



Anger



Latimer Wellbeing

Symptoms of anger:

Feelings

Furious / Raging

Tense

Irritable

Stressed

Physical symptoms

Chest feels tight

Tense muscles

Feel hot

Sweating

Light headed

Heart races

Raised blood pressure

Thoughts

I've been made a fool of

Everything is ruined

I have to do something about this

This is so unfair

They deserve it

I've been let down

Behaviour patterns

Easily irritated

Arguing

Say hurtful things

Shouting and swearing

Physical violence towards things or people

Storming out of a situation

Causes of anger:

Life events:

There may be certain situations which are more likely to trigger an angry reaction. Being exposed to a particular scenario or environment might put you on high alert. For example, some people find that they are much more likely to become angry whilst driving or during a game of football.

Thinking styles:

Our interpretation and thoughts about a situation can result in an angry outburst. Especially how we perceive the intentions of other people and the potential consequences to ourselves.

Situations in which we feel wronged in some way can be particularly difficult. Also where an injustice has been done that we feel is unacceptable.

Our understanding of anger may also influence our reaction. Our beliefs about anger can change the way that we express or control our anger. For example, if we consider that anger must be expressed and not 'bottled up'. We may not have considered making attempts to manage

Behavioural explanations:

You might find it difficult to sit with and tolerate frustration. This may be due to your social experiences.

what you have come to consider as being normal and acceptable behaviour.

There may not have been opportunities to learn effective ways of managing and expressing emotions. A pattern of angry behaviour can



Fuelling anger: What fuels anger?

Contextual anger:

There may be noticeable patterns before and after an anger episode. It may be working with groups, lacking control or in a specific subject.

This is contextual anxiety: there's an association between the situation and the feeling. This may be difficult to break, but through conditioning, it's possible.

Cost-benefit:

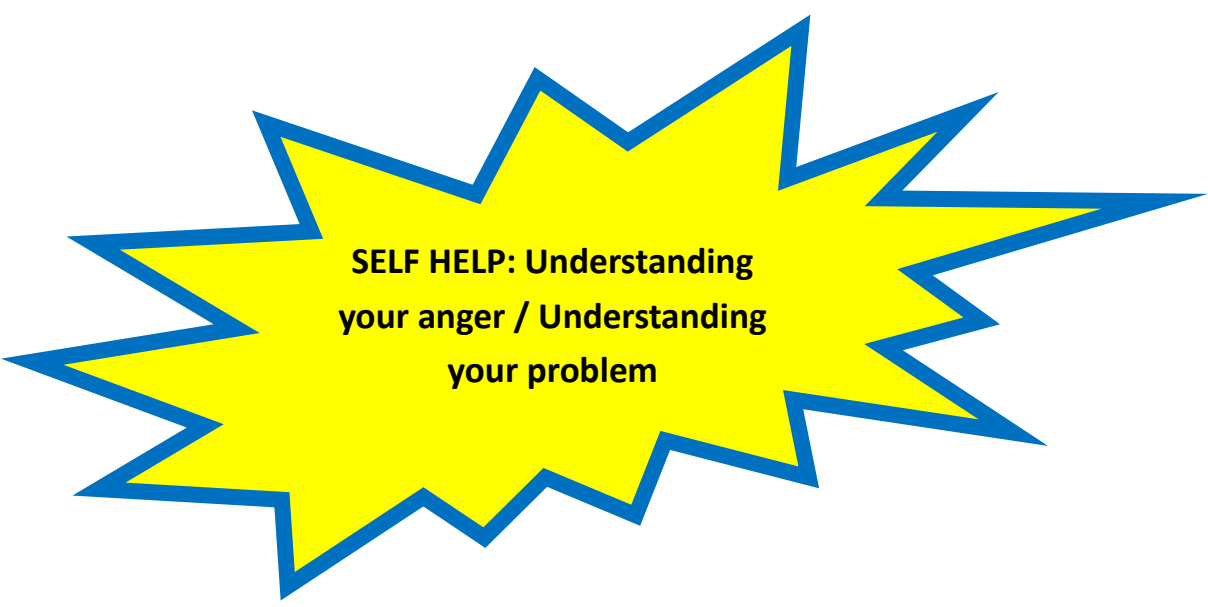
Many people have the knowledge that anger can help them to achieve short-term gains, such as: getting your own way.

However, there can be long-term costs such as damaged relationships and personal safety risks.

It's great to encourage children to see how anger may triumph in the short-term, yet point out the damage it can cause in the long-term.

A holistic issue:

When trying to prevent anger issues, it's best to see the issue in a holistic manner involving: behaviour, thoughts, feelings and physical sensations. This cycle of issues work together to fuel the fire of anger.



**SELF HELP: Understanding
your anger / Understanding
your problem**

Understanding your anger: How have you been coping?

It's helpful to consider what coping strategies have been used (if any) to have a baseline understanding before support strategies are put in place.

Considering effective and ineffective strategies can be really useful.

Using a Likert scale can be useful. Here's a suggested one, but tailoring it to the child is recommended.

Do you avoid speaking to your close friends and family in case you become angry?



Do you become angry in the same situations each time?



Can you tell when you are becoming angry within your body?



Do you feel that anger helps you to achieve your goals?



Do you have any methods you use to stop yourself becoming angry?



Challenging unhelpful thoughts:

Thoughts generate feelings. The way we think about situations impacts directly on our levels of stress and our quality of mood. Thoughts aren't always within our own control, therefore they can't always be stopped, they can be negative and unhelpful, consequently it's how they're dealt with that's important.

Thoughts need to be viewed as just that. A thought—not a fact. They are NOT you, they are something produced by the brain and you have some control over this. Rule your thoughts, don't let the thoughts rule you. Thoughts should be challenged, especially those of an unhelpful or negative nature.

The next 'Self-help' sheets will support staff in helping others to recognise unhelpful and unrealistic thoughts/thought patterns. You will find suggestions of how to change this. The aim is to support a more realistic thought process which will in turn improve mood, and help management of angry feelings.

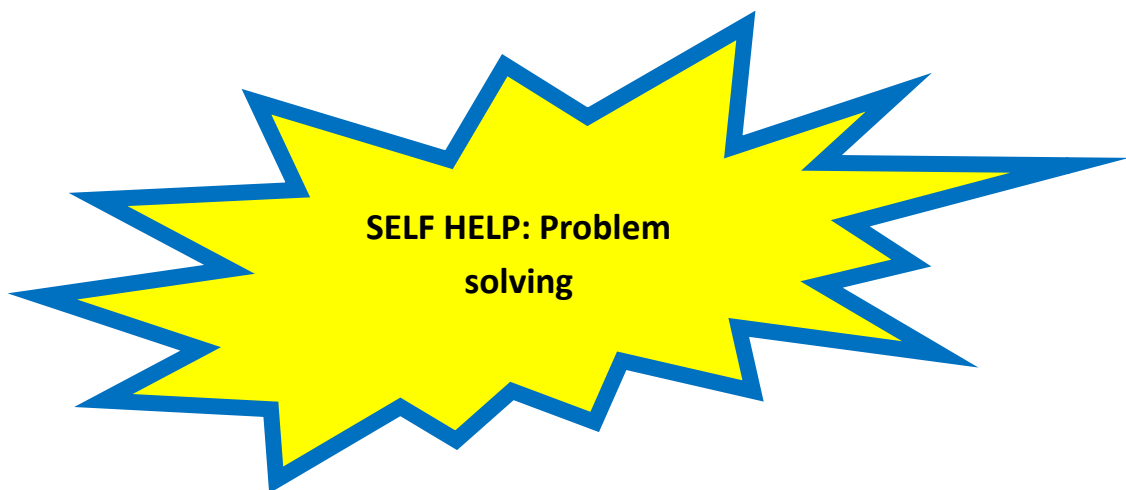


SELF HELP:

- **Unhelpful thoughts**
- **Patterns of unhelpful thinking**
- **Challenging unhelpful thoughts**
- **Identifying unhelpful**

How to reduce anxiety: How to stop fuelling anger

Identify the problem	Specifically identify the source of worry
Come up with possible solutions	List all the ways the problem can be solved—even if they are unrealistic. Think: how would you have previously solve it? How would you advise a friend to solve it?
Choose a solution	Go through the list, considering the pros and cons. Which is best? Remember: not all problems can be controlled
Break down the solution	Create small steps to help achieve the solution,
Try the solution and review the outcome	Pace is key. Keep it at a comfortable pace, don't rush. If the problem is solved—brilliant! If not,



Healthy lifestyles: Part 1

There is so much to be said for a healthy lifestyle, it can improve both stress levels and mood.

Factors included in this section can be used for both adults and children.

Some factors won't apply to children.

Focusing on positive changes can really boost motivation and improve mood.

Self-care is key.

Alcohol	Alcohol reduces the ability to deal with anxiety and stress. It can also impact on quality of sleep.
Drugs	Many drugs either sedate or stimulate, which can impact mood. Drugs can be used as a distraction from the actual problem. Consider if the problem is being solved or ignored.
Smoking	Nicotine acts as a stimulant, it also effects sleep. Despite the belief it can calm you, it actually stimulates.
Caffeine	Caffeine stimulates feelings of anxiety, causing 'on edge' feelings. Try to avoid caffeine at least 4 hours before bedtime.
Relation- ships/ social network	Communication is key. Use friends and family as a motivational tool. Talk through the problem and the solution. Explain how you're managing anger, they may learn something too!
Healthy eating	Food fuels our bodies, having a balanced, nutritious diet can help mood, sleep and physical health. Eat regular meals and stay hydrated.
Exercise	Encourage the endorphins! Exercise releases happy chemicals that have natural boost in the body. Try to do regular exercise to give yourself a natural mood boost!
Routine	Having set times helps our bodies to react and know what to expect, it can improve mood and lower stress. Your body know it's going to get what it needs.
Surroundings	Comfort, noise, temperature, light and tidiness can all impact on mood. These factors can impact on sleep and health. Take control of your situation to achieve a calmer surrounding.

Healthy lifestyles: Part 2

Communication	<p>Listen to others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Listen carefully to what others have to say. Don't get distracted. ⇒ Try to avoid assumptions and misunderstandings. You could do this by repeating back or paraphrasing what was said. Check whether you have understood correctly. ⇒ Don't jump to conclusions or try to mind-read. Ask questions if you are unsure. ⇒ Try to understand the meaning and emotions expressed by the other person. It can be helpful to know why they are saying something to you. <p>Expressing yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Think about what you mean to say before saying it. Also, consider what others might take from your comments. ⇒ Try to be as clear as possible. ⇒ Don't immediately get defensive or fight back. Try to understand more about what the other person feels and why they have said what they said. ⇒ Express your own emotions in an appropriate and considered way. Avoid using an angry or confrontational style. Otherwise this may cause the other person to react in fear, hurt or frustration.
Communication styles	<p>There are a range of communication styles that different people use at different times. Some are more effective and appropriate than others, depending upon the situation. The three most common are: passive, aggressive and assertive communication.</p> <p>Passive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ You prioritise the needs of others over your own. ⇒ You go along with what other people want to do. ⇒ You don't express or make known your own needs or desires. ⇒ You may find it difficult to say 'no' to someone. ⇒ You fear people in authority. ⇒ You cannot stand being criticised. <p>This style of communication can mean that you don't feel listened to by others. You might feel that you are walked over. If such a pattern builds up then people may not expect to hear your opinion. They can become used to ignoring you. You may end up accepting work or favours despite feeling that they may be unfair.</p> <p>Aggressive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ You prioritise your own needs above the needs of others. ⇒ You're always forcing your point through. ⇒ You can't stand not getting your own way. ⇒ You ignore other people and do not listen to their opinions and expressed needs. <p>This can be quite a confrontational style of communication which can lead to alienation. People may feel that they do not enjoy being with you because you do not take their opinions into consideration</p>

Healthy lifestyles: Part 3

Communication styles

Assertive:

- ⇒ You try to balance your own needs against the needs of others.
- ⇒ You take time to listen to other people's points of view.
- ⇒ Expressing a preference before negotiating in a polite and constructive fashion.
- ⇒ Believing that everyone should have an opportunity to express their needs.
- ⇒ You have respect for yourself and respect for other people.

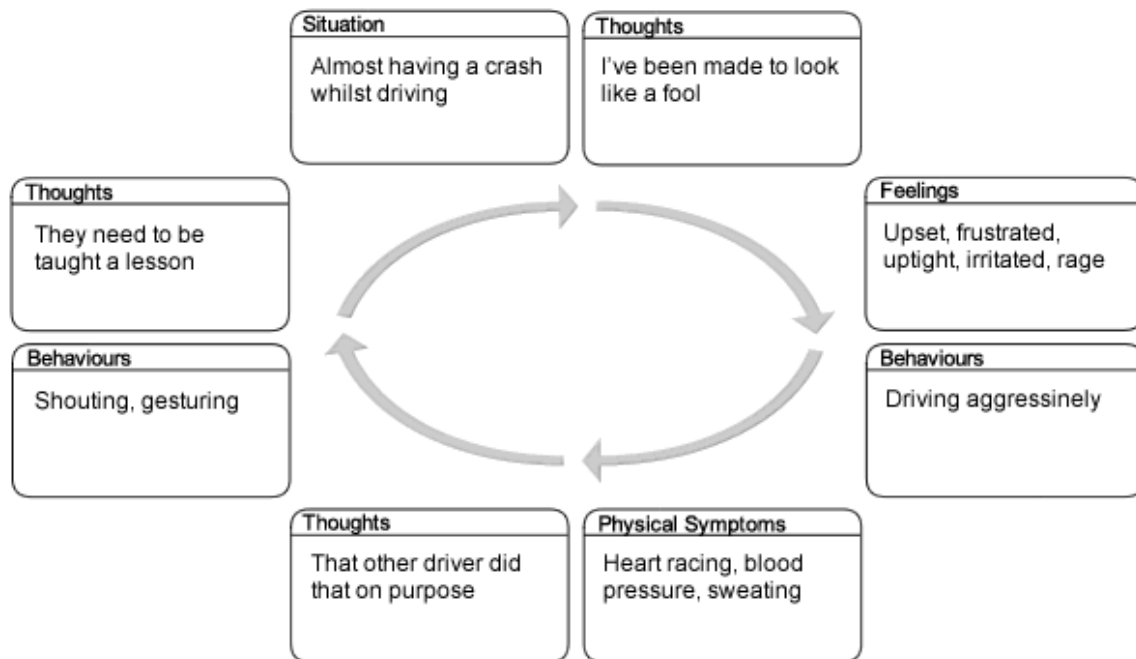
Being assertive involves being aware of your own needs. You can then express these with confidence. Your attitude and approach should be calm, confident and considerate.



Self help: Understanding your anger

Understanding your anger

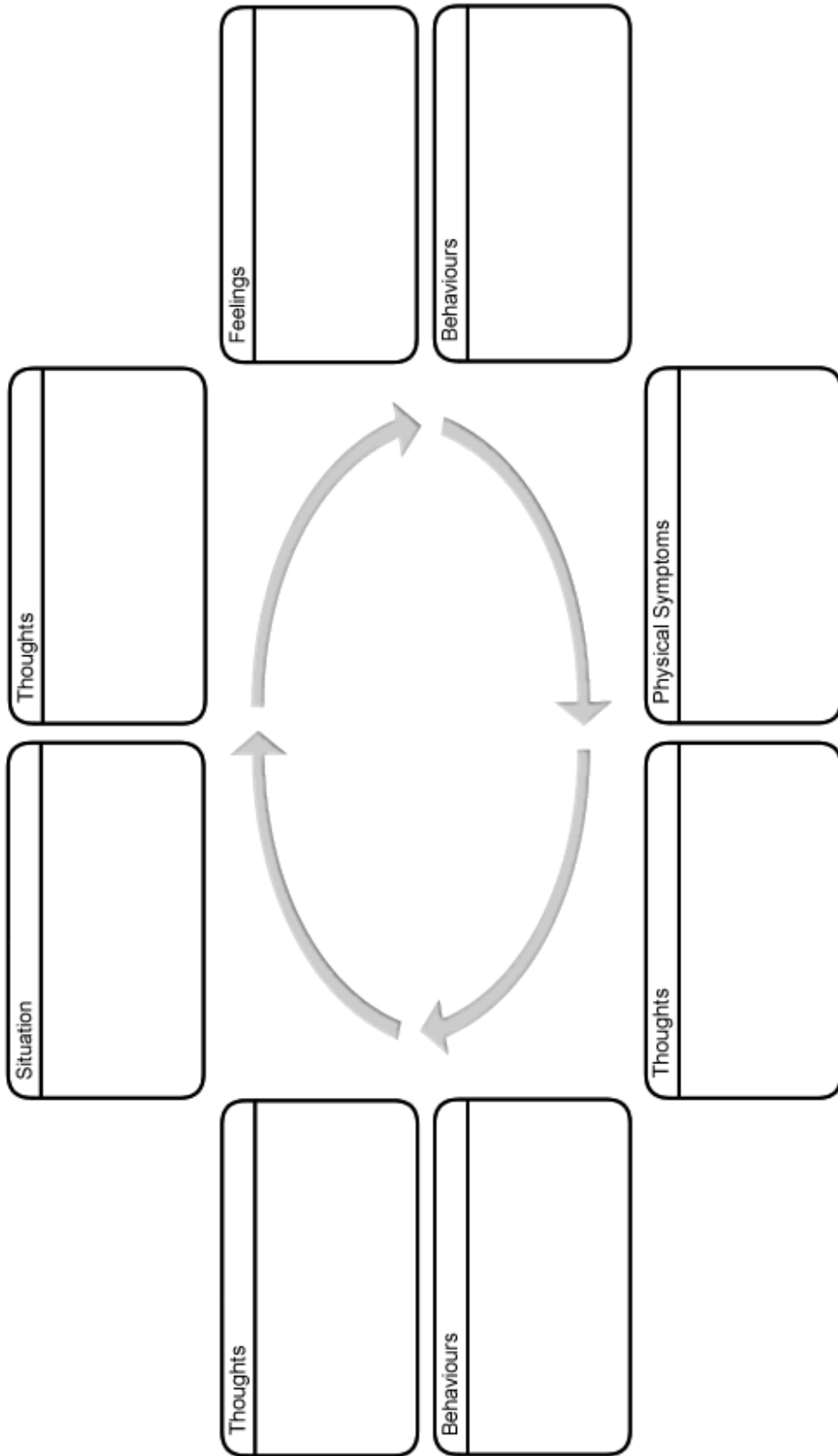
Have a look at some of the examples and try to fill in something of your experience. See if you can recognise a similar pattern occurring within yourself.



Self help: Understanding your problem

Understanding Your Problem

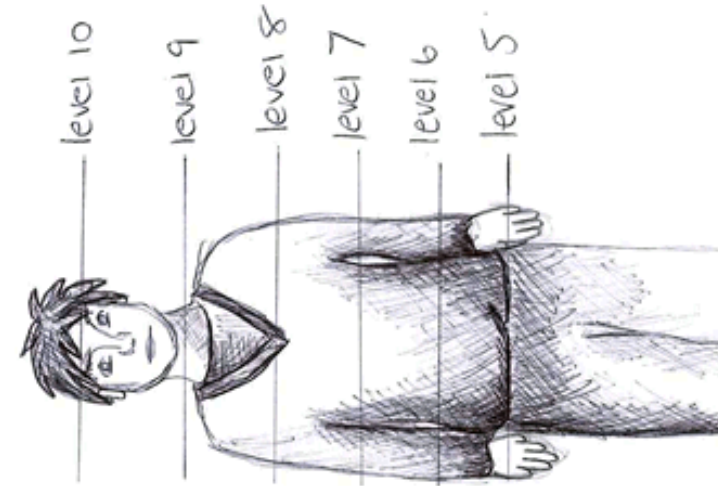
Try to fill in something of your own experience. You may begin to understand your difficulties a little better. Particularly what patterns may exist and how things interact.



Self help: Unhelpful thoughts

Below you will find example of unhelpful thoughts that can be used to format a lesson on digging deeper into thought processes.

This can be used as an example / a tool to show anger is an emotion everyone feels.



About Yourself / Your Actions and Thoughts:

- I am entitled to certain things
- I must stand up for myself
- I cannot tolerate frustration

About Others:

- Everyone's out to get me
- No one else is on my side
- Someone else is always to blame

About Anger:

- I have to express my frustration
- It's not good to hold back this strong emotion

clear to see how this kind of thinking might lead to you feeling more angry. Do you ever think in any of the ways outlined above? Fill in your examples below:

You might find it difficult to identify an unhelpful thought. Try thinking about a time when you felt angry. Consider what was running through your mind at that time.
Patterns of unhelpful thinking

Self help: Patterns of unhelpful thinking

(Part 1)

First you need to be able to recognise an unhelpful thought. Then you can challenge it. Being aware of the common patterns that unhelpful thoughts follow can help you to recognise when you have them. Here are some of the common patterns that our unhelpful thoughts follow:

What if?

Anxiety towards a situation can lead to anger, the fear of failure or ridicule is often the root of this thought. This worry leads to a lot of time ruminating—what if?

Unhelpful thoughts can catastrophise events, predicting what may go wrong, fuelling stress and the ‘on edge’ feeling. By thinking ‘what if’, things are blown out of proportion:

- ⇒ What if they laugh at me?
- ⇒ What if people laugh and I lose face?
- ⇒ What if people talk behind my back?

Jumping to conclusions:

When people are feeling emotionally vulnerable, it is likely that they take things to heart and become more sensitive to what people say.

They can often make assumptions about why someone said something, being overly quick to draw conclusions, and thinking that they are the focus of what has been said.

For example:

- ⇒ They did that on purpose to upset me.
- ⇒ They think I’m stupid.

Focusing on the negatives:

Often people can ignore the positive aspects of life or their situation.

Instead focusing on negative elements.

This style of thinking stops us feeling good about ourselves. It can lower your confidence.

For example:

- ⇒ I only got the certificate because I’m the last person in the class to get it.
- ⇒ I have been asked to do a special job at break time, but it’s only to stop my

Self help: Patterns of unhelpful thinking

(Part 2)

All or nothing:

Sometimes people only see things as black or white, with no grey area or in-between.

Having this polarised view can lead some people into setting themselves impossibly high standards, being overly critical and struggling to recognise any achievement due to their perfectionism.

- ⇒ Only 10/10 is worthy of happiness, anything less is not good enough.
- ⇒ They didn't say hello to me—they must hate me.
- ⇒ That didn't help me as much as I expected, what a waste of my time.

Over-generalising

Based on one isolated incident, there might be an assumption that other events will follow a similar pattern in the future.

It might be hard to see a negative event as a one-off.

This can also lead to labelling, often of an unkind manner, which can lower mood and confidence, perhaps even leading to feelings of hopelessness.

For example:

- ⇒ I only got 4/10 in my spelling, I'm so rubbish at English.
- ⇒ My teacher didn't say good morning, all my teachers have always hated me.
- ⇒ I didn't win, I'm useless.

Self help: Challenging unhelpful thoughts

Is there evidence that challenges my unhelpful thought?

- ⇒ Yes, we've never spoken before, that's why they didn't say 'Hi', not because they hate me. They are acting normally around me.
- ⇒ I've never met them, so maybe they're shy of me too, that's why they haven't spoken to me, not because they hate me.

Can you identify any of the patterns described below?

- ⇒ Yes, I keep thinking about 'what if?' and make up problems that don't exist.
- ⇒ Yes, I do always pick the negative events from a situation and neglect the positive ones.
- ⇒ Yes, I am 'all or nothing', I judge myself at extremes.
- ⇒ Yes, I jump to conclusions about how people feel when actually, I have no idea how they feel.
- ⇒ Yes, I do assume that if one situation hasn't worked positively for me, any like this will not either.

What would you say to a friend who was in a similar situation?

- ⇒ Consider the supporting advice you would give them, in future, be a friend to yourself.

What are the costs and benefits of me thinking this way?

- ⇒ Cost: I am likely to feel 'on edge' and worried, I will be suspicious of many people and uneasy in many situations.

How will you feel about this in 6 months time?

- ⇒ Will it matter? Will you still be upset? If not, it's not worth it!

Is there another way of looking at this situation?

- ⇒ Maybe they were just looking for a friend and thought I was them, they may not have been looking at me.

Self help: Patterns of unhelpful thinking

(Part 3)

Unhelpful Thought	Category
e.g. "I'm such a loser"	Labelling

Self help: Identifying unhelpful thoughts

(Par 1)

Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts

Whenever your mood changes, try to write down what you were doing, how you felt and what you were thinking at the time. You might find that patterns begin to emerge.

Situation	Feelings	Thoughts

Self help: Identifying unhelpful thoughts

(Par 2)

Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

Taking a particular unhelpful thought, see if you can test it.
Ask questions to test whether your belief has any real basis.

Unhelpful Thought



Challenges
Is there any evidence that contradicts this thought?
Can you identify any patterns of unhelpful thinking?
What would you say to a friend who had this thought in a similar situation?
What are the costs and benefits of thinking in this way?
Benefits:
Costs:
How will you feel about this in 6 months time?
Is there another way of looking at this situation?



Balanced Thought

Self help: Problem solving

Problem Solving

Identify a problem and try to come up with solutions to overcome it. By considering all of the options you will hopefully come up with the best solution.

Identify Your Problem



For	Against	



Chosen Solution

Steps Required										
	1									
	2									
	3									
	4									
	5									
	6									
	7									
	8									
	9									
	10									

Self help: Controlling breathing

Breathing focused:

Beginning:

Get into a comfortable position.

Middle:

Work out a stable breathing rhythm. Perhaps try to breathe in for three seconds, hold this breathe for two seconds, and then breathe out for three seconds. It can be helpful to count as you do this (e.g. IN: 1-2-3, HOLD: 1-2, OUT: 1-2-3, HOLD: 1-2).

Ending:

Repeat this action for a few minutes. You should soon begin to feel more relaxed. If you were feeling dizzy then this should also get better after a few minutes.

Body focused:

Beginning:

Find somewhere comfortable and quiet where you won't be interrupted. You can either sit or lie down to practice this exercise. Begin by focusing on your breathing. Try to have a slow and comfortable pace. You could use the controlled breathing technique described earlier. Do this for a few minutes to prepare for the muscular relaxation exercise.

Middle:

Try to tense each muscle group for around five seconds. Don't tense the muscle too tight. Focus on the sensations that this brings. Then relax your muscles for a similar length of time, and again, focus on how this feels. Then move onto the next muscle group. Try to remember to keep your breathing at a comfortable pace throughout. Below are some suggestions of muscle groups that you may wish to work through:

- Legs - point your toes and tense your muscles as if you were trying to stand up.
- Stomach - tense your stomach muscles.
- Arms - make fists and tense your muscles as if you were trying to lift something.
- Shoulders - shrug your shoulders. Lift them up towards your ears.
- Face - make a frowning expression. Squeeze your eyes shut and screw up your nose.

Ending:

It can be helpful to spend a few minutes just lying quietly in a relaxed state. See if you can notice any tension in your body and try to relax it. Otherwise, just let the tension be. If your mind wanders, try to bring your concentration back to your breathing.

Finally, count down silently and slowly: 5 4 3 2 1 0, and come out of the relaxation in your own time. See if it's possible to carry that relaxed feeling into whatever you do next.

Self help: Distraction

Distraction is a good technique to fend off symptoms of anxiety and stress when they feel overwhelming. This can also give you space to deal with a situation in a more considered and positive manner. It is also helpful when you don't have the space or time to use a more proactive approach, such as a relaxation exercise.

Distraction simply involves trying to take your mind off uncomfortable symptoms or thoughts. You can do this by trying to focus on something unrelated. Often this helps them to pass. It is still important to remember that the symptoms of anxiety are not harmful or dangerous. Even if you didn't use distraction or relaxation techniques, nothing terrible would happen.

Ideas to help distract you from your troubling thoughts or anxiety include:

- Try to appreciate small details in your surroundings.
- Count backwards from 1000 in multiples of 7.
- Focus on your breathing, for example, how it feels to breathe in and out.
- Count things that you can see that begin with a particular letter.
- Visualise being in a pleasant, safe and comfortable environment (e.g. being on a beach).
- Listen to your favourite music. Try to pick out all the different instruments and sounds that you can hear.

As with any relaxation exercise, it may take a few minutes before you begin to feel like it's working.

Self help: Improving communication

You may feel nervous going into a difficult situation. Practising specific strategies can help you feel more prepared. You might also find the use of relaxation techniques helpful.

'I' statements

It's very normal to sometimes feel unhappy with other's behaviours, but the key is how this is communicated. It's important to tell that person that you're unhappy, and to allow a helpful discussion to ensue.

An 'I' statement is different to a 'you' statement, where the other person can feel attacked or accused.

For example:

You have let your friend borrow your gel pens, but they have lost one of the lids.

'You' statement: You've lost one of my lids, you don't look after my things, you can't borrow them again!

'I' statement: I'm really sad that you've lost one of my lids, I may not be able to use my pen now and I'm worried it may dry out. I'm not sure I am confident to let you use them tomorrow.

The scratched record

This can be useful with strangers when you have a specific task. Being clear and firm can help you be assertive without becoming angry:

Asking a friend to stop calling you a nickname you do not like:

I'd like you to stop calling that name.

That name doesn't make me feel good

I don't find it funny when you call me that name.

Taking criticism

It can be difficult to listen to criticisms.

It is a chance to learn about yourself as others see you. Helpful criticism can be very useful. This is very different to negative insults.

Try simply listening to what is being said. Check that you understand their comments by repeating them back in your own words. You might not immediately agree with what has been said. It is important to stand your ground, but not become defensive.

