tools/skills in your tool box.

### The Process for Each Exposure

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Now, let's talk about the process for each exposure. Because we want the exposures to go well for you, we'll take some time planning for each one. This process seems a little long for the first one, but it becomes easier and quicker with each one we do.

*[With Group]: Describe the following process. Consider writing the steps on the board. After you have explained the steps, use the Sample Exposure Preparation Handout (see page 104) and the case of Mark (described below) to demonstrate the process to students.*

#### ***Step 1: Pick a situation.***

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** We'll start each exposure task by reviewing your fear ladder. Initially we'll pick a situation that has a rating around 30 or 40. We don't want it to be too anxiety provoking, but we also don't want it to be too easy or you won't get practice applying your skills. As you successfully complete exposures with lower ratings, we'll pick situations with higher ratings. Initially, we'll also pick a situation that is simple and easy to role play and that is most relevant to your daily activities. For example, you may be afraid of giving speeches in class, but if you don't have to do that this semester, we may pick a different situation that you do have to deal with (e.g., talking to students during lunch).

#### ***Step 2: Anticipate your automatic thoughts and challenges to them.***

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Once we pick a situation, I will have you imagine the situation in as vivid detail as possible. Then you'll write down 3 automatic

thoughts that you are likely to have. We'll identify the thinking errors associated with these thoughts. Then, we'll write down the challenges to these thoughts and the helpful/coping responses. We'll write these down so that you can use them as a script in the situation.

*Use the Exposure Preparation Handout (see page 105) to guide you through this process.*

***Step 3: Work out the details of the exposure.***

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Next, we'll plan out the situation. If it's a role play between you and me, we'll discuss the setting and the details of what is going to happen. If it's an imaginal exposure, we'll talk through the sights, sounds, smells, and details of the situation. If it's a real life exposure, we'll discuss the steps you will take before, during, and after the exposure.

***Step 4: Set an achievable goal.***

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Just before we complete the exposure, we need to set an "achievable behavioral goal" so that we know if the exposure is a success. This goal should be very specific (rather than vague), at a level that you are likely to achieve, and observable to others. Examples of specific and non-specific goals are provided below.

*Write these goals down on the Exposure Preparation Worksheet.*

*Specific Goals*

*Make two statements about myself*  
*Invite her to the dance*  
*Learn two things about that person*  
*Ask the teacher about the assignment*  
*Stay in the situation for 20 minutes*

*Non-Specific Goals*

*Don't get nervous*  
*Make a good impression*  
*Be friendly*  
*Communicate effectively*  
*Feel like I did a good job*

**Step 5: Complete the exposure.**

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** Just prior to the exposure, you will make a prediction about how anxious you will get during the exposure. We will complete the exposure, and I will ask you to make ratings of anxiety throughout the exposure.

*Depending on the duration of the role play, try to get 3 to 5 ratings before it ends. These ratings provide concrete evidence that anxiety is decreasing. Thus, this provides a cue to you how the student is feeling and how long the exposure needs to last. You must have the student remain in the exposure until it decreases at least a little.*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** I may also prompt you to use your coping statements.

*Offer supportive coaching statements during the exposure if the adolescent is unable to apply them on his/her own. "It might be helpful to take a few deep breaths here." "Remember to use your rational response script". "What would be helpful to say to yourself right now?"*

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** We will remain in the situation as long as it takes for your anxiety to drop. Then we will end the exposure and review how it went.

*[With Group]: Additional important points to cover about Step 5:*

- *Act out the role play or imagined situation as completely as possible*
- *Don't break roles or stop the role play until it's complete*
- *Do use your script as a reminder, as needed*
- *Do provide anxiety ratings as quickly as possible without belaboring the rating*
- *Don't be disappointed if it's difficult or doesn't go well. Remember to praise yourself for effort not outcome. It takes repeated exposures to fully break the cycle.*
- *If you avoid experiencing anxiety in exposures, it may help in the short run, but it will maintain anxiety in the long run.*



**Step 6: *Review the exposure.***

**[Group Leader/Counselor]:** After the exposure is over, we will take a deep breath and relax for a few minutes. Then we will discuss how it went. Specifically, we will review your predicted ratings, your actual ratings, how well you used your skills (deep breathing and thought restructuring), and whether or not you achieved your goal.

*Have students complete the final two questions on the Exposure Preparation Worksheet.*

*To help you prepare for the exposure preparation meeting, the exposure tasks, and the exposure review meetings, we have provided a sample below.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Sample Role Play Exposure (The Case of Mark)**

**Situation:** Mark is a freshman who is very anxious about speaking in groups. On his fear hierarchy, raising his hand, waiting to be called on, and providing an answer is listed at an anxiety rating of 60. He has significant anticipatory anxiety while waiting for the teacher to call on him, he worries that he'll pass out, not be able to answer the question or look stupid.

**The goal of this exposure is to simulate a classroom (using the counselor as the teacher, and three other students from the group as the class).**

**The counselor and Mark have agreed on the following:**

- The exposure will likely last 15 to 20 minutes
- The counselor will offer several opportunities for Mark to raise his hand and answer questions, but Mark will not know when these will occur
- Mark will raise his hand at least two or three times to answer a question, but he can decide when he will do this
- The counselor will be lecturing on a topic that has previously been covered in Mark's science class and that Mark is familiar with
- In order to obtain anxiety ratings from Mark, the counselor will periodically hold up a card that has a question mark on it. Each time she holds this up, Mark will quickly report his anxiety rating. (Mark can write these down, or he can have a peer write down his ratings on a piece of paper (*see Exposure Worksheet on page 106*) so that the counselor and Mark can review all of them at the end of the exposure.
- The other students will act as peers in the class, occasionally raising their hands to answer questions.

**Prior to the exposure, Mark has identified automatic thoughts that would likely occur**

- "I'm going to pass out"
- "The other student are going to laugh at me"
- "I'll say something stupid"

**To challenge these automatic thoughts, the counselor and Mark examined the evidence for each thought, the likelihood of the situation happening, and the outcomes if it did happen.**

For the first thought, they discussed that even though Mark feels like he is going to pass out, he actually has never passed out before and he has used deep breathing to reduce dizziness before (see the sample dialogue in the box below). For the second thought, they discussed a time when other students have gotten the answer wrong (which happens about 25% of the time) and how often other kids laugh at them (about 10% of

the time because the teacher does not tolerate disrespect). They discussed how often his answer to the teacher's question is correct (e.g., about 75%). They discussed that even if kids get laughed at, it's not the end of the world (i.e., people don't stop being friends with someone just because they made a mistake). For the third thought, they made some connections to the discussion about not passing out and about how often people make mistakes. They also discussed how well Mark knew the class material.

### **Sample Script for Testing the Evidence**

Counselor (C): I'm wondering if you've ever passed out in class before.

Mark (M): Well, not really passed out, but very close. My body totally freaks out. I get dizzy and sweaty and the room is swaying.

C: So, it really feels like you're about to pass out, but you have never lost consciousness?

M: No, I guess not.

C: If you don't pass out, what happens?

M: Well, I usually put my head down on the table and close my eyes.

C: So, that helps you not pass out?

M: Yea, I guess I look up and check the room to see if it's spinning. When it stops, I know I can sit back up again.

C: Well, I'm glad you've found something that keeps you from passing out. Have you ever tried to use your deep breathing or muscle relaxation (hand squeezing) during this situation?

M: Yea, actually, I did remember to use it once or twice. It's hard for me to remember to use it when I'm freaking out.

C: Yes, it can be hard to remember to use it. But it sounds like you did once or twice. That's a great start. Did it help?

M: Yea, I was surprised but it did. I just stared at a spot on the wall and after several deep breathes, I was feeling better.

C: Good I'm glad to hear this. It sounds like you were in control of getting your body to go from freaking out to a calmer state.

M: Yea, sort of.

C: So let's get back to your first automatic thought and review a bit of the evidence. The thought was "I'm going to pass out." You said you've actually never passed out. So 0% of the time you've passed out and 100% of the time you've not passed out. What is the likelihood that you will pass out in this situation in the future?

M: Well, when you put it that way, I have to say not very likely.

C: I would agree with you. And, even though this situation makes you very uncomfortable, is there some evidence that you can get control over this in the moment?

M: A little, I guess, if I can remember to use my deep breathing.

C: I would agree as well. Would it be helpful for you to give yourself a cue to remember to do it? Some students have put a small piece of paper in their pocket or even on their desk. So let's see if we can come up with a Coping Statement to challenge this automatic thought when it comes to your mind. "I'm going to pass out." What could you say to yourself instead?

M: Umm, how about “It hasn’t happened before. If you use your breathing, you can calm down.”

C: That’s great. Let’s write that down. Do you also want to add this statement to the paper in your pocket?

**They identified Coping Statements that Mark could use for each thought**

- “It’s not happened before. If I use my breathing, I can calm down.”
- “People make mistakes. I know my close friends won’t laugh at me”
- “I’ve studied this. I can at least say something close to what the teacher wants”

**Mark’s achievable goal:**

- Raise my hand to answer at least 2 questions
- Use deep breathing if my anxiety starts to spike

**Mark’s Anxiety Prediction:**

- He thinks his anxiety will rise to a 50

**Sample Role Play Exposure:**

The counselor tells the group that they are about to begin the role play and to remain in role until the role play his complete.

She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark’s initial anxiety rating.

Mark says 40.

The counselor acting as the teacher, welcomes the students to class, introduces the topic, and passes out a worksheet (she copied this from Mark’s science teacher).

She asks a question of the group

Mark raises his hand but the teacher calls on someone else.

She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark’s initial anxiety rating.

She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark’s anxiety rating.

Mark says 55.

The counselor gives the directions for the worksheet and how the class is going to complete it together. She begins working through the first problem as a sample.

She asks a question of the group.

Mark raises his hand and the teacher calls on him.

He answers successfully.

The teacher continues with the problem.

She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark’s anxiety rating.

Mark says 50.

Mark is starting to do some deep breathing.

The teacher finished demonstrating the first problem with the group. She tells them to complete the second problem on their own and that the group will discuss their answers when complete. She tells the group to work on the problem and turn their paper over when they are done.

While the group works, she walks over to Mark.

She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark's anxiety rating.  
Mark says 35.  
After about 5 minutes, the students all have their pages turned over.  
The teacher asks for a few students to share their answers.  
Mark does not raise his hand.  
The teacher calls on a peer who does.  
She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark's anxiety rating.  
Mark says 45.  
The peer answers.  
The teacher asks for another student to share their answer.  
Mark raises his hand.  
The teacher calls on him and he answers.  
She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark's anxiety rating.  
Mark says 45.  
The teacher tells the students to complete another problem on their own.  
While the group works, she walks over to Mark.  
She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark's anxiety rating.  
Mark says 30.  
After a few minutes the teacher asks a student to share their answer.  
Mark raises his hand.  
The teacher calls on him and he answers.  
She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark's anxiety rating.  
Mark says 35.  
The teacher calls on one other student  
She displays the Question Mark Card to get Mark's anxiety rating.  
Mark says 25.  
The counselor then announces the end of the role play.  
The other students are thanked for their participation and dismissed

**Mark and the Counselor review the exposure:**

C: So what did you think?  
M: Well, I thought it went okay.  
C: Yes, what makes you say that?  
M: Well, I think I did what I said I was going to do.  
C: You mean you achieved your goals? Wow, that's great. Let's review them. You said that you would answer two questions. Did you do that?  
M: Yes  
C: Yes, you did! You said that you would use deep breathing. Were you able to do this?  
M: Yea, after that first question, I noticed that my anxiety spiked. It was higher than I thought it might go. I didn't think that the role play would be close to the real classroom, but it was. So I started to use it so that I wouldn't freak out like I do in class.  
C: First, that's great that you noticed your anxiety levels and remember to use it. And second, it sounds like your deep breathing worked.  
M: Yes, I guess so.

C: You mentioned that your anxiety spiked higher than you thought. Let's see, yes, you predicted that your anxiety would get as high as 50, but your rating indicates that it got up to a 55. This is actually pretty close. What do think about this?

M: Well, I guess these role plays can make things seem pretty real.

C: Yes, so that's good because if you prove to yourself that you can manage your anxiety in these roles plays, then we can have some confidence that you can manage your anxiety in the real situations. Also, I was thinking that this gives us confidence that you are a good judge of your anxiety. I don't think we'll need to adjust anything on your fear hierarchy do you?

M: No probably not. But, man, I don't want to do any role plays that are rated higher than this yet.

C: Ok. That's important for us to consider. Maybe we should repeat this one a few times until you are more comfortable with it before moving up the hierarchy.

M: Ok.

C: I also wanted to ask you about your automatic thoughts. Did you have the ones that you had expected? *Review them from the list.*

M: Well, I was a little concerned about passing out when my anxiety went up to the 55, but I guess since we had talked about how my body probably wouldn't do that, it didn't spiral out of control.

C: Okay, so maybe our discussion about testing out the evidence for that automatic thought was helpful. Let's remember to do that again before the next exposure. What about the other thoughts?

M: Well, because it was a role play with other students from the group, I wasn't as worried about them laughing at me. But yea, I guess I was still a little worried about saying something stupid.

C: And did you say anything stupid?

M: No, I guess not.

C: So, thinking about all of this, what can you take from this experience?

M: Well, I guess I met my goal, so that's cool and these things are more real than I thought they would be so, it seems like I will get to practice some of the skills you're teaching us.

C: Yes, those are great lessons. Even though this was hard and your anxiety spiked a little, you DID achieve your goal, so now you have evidence that you can do it. It also sounds like your deep breathing can help to calm you down. So remember that, and keep using it. Great job today. Should we plan to repeat this next week?

M: Ok

C: And in the mean time, try to pay attention to your anxiety cues, and when you feel your anxiety start to spike, you can use the rational responses that you used today and your deep breathing. Hang in there. You're going great.

\*\*\*\*\*

Questions to guide the exposure review (You may ask any subset of these and in any order)

**1. Your predicted anxiety rating was a X. Your actual ratings were X, Y, and Z. What do you make of this pattern?** *Often their predicted ratings are higher than their actual ones. If so, discuss how anxiety can lead us to ‘expecting things to be worse than they actually are’. Discuss how we should anticipate this and not ‘treat these types of thought as accurate.’ Also, consider whether adjustments need to be made to the ratings on the fear hierarchy. If the prediction was a good match, you could frame this as the student being a good judge of what to expect. Indicate that you shouldn’t have to adjust the fear hierarchy if this is the case.*

**2. Your first anxiety rating was X and the others were Y and Z. What can we learn from this pattern?** *If the exposure served to help them habituate to their anxiety, the ratings should decrease. If so, use this as evidence to support what the student has learned about the activation and calming system. If not, discuss what you might change about the exposure for the next repetition (e.g., inducing more anxiety at the start, staying in the role play longer, modifying the exposure so that it is more real life, identifying more effective rational responses.*

**3. Did you have the automatic thoughts that you expected to have?** *If so, praise the student for identifying the relevant thoughts and planning to challenge them. If not, normalize that it is common for unexpected thoughts to pop up and discuss how to use these in the next exposure.*

**4. What additional automatic thoughts emerged?** *Develop rational responses to these for the next exposure.*

**5. How well did the rational response script do in combating the automatic thoughts?** *Discuss what to keep using and what to refine.*

**6. Did you meet your goal? Why or Why Not?** *Make sure that the student looks at the concrete evidence and does not use a thinking error to judge themselves too harshly. Offer praise to the student who achieves his/her goal and encouragement and support for those who did not achieve their goal.*

**7. What can you take from this experience for the future?** *Common take away messages to focus on are:*

*If I hang in there, it gets easier*

*Even though I was nervous, I still made my goal*

*Even though I feel panicky I won’t pass out*

*It was harder than I thought, but I made it through*

*Once I get through the first several minutes, I feel better*

*I’m in more control of me than my anxiety is*

*Deep breathing can help calm me down in the moment*

*Challenging my automatic thoughts can help me keep my thinking straight*

## Topic 2: Individual Exposure Tasks

Time: 20-30 minutes depending on each individual student's hierarchy

### Outline

- Complete the Exposure Preparation Worksheet with the student (see page 105)
- Complete the exposure, documenting least 3 to 5 anxiety ratings on the Exposure Worksheet (page 106)
- Review the exposure task, using the questions in the box on the previous page

### Materials Needed (see Appendix Phase 3)

- Exposure Preparation Worksheet (see page 105)
- Exposure Worksheet (see page 106)

*Exposure tasks require creativity. There are several common exposure activities. You may build off of the ideas below as you create the exposure tasks for your students.*

#### Activities for Exposures

**Imaginal exposures** (conduct this type of exposure in private): In a conversation, have the student tell you about the situation in detail, including what they see, hear, feel, think, taste, and smell in the situation. Once you have these details, guide the student through the situation in their imagination using all the details you just gathered. Initially, use vivid descriptions to heighten their anxiety. Use a lot of anticipatory anxiety statements to build up the situation. Continue to describe the situation so that they remain in the imagined situations for a prolonged time (5 to 10 minutes at least) until they habituate. Remember to gather anxiety ratings 3 to 5 times throughout the scenario. See the script for an example.

#### **Group Role Plays (using several students from the group)**

Create a classroom environment where a student has to raise their hand to be called upon. Have the scenario last 20 minutes and have the student raise their hand 3 to 4 times, so that they habituate to the task.



### **Group Role Plays (continued)**

Create a test environment (get copies of a previously completed test) where a student has to complete a test. Have the scenario last 20 minutes, so that they habituate to the task.

Create an unstructured social situation (e.g., like students entering a classroom before the class starts, lunch time, riding the bus), where student have to make small talk/interact informally

Create a situation, where one student invites another to do activity

Create a situation, where one student has to initiate a conversation with a teacher to clarify information about a longer term project

Create a situation where the student makes a mistake in front of others (e.g., gives a wrong answer in a class, pays for something but gives an inaccurate amount of money, turns two assignments in, but in the opposite basket). Have peers snicker or make a teasing statement so that the student has to endure some mild discomfort, but then have those peers speak to them nicely again and dismiss/forget the mistake so that the student learns that mistakes do not result in catastrophe. Have the scenario last long enough that the student can use a coping model out loud

Create a scenario where someone walks into a room and others are talking quietly.

Create a party atmosphere where someone has to tell a joke

Create a situation where the student has to give a speech or read a poem in front of others

### **In-vivo/ real life exposures**

Have the student engage in any of the above as an in-vivo task. During the early in-vivo exposures, it may be helpful to inform the teacher or adult in the situation that the student will be completing the exposure. Similarly, students may choose to enlist a close friend to help them.

### **One-A-Day-Keeps-Anxiety-Away Tasks**

Help the students develop a habit of doing one small exposure per day

Say hello to someone you typically do not speak to

Give someone a compliment

Speak up one extra time in a class or in a group setting

Make small talk with someone

Write in front of others

Take a drink from a water fountain in front of others

Make a mistake on purpose. (Provide the exact change for a purchase but put in one coin extra, spill a little water out of your water bottle)

Drive down one street they typically do not drive down

## APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. *Orientation Session Handouts (p. 74)*
2. *Phase 1 Handouts (p. 76)*
3. *Phase 2 Handouts (p. 88)*
4. *Phase 3 Handouts (p. 102)*

APPENDIX  
Orientation Session

1. *Ice Breaker Activities*

## **Ice Breaker Activities**

1. Have a ball with written questions and toss it to each other and wherever their right index finger catches the ball, they will answer the question. (Question examples: Whom do you look up to most in your family? If you were to go anywhere in the world where would you go? What's important to you about your culture?)
2. Two truths and a lie activity. Everyone shares two truths and one lie and the rest of the group tries to figure out which statement was a lie.
3. Have group members write down a certain type of occupation (e.g., firefighter, ballerina, rock star, physician) in private and then have the facilitator stick the Post-it on the group members' foreheads. The group then agrees to interact with the person with the Post-it in a way that addresses them like the person written on their forehead. The Post-it member can also ask yes/no questions of other members to try to determine who they are on the Post-it. The objective is for the member with the Post-it to try to figure out what is written on the Post-it.
4. Do an activity called *Link it*. The goal of activity is for everyone in the group to find something they can relate to in someone else. By finding something they connect on, they "link" arms until a circle is formed (the last person has to find something to relate to with the first person to close circle). The first person (Group leader) begins by listing things that describe them (activities they enjoy, their family, pets, vacations, etc) until someone in group hears something they have in common with the first person and "links" (put arms together like one is escorting the other). Then, the second person in the chain begins to list things that describe them until someone links to them and so on until everyone is linked in a circle.

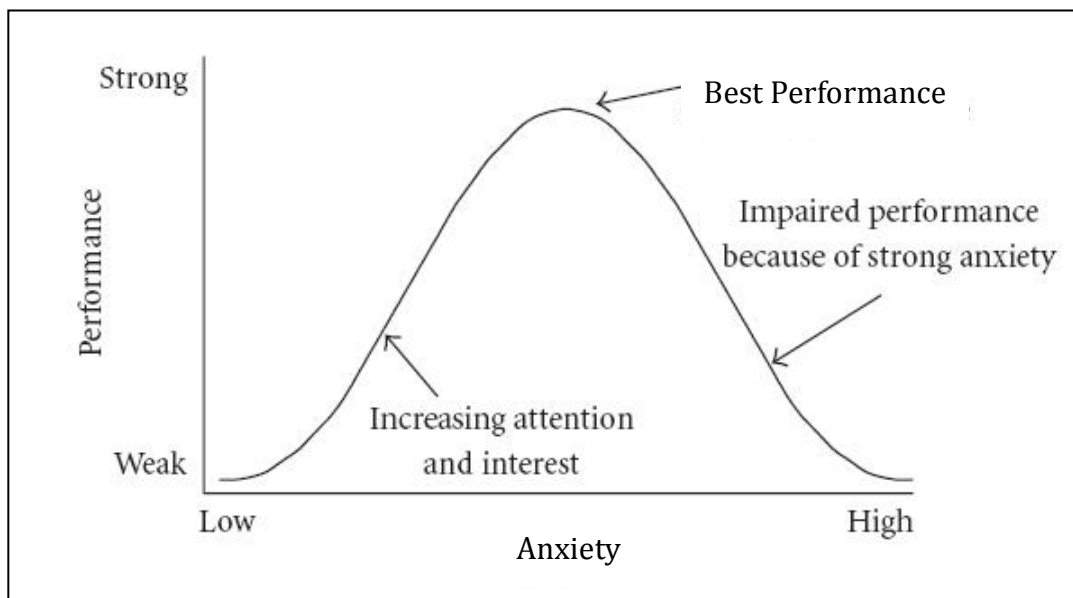
## APPENDIX Phase 1

1. *Upside Down U-Shaped Curve of Anxiety*
2. *The Physiology of Anxiety*
3. *Phase 1 ReCCaP Log*
4. *Situations, Thoughts, Feelings, Behavior Table*
5. *Spiral of Anxiety Handout*
6. *Anxiety Rating Scale*
7. *What is Your Anxiety Rating Now?*
8. *Fear Hierarchy Brainstorming Example*
9. *Fear Hierarchy Brainstorming Worksheet*
10. *Final Fear Hierarchy*
11. *End of Phase 1 Assessment*

## **Upside Down U-Shaped Curve of Anxiety**

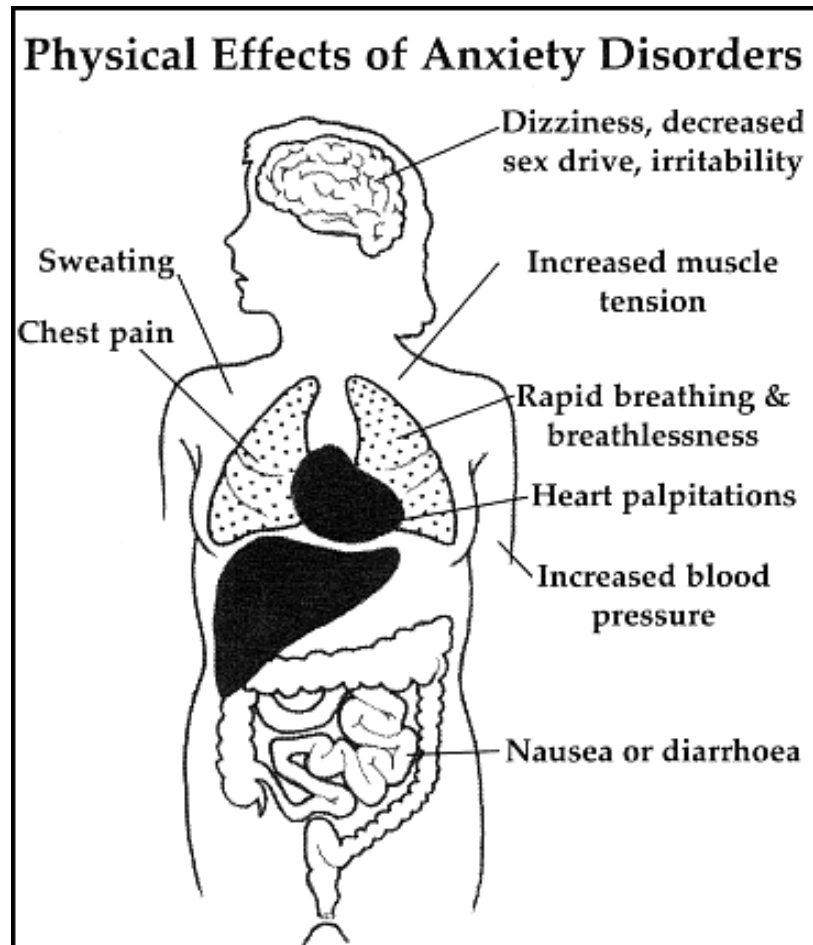
The figure below shows anxiety or activation on the bottom (x-axis). On the left is low anxiety and on the right is high anxiety. The figure also shows performance (how well you complete a task on the side (y-axis). Toward the bottom, it shows weak or low performance (not completing a task very well) and toward the top, it shows strong or high performance (doing really well on a task). Together this graph shows that, when our anxiety is really low OR really high, our performance is low. When anxiety is too low, we're not motivated, we don't really care, and we don't perform well. When anxiety is too high, we're panicked, frozen, over-focused, or overwhelmed and we don't perform well. But when our anxiety is just right (in the middle), we show our best performance. This is known as our optimal level of anxiety. When we are motivated, engaged, and focused we do our best.

This graph may help you understand why *some* anxiety is good and how too much anxiety interferes with performance. The goal of this anxiety group is to help you learn how to manage or cope with your anxiety when it gets too high and bring it back down to a level that allows you to perform at your best.



## **The Physiology of Anxiety**

The picture below shows all the places in your body where you may feel the physiological sensations of anxiety. Which sensations do you feel when you are anxious?



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Phase 1 ReCCaP Log**

Select a situation that made you feel anxious or nervous this week and complete the boxes below

- The situation: what was happening around you?
- Thoughts: what went through your mind during this situation (typically a sentence)?
- Feelings: what emotions were you feeling (typically one word)?
- Behavior: what did you do as a result of these thoughts and feelings?

1. Situation	2. Thought/s	3. Feeling/s	4. Behavior



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

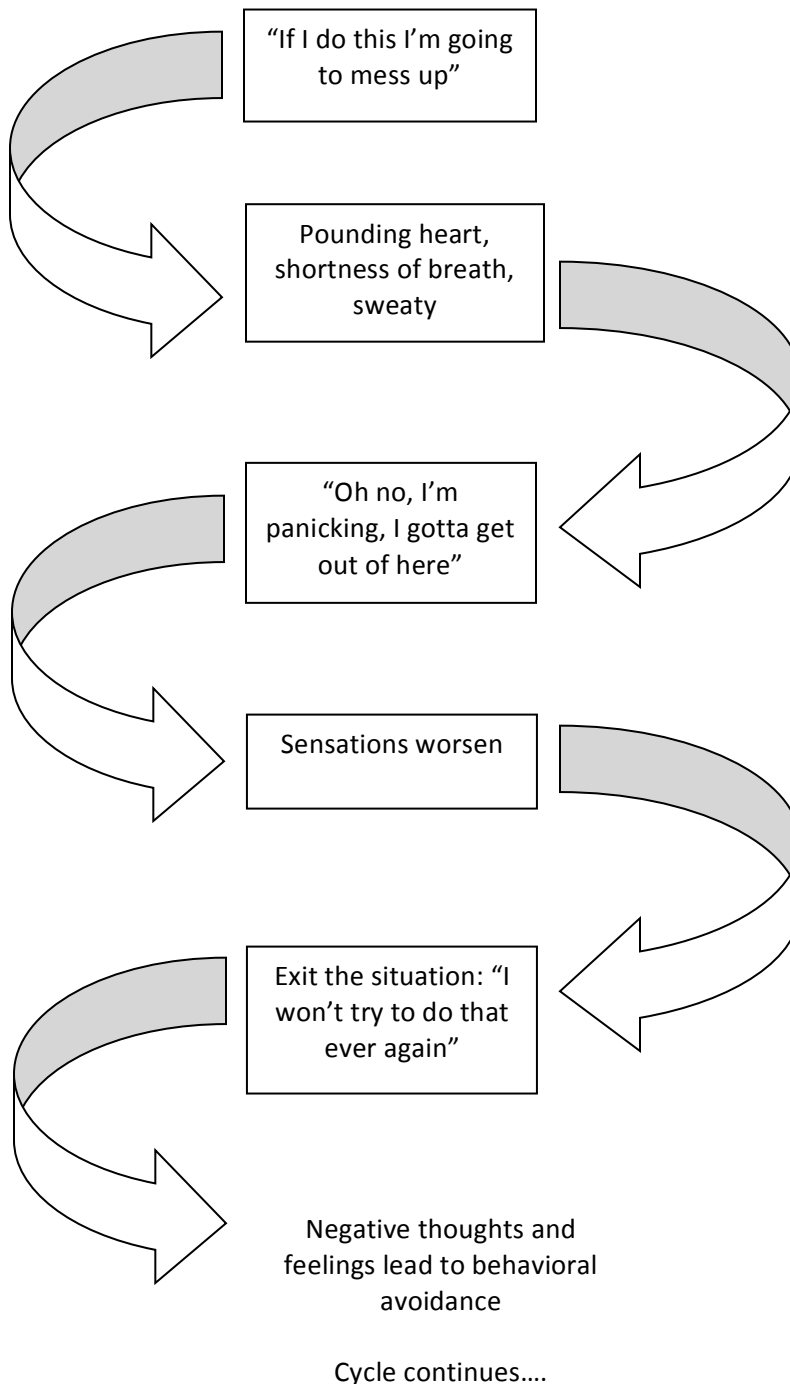
Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Situation, Thoughts, Feelings, Behavior Table***

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Thought</b>	<b>Feeling</b>	<b>Behavior</b>
<b>Phone Rings</b>	<b>It's my teacher</b>		
	<b>It's my (girl)friend calling about a party this weekend</b>		
	<b>It's the doctor with news about my Grandma</b>		

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Thought</b>	<b>Feeling</b>	<b>Behavior</b>

## Anxiety Spiral



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Anxiety Rating Scale***

<b>Anxiety Rating</b>	<b>Situation</b>	<b>Cues: Physiological Sensations, Feelings, Thoughts, Behaviors</b>
100		
90		
80		
70		
60		
50		
40		
30		
20		
10		

### **Anchors**

**100 – The most anxious or panicked you have ever been**

.

.

**50 – Anxiety that is uncomfortable and bothersome**

.

.

**0 – The most Calm or relaxed you have ever been**



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

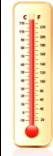
School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## What is Your Anxiety Now?

*In the boxes below, describe what you are currently doing and provide an anxiety rating.  
Discuss the impact of your activity on your anxiety rating.*


<b>Describe your current activity:</b>	<b>Rate your anxiety</b>
<i>Sitting Calmly in Group</i>	
<b>Describe your new activity:</b> <i>Thinking about _____</i>	
<b>Describe your new activity:</b>	
<b>Describe your new activity:</b>	
<b>Describe your new activity:</b>	



## ***Fear Ladder Brainstorming Example***

***Part 1: Mary writes down several ideas and then rates them***

<b><i>Rating</i></b>	<b><i>Situation</i></b>
70	Talking with other students
30	Talking to parents about school
<b>90</b>	<b>Taking the State Graduation Test</b>
30	Open book pop quizzes
60	Asking questions in social studies
50	Forgetting something while taking a tests
80	Telling parents about grades
40	Studying for a big test
70	Getting bad grades



***Part 2: Mary selects one of the main fears from above (taking the OGT) and expands her list for this fear (see below) by thinking about dimensions or situations that make her anxiety ratings for this fear higher and lower.***

90	Taking the State Graduation Test
80	Taking a mid-term exam
70	Forgetting something while taking a test
60	Taking a closed book pop quiz
50	Hearing teachers talk about preparing for the State Test
40	Studying for a big test
30	Taking an open book pop quiz
20	Studying for a scheduled quiz
10	Thinking about taking a test







## **End of Phase 1 Assessment**

To determine if the student is ready to move to Phase 2, Counselors/Group facilitators will have students answer the following 10 questions. (Note: Students may replace the word anxiety/anxious with other words, such as nervous or stressed, if desired.)

**State or write in your own words:**

**1. How anxiety can be helpful:**

**2. How anxiety can be harmful:**

**3. What are some common thoughts that people/you think when anxious?**

**4. What are some common feelings/emotions words associated with anxiety?**

**5. Where in your body do people/you feel anxiety?**

**6. What are some common behaviors or things that people/you *do* when anxious?**

**7. Give an example of how a thought/s influence feelings and behavior/s**

**8. Describe a situation that makes you very anxious, and then rate the intensity of your anxiety in this situation.**

**9. Describe a situation that only makes you a little anxious and then rate the intensity of your anxiety in this situation.**

**10. The student has created a final fear ladder?    Yes                      No**



## APPENDIX Phase 2

1. *Thinking Errors*
2. *Automatic Thoughts and Thinking Errors Handout*
3. *Phase 2 ReCCaP Log*
4. *Challenging Automatic Thoughts Handout*
5. *Talking Back to Fear Worksheet*
6. *What ifs Worksheet*
7. *Rational Responses Handout*
8. *Experimenting to Test Your Thoughts Log*
9. *My Reward List*
10. *End of Phase 2 Assessment*

## **Thinking Errors**

1. **Black or White Thinking.** This is when you think situations are either one way or the exact opposite and there is no in between (things are black or white, but not grey). For example, someone might think that if you make a mistake, you are stupid, and if you don't make a mistakes, you are cool. This is problematic because in real life everyone makes mistakes, and making mistakes does not automatically result in one extreme (being stupid) or another (being cool).
2. **Fortune Telling.** This is when you predict or "know" that something bad is going to happen. For example, knowing that you'll look stupid speaking in front of the class. This is problematic because there is no way to know the future for certain.
3. **Worst Case Scenario.** This is when people believe that the worst thing that could possibly happen will happen. For example, believing that if you speak in front of the class that you'll throw up and everyone will see it and laugh at you. Like fortune telling, it is impossible to predict the future with 100% accuracy.
4. **Relying On Emotions.** This occurs when you think something has to be true because you "feel" or believe it so strongly that it must be true. This is problematic because this can cause people to disregarding evidence indicating that the belief is not true.
5. **Mind Reading.** This is when you believe you know what others are thinking. For example, when giving a presentation in front of the class one might think "they must think I'm an idiot." We cannot know for sure what people are thinking.
6. **"Should" and "Must".** As the name implies, these are thoughts that include the words should or must. For example, "I must look stupid", "They should hate me", or "I should be better."

(Modified from Hope et al., 2000 and Kendall et al., 2002)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Automatic Thoughts and Thinking Errors Handout***

Below are several faces. Consider the situation and identify possible automatic thoughts that each person may have. Then, identify the thinking errors that characterize the automatic thoughts.

#1



#1 Automatic thought/s:

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#1 Thinking Error/s:

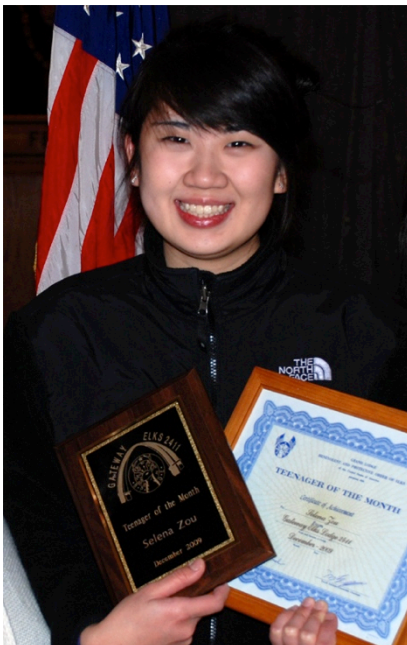
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#2



#2 Automatic thought/s:

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#2 Thinking Error/s:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

#3



#3 Automatic thought/s:

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#3 Thinking Error/s:

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#4



#4 Automatic thought/s:

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#4 Thinking Error/s:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

#5



#5 Automatic thought/s:

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#5 Thinking Error/s:

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#6



#6 Automatic thought/s:

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#6 Thinking Error/s:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

#7



#7 Automatic thought/s:

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#7 Thinking Error/s:

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#8



#8 Automatic thought/s:

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#8 Thinking Error/s:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Phase 2 ReCCaP Log***

Select a situation that made you feel anxious or nervous this week and complete the boxes below

In the top row of boxes, write the situation, one automatic thought and thinking error, your feelings, anxiety rating and behaviors.

In the bottom row, write a sentence to help you challenge your automatic thought, a coping statement, and consider your revised feelings, ratings and behaviors.

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Thoughts</b>	<b>Feeling</b>	<b>Anxiety Rating</b>	<b>Behavior</b>
	<b>Automatic Thought:</b>     <b>Thinking Error:</b>			
	<b>Challenge to Thinking Error:</b>     <b>Coping Thought:</b>	<b>Revised Feeling</b>	<b>Revised Rating</b>	<b>Revised Behavior</b>

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Challenging Automatic Thoughts Handout**

Use these questions to challenge you automatic thoughts. You will find each question helpful for many different thoughts. Several examples are also presented to help you get started.

1. Do I know for certain that \_\_\_\_\_?  
*Example: Do I know for certain that I won't do well on this test?*
2. Am I 100% sure that \_\_\_\_\_?  
*Example: Am I 100% sure that people will know I'm nervous?*
3. What evidence do I have that \_\_\_\_\_ will happen?  
What evidence do I have that the opposite is true?  
*Example: What evidence do I have that they will laugh at me?*  
*What evidence do I have that they will not laugh at me?*
4. What is the worst that could happen? How bad is that? How can I cope with that?
5. Do I have a crystal ball?
6. Is there another explanation for \_\_\_\_\_?  
*Example: Is there another explanation for not being invited to the party?*
7. Does \_\_\_\_\_ have to lead to or equal \_\_\_\_\_?  
*Example: Does "being nervous" have to lead to or equal "looking stupid?"*
8. Is there another point of view?
9. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean? Does \_\_\_\_\_ really mean that I am a(n) \_\_\_\_\_?  
*Example: What does "looking like an idiot" mean? Does the fact that I tripped really mean that I looked like an idiot?*

**Now you try. Write down an automatic thought:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Now use several of the questions above to challenge this thought:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What is a new rationale thought that you can think instead of your automatic thought?**

\_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Talking Back To Fear Worksheet**

My fear says (automatic thought): \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some things you could say to yourself that can help you talk back to your anxious feelings:

- Scared feelings are like the wind. They blow over you and then they are gone.
- Everybody feels scared sometimes. These feeling just make me human.
- These feelings are just signals to use my new skills.
- I know I can do this. The main reason I think I can't is because I feel scared. I just have to remember it's my fear talking.
- Keep cool. I can talk back to my fear.
- Is the worst thing that could happen in this situation *really* that bad?

Write down five more things you can say to yourself to talk back to your fear:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Write down these statements an index card. Read over them whenever you are feeling nervous or anxious.

(Modified from Friedberg & McClure, 2002)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **“What If” Thinking Handout**

Many times when you worry, you wonder, “What if something bad happens?” You sometimes guess that the worst is going to happen and you won’t be able to handle it. This is called What If thinking. Let’s use this worksheet to challenge those thoughts.

When I worry what if...

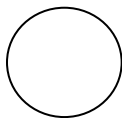
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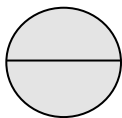
\_\_\_\_\_ I feel really scared and worried.

Ask yourself questions:

How sure am I that what I am worrying about will really happen? Circle one.



Not Sure



Pretty Sure



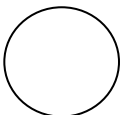
Very Sure

Has it ever happen before? Circle one.

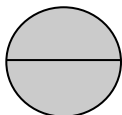
YES

NO

If it has never happened in the past, how likely is it to happen again/in the future? Circle one.



Not at All



Somewhat Likely



Very Likely

Now that you have answered these questions, what is a new way to talk back to your What If thinking?

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(Modified from Friedberg & McClure, 2002)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Coping Response Handout**

On this worksheet, you will be creating a conversation between your “anxious self” and your “coping self.” Your anxious self is the part of you that has negative automatic thoughts. Your coping self is the part of you that responds to your negative automatic thoughts with a rational coping response. First, list an automatic thought you might have about a situation. Then write a response that your coping self might make to that thought. Then have your anxious self respond to coping self’s statement and so on.

Anxious Self (Automatic Thought):
Coping Self (Rational Response):
Anxious Self:
Coping Self:
Anxious Self:
Coping Self:
Anxious Self:
Coping Self:
Anxious Self:
Coping Self:
Anxious Self:
Coping Self:
Anxious Self:
Coping Self:

(Modified from Friedberg & McClure, 2002)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Experimenting to Test Your Thoughts Handout**

At the beginning of each day this week, write the date in the first column. Next, rate how worried you are that bad things will happen. Use a 1 (not worried at all) to 10 (extremely worried) scale. Then, at the of each day, write down the bad things that happened that day. Finally, rate on a scale of 1 (not bad at all) to 10 (very bad, awful) how bad it actually was.

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>How Much I Worry (level of worry)</u></b>	<b><u>The Bad Things That Happened</u></b>	<b><u>How Bad Was It?</u></b>

**Do you see a pattern? What can you learn from this exercise?**

(Modified from Friedberg & McClure, 2002)



## **End of Phase 2 Assessment**

Student Name:

Date:

To determine if the student is ready to move to Phase 3, counselors/group leaders must observe the students implementing each of following skills without prompting from the counselor/group leader. The demonstration of the skills can be observed in group or in individual or ReCCaP sessions.

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Observed in Group</b>	<b>Observed in Individual or ReCCap Session</b>
Deep Breathing		
Muscle Relaxation		
Identify Automatic Thoughts		
Label Thinking Errors		
Challenge Automatic Thoughts		
Replace negative thoughts with helpful thoughts		
Self-evaluate		
Self-Reward		

APPENDIX  
Phase 3

1. *Understanding Exposure Handout*
2. *Exposure Preparation Worksheet*

# **UNDERSTANDING EXPOSURE HANDOUT**

**What is an exposure task?** Exposure means facing the situations that make you nervous.

Exposures start with the easier situations and work up to the harder ones. Exposures can be role plays with the counselor and group, imagined situations, or real life situations. The goal is to help you feel and be successful. If you ever think we're moving too fast or feel too anxious in the exposures, tell your counselor. It usually takes several exposures to the same situation for your anxiety to decrease dramatically. We will repeat each exposure several times until your anxiety for that situation has decreased and you are experiencing some success in using your skills in that situation.

## **Why is exposure helpful?**

**1. Habituation:** If you stay in a situation long enough, your anxiety will eventually level off and decrease. Your body's activation system can only stay activated for so long, before the calming system steps up and takes control to calm your body down. This is the body's way of taking care of itself. When you stop being as activated in a situation that used to make you nervous, this is called habituation. You may not have noticed this for two reasons, either (1) the situation was too short for the calming system to kick it (e.g., raising your hand and speaking up in class only takes a few minutes) or (2) your negative thoughts keep feeding your anxiety so you keep "telling" your activation system that there is a threat and to stay alert. Exposure tasks allow you to stay in the situation long enough for you to habituate or start the calming process.

**2. Practice:** Many times your anxiety leads you to avoid or leave the situation. Thus, you never get any better at demonstrating the behaviors that you need to be successful (e.g., like deep breathing or correcting negative self-talk). Exposures give you a chance to practice the needed behaviors in a safe place first (e.g., with me in role plays) and in real situations with your new coping skills and support from me and others.

**3. Identification of Automatic Thoughts:** There are likely some automatic thoughts that only occur when you're right in the middle of an anxiety-provoking situation to feed your anxiety and prevent the calming system from starting up. We need to identify the automatic thoughts that are so powerful in maintaining your anxiety and give you a tool or a weapon to challenge them. Exposures will give you a chance to practice using a weapon against these powerful thoughts so that you can start to break the cycle of anxiety.

**4. Testing of Automatic Thoughts:** Right now, you are convinced that your automatic thoughts are accurate (e.g., if you mess up, other students won't hang out with you). And if you are avoiding situations where you might mess up, you have no way to test if this thought is accurate or not. Exposures allow you to try the behavior and test the thought. Two things will likely happen. First, you may learn that more often than not, you actually don't mess up. Second, even if you do mess up, students will still hang out with you because most people mess up on things every now and then.



### **How will we prepare for each exposure?**

**Step 1: Pick a situation.** We'll start by reviewing your fear hierarchy. Initially we'll pick a situation that has a rating around 30 or 40. We don't want it to be too anxiety provoking, but we also don't want it to be too easy or you won't get practice applying your skills.

**Step 2: Anticipate your automatic thoughts and challenge them.** Once we pick a situation, you'll imagine the situation in as vivid detail as possible. Then, you'll write down 3 automatic thoughts that you are likely to have. We'll identify the thinking traps associated with these thoughts. Then, we'll write down the challenges to these thoughts and the rational responses. We'll write these down so that you can use them as a script in the situation. We will use Exposure Preparation Worksheet during this process.

**Step 3: Work out the details of the exposure.** Next, we'll plan out the situation. We'll discuss the setting and the details of what is going to happen.

**Step 4: Set an achievable goal.** Just before we complete the exposure, we need to set an "achievable behavioral goal" so that we know if the exposure is a success. This goal should be very specific (rather than vague), at a level that you are likely to achieve, and observable to others. Examples of specific and non-specific goals are provided below.

#### Specific Goals

Make two statements about myself  
Invite her to the dance

#### Non-Specific Goals

Don't get nervous  
Make a good impression

**Step 5: Complete the exposure.** We will complete the exposure, and I will ask you to make ratings of anxiety throughout the exposure. We will remain in the situation as long as it takes for your anxiety to drop. Then we will end the exposure and review how it went.

**Step 6: Review the exposure.** After the exposure is over, we will discuss how it went.

### **Important points:**

- Act out the role play or imagined situation as completely as possible
- Don't break roles or stop the role play until it's complete
- Do use your script as a reminder, as needed
- Don't be disappointed if it's difficult or doesn't go well. Remember to praise yourself for effort not outcome. It takes repeated exposures to fully break the cycle.
- If you avoid experiencing anxiety in exposures, it may help in the short run, but it will maintain you anxiety in the long run.

(Modified from Hope et al., 2000)

# **Sample Exposure Preparation Worksheet**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Exposure task/situation: \_\_\_ Raising hand to speak in class \_\_\_\_\_

List at least three automatic thoughts that you anticipate having during the exposure:

I'm going to pass out  
The other student are going to laugh at me  
I'll say something stupid

Identify the thinking errors associated with those thoughts:

Worst Case Scenario  
Forecasting

Write down the challenges to those automatic thoughts:

Do I know for certain that I'll say something stupid or others will laugh at me?  
Have I ever passed out before? What evidence do I have that I'm going to pass out?  
If students laugh, is that really the end of the world?  
Do other people make mistakes?

Write down the rationale responses that you will use during the exposure:

It's never happened before. If I use my breathing, I can calm down.  
People make mistakes. I know my close friends won't laugh at me  
I've studied this. I can at least say something close to what the teacher wants  
People make mistakes all the time

Which skills will you use to reduce anxiety:

Deep breathing and my rational responses

What are your goals for this exposure?

Raise my hand to answer at least 2 questions  
Use deep breathing if my anxiety starts to spike

What is your anxiety rating prediction? How high do you think your anxiety get?

50

Complete after exposure:

Did you reach your goals? Why or why not.

Yes, I answered at least 2 questions and used deep breathing

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Exposure Preparation Worksheet**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Exposure task/situation: \_\_\_\_\_

**List at least three automatic thoughts that you anticipate having during the exposure:**

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**Identify the thinking errors associated with those thoughts:**

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**Write down the challenges to those automatic thoughts:**

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**Write down the rationale responses that you will use during the exposure:**

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**Which skills will you use to reduce anxiety:**

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**What are your goals for this exposure?**

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**What is your anxiety rating prediction? How high do you think your anxiety get?**

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**Complete after exposure. Did you reach your goals? Why or why not.**

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(Modified from Hope et al., 2000)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Exposure Worksheet**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student initials: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Exposure task/situation: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating on Fear Hierarchy: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the Exposure Preparation Worksheet complete (circle one)?    Yes    No

If no, complete that worksheet before proceeding

<b>Exposure Start Time:</b>	<b>Rating (0-100)</b>
Anxiety Rating 1 When exposure begins	
Anxiety Rating 2	
Anxiety Rating 3	
Anxiety Rating 4	
Anxiety Rating 5	
Anxiety Rating 6	
Anxiety Rating 7	
Anxiety Rating 8	
Anxiety Rating 9	
Anxiety Rating 10	
<b>Exposure End Time:</b>	

**Comments:**