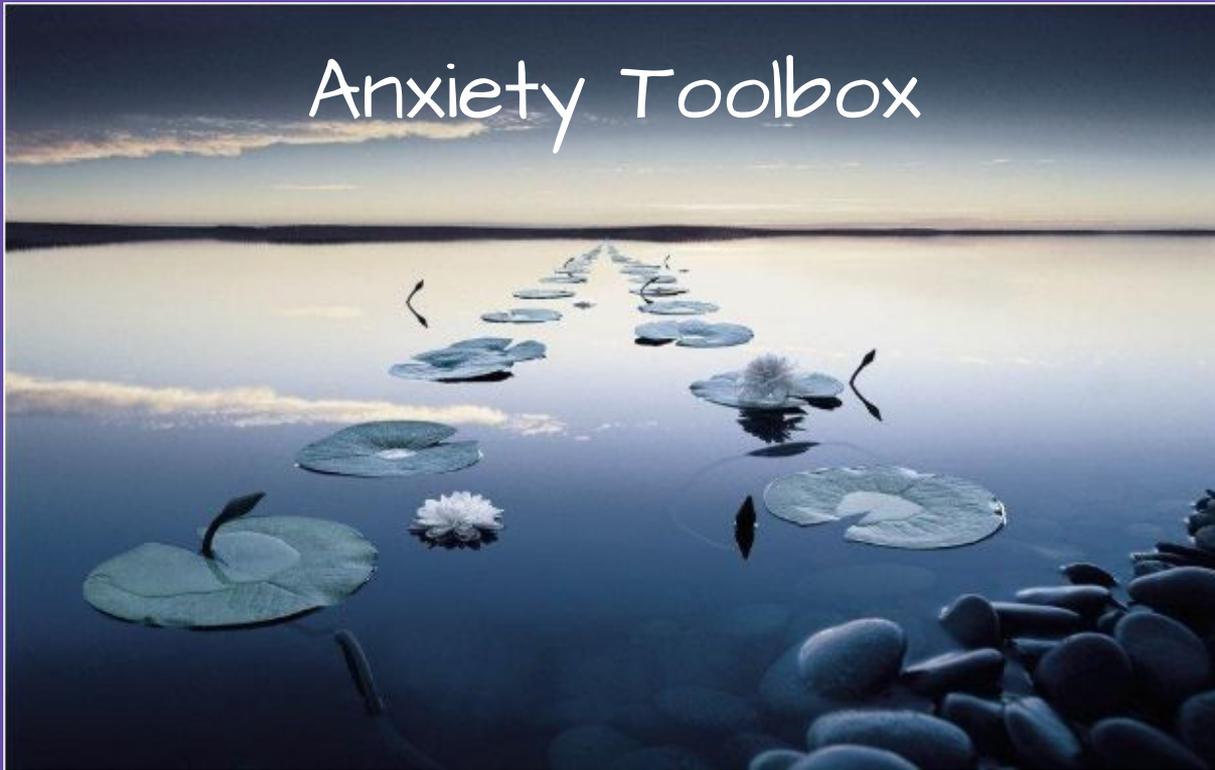


# Anxiety Toolbox



**Presented by CSUEB Counseling Services  
Week 2 - My Signs of Anxiety**



# Let's Stretch . . .



# A Few Zoom Guidelines

- Please mute your audio and type any questions into the chat box
- Your video can be off or on, whatever makes you most comfortable
- Confidentiality, and Zoom limitations

# Community Agreements

- Push yourself to participate
- Focus on your own experience
- Share headlines, not details
- Ask others before giving them feedback
- Step forward, step back
- Assume positive intent from others
- Take responsibility for your needs

# Introductions:

Share your name, year @ CSUEB, major  
and favorite animal



# Intention's for Today's Group

- 1) Practice Body Scan Meditation
- 2) Understanding My Signs of Anxiety
- 3) Cognitive Distortions
- 4) Cycle of Anxiety
- 5) Thought Cloud Meditation

# **My Anxiety Meter**

# Body Scan Meditation



# What Happens When Anxiety is Triggered?

**Emotionally**, we begin to experience a sense of threat or danger. Feeling tense, overwhelmed, nervous, and restless are just a few common responses.

**Physically**, the body's stress response ("fight-flight-freeze") is activated. This survival system involves the release of powerful stress hormones, and can allow us to run faster and longer, become motionless, or fight harder to stay alive in an emergency.

**Intellectually**, clear and rational thinking is impaired as our "primitive" mind is triggered; this is like a bodyguard trying to keep us away from harm. Our bodyguard operates automatically, so it works fast, but doesn't take the time to look at all the facts.

**Behaviorally**, we try to get away from danger immediately and avoid it in the future. Sometimes this works well. Yet, often we can't avoid the trigger, there's not actually danger ("false alarm"), or avoidance leads to loss of freedom and joy.

# What are your Signs of Anxiety?

**I notice physical changes like:** \_\_\_\_\_

*muscle tension, rapid heartbeat, rapid breathing, shakiness, dizziness, lightheadedness, stomach ache, chest pressure, feeling on edge, fatigue, difficulty focusing, sweating, restlessness, headaches...*

**My actions and behaviors change like:** \_\_\_\_\_

*avoiding friends/school/work, withdrawing from others, irritability, fidgeting, picking at nails/skin/hair, alcohol/substances, avoiding people, eating ...*

**I feel affected by thoughts like:** \_\_\_\_\_

*"I'm going to fail," "I'm losing it," "They probably all think I'm \_\_," ...*

**Emotionally, I start feeling**

\_\_\_\_\_ *overwhelmed, frustrated, sad, annoyed, frantic, panicked, worried, afraid, uneasy, numb, scattered, doomed, restless...*

# Common Cognitive Distortions

*Which cognitive distortions are impacting your anxiety the most?*

- ❑ **Catastrophizing** (“The snowball effect”): Imagining what has happened, or will happen, will be so awful you’ll be completely unable to handle it. Expecting worst-case scenarios.  
Example: *“I bet I’ll mess up this job interview just like the last one. I’ll never get a good job, and I’ll end up all alone and living on the street!”*
- ❑ **Fortune Telling**: A pattern of consistently making negative predictions.  
Example: *Even though I studied hard, I know I’ll fail.*
- ❑ **Mind reading**: A pattern of assuming you know exactly what other people are thinking. It involves consistently predicting the worst, without strong evidence it’s true.  
Example: *“Everyone probably thinks I’m a loser after that presentation.”*
- ❑ **Emotional Reasoning**: Allowing your mood to bias your interpretation.  
Example: *“I feel nervous, so it must be unsafe in this elevator.”*
- ❑ **Negative Filtering** (discounting the positives): Focusing almost entirely on the negatives and dismissing the positives.  
Example: *Doing really well on an exam but only focusing on a question you missed.*
- ❑ **Overgeneralizing**: Overestimating a pattern based on insufficient evidence.  
Example: *“Everyone in California drives recklessly.”*
- ❑ **Perfectionism**: Unfair and very rigid demands and expectations for yourself.  
Examples: *“I can’t make any mistakes” or “This presentation must go perfectly.”*
- ❑ **All-or-Nothing Thinking**: Seeing situations and people in all-or-nothing extremes.  
Examples: *“I am a total failure,” “I always have bad luck!,” or “No one cares about me.”*

## Risk Factors

Genetics   Health Concerns  
Trauma   Substance Misuse  
Learning: family, culture, society

## Triggers

Stress & Change, such as:  
School, Relationships  
Injustices, Finances

## Thoughts

Negative & Unfair  
Cognitive Distortions  
Worry Habits

## Behavior

Avoidance   Over-preparedness  
Reassurance-seeking  
Substance use   Procrastination

## Feelings

Guilt   Anxiety  
Frustration   Sadness  
Embarrassment   Fear

## Physical Changes

Muscle Tension   Reduced Focus  
Rapid Heart rate   Stomach Issues  
Sleep Issues   Restlessness   Fatigue

# Cycle of Anxiety

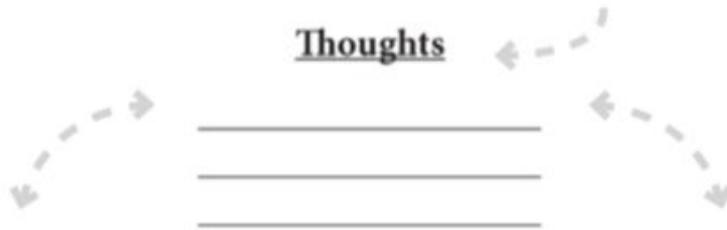
# My Cycle of Anxiety

Risk Factors

Triggers

\_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thoughts



Behavior

Feelings

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Physical Changes



# Thought Cloud Meditation



# **My Anxiety Meter**

# Take Care!

- Thank you for joining us today!
- Think about what skills you might want to practice from home this week:
  - Body Scan
  - Pay attention to my cognitive distortions
  - Write out my cycle of anxiety
  - Thought Cloud Meditation
- It is best to practice these when you are not anxious, so that you have the routines in place when you are feeling overwhelmed.



