

The **EXTENDED RELIEF** Study: Escitalopram Plus Psychotherapy in the Management of Late-life Anxiety



Psychotherapy Workbook

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The EXTENDED RELIEF Study
Recognizing Worry and Anxiety

Welcome to the counseling portion of the EXTENDED RELIEF Study. The focus is on learning skills to keep worry and anxiety under control, now and in the future. We hope that participating in this program will help you learn to manage your anxiety and worry better to feel better and stay well.

Goals for this session:

1. Introduce the program.
2. Get to know you a little better.
3. Learn some facts about worry and anxiety.
4. Learn about your worry and anxiety.

1. Introduction to the EXTENDED RELIEF Program

This program is designed to help older adults learn to manage their worry and anxiety better. It is based on techniques that have been used with anxious older as well as younger adults. All of these techniques are designed to teach you skills to manage anxiety, and they have been shown to be helpful for others.

You will be working one-on-one with an EXTENDED RELIEF staff member, or counselor, once a week for the next 16 weeks. Your counselor will work with you like a teacher or coach to help you learn skills to manage anxiety in your everyday life and prepare for stressful times in the future. Each session will last approximately one hour. If you need to miss a session, please call your counselor at least 24 hours in advance in order to reschedule.

Your counselor's name is: _____

and his/her phone number is: _____.

Because we will be covering a lot of material, it is important that you arrive on time so that you can get the most out of the program. Also, please bring this workbook with you to each session.

This program will cover the following topics:

Topic	Contents
Recognizing Worry and	Learning about worry and anxiety and your own

Anxiety	physical sensations, thoughts, and actions when you are worried or anxious
Learning to Relax	Applying relaxation skills in your daily life
Positive Action	Changing unhelpful behaviors and solving problems that lead to worry and anxiety
Changing Your Thinking	Recognizing unhelpful patterns of thinking and replacing automatic negative thoughts with more helpful thoughts
Maintaining Your Progress	Preparing for the future by reviewing what you've learned in the EXTENDED RELIEF program

The most important parts of the EXTENDED RELIEF program are the at-home practice exercises and taking medication. The point of this program is both to provide you with helpful medications and also to teach you valuable skills so that you can learn to manage worry and anxiety on your own, whether or not you continue to take medication. In order for medications to work most effectively, you should be sure to take them every day as instructed. In addition, the skills you learn require practice. **Therefore, if you want to have a successful experience in this program, you should plan to practice the exercises that your counselor will assign you for about 30 minutes each day.** Remember, 30 minutes each day will help you have much more success in managing your anxiety for the long term.

2. Getting to Know You

Your counselor would like to get to know you better, so please take some time to tell your counselor a little bit about yourself and what you hope to get out of participating in this program.

What are your most significant reasons for getting help with worry or anxiety right now? How is anxiety or worry affecting your health, family, relationships, routine daily activities, or other areas of your life?

Have you had problems with worry, anxiety, or depression in the past? What kinds of stressful situations have you dealt with in your life? How have you coped with them?

Have you ever had treatment for anxiety or depression in the past? What was that like? How do you feel about taking medication? What is your plan for the future with respect to medication?

3. Facts About Worry and Anxiety

You are participating in this program because you have symptoms of Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Here is a description of Generalized Anxiety Disorder:

- Excessive and hard to control worry and anxiety for at least 6 months
- At least three of these other problems:
 - Feeling restless, keyed up, or on edge
 - Muscle tension
 - Trouble sleeping
 - Fatigue
 - Irritability
 - Trouble concentrating
- These problems interfere with your life and/or are distressing.

So what is anxiety? Anxiety is the feeling we have when we are dealing with danger or think a bad thing is going to happen. Other words for anxious are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| • Worried | • Stressed |
| • Nervous | • Concerned |
| • Apprehensive | • Edgy, on edge |
| • Dreading | • Keyed up |
| • “Hyper” or hyperactive | • Fretful |
| • Afraid or scared | • Tense |

We use the words “worried” or “anxious” in this workbook, but if you feel like a different word describes you better, you and your counselor can use that word instead.

Everyone gets anxious. Why? **Anxiety is normal and helpful when we are in a dangerous situation.** In dangerous situations, anxiety prepares us, physically and mentally, for dealing with threat. If our ancestors hadn’t been able to feel anxious when they saw a saber-toothed tiger, we wouldn’t be here today! Anxiety still has an important function. For example, if a car runs a red light and is headed straight towards you, anxiety helps you react quickly to get out of the way.

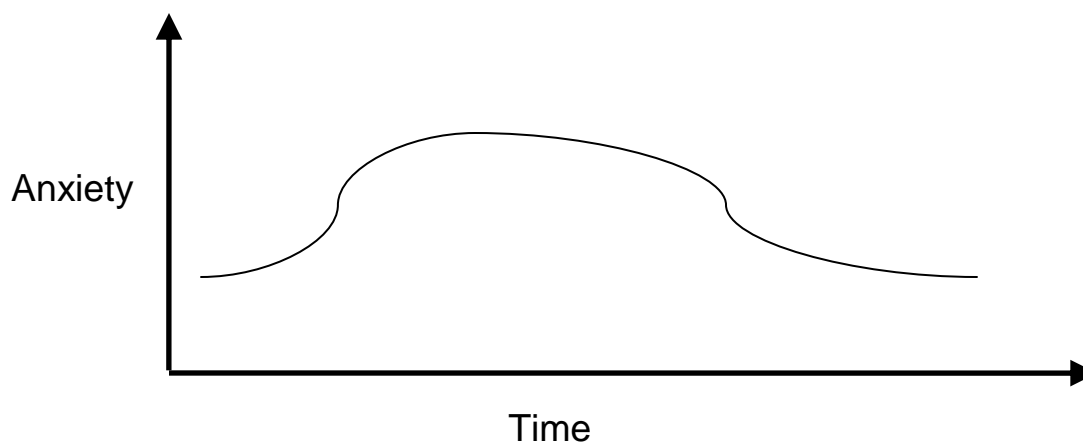
Sometimes, though, anxiety comes on in situations that aren’t physically dangerous. For example, many people get anxious just thinking about a bad thing

that is happening or might happen. In situations that aren't physically dangerous, too much anxiety can interfere with our ability to function well. Therefore, the purpose of this program is to teach you skills to help you be less anxious when you aren't really in danger (like when you're worrying) and to keep anxiety at a manageable level even when you're in a situation that is stressful or unpleasant.

It's true that some people tend to be more anxious than others. Genetics, biology, and life experiences all likely play a role in the development of anxiety. We don't know why any particular person tends to be anxious. But even if you knew why you get more anxious than somebody else, it wouldn't help you feel less anxious. The good news is that you don't need to know why in order to do something about it.

In the body, a lot of what we experience as anxiety is caused by a chemical called adrenaline. Adrenaline is released by the adrenal glands (located on top of the kidneys) when a person is in or thinks he or she is about to be in a dangerous situation. It gets released and spread throughout our body quickly, which is why anxiety can come on pretty fast. The purpose of adrenaline is to help our body prepare to deal with danger (the "fight or flight" response). Adrenaline breaks down over time and leaves the body, along with our body's other waste products.

The body produces other chemicals that help return our body to a resting state. These chemicals work more slowly than adrenaline, which is why anxiety can come on quickly but last a long time. Although it may feel like the discomfort and anxiety is never going to end, it is physically impossible to keep getting more and more anxious forever, and it is physically impossible to stay extremely anxious forever. The body eventually returns to its resting state. This figure illustrates what happens to anxiety over time.



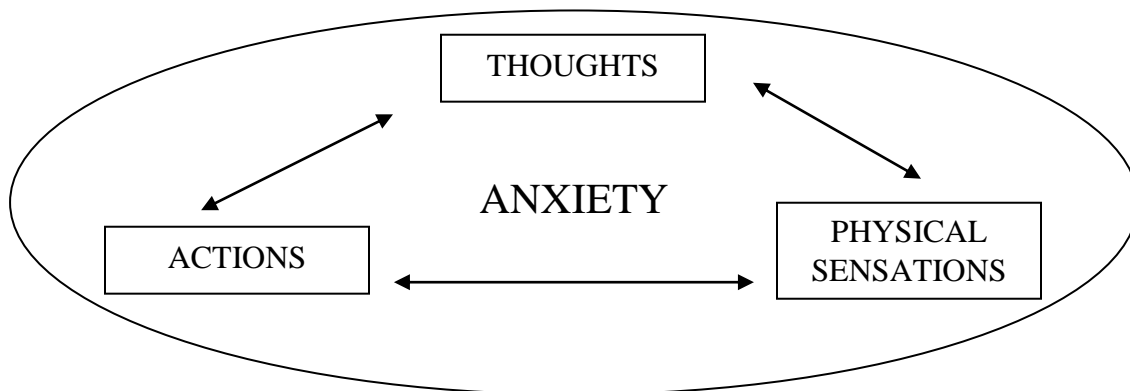
This pattern is true even for people who have been anxious for a long time.

Everyone can remember times in their life when they were very anxious, as well as times when they were relatively calm. This proves that anxiety goes up and down and doesn't keep getting worse forever.

The bottom line: anxiety isn't dangerous, and it can't last forever.

In order to break the cycle of excessive worry and anxiety, it is important to recognize when you are feeling worried or anxious. The earlier in the cycle that you can recognize anxiety, the easier it is to use coping strategies to manage or decrease it. **There are three parts of anxiety that you will learn to recognize: physical sensations, thoughts, and actions.** The skills you learn in this program will address each of these types of symptoms so that you can manage them effectively.

The three components of anxiety, physical sensations, thoughts, and actions, are all related to each other, as you can see in the diagram below. Notice that the ends of each arrow point in both directions. These arrows illustrate the two-way influences among thoughts, physical sensations, and actions. The way that we think can influence our physical sensations and how we act in certain situations. Similarly, our physical sensations can influence how we think and act. Finally, how we act affects our physical sensations and thoughts.



Physical sensations: Most people experience unpleasant or uncomfortable sensations in their body when they get anxious. **These sensations are normal and not dangerous.** Some of these sensations are:

- Restlessness
- Muscle tension, headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Fatigue
- Faintness or dizzy spells
- Butterflies in the stomach
- Upset stomach or indigestion
- Trembling or shaking

- Trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Irritability
- Feeling unable to relax
- Pounding or racing heart
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling jittery or jumpy
- Loose bowels
- Numbness or tingling
- Sweating or chills
- Lump in the throat
- Dry mouth

All of these sensations happen because of changes the body makes to deal effectively with a dangerous situation. For example, if a car were speeding toward you, your heart rate would speed up to help you get out of the way. In a physically dangerous situation, the changes in your body caused by anxiety could help save your life.

Thoughts: When people get anxious, they think about bad things that are happening now or that might happen in the future. We call this type of thinking worry. A little worry can help us mentally prepare to face a dangerous or unpleasant situation. A lot of worry can cause problems like insomnia, irritability, and trouble concentrating. **But although worrying is unpleasant, it isn't a sign of losing control or going crazy.** It's also not dangerous; it's just thinking, and thoughts can't hurt us.

Although everyone worries sometimes, some people worry a lot and find it hard to stop worrying when they try. Some people worry about unrealistic, unlikely, or little things, some worry even when things are going well, and others worry about big problems that are actually happening, either to themselves or to someone else.

Worry thoughts often either assume bad things are likely to happen or that if they happen, they will be disastrous. People who worry also often think they won't be able to cope with bad things that might happen. These thoughts are typically distorted or inaccurate.

Actions: When they are worried or anxious, people often do things that are not helpful. Here are some examples.

- Keep busy, distraction
- Check to make sure things are all right (e.g., blood pressure, locks)
- Work, clean, etc. too much
- Procrastinate
- Avoid situations that make you anxious
- Not be assertive

- Do too much for family
- Take on too many projects
- Ask for reassurance
- Isolate from other people

Anxiety can also get in the way of effective problem-solving. **However, anxiety can't make you lose touch with reality or do anything outside of your control.**

Because the three components of anxiety are related to each other, you can reduce your worry and anxiety by changing your physical sensations, thoughts, or actions. The EXTENDED RELIEF program is designed to help you do all three things. In addition to taking medication, you will learn *skills* to think, act, and feel differently.

4. Your Own Worry and Anxiety

In order to manage anxiety, you must first recognize it. This is much easier when you know the physical sensations, thoughts, and actions that you usually experience when you are feeling worried or anxious.

Think about a time you felt worried or anxious in the past week. What was the situation? Sometimes it helps to imagine that it is happening right now. You may want to close your eyes and imagine yourself in the situation.

What physical sensations did you experience?

What thoughts went through your mind?

What unhelpful things did you do? Sometimes it is easier for other people to

notice behaviors – did anyone give you feedback that what you were doing wasn't working well?

Are these the physical sensations, thoughts, and actions you typically have when you feel anxious or worried?

For the next week, you will do some at-home practice exercises to help you recognize when you're feeling worried or anxious. **It is important to fill out these forms every day, and not wait until the end of the week.** Recording your symptoms of worry each day will make for a more accurate record. The more accurate your records are, the more you will learn about your worry and the better you will be able to manage it.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS I LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER ARE:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Practice Exercises -- Date: _____

Recognizing Worry and Anxiety

On average, how much did you worry or feel anxious today (circle a number)?

0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

What did you worry or feel anxious about? (be specific)

What physical sensations did you feel when you were worried or anxious:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling nervous or fearful | <input type="checkbox"/> Pounding or racing heart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restlessness/keyed up/on edge | <input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue | <input type="checkbox"/> Trembling or shaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating | <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea/diarrhea/upset stomach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability | <input type="checkbox"/> Numbness or tingling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension | <input type="checkbox"/> Faintness or dizzy spells |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot or cold flashes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

What thoughts did you have when you were worried or anxious?

What unhelpful things did you do (e.g., getting overcommitted to activities, procrastinating, avoiding) because of worry or anxiety today?

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Anxiety and the Family



Goals for this topic:

1. Review the important role of family in treating anxiety
2. Help you to better understand anxiety and this treatment
3. Teach you ways to better help your anxious family member and yourself

1. Rationale for Involving Family

Anxiety is quite common in older adults, with an estimated 6%-10% meeting criteria for an anxiety disorder. The most common anxiety disorder in late life is Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). Your family member is participating in this program because he or she has symptoms of GAD. Here is a description of GAD:

- Excessive and hard to control worry and anxiety for at least 6 months
- At least three of these other problems:
 - Feeling restless, keyed up, or on edge
 - Muscle tension
 - Trouble sleeping
 - Fatigue
 - Irritability
 - Trouble concentrating
- These problems interfere with life and/or are distressing to your family member.

In the first phase of this treatment, your family member started taking a medication called escitalopram (Lexapro). In this phase, your family member will continue taking Lexapro and will also receive 16 sessions of counseling. The goal of the counseling is to help teach skills to manage worry and anxiety during stressful situations in the future, whether or not he or she continues taking

medication.

You may notice that anxiety and worry can have an impact on the whole family. You may feel concern and want to help your anxious family member. At the same time, you might feel helpless, frustrated, or angry that you are unable to “fix” the problem. You might even have trouble understanding why the anxious person can’t just stop worrying!

Your anxious family member may sometimes feel as if the family just doesn’t understand what she or he is going through. This too can lead to difficult feelings, such as frustration, anger, or feeling alone.

These feelings are very normal and understandable! Just the same, it can be difficult to cope with feeling this way. We invited you to your family member’s session today so that we can help you to better understand his or her experience of anxiety, and how you can be most helpful during and after your family member’s treatment. Just as importantly, we want to help you learn how you can take the best care of *yourself* during this time too.

2. Understanding Anxiety and Treatment for Anxiety

What is anxiety? Anxiety is the feeling we have when we are dealing with danger or think a bad thing is going to happen. Everyone gets anxious. Why? Anxiety is normal and helpful when we are in a dangerous situation. In dangerous situations, anxiety prepares us, physically and mentally, for dealing with threat. Anxiety becomes a problem, however, when it becomes excessive, unmanageable, and life-interfering.

In order to break the cycle of worry and anxiety, it is important for your family member to learn to recognize when he or she is feeling worried or anxious. The earlier in the cycle this happens, the easier it is to use coping strategies to manage or decrease the anxiety. There are three parts of anxiety: **physical sensations, thoughts, and actions**. The skills your family member will learn in this program will address each of these types of symptoms so that he or she can manage them effectively.

Physical sensations: Most people experience unpleasant or uncomfortable sensations in their body when they get anxious. Some of these sensations are:

- Restlessness
- Faintness or dizzy spells

- Muscle tension, headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Fatigue
- Trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Irritability
- Feeling unable to relax
- Pounding or racing heart
- Shortness of breath
- Butterflies in the stomach
- Upset stomach or indigestion
- Trembling or shaking
- Feeling jittery or jumpy
- Loose bowels
- Numbness or tingling
- Sweating or chills
- Lump in the throat
- Dry mouth

Thoughts: When people get anxious, they think about bad things that are happening now or that might happen in the future. This type of thinking is called worry. Worry thoughts often either assume bad things are likely to happen or that if they happen, they will be disastrous. People who worry also often think they won't be able to cope with bad things that might happen. These thoughts are typically distorted or inaccurate.

Actions: People often do things that are not helpful when they are worried or anxious. Here are some examples. Anxiety can also get in the way of effective problem-solving.

- Keep busy, distraction
- Check to make sure things are all right (e.g., blood pressure, locks)
- Work, clean, etc. too much
- Do too much for family
- Take on too many projects
- Procrastinate
- Avoid situations that make you anxious
- Not be assertive
- Ask for reassurance
- Isolate from other people

Because the three components of anxiety are related to each other, it is possible to reduce worry and anxiety by changing physical sensations, thoughts, or actions. The EXTENDED RELIEF program is designed to help your family member do all three things. In addition to taking medication, her or she will learn *skills* to think, act, and feel differently, now and in the future.

This program will cover the following topics:

Topic	Contents
Recognizing Worry and Anxiety	Learning about worry and anxiety and your family member's own physical sensations, thoughts, and

	actions when worried or anxious
Learning to Relax	Applying relaxation skills in daily life
Positive Action	Changing unhelpful behaviors and solving problems that lead to worry and anxiety
Changing Your Thinking	Recognizing unhelpful patterns of thinking and replacing automatic negative thoughts with more helpful thoughts
Maintaining Your Progress	Preparing for the future by reviewing skills learned in the EXTENDED RELIEF program and making a plan if anxiety returns

The most important parts of the EXTENDED RELIEF program are the at-home practice exercises and taking medication. The point of this program is both to provide your family member with helpful medications and also to teach him or her valuable skills in order to learn to manage worry and anxiety, whether or not medication is continued. In order for medications to work most effectively, they should be taken every day as instructed. In addition, the skills require practice. **Therefore, in order to have a successful experience in this program, your family member should plan to practice the exercises that the counselor will assign for about 30 minutes each day.** Remember, 30 minutes each day will help your family member have much more success in managing anxiety in the long term.

3. How You Can Help Your Anxious Family Member and Yourself

There are **three** very, very important aspects to this treatment that will maximize the benefit to your family member (and therefore to you!):

1. Consistent attendance
2. Taking medications
3. PRACTICING skills

One of the ways you can be most helpful to your family member during this treatment is to encourage him or her to always do these three things. Talk to each other and work together to develop a plan for how you can be supportive. This might include:

- Daily reminders to practice skills and take medications
- Practicing skills along with your family member
- Helping him or her find time and space to practice

- Encouraging attendance even if your family member doesn't feel like going

Support has been found to be an essential contributor to good mental and physical health. It is very important, however, that you *support* your family member without taking over or doing it for them. Remember, it is not your job to fix the problem! You can leave that up to your family member and to us.

Following are some examples of helpful and unhelpful family support behaviors:

Helpful family support behaviors	Unhelpful family behaviors
Praise for even small accomplishments	Trying to minimize their fear or reassuring them that “everything will be fine”
Encouragement	Pressuring your family member to take bigger steps
Asking your family member what they need or how you can help	Taking over

Supporting your family member in his or her treatment should not become your only focus! Often, just dealing with someone's worry and related behaviors can create an added burden on the family. The following may be some warning signs that you need a break:

- You feel more exhausted or “put upon” than usual
- You feel unusually irritable, especially with your anxious family member
- You are experiencing symptoms that are not typical for you, such as muscle tension or sleep difficulties
- You feel more “stressed out” than usual

It is very important that you take good care of yourself during this time (and always!). Can you think of some ways you might be able to do this? Some family members have done the following:

- Setting aside some “alone” time to read, take a bath, take a walk, listen to music, or write a letter to an old friend
- Spending time with (non-anxious) friends or family

- Practicing relaxation exercises with your family member
- Setting “non-worry” time aside to spend with your family member. In other words, agreeing to talk about the days events or participate in an activity where you both agree that worry topics are strictly off limits during that time (don’t worry, your family member will have “worry time” set aside that he or she learned about in this treatment!)

We would like to express our gratitude to you for accompanying your family member to this session. We hope what you have learned here today has been helpful. We are confident that attending these treatment sessions, taking medications, and practicing skills will have your family member feeling and acting better over the next 16 weeks. She or he and we appreciate your support and willingness to help!

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Learning to Relax

Goals for this topic:

1. Understand the rationale for relaxation exercises.
2. Practice three types of relaxation exercises: (a) slow, deep breathing; (b) progressive muscle relaxation; and (c) imagery.
3. Understand the importance of daily practice.



1. Rationale for Relaxation Exercises

Although the physical sensations associated with anxiety and worry aren't dangerous, they can be uncomfortable. **By practicing some simple exercises that decrease the physical sensations associated with worry or anxiety, you can effectively decrease your worry and anxiety.** These exercises include relaxation techniques such as slow, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and imagery.

The main purpose of learning these relaxation techniques is to help reduce the physical sensations associated with anxiety. Can you be anxious and relaxed at the same time? So if your body is relaxed, what will happen to your anxiety? In addition to helping calm anxiety, relaxation exercises can also help you cope with any unpleasant symptoms you experience if you taper off your medication, as well as help you fall asleep.

2. Relaxation Exercises

Relaxation exercises calm your body and make your anxiety decrease. Muscle tension, dizziness, and shallow breathing are common physical sensations associated with worry and anxiety. Learning, and most importantly, regularly practicing the following relaxation exercises will help you manage any uncomfortable physical sensations that result from your anxiety.

Slow, Deep Breathing. Breathing has two primary functions: It brings oxygen into your body, and it releases carbon dioxide. Our body changes the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide when we are anxious because a different balance is needed in dangerous situations when we might need to fight or run away. In situations that aren't actually physically dangerous, however, the change in the balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide can make you feel temporarily light-

headed or dizzy. Experiencing these physical sensations can make you anxious, which in turn can make you more light-headed and dizzy. Although this is not physically dangerous, and like all other anxiety symptoms, it goes away naturally over time, it can be uncomfortable. Learning the slow, deep breathing relaxation technique will help readjust the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels, which will reduce your anxiety.

To start, what kind of breather are you? Do you breathe from your chest or your abdomen? Chest breathing brings air into the body more quickly than abdominal breathing, which is better when you are in a physically demanding situation (like when you need to fight or flee). This is why you may breathe more from your chest when you are worried or anxious. However, the muscles you use when you breathe from your chest are only designed for breathing for a short while and may start to hurt after they are used for long periods of time. This explains why some people experience chest pain or tightness when they become anxious. This sensation is not dangerous, and it does go away eventually.

Abdominal breathing is produced by the diaphragm, which is a large muscle in your belly. Abdominal breathing is more efficient and results in better respiratory functioning when you are not in a dangerous or physically demanding situation. To find out your breathing style, put one hand on your chest and the other hand on your abdomen and breathe normally. Which of your hands moves more, the one on your chest, or the one on your abdomen?

Once you have determined your breathing style, find a comfortable, quiet place to practice. Sometimes it is easier to learn abdominal breathing lying down. Close your eyes and place one hand on your abdomen and the other on your chest. Take one long, deep breath in through your nose and silently count to three. While you breathe in, focus on using your abdomen and feel it rise with your hand as your lungs fill with air. Hold your breath for a few short moments, think the word “RELAX,” and then exhale through your mouth while silently counting to three. Feel the hand on your abdomen fall as you exhale the air from your lungs. Repeat 10 times and then notice how you feel. As you practice this skill, you can gradually increase the count to slow your breathing. Listen to the CD to guide you through a couple of breathing exercises.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR). This is a relaxation technique that focuses on reducing the muscle tension in your body through the process of systematically flexing and releasing different muscle groups. Muscle tension is a very common physical sensation associated with anxiety because in dangerous

situations, it is important to have your muscles ready to fight or flee. In situations that are not physically dangerous, using PMR to reduce muscle tension can help you reduce your worry and anxiety.

PMR has two components, physical and mental. The physical part of PMR involves tensing your muscles and then relaxing them. Tensing the muscles first actually helps you relax them, since it is normal for muscles to relax after being tensed. The mental part of PMR involves paying attention to the sensations of tension and relaxation. This will help you identify when you are tense vs. relaxed, which helps you become more aware of your own anxiety. Knowing when you are anxious will help you engage in coping strategies earlier in the process, which can help you reduce your anxiety or avoid an escalation in your worry.

To start, you will learn how to tense and release 16 different muscle groups; later this will be broken down into fewer muscle groups, so you will learn to achieve relaxation more quickly with practice. During this exercise, try to concentrate on what you're experiencing and feeling in your body. If you find that your mind is wandering, don't be concerned; this is perfectly normal. Just take a second and refocus on what you feel in your body.

If you have arthritis or other pain in your muscles or joints or a past injury in a particular area of your body, you can imagine that you are tensing your muscles, rather than actually tensing them. When it's time to relax your muscles, just release whatever tension is left and concentrate on feeling even more relaxed.

You will be instructed to tense a specific area of your body. Only tense the muscles half way, enough to notice the difference from relaxation; you should not be straining or tightening them more than 50%. You will hold that tension for about 10 seconds, then release it and focus on the area for about 20 seconds, until the recording tells you to tense again. Notice the difference between how it feels when your muscles are tense and when they are relaxed.

First, find a quiet, comfortable location to practice. It is best to practice in a recliner or on a bed where your entire body, including your neck, is supported. Make sure you find a place where you will not be distracted or disturbed. Consider taking the phone off the hook and telling anyone you live with not to interrupt you until you are finished. Take off your shoes and remove any tight clothing. Now turn on the CD to go through the exercise.

Imagery. This relaxation technique is one that everyone has used at some

point in his or her life. Daydreaming and remembering pleasant experiences are examples of imagery. Your imagination and tapping into your own experiences are hallmarks of imagery. This relaxation strategy can be very effective at calming stress and reducing anxiety. To maximize the relaxing benefits derived from imagery, it is very important to mentally construct a scene that you find appealing and peaceful. This can be a place you have actually been or a place you have only imagined. Be sure to include all your senses when constructing an image. Ask yourself these questions as you practice: What do I see? What can I hear? What do things feel like to the touch? What do I smell? What can I taste?

Make sure that you are as comfortable as possible when you practice your imagery, close your eyes, and give yourself permission to relax. Remember to use your own scene during imagery and make it as elaborate and realistic as possible, using all of your senses. An example of a brief scene that can be used during imagery is included on your relaxation CD so that you can use it when you practice at home if you like. We have also recorded instructions to prompt you to create your own scene if you prefer.

3. Daily Practice

Learning relaxation skills will help you decrease the uncomfortable physical sensations associated with worry and anxiety. But these skills take time to develop and master, so practice is important. **In order to get the benefits from relaxation, you need to practice every day and make it a part of your life.** The more time, effort, and practice you put into using and refining these skills, the better the results you will get.

For the next couple of weeks, you will do some at-home practice exercises to help you refine your relaxation skills. Your counselor will give you a CD or audiotape with the exercises you have done in session to help you practice at home. It is important to record your practice on the forms provided so you can track your improvement in your new skills.

Once you know how to relax in a quiet, undistracted setting, it's time to start using relaxation in your daily life. You can do a short version of the PMR exercise by focusing only on those parts of your body where you get tense (e.g., shoulders, jaw), or do the breathing or imagery. Some people find it easiest to start by doing relaxation during boring activities, like standing in line. After you feel you know how to do these exercises well, you can also start to use them during more stressful activities, like driving.

What are some situations in which you might be able to practice relaxation?

Put a star by any situations that you would consider stressful. Plan to start using the exercises in situations that are not stressful. After practicing in non-stressful situations, you can try to use the exercises in the stressful situations you marked with a star.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS I LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER ARE:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Practice Exercises -- Date: _____
Learning to Relax

On average, how much did you worry or feel anxious today (circle a number)?

0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

What did you worry or feel anxious about?

What physical sensations did you feel when you were worried or anxious?

What thoughts did you have when you were worried or anxious?

What unhelpful things did you do because of worry or anxiety today?

Practice a relaxation technique every day. This can be slow, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or imagining yourself in a peaceful place. Rate your muscle tension before and after the exercise.

What exercise(s) did you do today? _____

In what situation(s)? _____ For how long? _____

Amount of tension before the exercise:

0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

Amount of tension after the exercise:

0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Positive Action

Goals for this topic:

1. Understand the role of behavior in worry and anxiety.
2. Changing your behavior and solving problems.
3. Making the change.

1. Anxiety, Worry, and Behavior



By now you probably have learned that worry and behavior, or the way we act, are related. This is especially true when dealing with problems. Can you give an example from your own life of a time that feeling worried or under stress made you do something that wasn't helpful? How about an example of a time that your own actions (or inactions) made you feel worried or anxious? It is important to remember that anxiety can't make you lose control or cause you to do anything you wouldn't do when you're calm. You always have a choice about what to do. For the next few months, you will focus on identifying and changing unhelpful behaviors associated with worry and anxiety.

Here are some examples of unhelpful things some people do when they get anxious:

- Keep busy, distraction
- Check to make sure things are all right (e.g., blood pressure, locks)
- Work, clean, etc. too much
- Do too much for family
- Take on too many projects
- Procrastinate
- Avoid situations that make you anxious
- Not be assertive
- Ask for reassurance
- Isolate from other people

Do any of these sound familiar? Are there other examples from your own life?

2. Changing Unhelpful Behaviors

The first step in changing unhelpful behaviors is to identify them. Sometimes this includes things you have been doing or not doing when dealing with an important problem. Going over your at-home exercise records may remind you of your unhelpful behaviors when dealing with stressful situations. Or family

members, friends, or others who know you may have told you that something you have been doing (or not doing) is causing problems.

Take a minute to think about one problem that you would like to work on over the next couple of months. This can include a behavior that you would like to change. Make sure that whatever problem or behavior you choose is very specific. Break down the problem into pieces, if necessary, and choose only one piece.

The next step after you have stated a very specific problem or behavior is to brainstorm solutions or other things you could do instead. Don't judge the options; just list anything that comes to mind. After you have listed as many ideas that you can think of, go back and look at your list to combine, expand, or improve specific alternatives.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

12. _____

Next, pick the top two or three solutions. You may want to combine alternatives or refine them at this point. Once you have your alternatives in mind, make a list of advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. Essentially what you are doing is weighing the potential costs and benefits of your best alternatives to solve your problem. Make sure to think about all possible disadvantages and “hidden costs” as well as the benefits of your two possible solutions.

Solution 1: _____

Advantages:	Disadvantages:

Solution 2: _____

Advantages:	Disadvantages:

Solution 3: _____

Advantages:	Disadvantages:

Next, pick the option that seems to be the best overall and make a plan to carry it out. Use the lines below to describe exactly what you will do. Be as specific as possible. Thinking in very detailed, specific terms up front will help make sure that you are able to actually carry out the plan and will help you commit to making it happen.

Now, put your plan into action. What was the outcome? Are you pleased with it? If you are happy with your results, this means that your new plan is working. If you find that you are not pleased with your results, go back to your list of possible options and try another one, or brainstorm some more alternatives. Pick the best option and create a plan. Evaluate the results, repeating as necessary to reach your goal.

You can use this as a general problem-solving strategy. **Think about a very specific problem to work on or behavior to change, brainstorm a list of alternative options, then pick the best one and see how it works.**

3. Making the Change

For some people, unhelpful behaviors are part of a long-standing coping strategy. One of the goals of this program is to help you recognize your own

problem behaviors and identify more helpful alternatives. Take a minute to think about your own pattern. Be honest with yourself. Are there situations that tend to come up over and over again? Have you had similar problems at several times or in several different situations?

It is often helpful to have a reminder of the “big picture.” Your counselor can give you an index card to write down the behavior that seems to be part of a long-standing problem. Then you can write down alternatives that you can use when situations like this come up in the future. **Remember to look at this card and think about your behavior patterns and what you might do differently at least once a week.**

It isn't easy to make changes or break old habits. Sometimes people find that they get more worried or anxious the first few days they try something new. This is only natural. Remember, anxiety is not dangerous and does not last forever. Over time the worry or anxiety decreases as the new way of acting becomes more natural. You are also learning coping skills to handle any worry or anxiety that comes up. In the long run, it is helpful to change an unhelpful behavior.

See how changing an unhelpful behavior or tackling an important problem affects your worry and anxiety. Spend a week working on one thing and see what happens. Also, continue to practice relaxation throughout the day.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS I LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER ARE:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Practice Exercises -- Date: _____

Positive Action

On average, how much did you worry or feel anxious today (circle a number)?

0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

What did you worry or feel anxious about?

What physical sensations did you feel when you were worried or anxious?

What thoughts did you have when you were worried or anxious?

What unhelpful things did you do because of worry or anxiety today?

What unhelpful behavior or problem did you work on?

What did you do?

How did it work?

Did you do a relaxation exercise? Yes No Tension before (0-10): ____ After: ____

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study **Changing Your Thinking**

Goals for this topic:

1. Learn the role of negative thoughts in anxiety.
2. Learn how to challenge and replace negative thoughts.
3. Recognizing and changing long-standing thought patterns.
4. Understand the importance of frequent practice.

1. Negative Thoughts and Anxiety

The third component of anxiety, in addition to physical sensations and actions, is thoughts. Negative thoughts are common for people who experience anxiety. They are not a sign of going crazy or losing control. A worry is one type of negative thought that usually involves thinking about negative events that are happening right now or that might happen in the future. Although worrying is unpleasant, it's just thinking, and thoughts can't hurt us.

For people who feel worried or anxious, the thoughts are often that something bad is likely to happen (fortune telling) or that you won't be able to cope with it (catastrophizing). These thoughts are often distorted or inaccurate. Here are some examples of negative, distorted thinking:

Category	Definition	Example
Fortune Telling	Overestimating the risk that a bad thing is going to happen	"I've got that headache again. I'm sure I'm going to have a stroke just like my father did."
Catastrophizing	Assuming that something will be worse than it is, or that you won't be able to cope with it	"If my husband dies, I will not have any social life for as long as I live."
"Should" Statements	Holding fixed ideas about how the world "should," "ought to," or "must" be	"I should be able to keep my house as clean and organized as I used to."

Your therapist may identify some other categories, including Discounting the Positive, Negative Filter, and Mind Reading. Can you identify some examples of your own negative, distorted thoughts? What categories do they fall into?

Example	Category

2. Challenging Negative Thoughts

Changing inaccurate, distorted thoughts to more realistic thoughts will reduce anxiety. Note that this is not just “the power of positive thinking.” Rather, it is important to think more accurately and realistically, even when dealing with difficult problems. Below we list more realistic thoughts to counter distorted negative thinking from the examples above.

Distorted thought:	More realistic thought:
I’ve got that headache again. I’m sure I’m going to have a stroke just like my father did.	I might have a headache because I’m tired, or because I did a lot of reading yesterday, or because my neck muscles are tense from worry or stress. It doesn’t mean I’m having a stroke.
If my husband dies, I will not have any social life for as long as I live.	If he dies, I will be very sad, but the grief will eventually get less intense, and I will still be able to go out socially with my daughter and my friends from church.
I should be able to keep my house as clean and organized as I used to.	People have always teased me about being too clean. If I can’t do it all, I can hire someone to help.

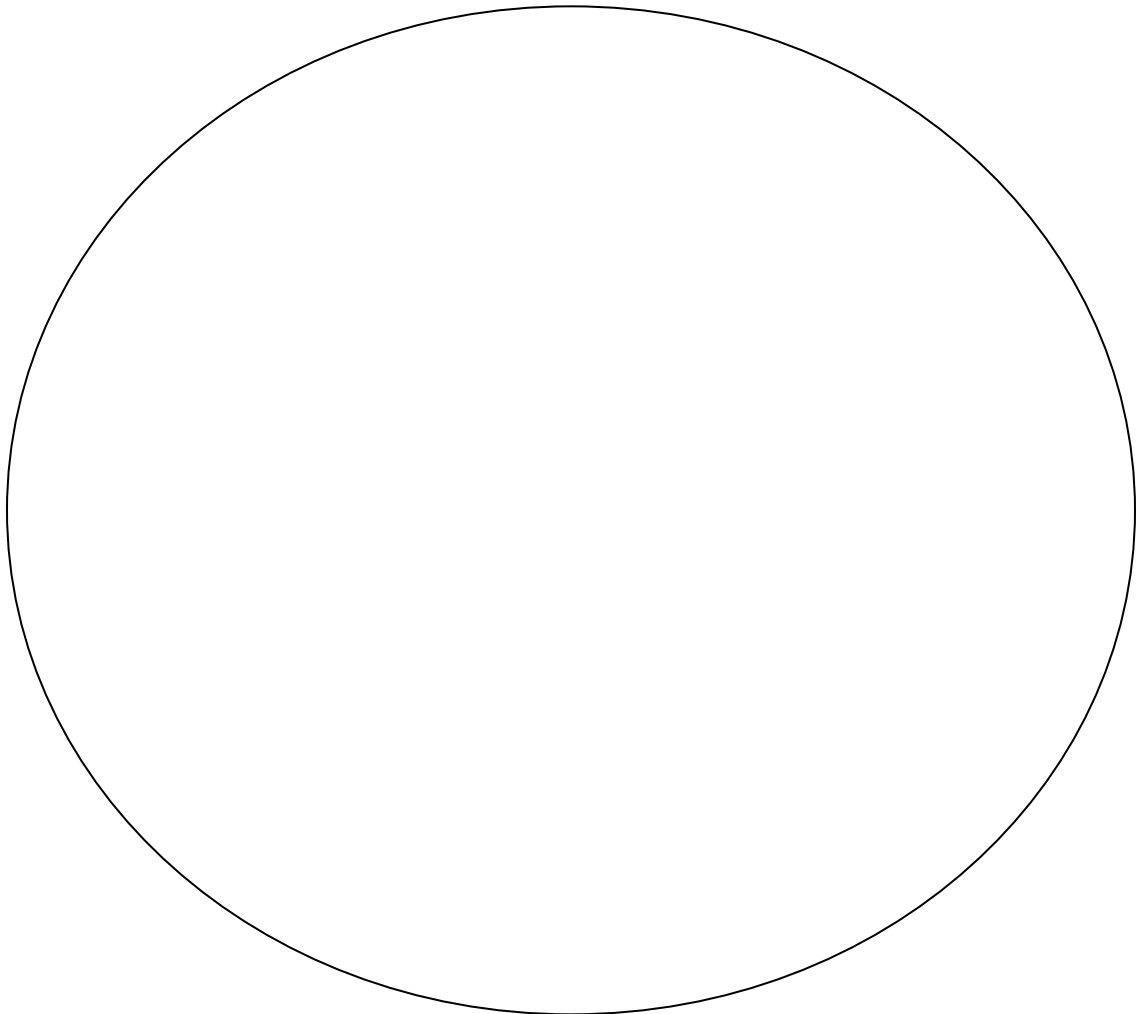
How can you identify more realistic thoughts to counter your negative, distorted thinking? The best way to challenge the idea that the worst possible outcome will happen is to think about all the other things that could happen instead. One useful way to do this is the “pie chart method.” In this method, you create a pie chart with each piece representing one possible outcome or

explanation. Looking at the pie chart can remind you that there are many possible things that could happen, and not all of them are catastrophic.

Start by choosing an example of “Fortune Telling,” where you jump to the conclusion that a bad thing is going to happen:

Rate how anxious that thought makes you on a scale of 0 to 10: _____

Now you will fill in pieces of the pie that represent different possible outcomes or explanations. Start with the thing you worry about the most in this situation. Fill in all the other possibilities, including those that are not as negative.



Now that you have filled in many different pieces of the pie chart, take a minute to think about the likelihood of the worst case scenario. Are there any other options that might be more likely? Use this exercise to come up with an alternative, more accurate thought to replace the original anxious thought:

Rate how anxious this new thought makes you on a scale of 0 to 10: _____

Although we tend to overestimate the likelihood of bad things happening when we get anxious, sometimes challenges do arise. However, anxiety tends to make us believe that things are utter catastrophes that are impossible to handle. **In reality, it's almost never as bad as we *think* it's going to be, and we can *handle it much better than we think we can*.** Can you identify any examples of catastrophizing in your own thinking?

Rate how anxious this thought makes you on a scale of 0 to 10: _____

Now list all the ways in which you could cope if this thought came true.

Now that you have thought about the different ways that you could cope with the situation, come up with an alternative, more accurate thought to replace

the original anxious thought:

Rate how anxious this new thought makes you on a scale of 0 to 10: _____

Effective coping thoughts remind us that feared outcomes are not as likely to happen as we think, and we have better ability to handle situations than we think.

3. Long-term Patterns of Thinking

Many worried older adults struggle with negative thoughts related to one (or more) of three themes: **Need for Control, Responsibility, or Perfectionism**. As you look at your list of negative thoughts, do they fall into any of these themes?

- Some people feel worried about things they can't control, like a medical condition. As a result, they keep doing things, even things that don't help, in an effort to feel like they have some control over a situation.
- Others feel responsible to take care of the people close to them, no matter what the cost or outcome. As a result, they may wear themselves out, become resentful, or annoyed, or encourage dependence in their loved one.
- Some people may fear making any mistake or not doing things "just right." This may be due to high internal standards or a fear of what others may think.

These themes are often long-standing patterns of thinking. You may have learned them as a child; for example, if your family was poor and you were never sure whether there would be enough money, you may have learned to take very tight control of your finances when you grew up. In some situations, these patterns of thinking can be helpful. For example, perfectionism may have made you more successful in your job because your employer could always count on you to get things right, or being very responsible may have made you a good parent when your children were young. As we get older, though, these patterns may lead to worry or stress because:

1. Many things we deal with as we age (health, death of friends or family) are uncontrollable, no matter what we do.
2. None of us are indispensable. Although it may feel good to have people depend on us, they will need to muddle through without us once we're gone.
3. As we age, we lose speed, strength, and stamina. We just can't do all the things we used to do when we were younger, at least not in the same way.

As you identify your negative thoughts, see whether they fit into any of these themes. Ask yourself: is the stress this way of thinking causes worth it right now? If not, it might be time to let it go. Here are some examples.

Distorted thought:	More realistic thought:
Need for Control: I have always been healthy. I should be able to manage my blood pressure without medication.	Although I would prefer not to take any medications, taking my blood pressure pill is a way of taking care of my health.
Responsibility: My daughter is disabled and can't take care of herself. If I don't help her, she will end up homeless.	She needs to learn to be more independent, or it will be much harder for her after I'm gone.
Perfectionism: I can't invite people to my home any more because I don't have the energy to cook for them.	They come to see me, not my food. I can ask them to bring a dish, get take-out, or invite them for coffee and coffee cake rather than dinner.

Practice with your own examples:

Distorted thought:	More realistic thought:

Remember, although these patterns of thinking may be helpful in some ways, they can also lead to stress and anxiety, especially as we get older. Changing

your thinking can help you feel better in the long run.

4. Practice Changing Your Thinking

These thoughts are typically automatic, which can make them hard to recognize and challenge. It takes work to change the way you think, especially if you've been thinking that way for a long time. You will need to spend time and effort to identify and change these thoughts. On your practice sheets, write down a negative thought every day. Challenge the thought and replace it with a more realistic coping thought. **The more you practice becoming conscious of negative thoughts and changing them for coping thoughts, the less worried and anxious you will feel.**

Continue to practice relaxation throughout the day, and commit to at least one positive action you can take this week to change an unhelpful behavior or work on an important problem.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS I LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER ARE:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Practice Exercises -- Date: _____
Changing Your Thinking

On average, how much did you worry or feel anxious today (circle a number)?

0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

What did you worry or feel anxious about?

What physical sensations did you feel when you were worried or anxious?

What thoughts did you have when you were worried or anxious?

What unhelpful things did you do because of worry or anxiety today?

Distorted thought:	More realistic thought:

What did you do to work on an unhelpful behavior or problem today?

Did you do a relaxation exercise? Yes No Tension before (0-10): ____ After: ____

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Increasing Pleasure

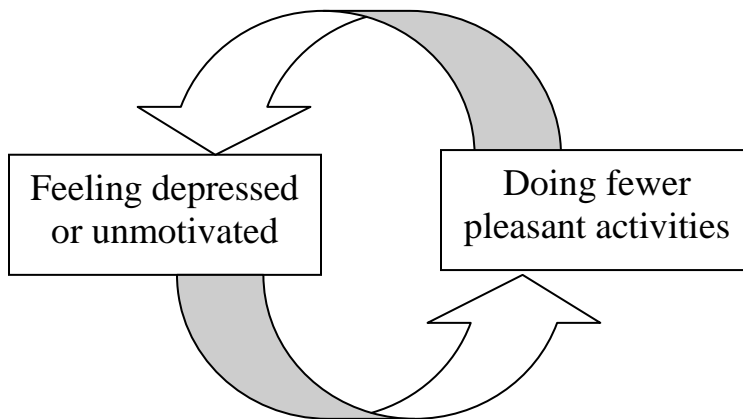
Goals for this topic:

1. Learn about the relationship between pleasant activities and mood.
2. Make a list of pleasant activities.
3. Develop a plan and schedule for pleasant activities.

1. Pleasant Activities and Mood

Why are pleasant activities important when you feel depressed? What happens to your mood when you do something you enjoy? What happens to your mood when you don't?

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between feeling down or depressed and pleasant activities.



When you feel depressed, you do fewer things you enjoy. This will make you feel more depressed, which leads you to do fewer things, and so on. The result is a downward spiral of less activity and more depressed mood.

The good news is that the cycle works both ways: if you're feeling depressed, doing a pleasant activity will make you feel better. But what happens if you're not feeling motivated to do something you enjoy? Should you wait until you're feeling better? What will probably happen if you wait?

Although it may sound strange, the answer is that you need to do something pleasant in order to feel more motivated, rather than the other way around. **So**

when you're feeling depressed or low is the most important time to do something you enjoy, even if you don't feel like it. Here's a phrase that can help you remember the importance of pleasant activities: "Move your feet and your mood will follow!"

2. Create a List of Pleasant Activities

It can be hard even to think of something you enjoy when you're feeling low or depressed. **That's why it's helpful to make a list of pleasant activities and keep it handy to remind yourself of what you like to do.**

So what do you like to do? Here are some examples. Circle the ones that you have found pleasant in the past year or so. Feel free to add new ones. Make sure you have at least 10.

- Spending time with friends
- Talking on the phone
- Looking at the stars
- Crossword puzzles
- Reading a book
- Looking at photos
- Playing with grandchildren
- Listening to music
- Writing a story
- Cooking or baking
- Prayer
- Walking on the beach
- Having a manicure
- Going to a party
- Going to the library
- Putting on make-up
- Sitting in the park
- Being outside
- Going to a senior center
- Learning something new
- Eating something enjoyable
- Meditating
- Getting out of the city
- Hearing a concert
- Planning a party
- Computer activities
- Taking a walk
- Doing art or crafts
- Getting a massage
- Seeing a movie
- Reminiscing
- Watching TV
- Playing cards or games
- Taking a warm bath
- Woodworking
- People-watching
- Getting your hair cut
- Fishing
- Getting dressed up
- Taking a drive or ride
- Hunting
- Fixing things
- Going to the desert
- Playing with a pet
- Helping someone
- Visiting a museum
- Watching a sunset
- Going to the mountains
- Tai chi or yoga
- Having a pedicure
- Going out to eat
- Cuddling, kissing
- Writing letters
- Gardening
- Singing
- Dancing
- Enjoying nature
- Exercising
- Drinking coffee
- Smelling flowers
- Shopping
- Shooting pool
- Planning a trip
- Watching clouds
- Taking a class
- Going out
- Sewing
- Relaxing
- Watching sports
- Going to church
- Collecting things
- Swimming
- Seeing a play
- Stretching
- Drinking tea

- Meeting someone new
- Complimenting someone
- Going to a club meeting
- Getting involved in politics
- Teaching someone something
- Laughing
- Photography
- Giving a gift to someone
- Going to a casino
- Reading the paper
- Having a soft drink
- Volunteering
- Reading a magazine
- Lunching with a friend
- Holding a baby
- Daydreaming
- Sitting in the sun
- Having a quiet evening
- Taking a nap
- Having a picnic
- Playing music
- Talking
- Bird-watching
- Camping
- Sightseeing
- Doodling
- Golfing

Others: _____

3. Make a Plan and Schedule for Pleasant Activities

It's hard to do something pleasant when you're feeling down or depressed. You probably won't want to – if you wanted to, you wouldn't be depressed! So how can you make yourself do something enjoyable even when you're feeling low? People are more likely to do something if they make a plan and schedule.

Take some time to make a clear, specific plan in advance for what, how, when, where, and with whom you will do something you enjoy. Schedule at least one pleasant activity into each day. Pick a different activity every day. Put them in your calendar, if you have one. Remember, you don't have to feel like it to do something pleasant. The activity itself will make you feel more motivated and improve your mood.

Continue to practice relaxation throughout the day, notice and change inaccurate negative thoughts, and commit to at least one positive action you can take this week to change an unhelpful behavior or work on an important problem.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS I LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER ARE:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Practice Exercises – Date: _____
Increasing Pleasure

On average, how much did you worry or feel anxious today (circle a number)?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

What did you worry or feel anxious about?

What physical sensations did you feel when you were worried or anxious?

What thoughts did you have when you were worried or anxious?

What unhelpful things did you do because of worry or anxiety today?

Pick one pleasant activity that you can do today. Schedule a time and place for it. Rate your mood before and after on a scale of 0, no depression, to 10, a lot of depression. Make sure you try a different activity every day this week.

Activity: _____

Amount of depression before the activity:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

Amount of depression after the activity:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

What did you do to work on an unhelpful behavior or problem today?

Did you do a relaxation exercise? Yes No Tension before (0-10): ____ After: ____

Did you try changing your thinking? Yes No Was it helpful? Yes No

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Facing Your Fears

Goals for this topic:

1. Why exposure?
2. Create a list of feared or anxiety provoking situations.
3. Learn how to practice exposure at home.



1. Why Exposure?

Fear and anxiety are helpful, even life-saving, emotional responses in threatening situations. Although there are some individual differences in how and when people experience fear and anxiety, these responses generally are very similar for everyone (e.g., “fight or flight”). For example, fear and anxiety are often characterized by physical sensations such as increased heart rate, sweating, shallow breathing, and/or nausea; thinking the worst or that you can’t cope, and behaviors such as escape or avoidance.

Some people experience these anxiety symptoms in situations that are not actually dangerous. This can start after a traumatic experience (e.g., a person who was in a car accident may become extremely anxious when riding in a car). Some people may first experience intense anxiety or a panic attack in a stressful situation, but then start to have attacks unpredictably in many situations. It is also possible not to know how or why the problem started (e.g., a person may have been very shy as a child and now experiences intense fear and anxiety meeting a new person or spending time in a group).

Exposure treatment is a technique that is used to help people who avoid situations due to anxiety. The process involves putting yourself into the feared situation and staying there until your anxiety starts to decrease. Why might this be helpful? It teaches you that the situation is not dangerous, nothing horrible is going to happen, and you can handle it.

The first step is to learn ways of managing anxiety. This can include relaxation and more realistic thinking. Second, create a list of situations that make you anxious, putting it in order from least anxiety-provoking to most. Third, start by putting yourself in a moderately anxiety-provoking situation on the list and stay in that situation until your anxiety decreases. Practice several times with the same situation until it only makes you mildly anxious. Then practice with a harder situation. Keep moving up the list until you have mastered the most anxiety-

provoking situation. This process can take a long time, several weeks at least. The longer you have experienced the fear, the more intense it is, and the more you have avoided the situation, the longer it will take. However, this process is the most effective treatment for reducing fear and avoidance of specific situations.

2. Creating a List of Anxiety-Provoking Situations

So what is the fear you want to face? This can include closed places, heights, animals, the sight of blood, needles, meeting new people, or sudden unexpected panic attacks.

Make a list of anxiety-provoking situations related to this fear. You should think of at least a few that make you moderately anxious (6-7 on a 10-point scale) and a few that make you very anxious (8-10 on a 10-point scale). Your counselor will help you create your list. **Rate how much anxiety each item on the list causes on a scale of 0, no anxiety at all, to 10, very anxious.**

Situation: _____	Anxiety Rating
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

3. Practicing Exposure at Home

Now that you have created a list and rated each item, it's time to practice exposure. You will start with the item on the list that has an anxiety rating of at least 6 (moderate anxiety).

Begin by doing a relaxation exercise for about ten minutes or until you feel very calm and relaxed. Rate your anxiety on a scale of 0 to 10. Now, put yourself into the situation. Keep rating your anxiety while you are in the situation. You may get more anxious after being in the situation for a while. That is normal; eventually you will find that your anxiety decreases. Stay in that situation until your anxiety reduces to a 3 or less. **The most important thing is to stay in the situation as long as it takes for your anxiety to start to decrease.** Keep practicing with the same situation until your anxiety never gets above a 3 in that situation.

Once you can remain in that situation with only mild fear or anxiety, move on to the item on your list with a slightly higher anxiety rating. Again, start by doing a relaxation exercise, then put yourself in the situation and stay there until your anxiety decreases. Keep practicing with that same situation until it no longer causes more than mild levels of anxiety. Keep moving up your list using the same procedure until you are able to put yourself in the most anxiety-provoking situation on your list without experiencing more than mild to moderate anxiety.

It's hard to put yourself in an anxiety-provoking situation, especially if you've been avoiding it for a long time. Expect that it will take some time before you can manage your anxiety well enough to put yourself in the hardest situations on your list. **However, remember that the only way to get over a fear is to face it, one small step at a time.**

Continue to practice relaxation throughout the day, notice and change inaccurate negative thoughts, and commit to at least one positive action you can take this week to change an unhelpful behavior or work on an important problem.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS I LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER ARE:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Practice Exercises -- Date: _____
Facing Your Fears

On average, how much did you worry or feel anxious today (circle a number)?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

What did you worry or feel anxious about?

What physical sensations did you feel when you were worried or anxious?

What thoughts did you have when you were worried or anxious?

What unhelpful things did you do because of worry or anxiety today?

Start with a moderately anxiety-provoking item on your list (rated at least a 6). Every day, put yourself in that situation. Record how long you spend in the situation and how anxious you get when you first enter the situation, at your maximum level of anxiety, and at the end on a scale of 0, no anxiety, to 10, a lot of anxiety. Don't stop until your anxiety goes down to 3 out of 10. Practice this exercise every day with the same situation until your anxiety level stays at 3 or less for the entire exercise. Then try the next highest item on your list.

Item: _____

Anxiety at the beginning (0-10): _____ At its worst: _____ At the end: _____

How long did you spend doing the exercise today: _____ minutes

What did you do to work on an unhelpful behavior or problem today?

Did you do a relaxation exercise? Yes No Tension before (0-10): ____ After: ____

Did you try changing your thinking? Yes No Was it helpful? Yes No

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Getting to Sleep

Goals for this topic:

1. Learn some facts about sleep.
2. Review good sleep guidelines: “DROWSE.”
3. Develop a plan to use good sleep skills.



1. Facts About Sleep

What happens when you don't sleep well? Can it hurt you? **Actually, although poor sleep can make you feel bad, it isn't incapacitating or dangerous.** People often report that their reaction time or reasoning ability is much worse after a night or two without sleep, but actual performance as measured by laboratory tests doesn't change much. Even long-term sleep deprivation doesn't cause permanent problems in thinking or functioning.

How much do you need to make up for lost sleep? It actually takes only 50% of the time you lost to make up for lost sleep. In other words, if you normally get 8 hours of sleep a night, and last night you only got 6, you would only need to get 1 extra hour of sleep (50% of the 2 hours you missed) to make up for the sleep you lost.

Finally, you are probably getting more sleep than you think. Laboratory studies have shown that older people who report poor sleep actually get as much sleep as people who report good sleep.

How much sleep do you need? Any amount between 5 and 10 hours is considered normal. On average, younger adults need about 8 hours of sleep whereas older adults need a little less, about 7 hours. Therefore, as you age, you may discover that you don't need the same amount of sleep to feel rested as you used to when you were younger. Spend some time paying attention to your sleep schedule and learn what is normal for you.

2. Good Sleep Guidelines: “DROWSE”

There are some important things you can do to increase your chances of getting a good night's sleep. You can use the acronym “DROWSE” to help you remember them:

Don't nap during the day.

Restrict the amount of time you spend lying in bed awake to 15 minutes.

Outdoor light every afternoon will help maintain your sleep/wake cycle.

Within 3 hours of bedtime, no alcohol, caffeine, heavy meals, or stimulating activities.

Sleep and sex are the only activities you should do in bed.

Establish a schedule for getting up and going to bed.

Don't nap during the day. Even if you are very sleepy, taking a nap during the day will throw off your schedule, making it more difficult to fall asleep later that night.

Restrict the amount of time you spend lying in bed awake to 15 minutes. Don't lie awake longer than that waiting to get to sleep. If you lie awake in bed worrying about the fact that you're not sleeping, you may get anxious about going to bed the next night, which will make it even harder for you to get to sleep. **If you can't fall asleep within 15 minutes of going to bed, or if you're awake during the night for more than 15 minutes, get up and engage in a quiet, soothing leisure activity such as listening to music or flipping through a magazine until you are tired and ready to fall asleep.** You could also try a relaxation exercise, with or without your CD. Repeat this process as often as you need to.



Outdoor light every afternoon will help keep your sleep/wake cycle regular. It's important to get outside during the afternoon. As people age, they tend to wake up earlier in the morning than they did when they were younger. Over time, they may start waking up and going to bed earlier and earlier until they're awake when it's dark and asleep when it's light. Afternoon sunlight will help keep the cycle regular so that you will sleep during the night and be awake during the day. This will help you sleep better overall.

Within 3 hours of bedtime, no alcohol, caffeine, heavy meals, or stimulating activities (including exercise). Avoid drinking alcohol or caffeine or eating a heavy

meal 3 hours before bedtime so that your body is not busy processing the alcohol, caffeine has time to wear off, and you don't have an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach from eating so much. Although having a drink of alcohol before bed can feel like it helps you to fall asleep, you are more likely to wake up in the middle of the night and have trouble getting back to sleep. Spend the time before bed doing peaceful and relaxing activities. Again, you could even use this time to practice relaxation exercises!

Sleep and sex are the only activities you should do in bed. Don't eat, read, watch television, or talk on the telephone while in bed. If all you do in bed is sleep, your mind and body will make the connection between bed and sleep, which will help you start to feel drowsy the minute you go to bed.



Establish a schedule for getting up and going to bed. Getting up at the same time each day, regardless of how little sleep you got the night before, will help you establish a regular sleep-wake cycle. Also, if you don't "sleep in" to make up for lost sleep the night before, you'll be sleepier at bedtime, which will help you go to sleep.

Do some of these guidelines sound strange to you? Many people don't know much about sleep. That may not matter all the time, but not following good sleep habits make it harder to get to sleep when you're feeling anxious and worried.

Are there any of these guidelines that you're not practicing regularly? Try changing your habits and see what happens to your sleep.

3. Develop a Plan to Use Sleep Management Skills

In order to develop a plan for good sleep, the first step is to understand the "DROWSE" guidelines. If you have questions, ask your counselor. If you have other sleep problems, your counselor can give you some other suggestions for how to improve your sleep. Second, keep the list of guidelines handy until you learn them completely. You can review them each evening prior to going to bed. Third, put them into practice! Obviously, they won't work if you don't do them. **Finally, have patience. It can take a few nights to see the results. Remember, a couple of nights of poor sleep won't hurt you.** And once you learn that there are things you can do to improve your sleep, you'll feel less anxious about an occasional bad night.

Continue to practice relaxation throughout the day, notice and change

inaccurate negative thoughts, and commit to at least one positive action you can take this week to change an unhelpful behavior or work on an important problem.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS I LEARNED IN THIS CHAPTER ARE:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study Practice Exercises – Date: _____
Getting to Sleep

On average, how much did you worry or feel anxious today (circle a number)?

0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
None A little Some Quite a bit A lot

What did you worry or feel anxious about?

What physical sensations did you feel when you were worried or anxious?

What thoughts did you have when you were worried or anxious?

What unhelpful things did you do because of worry or anxiety today?

What time did you go to bed? _____ What time did you fall asleep? _____

Times awake during the night:

Time How long? Time How long? Time How long?

1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____

What time did you wake up? _____ What time did you get out of bed? _____

Did you:

Get up and do a quiet activity if you couldn't fall asleep in 15 minutes?

Expose yourself to outdoor sunlight in the afternoon?

Take a nap?

Drink alcohol or caffeine or eat a heavy meal within 3 hours of bedtime?

Watch TV, eat, or read in bed?

What did you do to work on an unhelpful behavior or problem today?

Did you do a relaxation exercise? Yes No Tension before (0-10): ____ After: ____

Did you try changing your thinking? Yes No Was it helpful? Yes No

The EXTENDED RELIEF Study
Maintaining Your Progress

Goals for this session:

1. Review skills from the EXTENDED RELIEF program.
2. Identify your early warning signs of worry or anxiety and make a plan for dealing with them.
3. Start to say good-bye to your counselor.

1. Reviewing Your Progress

Congratulations! You have completed the EXTENDED RELIEF program! We hope that you have learned some important skills for managing your worry and anxiety. What skills have been the most useful for you so far? In what situations have you used them?

Skills
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

2. Planning for the Future

Use this EXTENDED RELIEF Study workbook to continue practicing the skills on your own. Do it even when you're not feeling anxious. **Continued practice when you're feeling well will help you stay well and will keep your skills sharp and ready to use if you start to feel more worried and anxious.**

No matter how much progress you've made, there will be some times in the future when things don't go as well as you'd like them to. Sometimes even positive life changes can cause stress or anxiety. So you will get anxious from time to time, but as you've learned, anxiety is not dangerous and does not last forever. You also have a number of different skills that you can use to manage worry and anxiety.

In order to help you manage worry and anxiety in the future, you need to recognize the early warning signs that you are starting to get more anxious. These could be situations that cause anxiety, physical sensations, thoughts, or actions. They may be problems you remember from before you started the EXTENDED RELIEF program, or problems that you still have, perhaps less often or less severely than you used to. What are your early warning signs?

Early Warning Signs
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

It is helpful to discuss these early warning signs with a close friend or family member. Develop a plan for what you will do if you notice any of them:

It can be helpful to write the early warning signs and the coping plan on a card. Check yourself by looking at the card once a week. Also talk to your friend or family member so that they can help you recognize these signs and put your plan into action if needed.

And finally, remember: If worry or anxiety symptoms start to be a problem at any time during the next 12 months, contact your counselor right away to schedule some booster sessions. We have found that a couple of sessions to reinforce the skills learned in this program can have a quick and dramatic effect on anxiety and worry.

3. Saying Good-Bye

You have now met with your counselor 16 times in the EXTENDED RELIEF Study program. Sometimes thoughts or feelings come up when you stop working with a counselor or therapist. You and your counselor will take some time to talk about this and to say good-bye.