



OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF COUNSELING SERVICES

ANXIETY TOOLBOX

MATERIALS AND CURRICULUM COURTESY OF CAL POLY COUNSELING SERVICES

WELCOME TO ANXIETY TOOLBOX!

The goal of the Anxiety Toolbox is to provide you with some skills to recognize and manage symptoms you may be experiencing.

Please take your time and work at your own pace.

We hope you find it helpful!

Anxiety Toolbox Goals:

- X We want to provide you with life-long tools you can use while facing anxiety-triggering situations.
- X We are not trying to “get rid of” your anxiety.
- X This is a jumping board to use skills in your daily life to reduce anxiety.

ANXIETY TOOLBOX

SECTIONS

#1: ANXIETY 101

#2: AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS AND UNHELPFUL COGNITIONS

#3: ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES, GROUNDING, AND SELF-CARE –
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



ANXIETY 101

- ✓ COMMON ANXIETY SYMPTOMS
- ✓ STRESS VS. CLINICAL ANXIETY
- ✓ STRESS CURVE
- ✓ ANXIETY AVOIDANCE ROLLER COASTER
- ✓ PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSES – FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE
- ✓ FULLER PICTURE: CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION
- ✓ SLEEP HYGIENE



lump in the throat

racing heart

nausea

brain zaps

jumpy

falling sensation

feel like

headaches

sweating

shaking

weak

legs

difficulty

crazy thoughts

passing out

cold chills

knot in stomach

breathing

yawning



Anxiety Symptoms

chest pressure

tight band

around the

head

hearing loss

twitching

muscle tension

dizziness

body jolts

blurred vision

lightheadedness

eye strain

restless legs

trembling

numbness

tightness

giddiness

hot flash

night sweats

head pressure body pain

ringing in the ears

facial tic

tingling

chest pain

burning

swaying feeling

stuck thoughts

bloating

memory loss

depersonalization

skin

stabbing pains

chronic fatigue

weak limbs



frequent urination

startle easy

anxietycentre.com

palpitations

sudden weight loss

STRESS VS. ANXIETY

Stress

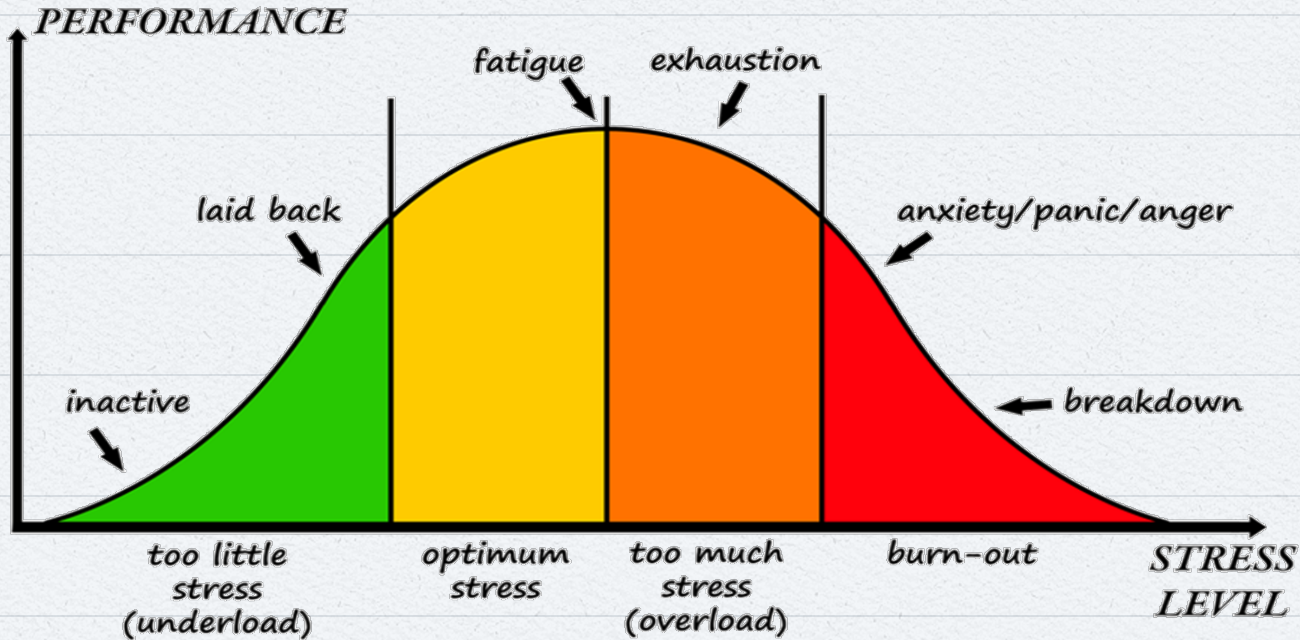
- X Is a response to a known environmental factor
- X Symptoms usually go away when stressor goes away
- X Is something we all experience at some point in our lives
- X Can be motivational

Clinical Anxiety

- X Can occur with chronic stress, major stressful event, or when there is no identifiable stressor
- X Symptoms persist even after the stressor has passed
- X Symptom intensity is exaggerated
- X Causes significant distress
- X Interferes with your daily life
- X Is not motivational

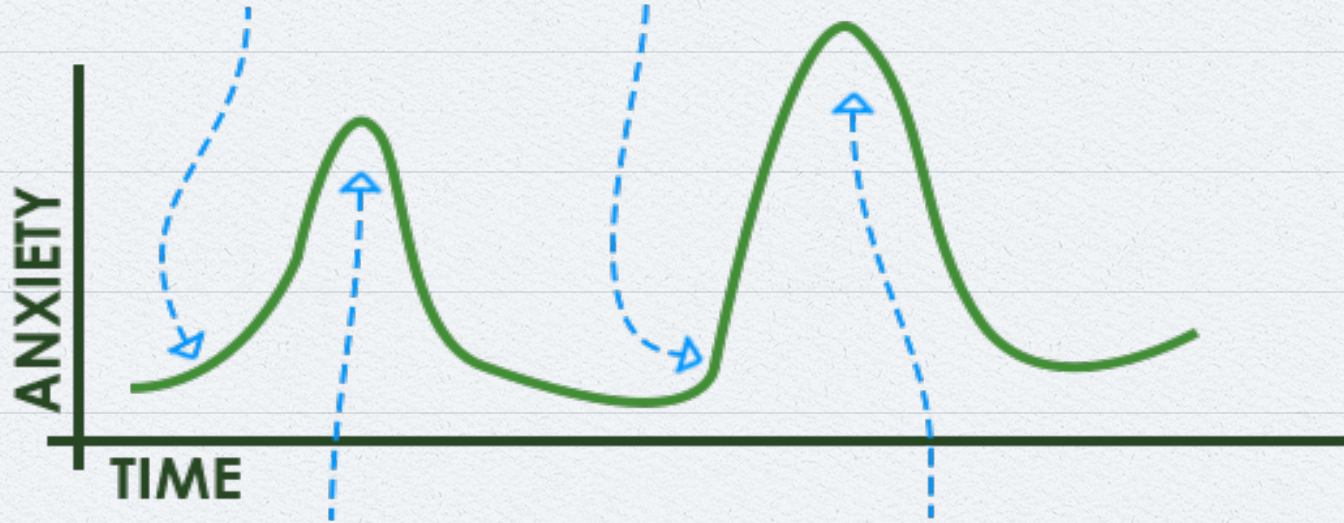


STRESS CURVE



- X The idea here is that someone who has no stress or anxiety has little motivation
- X Whereas someone with too much anxiety may avoid the situation or perform poorly
- X However, with a **moderate level of anxiety**, a person is likely to be motivated without becoming debilitated or avoidant.

(A person is confronted with an anxiety-producing situation which leads to an uncomfortable sense of worry and agitation.)



(The anxiety-producing situation is avoided, and the person receives a feeling of relief. However, next time the anxiety will be worse.)

Sound familiar?



The fight or flight response is an automatic response that gets the body ready to fight or run away.

Have you experienced any of these?

Thoughts racing
helps us to evaluate threat quickly and make rapid decisions, can be hard to focus on anything but the feeling of danger

Changes to vision
tunnel vision, or vision becoming 'sharper'

Dry mouth

Heart beats faster
feeds more blood to the muscles and enhances ability to fight or run away

Hands get cold
blood vessels in the skin contract to force blood towards major muscle groups

Muscles tense
ready to fight or run away they may also shake or tremble

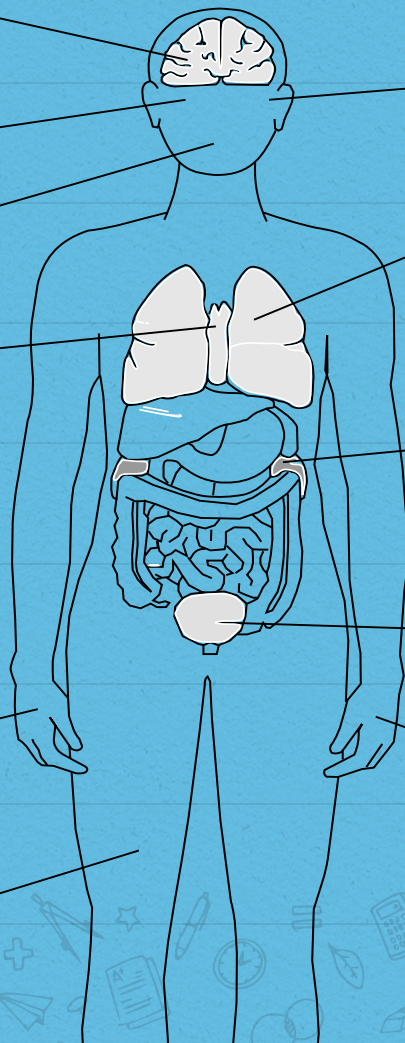
Dizzy or lightheaded

Breathing becomes quicker and shallower
to take in more oxygen and make our body more able to fight or run away

Adrenal glands release adrenaline
adrenaline signals other organs to get ready

Bladder urgency
muscles in the bladder relax in response to stress

Palms become sweaty
the body sweats to keep cool, this makes it a more efficient machine



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

Explores the interactions between:

- x A situation
- x Thoughts
- x Emotions
- x Physical sensations
- x Behaviors

Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?*)

Physical (*When anxious, what physical sensations did you experience? What did you notice in your body?*)

Emotional (*What emotions came up for you when you felt anxious?*)

Cognitive (*What went through your mind when you felt anxious? What did that say or mean about you or the situation?*)

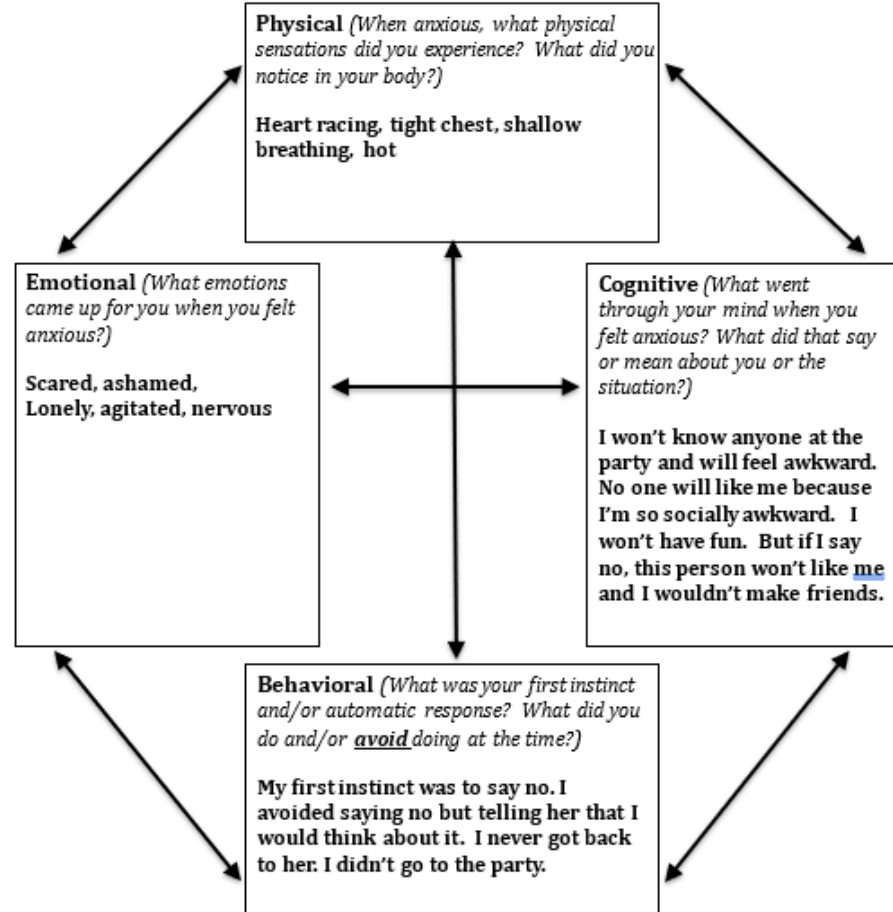
Behavioral (*What was your first instinct and/or automatic response? What did you do and/or avoid doing at the time?*)



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

The cross sectional formulation helps us to write down our reactions to the situation...

- x Thoughts
- x Emotions
- x Physical sensations
- x Behaviors



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

Explores the interactions between:

x A situation

Now, let's try walking through a situation that has recently caused you anxiety...

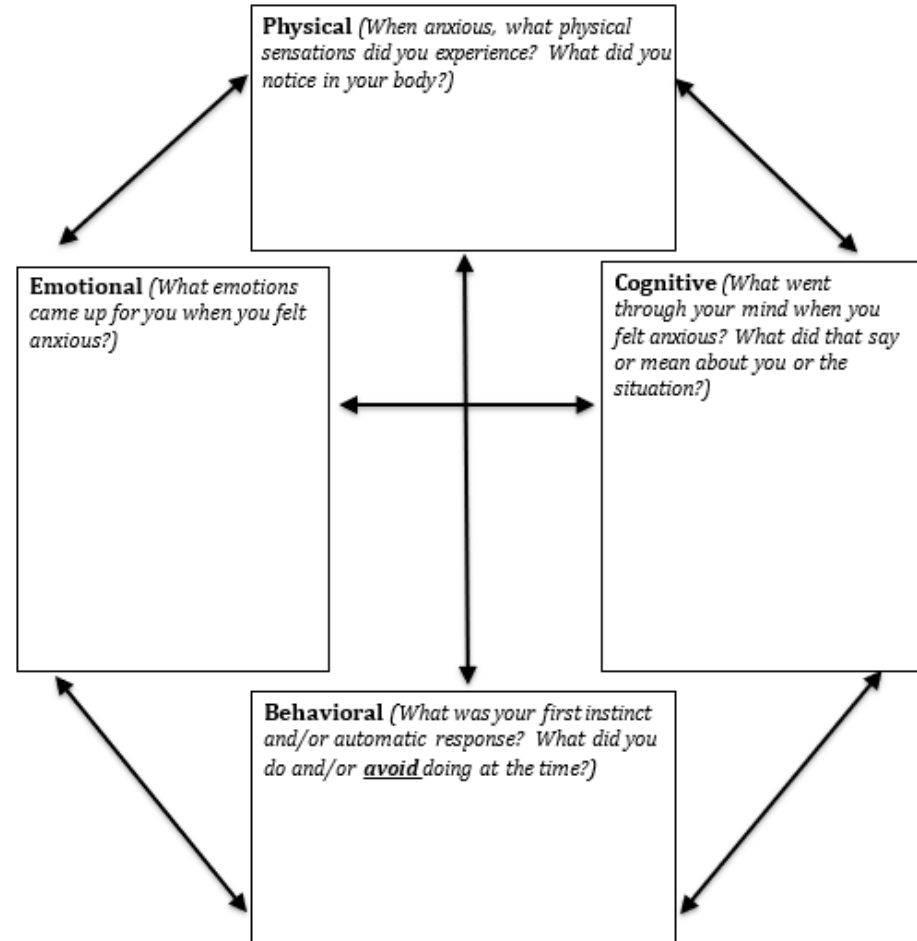
Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

Now let's put ourselves back in that situation and write down the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical sensations that we were feeling in that situation...

- x Thoughts
- x Emotions
- x Physical sensations
- x Behaviors



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

- x Were you able to identify a specific anxiety provoking situation and corresponding anxiety responses?
- x *Okay!* Congrats on your first Cross Sectional Formulation!
- x We'll be asking you to continue to practice these so it gets easier to identify anxiety provoking situations and your responses.



WRAP-UP ANXIETY 101

- x To wrap up, let's talk about sleep.
- x Good sleep, along with physical activity and attending to your personal nutritional needs, are the foundation of basic physical and mental health.
- x Without this foundation, you may find you're more vulnerable to anxiety symptoms.



LET'S TALK ABOUT SLEEP...

- X Lots of important things happen while you sleep.
- X Research shows that your brain is forming pathways necessary for learning!
- X Lack of Sleep impacts mood, energy, memory, grades, ability to focus and ability to concentrate.
- X It's common for people to stay up late, pull all-nighters, "catch up" on sleep later, take naps, etc... **Does this sound familiar to anyone?**
- X Important: We **need 7 to 8 hours of sleep consistently EVERY night!**



SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS

Get Regular

Go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off!



Get up & try again.

Go to sleep only when tired. If you haven't been able to fall asleep after 30 minutes, get up and do something calming, then return to bed and try again.

Bed is for sleeping.

Do not try to use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex, so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep.

Avoid Alcohol

Avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before bed because it interrupts the quality of sleep

The right space.

Make your bed and bedroom quiet and comfortable for sleeping. An eye mask and earplugs may help block out light and noise.

Avoid caffeine & nicotine

Avoid consuming any caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, chocolate) or nicotine (cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These act as stimulants and interfere with falling asleep



SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS

Electronics Curfew

Don't use back-lit electronics 60 minutes prior to bed, as the artificial light prevents hormones and neurons that promote sleep



No clock-watching.

Checking the clock during the night can wake you up and reinforces negative thoughts such as “Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep.”

Keep same daytime routine

Even if you have a bad night sleep it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.

Sleep rituals

Develop rituals to remind your body that it is time to sleep, like relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed



No naps

Avoid taking naps during the day. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm.



PRACTICE

Homework 1: Complete at least 1 Simple Cross Sectional Formulation worksheet

Homework 2: Implement 1 Sleep Hygiene Tip

CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

Explores the interactions between:

x A situation

Now, let's try walking through a situation that has recently caused you anxiety...

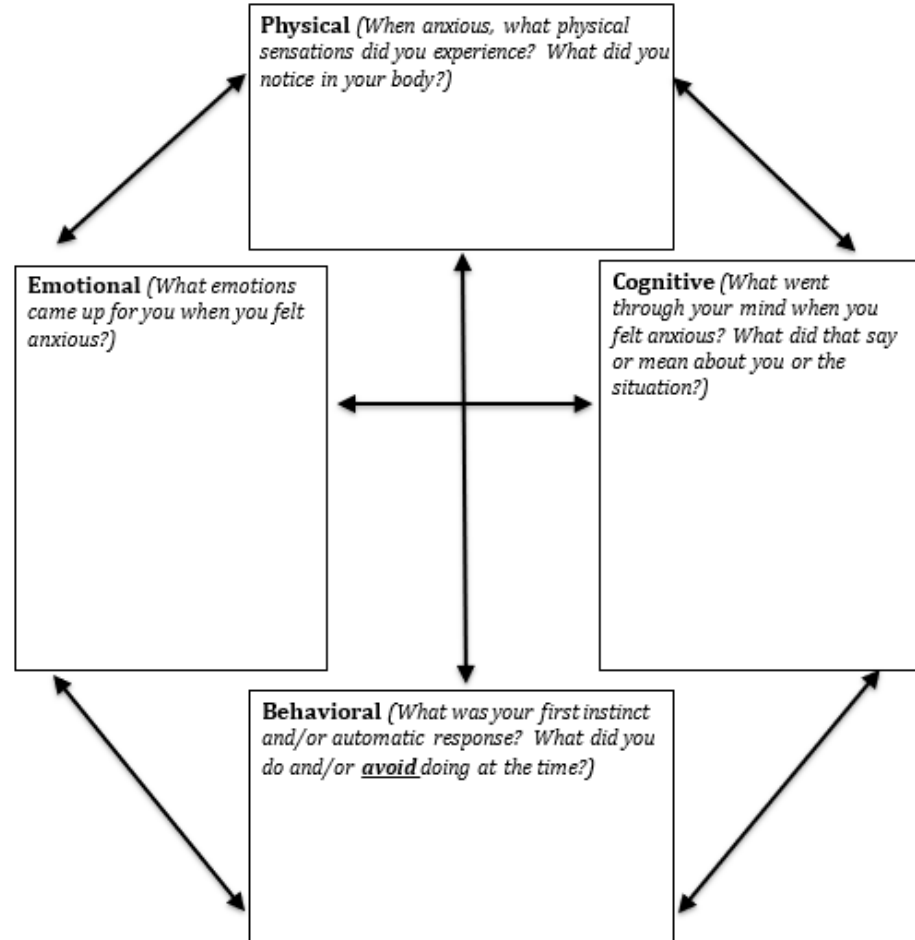
Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*

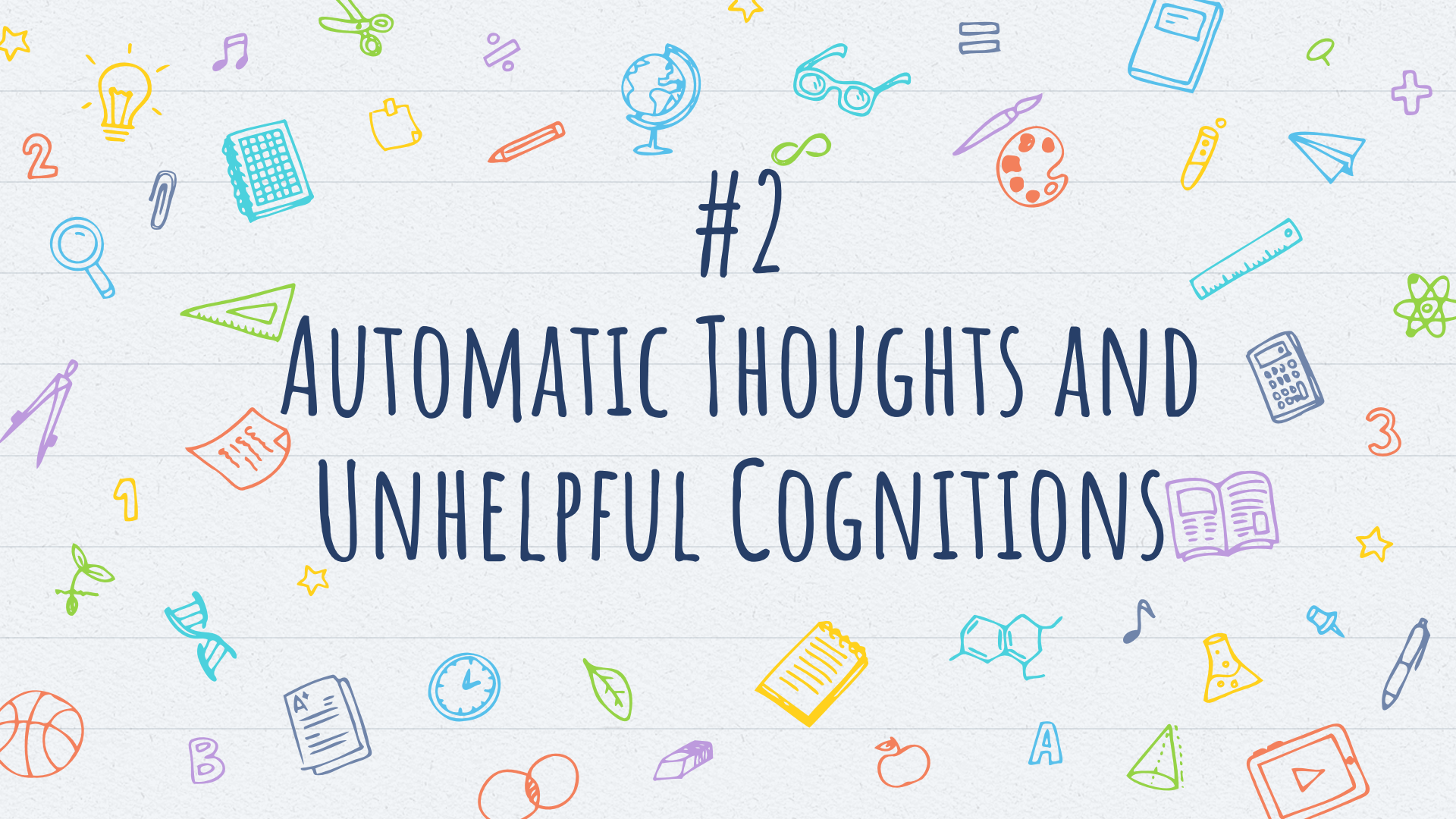


CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

Now let's put ourselves back in that situation and write down the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical sensations that we were feeling in that situation...

- x Thoughts
- x Emotions
- x Physical sensations
- x Behaviors





#2

AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS AND UNHELPFUL COGNITIONS



Automatic Thoughts YouTube Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2zRA5zCA6M>

ANXIETY TRIGGERS

- x Triggers can be external events (e.g., a test) or internal stimuli (e.g., a physical sensation or emotion) that led to anxiety
- x It may be difficult to identify a trigger, understanding your triggers for anxiety is an important step in helping you know when to practice the coping strategies you will learn in Anxiety Toolbox.



ANXIETY TRIGGERS

External Events (e.g., a test)

Responses to External Stimuli:

- X **Presence of Others:** attending a social event or meeting with a professor
- X **Physical Setting:** a classroom or an area on campus
- X **Social Pressure:** feeling pressured to make friends or perform well in school (in comparison to your peers)
- X **Activities:** e.g., a sports event or a party

Internal Stimuli (e.g., a physical sensation or emotion)

Responses to Internal Stimuli:

- X **Emotions:** feeling down, fear or worry
- X **Mental Images:** replaying interpersonal interactions or performance experiences
- X **Physical State:** racing heartbeat, lightheadedness, tightness in chest
- X **Thoughts:** “I might fail this test” or “That person must not like me”



PRACTICE

- x **Homework 1:** Write down your Anxiety Triggers
- x **Homework 2:** Let's do another Cross Sectional Formulation worksheet!

LIST YOUR ANXIETY TRIGGERS:

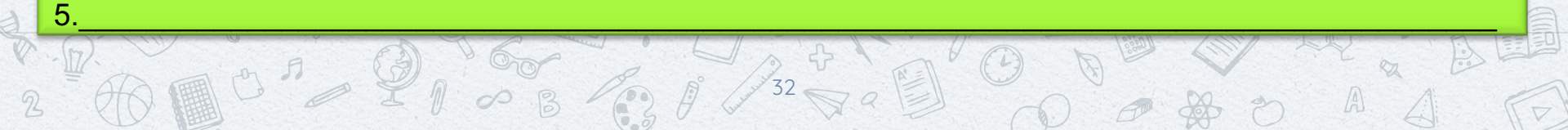
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

Explores the interactions between:

x A situation

Now, let's try walking through a situation that has recently caused you anxiety...

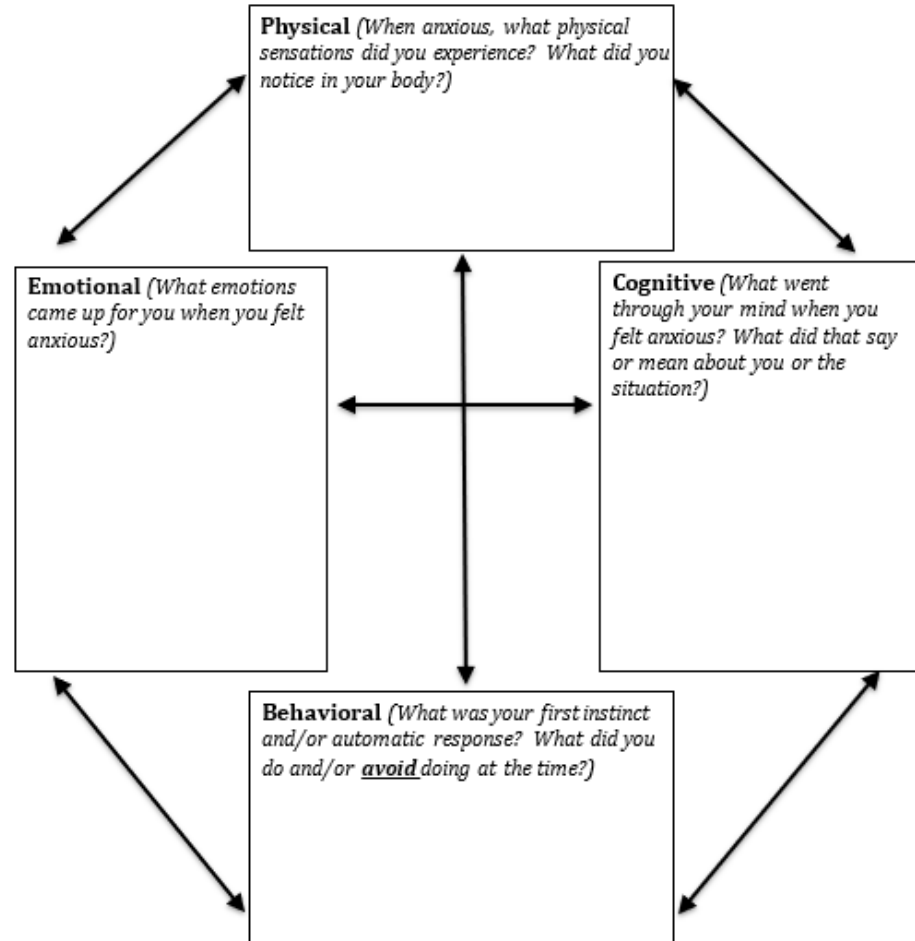
Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)*



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION

Now let's put ourselves back in that situation and write down the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical sensations that we were feeling in that situation...

- x Thoughts
- x Emotions
- x Physical sensations
- x Behaviors



#3

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES,
GROUNDING, AND SELF-CARE
- PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

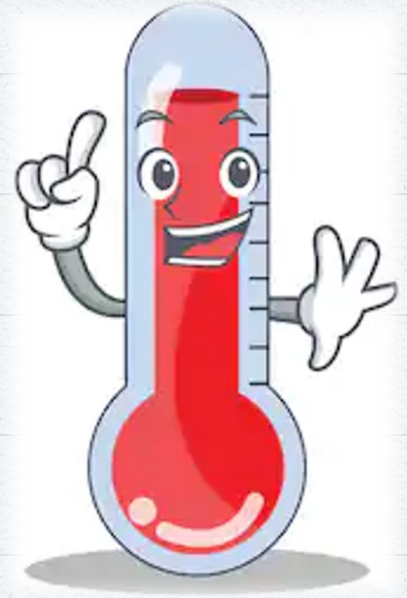
Now, let's take
a minute to
practice some
deep
breathing by
clicking on the
video to the
right.



One Minute Breathing YouTube Video Link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0FZIT3Uk30>

THERMOMETER READER

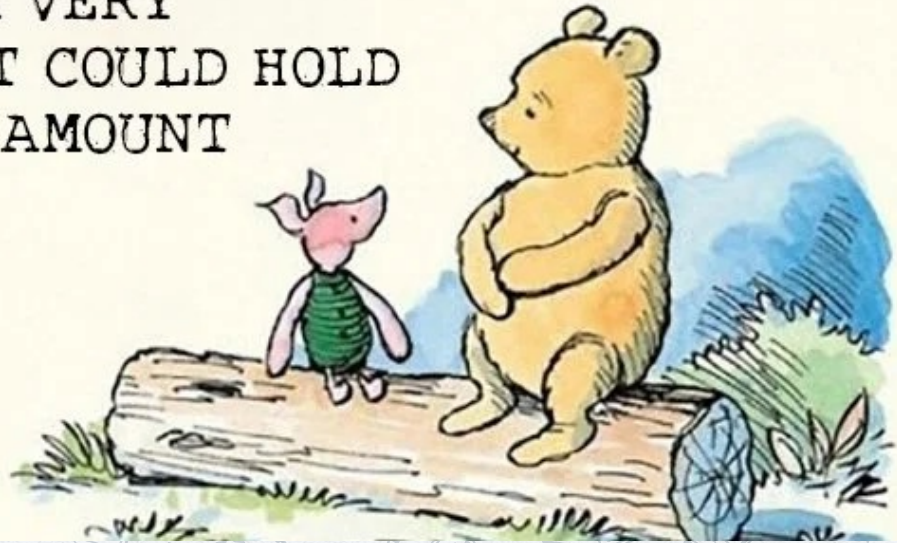
- x Okay. Now, let's take a new thermometer reading.
- x Please rate your current level of anxiety on the scale from 1 (very low to none) to 10 (most severe). ***Did you notice a shift in your number?***



NOW, LET'S SAY ONE THING YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR TODAY.

PIGLET **NOTICED** THAT EVEN
THOUGH HE HAD A VERY
SMALL HEART, IT COULD HOLD
A RATHER LARGE AMOUNT
OF **GRATITUDE**.

A. A MILNE



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION AND ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES

- X Looking back on the last anxiety provoking situation and corresponding anxiety responses, we can now talk about alternative responses.
- X Now stop, pay attention to **what is going on in your mind and body** and then **be intentional** about what happens next.
- X What we want to do here is **slow down** so that you don't get caught up in the anxiety and you feel more in control. The **ultimate goal** is for the “stop and pay attention” mantra to become second nature so that you use it before experiencing anxiety. That is going to take time and lots of practice.



CROSS SECTIONAL FORMULATION AND ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES

- x To better understand this “stop and pay attention” mantra, let’s work through an **example of alternative responses** to anxiety.
- x I want to highlight that when we are doing alternative responses we are **not saying “just think positive”**, it’s not that simple!
- x What we are saying is, let’s look at the situation from a **broader perspective.**



EXAMPLE OF ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES

Situation: (When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?)

A student invited me to a party in my residence hall, but I didn't know her very well and felt anxious about going.

Alternative Thoughts and Images: (Are these thoughts helpful? Are the anxious thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)

I may not be as socially awkward as I think.

If she invited me, she probably wants me there.

I might still have an okay time even if I am anxious

Alternative Behaviors: (What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- Deep breathing
- Distract myself
- Seek support from a friend/family member
- Do a pleasurable activity
- Use alternative response worksheet

Alternative Feelings: (What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)

Excited

Wanted

Liked

Hopeful

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES: HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO AN ANXIOUS SITUATION?

Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel anxious about?*)

Alternative Thoughts and Images: (*Are these thoughts helpful? Are the anxious thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?*)

Alternative Behaviors: (*What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?*)

Alternative Feelings: (*What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?*)

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- Deep breathing
- Distract myself
- Seek support from a friend/family member
- Do a pleasurable activity
- Use alternative response worksheet

So we've spent time looking at alternative responses. Now let's shift into other strategies you can add to your toolbox:

GROUNDING AND SELF-CARE

GROUNDING

- x Let's start with a technique called "grounding", which is used to pause, re-focus, get unstuck, and come back to the moment
- x It's a sensory experience that you can use anywhere, anytime. Let's practice one together.

Grounding Exercise

*For use during a panic attack,
when you need to stay calm,
or anytime you feel "disconnected" from your body.*

Look around you. Identify + name:

5 things you **see**

4 things you **feel**

3 things you **hear**

2 things you **smell**

1 thing you **taste**



GROUNDING EXERCISES

***You may need to try multiple exercises to find one or two that work best for you.**

Take 10 breaths.

Focus your attention on each breath on the way out. Say the number of the breath

Water.

Splash water on your face or place a cool wet cloth on your face.

Remind you who you are now.

State your name, age and where you are right now.



Sitting.

While sitting, feel the chair under you and the weight of your body and legs pressing down on it.

Grounding Object.

Find an object to hold, look at, listen, or smell. Such as a stuffed animal, stone from the beach, or any other object that represents safety or comfort.

Listen to music.

Pay close attention and listen for something new or different.



SELF-CARE



Practice self-compassion.
Be kind to yourself. Try to limit and correct your self-judgments.



Make time for yourself.
Allow time for rest. Pay attention to when your self-care battery is running low—and take the time to recharge.



Set manageable goals for yourself. Write goals down—they will lead to bigger accomplishments in the end.



Notice the moments of joy in your day—no matter how big or small.
When you take time to notice positive moments in your day, your experience of that day becomes better.

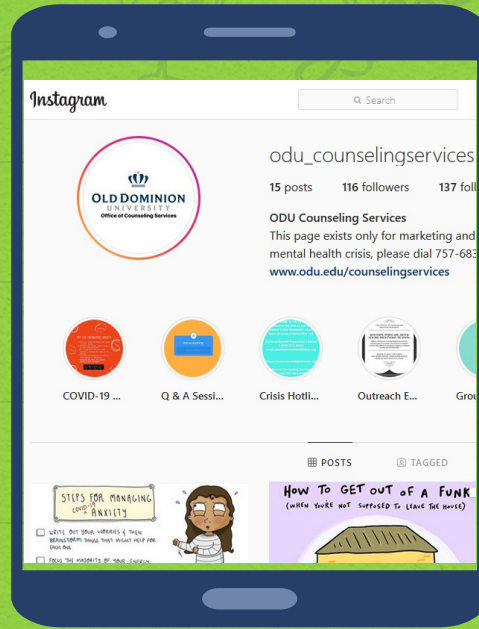


Gather strength from others & build a support system. Countless other people have faced similar stresses or challenges. Reach out to friends, family, or a therapist.

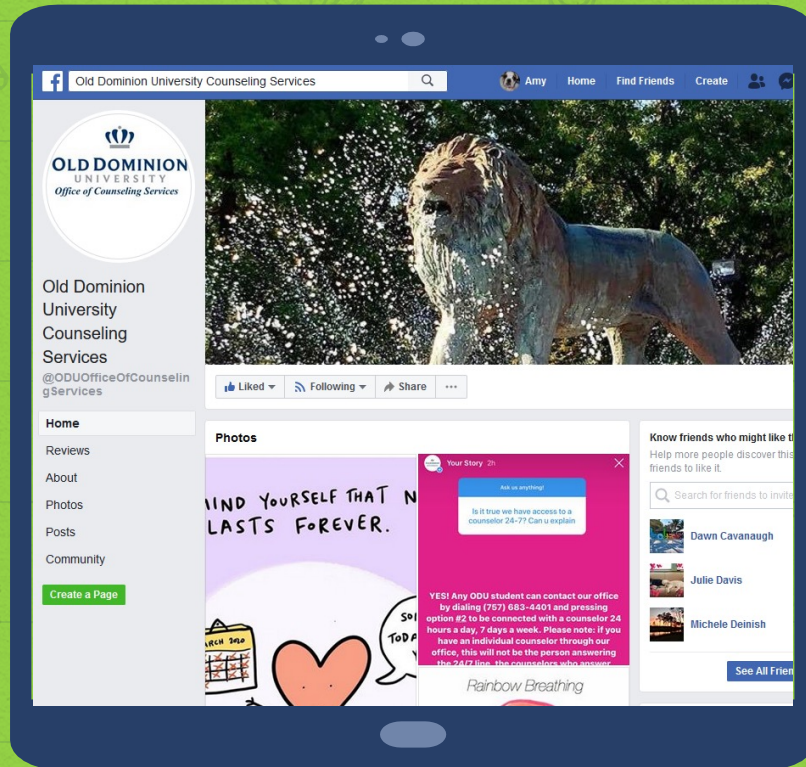
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: MY PLAN FOR MANAGING ANXIETY

- X Use Cross sectional formulation to note my symptoms
- X Positive Changes I can make to my sleep:_____
- _____
- X Common Anxiety Triggers:_____
- X Common Alternative Responses for me:_____
- _____
- X Grounding and Self-Care:_____
- X When I feel overwhelmed, it is helpful for me to:_____





JOIN US ON INSTAGRAM



JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

ONLINE RESOURCES

Mayo Clinic Stress Reduction Website

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mindfulness-exercises/MY02124>

Meditation Oasis www.meditationoasis.com

Mindful www.mindful.org

Mindfulness Research Guide <http://www.mindfulexperience.org/>

UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center- Guided Meditations

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>



APPS FOR YOUR SMARTPHONE, TABLET, OR COMPUTER

ACT Coach

Breathe2relax

Breathing techniques by Hemalayaa

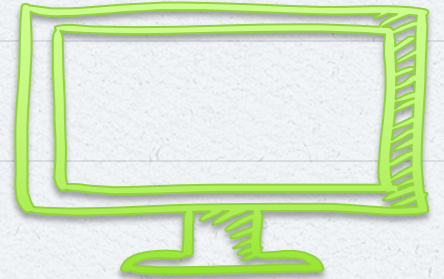
CBTi-Coach

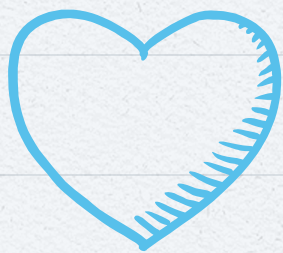
Mindfulness Coach

Mindshift

T2 Mood Tracker

Take a break!





THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Any questions?

You can call Counseling Services at 757-683-4401