

Anxiety Resources

Hi all,

At CAMHS we understand that each day can bring a number of different challenges for your family. The purpose of this resource is to help you gain a clearer understanding of what 'Anxiety' is.

Contents of this resource pack:

- ✚ What is anxiety?
- ✚ What factors maintain anxiety?
- ✚ What should be done when your child/young person presents with anxiety?
- ✚ Short and long term anxiety relief ideas

1. What is Anxiety?

The word anxiety is used quite often in day-to-day life, however sometimes it can feel hard to describe. So when asked what anxiety is, it can be helpful to break it down into the following categories: Thoughts, Feelings, Body Signals & Behaviours.

Thoughts:

If you hear thoughts from your young person such as: "What if I'm not good enough?", "What if I get ill?" or "What if this quarantine lasts for many months?" These are a few examples of thoughts which may suggest that your young person is feeling anxious.



Feelings:

If your child presents with feelings of sadness, fear, panic, worry or restless. These are just a few of the feelings which a young person could report, which would suggest that they may be feeling anxious.



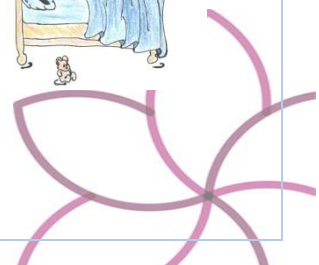
Body Signals:

There are a vast number of bodily sensations which your young person may report, which may suggest that they are experiencing raised levels of anxiety, a few common examples may include: feeling tense, difficulties in concentration, feeling knots in their stomach, dizziness, increased heart or breathing rates.



Behaviours:

Since it is likely that you know the young person in your care, any changes in their behaviour may be important to consider, for example: spending time isolating themselves, removing themselves from previously enjoyed clubs, stopping activities which they may have





enjoyed, increased fidgeting, checking that things have been done multiple times or asking for lots of reassurance.

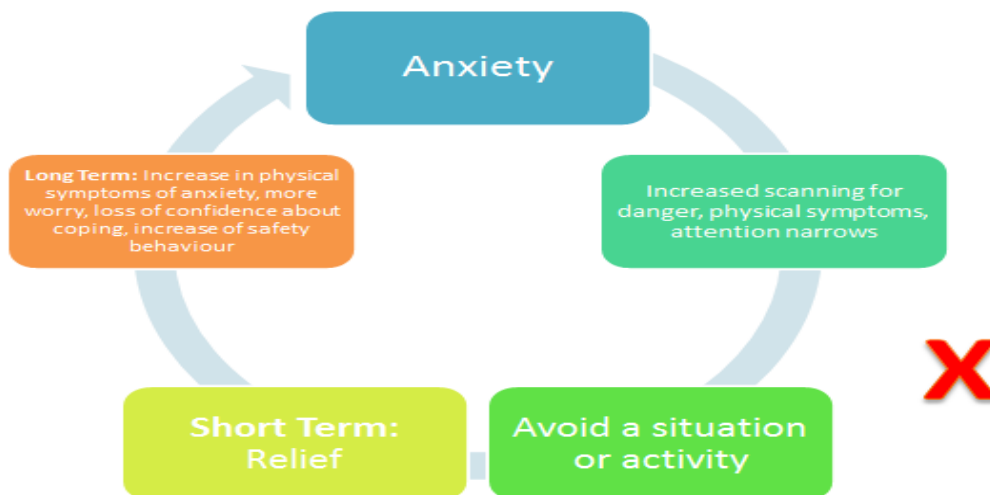
If you recognise that your young person is experiencing a number of symptoms as mentioned above then your young person may be experiencing anxiety.

It is important to remember that this is normal to experience anxiety!

2. What maintains Anxiety?

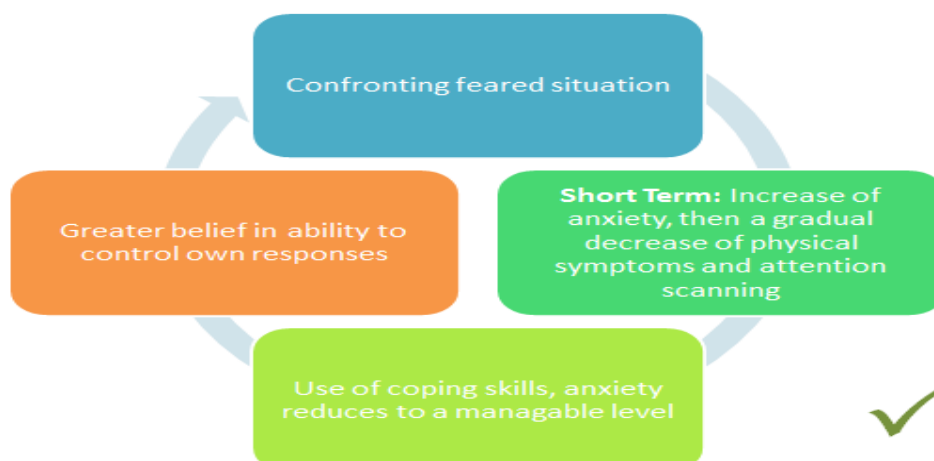
In some instances a young person may experience anxiety within specific situations; a relevant example could be if a young person experiences anxiety when leaving the house for daily exercise. The following diagram explains what may happen if the young person begins to *avoid* situations, this in turn can provoke anxiety in the future.

The Cycle of Anxiety



The following cycle shows us how we can begin to reduce anxiety in the future, referring to the previous example, if we *confront* the anxiety by entering the feared situation i.e going outside for the 30 minute exercise, and repeating this activity, the anxiety is shown to reduce.

Confronting the Cycle of Anxiety



In some instances, young people may begin to use **unhelpful thinking styles**, we all use some of the following styles from time to time, however once we are aware of them, we can then begin to move to more adaptive thinking styles. (Resources found on the **Centre for Clinical Interventions** website)

unhelpful thinking styles

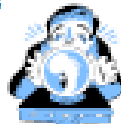
When a person experiences an unhelpful emotion (eg, depression or anxiety), it is usually preceded by a number of unhelpful self-statements and thoughts. Often there is a pattern to such thoughts and we call these, "unhelpful thinking styles". One of the things we have noticed is that people use unhelpful thinking styles as an automatic habit. It is something that happens out of our awareness. However, when a person consistently and constantly uses some of these styles of thinking, they can often cause themselves a great deal of emotional distress. This information sheet describes a number of "unhelpful thinking styles". As you read through them, you might notice some thinking patterns and styles that you use consistently. Some of these styles might sound similar to one another. They are not meant to be distinct categories but to help you see if there is a kind of pattern to your thoughts.

Mental Filter:

This thinking style involves a "filtering in" and "filtering out" process – a sort of "tunnel vision," focusing on only one part of a situation and ignoring the rest. Usually this means looking at the negative parts of a situation and forgetting the positive parts, and the whole picture is coloured by what may be a single negative detail.

Jumping to Conclusions:

We jump to conclusions when we assume that we know what someone else is thinking (mind reading) and when we make predictions about what is going to happen in the future (predictive thinking).



Personalisation:

This involves blaming yourself for everything that goes wrong or could go wrong, even when you may only be partly responsible or not responsible at all. You might be taking 100% responsibility for the occurrence of external events.

Catastrophising:

Catastrophising occurs when we "blow things out of proportion", and we view the situation as terrible, awful, dreadful, and horrible, even though the reality is that the problem itself is quite small.

Black & White Thinking:

This thinking style involves seeing only one extreme or the other. You are either wrong or right, good or bad and so on. There are no in-betweens or shades of gray.

Shoulding and Musting:

Sometimes by saying "I should..." or "I must..." you can put unreasonable demands or pressure on yourself and others. Although these statements are not always unhelpful (eg "I should not get drunk and drive home"), they can sometimes create unrealistic expectations.

Overgeneralisation:

When we overgeneralise, we take one instance in the past or present, and impose it on all current or future situations. If we say "You always..." or "Everyone...", or "I never..." then we are probably overgeneralising.

Labelling:

We label ourselves and others when we make global statements based on behaviour in specific situations. We might use this label even though there are many more examples that aren't consistent with that label.



Emotional Reasoning:

This thinking style involves basing your view of situations or yourself on the way you are feeling. For example, the only evidence that something bad is going to happen is that you feel like something bad is going to happen.

Magnification and Minimisation:

In this thinking style, you magnify the positive attributes of other people and minimise your own positive attributes. It's as though you're explaining away your own positive characteristics.



When we begin to experience negative thoughts, using the above thinking styles, it can be helpful to take a few minutes and consider how we can look at these thoughts in a more helpful way. The following worksheet can be a very powerful tool, useful in considering how we can differently perceive a situation or 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

(Worksheet resource found on the **MOODJUICE** website)



3. What to do when my young person presents with anxiety

It's important to consider that each different young person has a unique personality and will have different needs thus will respond differently to any input that a guardian may have. It is important to consider what the young person wants. The following is a document which opens an avenue for a guardian to discuss with a young person what *they* want and need when they are struggling:

My Anxiety Plan

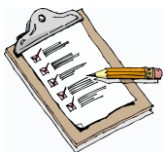
I will know I am feeling anxious when...

(What thoughts will I have? What will I be doing/not doing?)



When I am feeling anxious I will...

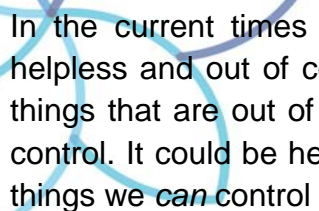
(What can I do to help reduce/manage my anxiety? What activities could I be doing? How could I distract myself? What can my family do with me?)



I can talk to....

- Papyrus: 08000684141 Text: 07786209697
- Kooth: Sign up
- Call: Wigan CAMHS duty on 01942 775400
- NHS: 111 for advice
- In crisis and can't maintain safety: Contact 111, call 999, if absolutely necessary attend A&E.





In the current times of uncertainty, young people under our care can often feel helpless and out of control, the following task can help to remind us that there are things that are out of our control; however, there are a number of things within our control. It could be helpful to go through this with your young person, consider what things we *can* control and what we *can* do at this time:

Try to let go of....



& try to

focus on....



Short Term Anxiety Resolution

At the moment, it can be really tough, especially if the young person is experiencing lots of physical sensations of anxiety, such as the panicking. If we effectively practice the following techniques, it can help relieve anxiety to a point where the young person can begin to take control again. Two techniques to manage this level of anxiety are: **Breathing Techniques** and **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)**.

Square Breathing

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.

- Close your eyes and begin to focus on your breathing.
- Inhale for the count of 4.
- Hold for the count of 4.
- Exhale for the count of 4.
- Hold it out for the count of 4.
 - Repeat the cycle
- Continue for at least 4 cycles



Be sure to draw out the inhale and exhale so it fills the full four counts

- Relax! Try not to hold much tension in your face, chest or head. Allow yourself to relax in all phases of the breath.
- If it's too hard to use 4 as the counting number, use 3.
 - To help focus, hear and visualize the numbers as you count them



Square Breathing is an effective breath exercise to combat feelings of worry, anxiety and panic. It regulates the breath and heart rate, alleviates tension and feelings of confusion and panic and brings a general sense of peace and order to the mind and body.

5 Finger Breathing

TRACE ALL 5 FINGERS



1. Stretch one hand out so that you have space between your fingers

2. Hold up your pointer finger from the other hand

3. Start at the bottom of your thumb. Use your pointer finger to trace your thumb as you *slowly* breathe in through your mouth.

4. When you get to the top of your thumb, *slowly* breathe out through your nose as you trace down the other side.

5. Repeat for all fingers until you have traced your whole hand.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is a form of relaxation training that can teach you how to achieve deep physical relaxation. You will tense groups of muscles, then release the tension and pay close attention to feelings of relaxation. Relaxation should be enjoyable, so if any part of the exercise is too difficult skip over it and move on to the next part. If you have any injuries be careful not to stress that part of your body.

Preparation

Choose a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. You can relax while lying down on a firm bed or couch, or sitting comfortably in a chair with your head well-supported. Loosen any tight clothing and make sure that you will be comfortably warm.

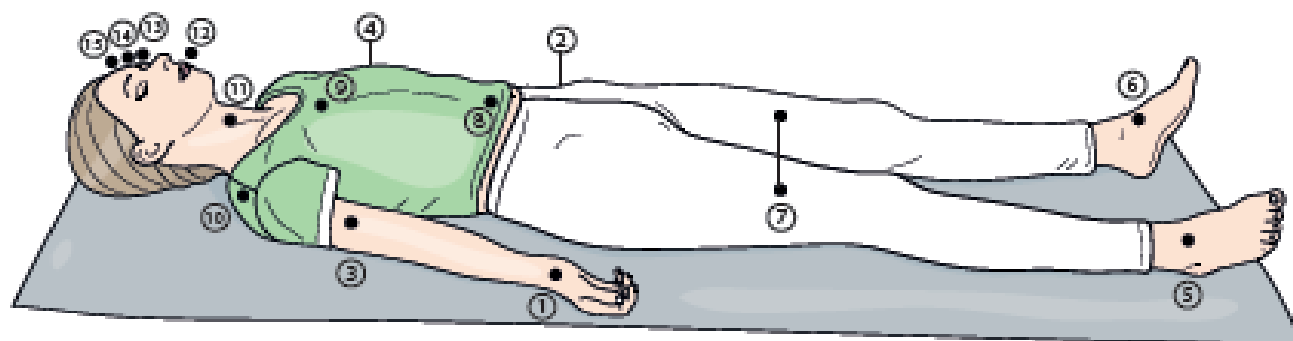
Instructions

For each group of muscles you should:

1. Focus your attention on that muscle group
2. Tense those muscles as instructed
3. Maintain the tension for about 5 to 7 seconds
4. Stay focused on that muscle group for about 20 to 30 seconds before moving on, noticing feelings of relaxation

Go through the sequence three times:

1. **Tense & relax:** tense the muscles, maintain the tension for few moments, then relax
2. **Lightly tense & relax:** tense the muscles only very slightly, then relax
3. **Relax only:** just pay attention to each muscle group and decide to relax it



Recommended sequence

1. Right hand and lower arm (clench your fist and tense the lower arm)
2. Left hand and lower arm
3. Right upper arm (bring your hand to your shoulder and tense your biceps)
4. Left upper arm
5. Right lower leg and foot (point your toe and gently tense the calf muscle)
6. Left lower leg and foot
7. Both thighs (press your knees and thighs tightly together)
8. Abdomen (pull your abdominal muscles in tightly)
9. Chest (take a deep breath and hold it in)
10. Shoulders and back (hunch your shoulders or pull them towards your ears)
11. Neck and throat (push your head backwards against the surface on which you are resting)
12. Lips (press them tightly together without clenching your teeth)
13. Eyes (closing them tightly)
14. Lower forehead (frown and pull your eyebrows together)
15. Upper forehead (wrinkle your forehead)

PSYCHOLOGYTOOLS*

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(Worksheet resource found on the [Psychology Tools](https://www.psychologytools.com/) website)





Long Term Anxiety Resolution

In the long term, young people may need to be able to anticipate their anxiety and learn to distract themselves. It is important to note that within CAMHS we promote facing problems as mentioned in section 2. But sometimes to be able to face those situations, young people may need to support of the following techniques.

Using the 5 senses

- Touch: What can I feel? What is the texture like (e.g. rough, smooth)? Where on my body do I have contact with it? Are there areas of my body with more or less contact with it?
- Sight: What can I see? What catches my eye? What about the light... the shadows... the shapes... the colours? How many things can I see?
- Hearing: What sounds do I notice? Take a moment to notice each sound?
- Smell: What smells do I notice? Do they change during the task? How many smells are there?
- Taste: What flavours do I notice? Do they change during the task? What is the quality of the flavours?



Or

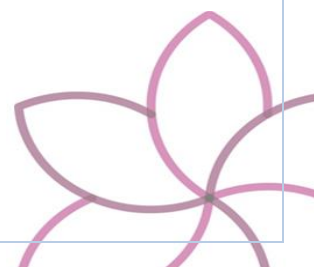
Focus on one area of your body e.g. your feet. What can you see? Really look at your shoes (are they dirty, clean, do they have laces? How many? How do your feet feel in your shoes? Pay attention to your toes. Can you feel each one?)

Thinking puzzles

At other times you may want to occupy your thoughts by setting yourself some form of thinking puzzle. This could be anything such as:



- Counting backwards from 123 in nines
- Spelling the names of your family backwards
- Naming the songs of your favourite band
- Naming all of the players in your favourite sports team





Following is a list of activities which you could try to engage in to keep yourself and/or your young people distracted

Activity Menu



Animals

- Put an animal
- Walk a dog
- Ride a horse
- Volunteer at an animal shelter
- Go bird watching
- Go fishing
- Listen to the birds
- Visit the zoo



Be active

- Go for a walk
- Go for a run
- Go for a swim
- Go hiking
- Go cycling
- Go to the gym
- Go bowling
- Go ice / roller skating
- Play golf / football / tennis
- Throw a frisbee
- Fly a kite
- Try a martial art



Clean

- Clean the house
- Clean the yard
- Clean the bathroom
- Clean the toilet
- Clean your bedroom
- Clean the fridge
- Clean the oven
- Clean your shoes
- Do the washing up
- Fill / empty the dishwasher
- Do laundry
- Do some chores
- Organise your workspace
- Clean a cupboard



Connect with people

- Contact a friend
- Invite a friend to come over
- Be with friends
- Meet a friend for coffee
- Make new friends
- Join a new group
- Join a political party
- Join a book club
- Join an exercise class
- Join a mother & baby group
- Join a dating website
- Ask someone out
- Go on a date
- Go 'people watching'
- Send a message to a friend
- Write a letter to a friend
- Reconnect with an old friend



Cook

- Cook a meal for yourself
- Cook a meal for someone else
- Bake a cake / cookies
- Roast marshmallows
- Have a BBQ
- Find a new recipe
- Organise a dinner party



Create

- Draw a picture
- Paint a portrait
- Take a photograph
- Doodle / sketch
- Organise photographs
- Make a photograph album
- Start a scrapbook
- Finish a project
- Do some sewing / knitting



Expression

- Laugh
- Cry
- Sing
- Shout
- Scream



Kindness

- Help a friend / neighbour / stranger
- Volunteer at a charity
- Make a gift for someone
- Try a random act of kindness
- Do someone a favour
- Offer to babysit
- Teach somebody a skill
- Do something nice for someone
- Plan a surprise for someone
- Make a list of your good points
- Make a list of things or people you are grateful for



Learn

- Learn something new
- Learn a new skill
- Learn a new fact
- Enroll in a class
- Go back to school
- Watch a tutorial video



Mend

- Repair something in the house
- Repair your bike / car / scooter
- Make something new
- Change a lightbulb
- Decorate a room



Mind

- Daydream
- Meditate
- Pray
- Reflect
- Think
- Try relaxation exercises
- Practise yoga



Music

- Listen to music you like
- Find some new music to listen to
- Go to a concert
- Turn on the radio
- Make some music
- Sing a song
- Play an instrument
- Listen to a podcast



Nature

- Try some gardening
- Plant something
- Do some pruning
- Mow the lawn
- Pick flowers
- Buy flowers
- Go for a walk in nature
- Swim in the sea
- Hike in the mountains
- Walk in the woods
- Sit in the sun
- Go to the park



Plan

- Set a goal
- Create a budget
- Make a 5 year plan
- Make a 'to do' list
- Make a 'bucket list'
- Make a shopping list



Read

- Read a favourite book
- Read a new book
- Read the newspaper
- Read your favourite website



Schedule

- Get up extra early
- Stay up late
- Sleep in late
- Book a day off
- Tick something off your 'to do' list



Self care

- Take a bath
- Take a shower
- Wash your hair
- Give yourself a facial
- Trim your nails
- Go for a massage
- Sunbathe (wear sunscreen)
- Take a nap



Shop

- Shop for groceries
- Shop for clothes
- Go to a car boot sale / yard sale
- Take things to a charity shop



Travel

- Go for a ride in the car
- Take the bus somewhere
- Catch a train
- Plan a holiday



Try something new

- Try a new food
- Take a walk in a new place
- Listen to some new music
- Watch a new TV show or movie
- Wear some new clothes
- Read a new book
- Try a new class
- Do something spontaneous
- Express yourself



Watch


- Go to the cinema
- Go to the theatre
- Watch a movie
- Watch a TV show
- Watch a YouTube video



Write

- Write a letter of complaint
- Write a letter with compliments
- Write a letter to your politician
- Write an angry letter
- Write a grateful letter
- Write a 'thank you' card
- Write a journal / diary
- Write your CV
- Start writing a book

Get Appy



Please use the Apps attached to this email to your benefit, consider the needs of yourself and your family.

Acknowledgements

Finally, it is important to remember that we are all going through difficult times, both young people and adults alike will be experiencing higher levels of anxiety, due to the ongoing pandemic, thinking about our friends and families and spending prolonged periods of time within a disrupted routine. It is okay to feel anxious, it is normal and expected that people will be struggling. Parents and guardians need to look after themselves to be able to look after their young people, we acknowledge the commendable effort of families who are working with young people who may be struggling. You are not alone with these difficulties, take each day at a time, and use the tools which we are providing to make this time pass as comfortably as possible.



Resource List

Please find below a list of resources to help your young people with their anxieties:

What is anxiety →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Anxiety/Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%20001%20-%20What%20is%20Anxiety.pdf>

What is generalised anxiety / worry →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Generalised%20Anxiety/Generalised%20Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Generalised%20Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%20001%20-%20What%20is%20Generalised%20Anxiety.pdf>

How worry works →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Generalised%20Anxiety/Generalised%20Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Generalised%20Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%20004%20-%20How%20Worry%20Works.pdf>

Accepting Uncertainty (good for this time!) →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Generalised%20Anxiety/Generalised%20Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Generalised%20Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%20006%20-%20Accepting%20Uncertainty.pdf>

The vicious of anxiety →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Panic/Panic%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Panic%20Information%20Sheet%20-%20003%20-%20The%20Vicious%20Cycle%20of%20Anxiety.pdf>

Biology and psychology of panic →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Panic/Panic%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Panic%20Information%20Sheet%20-%20002%20-%20Biology%20and%20Psychology%20of%20Panic.pdf>



Breathing retraining →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Anxiety/Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%2008%20-%20Breathing%20Retraining.pdf>

Progressive muscle relaxation →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Anxiety/Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%2009%20-%20Progressive%20Muscle%20Relaxation.pdf>

Coping with Stress →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Anxiety/Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%2009%20-%20Progressive%20Muscle%20Relaxation.pdf>

What is mindfulness? →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Generalised%20Anxiety/Generalised%20Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Generalised%20Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%2002%20-%20What%20is%20Mindfulness.pdf>

Mindfulness and letting go →

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Generalised%20Anxiety/Generalised%20Anxiety%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Generalised%20Anxiety%20Information%20Sheet%20-%2003%20-%20Mindfulness%20and%20Letting%20go.pdf>

