

ANXIETY

My thoughts

- I think that something bad is going to happen
- My mind is telling me that I won't be able to cope

How my body reacts

It is as if I have an inbuilt body alarm system that is linked to my adrenaline storehouse, which in turn, triggers the fight, or flight response. Blood is then diverted to the big muscles to help me escape or fight the threat, which means that blood is therefore taken away from other body systems.

What I might notice in my body?

- Heart rate increases
- Breathing speeds up, breathless, choking feeling
- Muscles tense, aching, shaking
- Hot, Sweating
- Lightheaded, Blurred vision
- Butterflies in tummy, urge to go to toilet
- More alert - scanning for danger

Devise a Checklist for Change

How I can THINK differently:

- Is this threat a real one or is it really bound to happen?
- Am I exaggerating the threat? Am I misreading things?
- I feel bad, but that doesn't mean things really are so bad.
- What would someone else say about this?
- What would I say to a friend in this situation?

- What would be a more helpful way of looking at things?
- Where's my focus of attention?
- I can cope with these feelings simply because I've got through it before. This will pass.

How I can DO things differently:

- Take a deep breath
- Ask myself how will doing this affect me in the long term?
- I should not avoid this situation – it will go anyway
- I should problem solve or make plans if necessary
- I should take things slowly and/or gradually
- I should focus my attention externally rather than internally
- Ask myself what is the best thing to do at this moment?
- Ask myself what would help most?
- Rate it from 1 to 10 (at 10 me being the most anxious)

Use the power of visualization...

Imagine myself coping in a situation that I would normally feel anxious about. Now see that situation (using the Checklist for Change) through to a more successful completion.

A small Tip

What colour do I visualise for calm (*my inhalation colour*) and what colour for anxiety (*my exhalation colour*)?

Then quietly say to myself: **Breathe in blue and breathe out red.**