

Activity Sheet: Overthinking

Thought challenging is a simple yet powerful tool for reducing anxiety.

Unhelpful thinking patterns can occur when your mind fixates on threat, uncertainty and negativity. Thought challenging is a simple but powerful cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) technique that helps to broaden your focus to include the bigger picture.

Here are two thought challenging techniques you can try to see what works best for you.

1. ABCDE

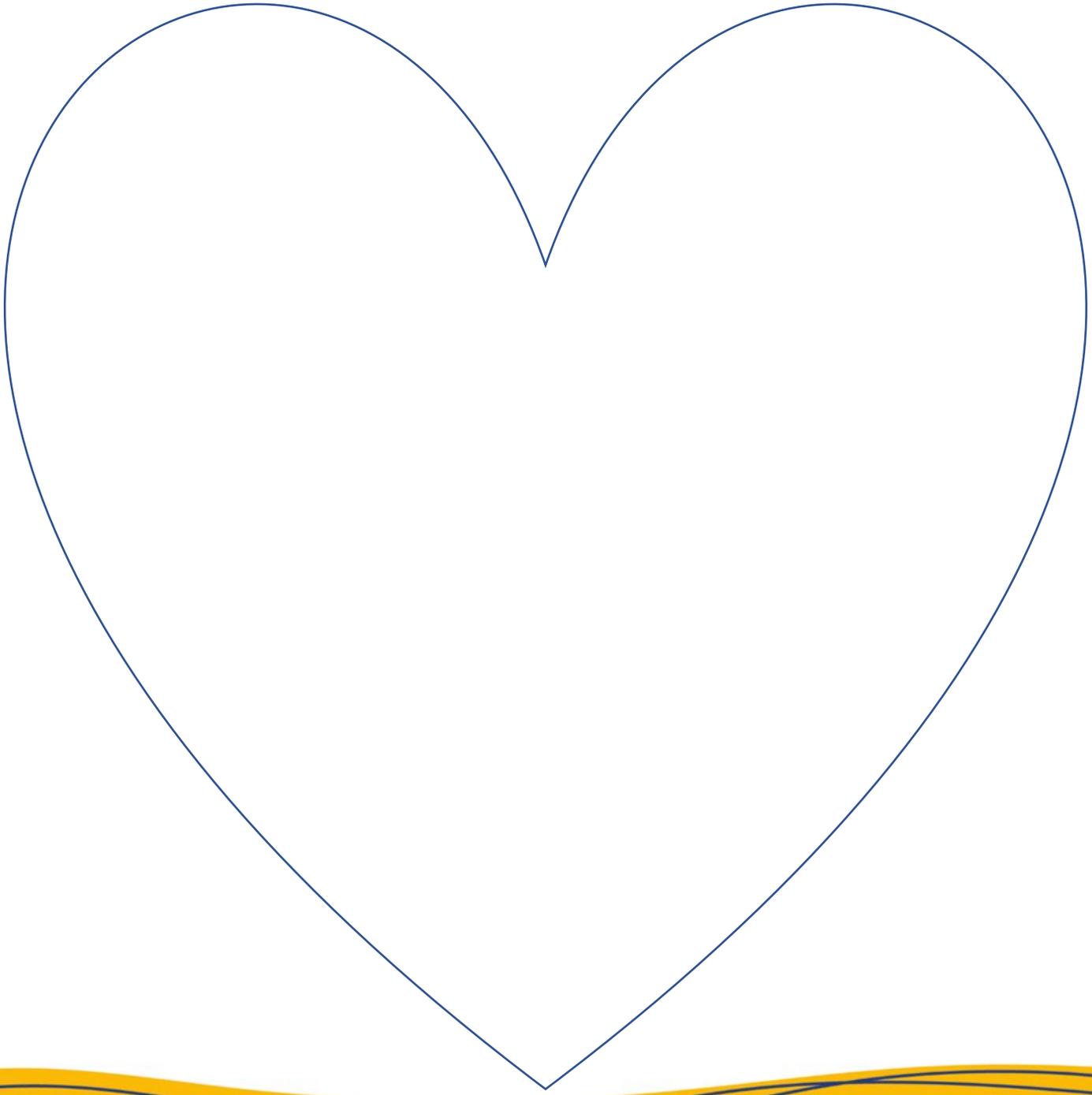
- **Attention** – When you feel distressed, stop what you're doing and pay attention to your inner dialogue. What is your mind telling you?
- **Believe?** – Do not automatically believe your thoughts!
- **Challenge** – Defuse anxiety by broadening your focus. What's the bigger picture? Is the thought fact or opinion? What might you think if you were feeling calmer?
- **Discount** – Acknowledge that anxiety has been dominating your thinking and let the unhelpful thoughts go.
- **Explore options** – What would be helpful to focus on right now? What options do I have available?

2. THINK

- **Technique True?** – Is this thought 100% true? If not, what are the facts, and what is opinion?
- **Helpful?** – Is paying attention to the thought useful to me or others?
- **Inspiring?** – Does the thought inspire me or does it have the opposite effect?
- **Necessary?** – Is it important for me to focus on the thought? Is it necessary to act on it?
- **Kind?** – Is the thought kind? If not, what would be a kinder thought?

Activity sheet: Kindness

Writing down our strengths is something we can do to be kind to ourselves. Jot down on the heart your strengths, the things that you are good at. If you are unsure ask a friend to help you by telling you what they see as your strengths. Stick them up somewhere you can read them to encourage you.

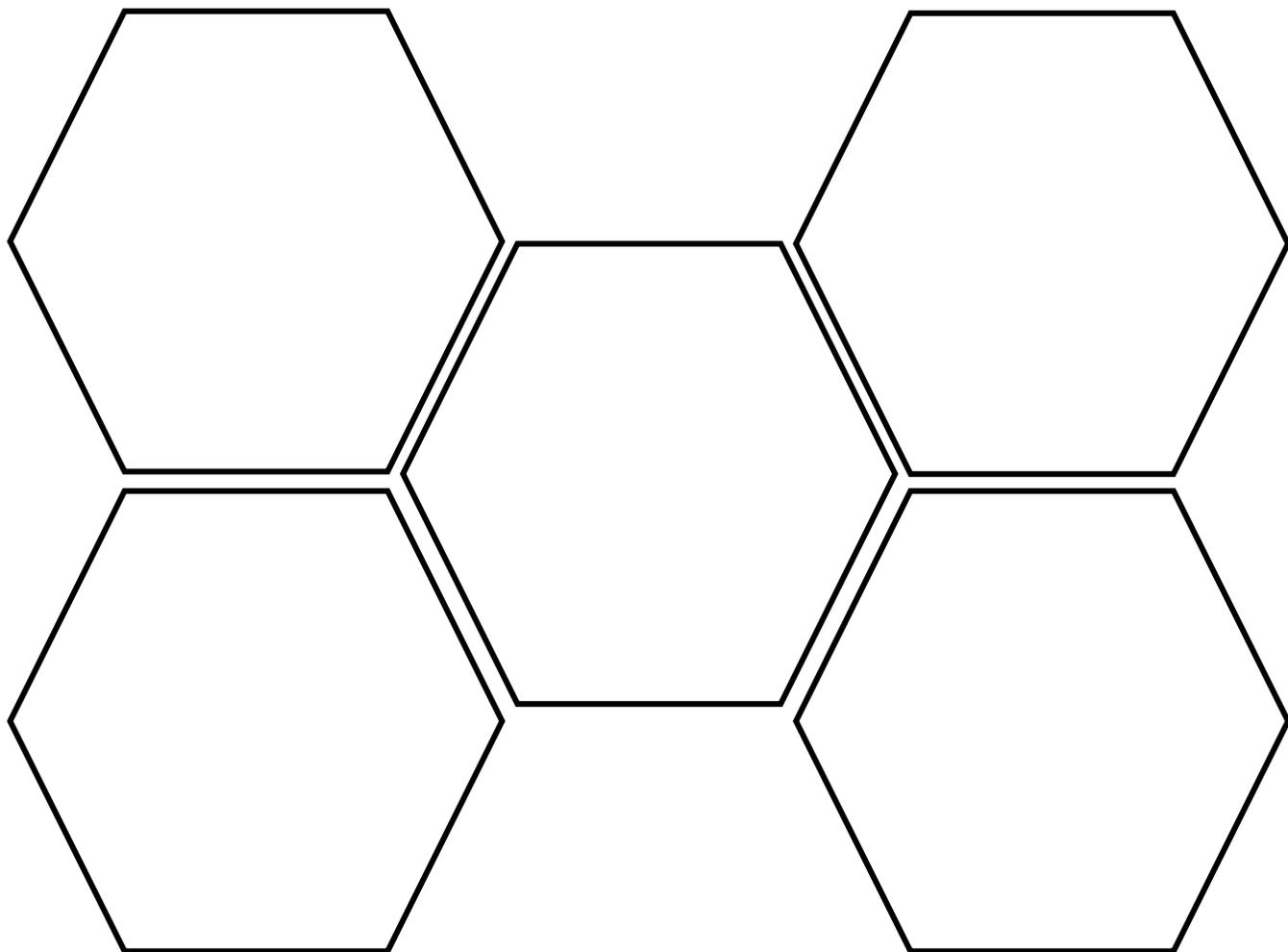


Activity Sheet: Working from home

Think about the tips we've shared about working from home.

Is there anything you could add to your working day or things you could improve to help your wellbeing (and your productivity!)?

Jot down your top 5 below and start by doing one of these from today and build over time. Keep your list nearby to remind you!



Activity sheet: Grounding

Grounding techniques can help you feel more in control. They're especially useful if you experience dissociation during panic attacks.

The following techniques can keep you connected to the present and help you avoid feelings, memories, flashbacks or intrusive thoughts that you don't feel able to cope with yet.

Mindful activities:

- breathing slowly
- listening to sounds around you
- walking barefoot
- wrapping yourself in a blanket and feeling it around you
- touching something or sniffing something with a strong smell.

5 to 1 grounding :

- Think of 5 things you can see right now
- 4 things you can hear right now
- 3 things you can touch, and reach out and touch them, right now
- 2 things you can smell or like the smell of
- 1 slow, deep breath.
- Then focus on your breathing, before shifting your focus of attention onto something different.

Focus on the sensations you are feeling right now. You might find it helpful to keep a box of things with different textures and smells (for example perfume, a blanket and some smooth stones) ready for when you need it.

What helpful things can you put in your box?



Activity Sheet: Relaxation

How to use relaxation exercises:

You can use relaxation techniques regularly, or every once in a while – whatever feels right for you.

Try and make some time in your day to try these exercises. Don't treat relaxing like a task that needs to be completed – try to think of it as giving yourself some time and space.

Find somewhere quiet and comfortable where you won't be interrupted, if you can.

Try to make sure your surroundings are the right temperature – it can be hard to relax if you're too hot or cold.

What do I need?

You will need:

- somewhere comfortable to sit or lie down
- space where you won't be interrupted

What do I do?

- Lie down or sit with your back straight and your feet on the floor. Close your eyes or focus on a spot in the distance.
- Start by clenching your toes as much as you can for a few seconds then releasing them. Notice the difference between the two feelings.
- Match this to your breathing. Tense your muscle as you take a deep breath in, and relax as you breathe out.
- Move up your body to your thighs, your stomach and all the way to your shoulders and hands, clenching and relaxing each muscle in turn. Take time to notice any parts of your body that feel tense, tight or tired. You can repeat if you still feel tense.
- Take a moment to relax, then slowly and gently begin to move. When you feel ready, you can stand up slowly.

Activity Sheet: Relaxation

Draw calming circles

Colour, creativity and movement can help you feel relaxed by:

- distracting you from worrying thoughts
- giving you an outlet and focus for your emotions
- stimulating your senses.

What do I need?

You will need:

- a table or desk
- blank paper
- crayons, coloured pencils or pens
- sticky tape or masking tape to hold your paper down (optional)

What do I do?

1. Make sure you are sitting comfortably with your feet firmly on the floor, your back straight and your shoulders relaxed.
2. Take your paper and crayon, and draw a circle that fills most of the page – don't worry if it's a bit wonky!
3. Now keep drawing. You could keep going over the circle, or fill it with a pattern, but try not to let your crayon leave the page. Don't worry about creating a finished picture, just keep going.
4. Take time to focus on what you're drawing. Focusing on these sensations can help you quieten your mind.
5. Once you have done this for a few minutes, try using a different colour or pattern.

Activity Sheet: Mindfulness Exercises

Mindfulness is a technique you can learn which involves making a special effort to notice what's happening in the present moment (in your mind, body and surroundings) – without judging anything.

Here are a few exercises you could try. You don't need any special equipment:

Mindful eating. This involves paying attention to the taste, sight and textures of what you eat. For example, when drinking a cup of tea or coffee you could focus on how hot and liquid it feels on your tongue, how sweet it tastes or watch the steam that it gives off.

Mindful moving, walking or running. Notice the feeling of your body moving. You might notice the breeze against your skin, the feeling of your feet or hands against different textures on the ground or nearby surfaces, and the different smells that are around you.

Body scan. This is where you move your attention slowly through different parts of the body, starting from the top of your head moving all the way down to the end of your toes. You could focus on feelings of warmth, tension, tingling or relaxation of different parts of your body.

Mindful colouring and drawing. Focus on the colours and the sensation of your pencil against the paper, rather than trying to draw something in particular. You could use a mindfulness colouring book or download mindfulness colouring images.

Mindful meditation. This involves sitting quietly and focusing on your breathing, your thoughts, sensations in your body and the things you can hear around you. Try to bring your focus back to the present if your mind starts to wander. Many people also find that yoga helps them to concentrate on their breathing and focus on the present moment.