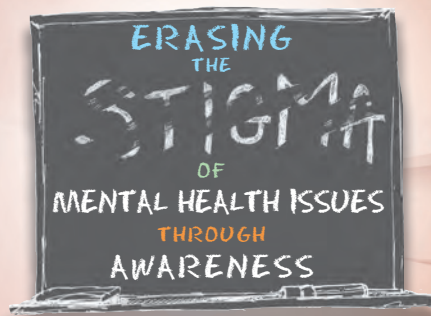# Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens

A TOOLBOX of REPRODUCIBLE ASSESSMENTS and ACTIVITIES for FACILITATORS

Ester R. A. Leutenberg
and John J. Liptak, EdD

ERASING
THE
STIGMA
OF
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
THROUGH
AWARENESS

ERASING
THE
STIGMA
OF
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
THROUGH
AWARENESS

Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens

A TOOLBOX of REPRODUCIBLE ASSESSMENTS and ACTIVITIES for FACILITATORS

Ester R.A. Leutenberg
and John J. Liptak, EdD

101 West 2nd Street, Suite 203
Duluth, MN 55802

800-247-6789

books@WholePerson.com
WholePerson.com

All efforts have been made to ensure accuracy of the information
contained in this book as of the date published.

The author(s) and the publisher expressly disclaim responsibility
for any adverse effects arising from the use or application of the
information contained herein.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Editorial Director: Carlene Sippola
Art Director: Mathew Pawlak

Using the *Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens*

Teens experience stress about a great number of situations and circumstances, and anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. For teens, such circumstances as speaking in public, moving to a new neighborhood, dating issues, taking tests, making good grades, and competing in athletic events may all cause stress. For some teens various circumstances or events can cause more than the usual amount of stress. This leads to anxiety.

Anxiety has been defined as a state of intense apprehension, uncertainty, and fear resulting mainly from the anticipation of a threatening event or situation, often to a degree that disrupts normal, everyday physical and psychological functioning. Fear is an emotional response to a <u>real or perceived threat</u>. Anxiety is anticipation of a future threat.

Anxiety is normal in the everyday life of all people and can actually be a good thing. Anxiety motivates one to accomplish goals and warns a person of a dangerous situation. However, intense anxiety can involve debilitating symptoms and affect performance in school, athletics, and interpersonal interactions. Some teens persistently experience excessive amounts of worry and fear about everyday situations and this may lead to depression. Persistent anxiety and fear can interfere with daily activities. Often, these symptoms are difficult to control.

How Does Anxiety Manifest Itself?

Anxiety affects one's general well-being and manifests itself physiologically, behaviorally, and psychologically. Following are some of the ways that anxiety can affect teens:

- Apprehension
- Chills
- Cold or sweaty hands and/or feet
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness
- Dry mouth
- Emotional tension
- Fear of anticipation of the worst outcome
- Feeling as if one's mind has gone blank
- Feelings of powerlessness
- Feelings of extreme fear
- Heart palpitations
- Inability to act

- Inability to express oneself
- Inability to sit or stand still
- Inability to sleep and/or remain asleep
- Inexplicable feelings of dread
- Irritability
- Jittery feelings
- Muscle tension
- Nausea
- Over-alertness for signs of danger
- Panic attacks
- Mind racing
- Shortness of breath
- Tingling of hands and/or feet

This Workbook has Two Goals

1. Our goal is NOT to diagnose a mental illness, or even for the facilitator to make that diagnosis from this workbook's content. Our goal is to touch on some of the symptoms and possibilities, create realizations, and provide coping methods which will help teens to go forward and perhaps consider the possibility of the need for medications and therapy.
2. Our other goal is to help participants recognize that other people have the same issues. No shame should be connected to them, nor should mental health issues of any kind be stigmatized

> **In this workbook, we are using the phrase MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES to include all types of anxiety issues, from experiencing a few anxiety problems to serious, extremely intense anxiety issues.**

"Normal" Anxiety vs. Intense Anxiety Disturbances

Anxiety is an inevitable part of everyday life for most teens. Some anxiety is actually an appropriate emotional response to a variety of situations that people encounter. The assessments and activities in this workbook can be valuable tools for helping teens deal effectively with "normal" everyday anxiety that they experience, as well as more intense anxiety disturbances.

Anxiety manifests itself in the everyday life of most teens in many different ways.

Some of the most common types of everyday, "normal" anxiety:
- **Situational Anxiety** – Feelings of apprehension and dread related to a specific situation such as taking a class in physics, moving to a new community, or trying out for the soccer team at school.
- **Anticipatory Anxiety** – Feelings of apprehension and dread when one confronts something that has been frightening in the past, or that has resulted in a negative experience such as speaking in front of classmates.

Anxiety Disturbances – These can be distinguished from the everyday, "normal" anxiety because they are more intense (panic attacks), last longer (often months or years instead of going away after an anxiety-producing situation), and interfere with a person's ability to function effectively in daily life (i.e., afraid to go to school, fear of getting bullied, etc.).

Different types of disturbances related to thinking and behavior are conveyed and expressed in different forms:
- **Panic Disorder:** Teens have feelings of extreme terror that strike suddenly and often without any warning. Teens with a panic disorder often experience sweating, chest pain, and/or heart palpitations. They feel as if they are out of control during one of their attacks of fear, and they attempt to avoid places where panic attacks have occurred in the past.
- **Social Anxiety Disorder:** Teens have feelings of overwhelming worry and experience extreme self-consciousness in everyday social situations. These worries include fear that others will judge them harshly, they will do something that may be embarrassing, and they fear being ridiculed by other teens. Teens with this disorder often are very anxious around other people and have a difficult time talking to others. They will stay away from places where there are other people and have a hard time making and keeping friends. This can lead to avoidance and selective mutism.
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder:** Teens exhibit excessive, extreme, and/or unrealistic worry and tension, even if there is nothing (or very little) to be worried and/or tense about. Teens with this disorder may be worried about just getting through the day and doing everyday tasks. They often have trouble falling and staying asleep, relaxing, and concentrating in school.
- **Specific Phobias:** Teens experience intense, unwarranted fears about an object or a situation. The fear involved in a phobia is usually inappropriate for the phobia-producing object or situation and may cause people to avoid specific everyday activities in order to avoid the object or the situation. Some common phobias include snakes, speaking in public, clowns, fear of situations where escape from bad things is perceived as difficult. Phobias are intense fears resulting from real or imagined exposure to a wide range of situations.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Teens experience anxiety caused by exposure to traumatic events (i.e., child abuse, abandonment, accident, house fire, loss, victim of crime).
- **Anxiety Disorder Due to Another Medical Condition:** Teens experience anxiety attacks directly attributed to an existing medical condition (i.e., cancer diagnosis), and it often parallels the course of the illness.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder:** Teens have repetitive thoughts that will not dissipate (obsessions) and/or engage in ritual behaviors to dispel anxiety (compulsions).

Which Teens are at Risk?

Many risk factors or things that might make teens more vulnerable or sensitive to experiencing anxiety have been identified. Some of these risk factors include genetic factors such as living in a family with a history of mental health issues; personality factors such as high sensitivity or extreme introversion; environmental factors, such as experiencing ongoing stress or a single stressful event that occurs in the teen's life; and medical factors such as ongoing physical illness.

When to Worry?

Symptoms related to intense anxiety can be very complex and difficult to cope with. The good news is that teens can develop the skills needed to manage the symptoms and progress forward to begin enjoying life more. Undergoing the stress that accompanies many of the mental health issues can be a very frightening way to live. **A teen who experiences anxiety and stress over time is at risk of developing a serious mental or physical illness and needs to seek a medical professional.**

Suicide Warning!

People who experience intense anxiety may feel suicidal, harbor suicidal thoughts, and plan to die by suicide. Sometimes they think that the only way to escape the physical, psychological, and emotional pain is suicide. Remember to take any talk about suicide or suicidal acts very seriously.

Signs of Suicidal Thoughts

- Calling or visiting people to say goodbye
- Drastic changes: angry person becoming super happy, style of clothes, shaving head
- Dropping out of school
- Engaging in reckless actions
- Expressing feeling of being trapped with no way out
- Expressing severe hopelessness about the future
- Giving away possessions
- Increasing use of harmful substances
- Making a plan for dying by suicide
- Purchasing a weapon
- Talking about harming oneself or another person
- Withdrawing from family, friends, and activities of interest in the past

Serious Mental Illness

If participants have a serious mental illness, they need to do much more than complete the assessments, activities and exercises contained in this workbook. They need to be taken seriously and facilitators can take an active role in their finding help immediately. All disturbances related to intense anxiety need to be thoroughly evaluated by a medical professional and then treated with an appropriate combination of medication and group and/or individual therapy.

Format of the *Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens*

The *Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens* is designed to be used either independently or as part of an established mental health issue program. You may administer any of the assessments and the guided self-exploration activities to an individual or a group with whom you are working, and you may administer any of the assessments and activities over one or more days. Feel free to pick and choose those that best fit the outcomes you desire. The purpose of this workbook is to provide facilitators who work with individuals and groups who may be experiencing anxiety issues with a series of reproducible activities that can be used to supplement their work with participants. Because these activity pages are reproducible, they can be photocopied as is, or you may adapt them by whiting out and writing in your own changes to suit the needs of each group, using that page as your master copy to be photocopied for each participant.

Assessments

Assessments establish a behavioral baseline from which facilitators and participants can gauge progress toward identified goals. This workbook will supplement the facilitator's work by providing assessments designed to measure client change in those behavioral baselines. In order to do so, assessments with scoring directions and interpretative materials begin each module. The authors recommend that you begin presenting each topic by asking participants to complete the assessment. Facilitators can choose one or more or all of the activities relevant to their participants' specific needs and concerns.

Each of the awareness modules contained in this workbook begin with an assessment for these purposes:
- To assist participants to feel a part of the treatment planning process.
- To help facilitators gather valuable information about their participants.
- To help facilitators identify patterns that are negatively affecting participants.
- To help facilitators in the measurement of change over time.
- To help facilitators to develop a numerical baseline of behavior, attitude, and personality characteristics of participants before they begin their individual treatment plans.
- To prompt insight and behavioral changes in participants' lives.
- To provide participants with a starting point to begin to learn more about themselves and their strengths and limitations.
- To use as pre-tests and post-tests to measure changes in behavior, attitude, and personality.

Assessments are a great aid in developing plans for effective change. Be aware of the following when administering, scoring, and interpreting the assessments in this workbook:
- The purpose of these assessments is not to pigeonhole people, but to allow them to explore various elements of themselves and their own situations.
- This workbook contains self-assessments and not tests. Traditional tests measure knowledge or right or wrong responses. For the assessments provided in this workbook, remind participants that there are no right or wrong answers. These assessments only ask for opinions or attitudes.
- The assessments in this workbook have face value, but have not been formally normed for validity and reliability.
- The assessments in this workbook are based on self-reported data. In other words, the accuracy and usefulness of the information is dependent on the information that participants honestly provide about themselves. Assure them that they do not need to share their information with anyone. They can be honest!
- Remind participants that the assessments are exploratory exercises and not a judgment of who they are as human beings.
- The assessments are not a substitute for professional assistance. If you feel any of your participants need more assistance than you can provide, refer them to an appropriate medical professional.

Format of the *Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens* (Continued)

Assessment Script

When administering the assessments contained in this workbook, please remember that the assessments can be administered, scored, and interpreted by the client. If working in a group, facilitators should circulate among participants as they complete assessments to ensure that there are no questions. If working with an individual client, facilitators can use the instruction collaboratively.

Please note that as your participants begin the assessments in this workbook, the participants' instructions italicized below are meant to be a guide, so please do not feel you must say them word for word.

Tell your participants: *You will be completing a quick assessment related to the topics we are discussing. Please remember that assessments are powerful tools if you are honest with yourself. Be truthful in your responses so that your results are an honest reflection of you. Your level of commitment in completing the assessments honestly will determine how much you learn about yourself.*

Allow participants to turn to the first page of their assessment and read the instructions silently to themselves. Then tell them: *All of the assessments have similar formats, but they have different scales, responses, scoring instructions, and methods for interpretation. If you do not understand how to complete the assessment, ask me before you turn the page to begin.*

Then tell them: *Before completing each assessment, be sure to read the instructions. Because there is no time limit for completing the assessments, take your time and work at your own pace. Do not answer the assessments as you think others would like you to answer them or how you think others see you. These assessments are for you to reflect on your life and explore some of the barriers that are keeping you from living a more satisfying life.*

Make sure that nobody has a question, then tell them: *Learning about yourself can be a positive and motivating experience. Don't stress about taking the assessments or discovering your results. Just respond honestly and learn as much about yourself as you can.*

Tell participants to turn the page and begin answering with Question 1. Allow sufficient time for all participants to complete the assessment. Answer any questions. As people begin to finish, read through the instructions for scoring the assessment. Have participants begin to score their assessment and transfer their scores for interpretation. Ask if anyone has questions about how to do the scoring.

Review the purpose of the interpretation table included after each assessment. Tell the participants: *Remember, this assessment was not designed to label you. Rather, it was designed to develop a baseline of your behaviors. Regardless of how you score on an assessment, consider it a starting point upon which you can develop healthier habits. Take your time, reflect on your results, and note how they compare to what you already know about yourself.*

After participants have completed, scored, and interpreted their assessment, facilitators can use the self-exploration activities included in each module to supplement their traditional tools and techniques to help participants function more effectively.

Format of the *Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens* (Continued)

Self-Exploration Activities

This workbook will provide self-exploration activities that can be used to reduce stress and decrease anxiety. These activities, included after each of the modules, will prompt self-reflection and promote self-understanding. They use a variety of formats to accommodate all learning styles, foster introspection, and promote pro-social behaviors, life skills, and coping skills. The activities in each module correlate to the assessments to enable you to identify and select activities quickly and easily.

Self-exploration activities assist participants in self-reflecting, enhancing self-knowledge, identifying potential ineffective behaviors, and teaching more effective ways of coping with anxiety. They are designed to help participants make a series of discoveries that lead to increased social and emotional competencies, as well as to serve as an energizing way to help participants grow personally and professionally. These brief, easy-to-use self-reflection tools are designed to promote insight and self-growth.

Many different types of guided self-exploration activities are provided for you to pick and choose the activities that are most needed by your participants and the ones that will be most appealing to them. The unique features of the exploration activities make them user-friendly and appropriate for a variety of individual sessions and group sessions.
.

In some activities, participants will have the opportunity to engage in these ways:
- Explore how they could make changes in their lives to feel better. These activities are designed to help participants reflect on their current life situations, discover new ways of living more effectively, and implement changes in their lives to accommodate these changes.
- Journal as a way of enhancing their self-awareness. Through journaling prompts, participants will be able to write about the thoughts, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that have contributed to, or are currently contributing to, their current life situation. Through journaling, participants are able to safely address their concerns, hopes, and dreams for the future.
- Explore their intense anxiety issues by examining their past for negative patterns and learning new ways of dealing with them more effectively in the future. These activities are designed to help participants reflect on their lives in ways that will allow them to develop healthier lifestyles.

Take-Away Skills

Take-Away Skills for each Module Following each Cover Page
Conditions and Behavior, Frequency and Duration, and/or Accomplishment statements for each activity may be used in educational and/or treatment planning. They may also be used to measure progress toward goals. These skills promote real life outcomes and behavioral changes.

The Stigma Awareness Approach

It is important that facilitators keep an open mind about mental health issues and the stigma attached to people experiencing these issues. Rather than thinking of people as having a mental disorder, or being mentally ill, the *Erasing the Stigma of Mental Health Issues through Awareness* series is designed to help facilitators diminish the stigma that surrounds people suffering from intense anxiety issues. Stigmas occur when people are unjustly labeled, thus setting the stage for discrimination and humiliation. Facilitators are able to help to erase the stigma of mental illness through enhancing awareness of the factors that activate and accentuate the depth of the issues, and thereby accelerate awareness and understanding.

To assist you, a module titled *Erasing the Stigma of Mental Health Issues* is included to provide activities to help erase the stigma associated with intense anxiety issues.

The Awareness Modules

The reproducible awareness modules contained in this workbook will help you identify and select assessments and activities easily and quickly:

Module I: Signs of Stress Symptoms
    This module will help participants explore the signs of stress in their lives, recognize the symptoms of anxiety, and learn tools to begin to help decrease the anxiety.

Module II: Need for Control
    This module will help participants explore the various ways they need to be in control of their lives.

Module III: Social Approval
    This module will help participants explore the various ways that their need for the approval of others affects their functioning in social situations.

Module IV: Perfectionism
    This module will help participants explore ways that their need to be perfect and mistake-free, and their determination to achieve unrealistic standards can cause anxiety.

Module V: Erasing the Stigma of Mental Health Issues
    This module will help participants explore the stigma of having intense anxiety and the impact that the stigma has on them.

How the *Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens* Can Help

Teens who experience intense anxiety are likely to find it difficult to function in everyday life due to the symptoms associated with anxiety. The assessments and activities in this workbook are designed to provide facilitators with a wide variety of tools to use in helping people manage the intense anxiety in their lives more effectively. Many choices for self-exploration are provided for facilitators to determine which tools best suit the unique needs of their clients.

The purpose of this workbook is to provide a user-friendly guide to short-term assessments and activities to help teens manage their anxiety and the stress that often triggers it, and to give them a greater sense of well-being. In addition, this workbook is designed to help provide facilitators and participants with tools and information needed to overcome the stigma attached to intense anxiety issues.

In order to help participants cope successfully with stress and the subsequent anxiety, facilitators need to have a variety of assessments and activities to help their participants open-up and begin to feel as if they can manage their anxiety to begin living a more calm and peaceful life. The Managing Anxiety Workbook for Teens provides assessments and self-guided activities to help participants understand the intensity of their issues and how they can lead more effective lives.

~~~~~~

Confidentiality

Instruct teens to use NAME CODES when writing or speaking about anyone.
Teens completing the activities in this workbook might be asked to respond to assessment items and journal about their anxiety. Before you begin using the materials in this workbook explain to teens that confidentiality is a term for any action that preserves the privacy of other people. Maintaining confidentiality is extremely important as it shows respect for others and allows – even encourages – teens to explore their feelings without hurting anyone's feelings or fearing gossip, harm or retribution.

In order to maintain this confidentiality, ask teens to assign a NAME CODE for each person they write about as they complete the various activities in the workbook. For example, a friend named **Joey** who **enjoys going to hockey games** might be titled **JLHG** (Joey Loves Hockey Games) for a particular exercise. In order to protect their friends' identities, they will not use people's actual names or initials, just NAME CODES.

~~~~~~

Our thanks to these professionals who make us look good!

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

My Stress Triggers

It is important to explore the stressful reaction triggers that create anxiety for you.

The following will help you examine what prompts stress in a variety of settings, Place an X in the boxes that apply to you. Then, in the space after each item you check, describe how the item applies to you. The area with the most boxes checked is your greatest source of stress triggers.

At Home

☐ When I am asked to do _____

☐ When someone _____

☐ When I feel like I'm _____

☐ When others don't _____

☐ When I think _____

<div align="right">

At Home TOTAL = _____

</div>

At School

☐ When I am asked to do _____

☐ When someone _____

☐ When I feel like I'm _____

☐ When others don't _____

☐ When I think _____

<div align="right">

At School TOTAL = _____

</div>

In Social Situations

☐ When I am asked to do _____

☐ When someone _____

☐ When I feel like I'm _____

☐ When others don't _____

☐ When I think _____

<div align="right">

In Social Situations TOTAL = _____

</div>

In the Community

☐ When I am asked to do _____

☐ When someone _____

☐ When I feel like I'm _____

☐ When others don't _____

☐ When I think _____

<div align="right">

In the Community TOTAL = _____

</div>

A Past Stressful Situation

Think back to a stressful situation that caused you to become intensely anxious. Journaling about that situation can help you better understand the situation and reduce your distress associated with it. **USE NAME CODES.**

In the spaces that follow, journal about your stressful situation.

Describe the situation. _____
_____
_____
_____

How did you get into the situation? _____
_____
_____
_____

Who else plays a role in the situation? _____
_____
_____
_____

What happened? What did you do? _____
_____
_____
_____

What didn't you do? _____
_____
_____
_____

(Continued on the next page)