

Anxiety Solutions



While many people experience anxiety (Australia's most common mental health condition), almost everyone has anxious thoughts sometimes. Whether it is nagging concern about exams, finances or body image, or the cold sweat of performance anxiety or social situations, it's empowering to have some simple strategies you can use anywhere, anytime. *Anxiety Solutions* is a set of 50 beautifully-illustrated cards for building your skills in managing worry. Here are a few ideas for using the cards (you'll find many more in the booklet that comes with the cards).

- Spread the cards out illustration side up, and select 2 or 3 cards. Read the activity on the back.
- What appeals to you about these illustrations or activities?
- Choose one activity that can be completed right now.
- Before doing the activity, give yourself an 'Anxiety Rating' on a scale of one to ten.
- After the activity, rate yourself once again. Which strategies were the most effective?
- Each day select another card and try out other techniques. Give each one a 'calm rating' and note the ones that work best for you.
- Pick cards that remind you of things you did as a child to relax and feel calm. Deliberately build these into your day again.
- Try an activity you have never done before. How was it?
- Select a variety of different activities. For example, inside/outside; quiet/loud; using the mind/ using the body. Try out the activities. Which ones worked best?
- Pick cards for anxiety-reducing activities you can do while waiting in line, driving in traffic, at a social situation.
- Think about an upcoming event—a job interview, presentation or exam. Build a program of anxiety-busting activities by selecting 3-6 cards with strategies to practise 2 weeks before, 1 week before, on the day.
- Display your favourite card(s) on your fridge, desk or mirror as reminders.
- Choose a card at random and try that strategy out every day for a week.
- Choose a card that relates to a 'wellbeing' goal you have. What simple step could you take today?
- In secondary classrooms: Students select 1-3 cards with activities to try by themselves or with a partner.

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50 laminated, full-colour cards, 140 x 140mm, cardboard box, plus booklet.
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- Or teachers can set up 'stations' based on activities in the cards. Students rotate through the stations and give each activity a 'Calm Rating' out of ten.
- Students research how anxiety affects the brain and body.
- Each student chooses a card and researches the practice base of the technique (these are listed in the booklet) and finds related quotes, poems or songs.
- Cards can be used as prompts for creative writing, journaling and storytelling.
- Have a 'lucky dip' where a student randomly chooses a card of the day/week. Everyone practises the technique and discusses the effect on body and mind.
- Use the cards at potentially anxious times—camps, exams, performances, transitions.
- Display cards on noticeboards and in corridors to promote a culture of wellbeing in your school or workplace.

Always consider that sometimes a technique is not enough and help is needed.

REFERENCES and Further Reading

The following list of references, further reading and links to research papers (over page) was created to complement the *Anxiety Solutions* cards. These references support the practice base of the techniques used in the cards.

1. Achor S 2010, *The happiness advantage: the seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance at work*, Crown Publishing Group, USA.
2. Amen D 2015, *Change your brain, change your life: the breakthrough program for conquering anxiety, depression, obsessiveness, lack of focus, anger, and memory problems*, Tuttleback Books, USA.
3. Byrne S 2017, *Anxiety solutions for kids* (card set), St Luke's Innovative Resources, Bendigo, Australia.
4. Byrne S 2016, *Daily psych bites: hundreds of quick installations for optimism and energy*, Selina Byrne Wellbeing Solutions, Melbourne, Australia.
5. Byrne S 2017, *Optimism boosters* 2nd edition (card set), St Luke's Innovative Resources, Bendigo, Australia.
6. Edwards C, Gandini L, & Forman G, (ed.s) 2011, *The hundred languages of children: the Reggio Emilia experience in transformation*, 3rd edn, Praeger (Greenwood Publishing Group), Westport, USA.
7. Fisher P & Wells 2009, *Metacognitive therapy: distinctive features*, Routledge, London, UK
8. Hayes S, Strosahl K & Wilson K 2016 *Acceptance and commitment therapy*, 2nd edition, Guilford Publications, USA.
9. Hodges J 1999, *Sportsmind: an athlete's guide to superperformance through mental and emotional training*, Sportsmind Institute for Human Performance Research (originally published as a thesis in 1993 by the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, Australia)
10. Kabat-Zinn J 2012, *Mindfulness for beginners: reclaiming the present moment—and your life*, Sounds True, USA.
11. Kendall P (ed.) 2011, *Child and adolescent therapy, fourth edition: cognitive-behavioral procedures*, Guilford Press, New York, USA.
12. Mahler K 2016, *Interoception: the eighth sensory system practical solutions for improving self-regulation, self-awareness and social understanding of individuals with autism spectrum and related disorders*, AAPC Publishing, USA.
13. McNeilly R 2016, *Learning hypnosis: a common everyday approach after ericsson*, Tandava Press, NSW, Australia.
14. McNeilly R & Brown J 1994, *Healing with words*, Hill of Content Publishing, Melbourne, Australia.
15. Michael Hall L 2004, *Sourcebook of magic: a comprehensive guide to nlp change patterns*, 2nd Revised ed., Crown House Publishing, UK.
16. Hanlon B & Beadle S 1999, *A guide to possibility land: fifty-one methods for doing brief, respectful therapy*, W.W. Norton and Co, New York, USA.
17. Hanlon B & Weiner-Davis M 2003, *In search of solutions: a new direction in psychotherapy*, W.W. Norton and Co, New York, USA.
18. Rossi E 1993, *the psychobiology of mind-body healing: new concepts of therapeutic hypnosis* (Revised Edition) W.W. Norton and Co, New York, USA.
19. Sapolsky R 2004, *Why zebras don't get ulcers*, 3rd edition, Holt Paperbacks, New York, USA.
20. Seligman M 2011, *Flourish: a visionary new understanding of happiness and wellbeing*, Simon and Schuster,
21. Seligman M 2011, *Learned optimism: how to change your mind and your life*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, New York, USA.
22. Schwartz J 1997, *Brain lock: free yourself from obsessive compulsive behavior*, HarperCollins, New York, USA.
23. Snyder C 1994, *The psychology of hope: you can get there from here*, Simon and Schuster, New York, USA.
24. Toyoda H, Li X-Y, Wu L-J, Zhao M-G, Descalzi G, Chen T, Koga K, & Zhuo M 2011, 'Interplay of amygdala and cingulate plasticity in emotional fear', *Neural Plasticity*, Vol 2011, Article ID 813749.

See next page for research papers.

Links to Research papers

anxiety
SOLUTIONS

Studies and articles relating to the practice methods used in the *Anxiety Solutions* cards.

A study that distinguishes 'interoceptive awareness' from 'interoceptive accuracy'.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301051114002294#bib0275>

Study with athletes on how the brain is altered by meditative or mindfulness activities.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201306/how-does-meditation-reduce-anxiety-neural-level>

Effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques on anxiety in children and adolescents.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anne_Albano/publication/8443795_Cognitive-Behavioral_Psychotherapy_for_Anxiety_and_Depressive_Disorders_in_Children_and_Adolescents_An_Evidence-Based_Medicine_Review/links/0fcfd513e14cf4fcc500000/Cognitive-Behavioral-Psychotherapy-for-Anxiety-and-Depressive-Disorders-in-Children-and-Adolescents-An-Evidence-Based-Medicine-Review.pdf

The effect of fear on the brain by Toyoda et al (also cited in references above).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2011/813749>

Mental imagery research.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1878929313000091>

Focusses on the effectiveness of distraction techniques.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1976131713000662>

Focusses on the effectiveness of distraction techniques.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277608300_The_effects_of_three_different_distraction_methods_on_pain_and_anxiety_in_children

Italian study with undergraduates showing the positive effect of 'metacognition skills' on anxiety.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cpp.520/abstract>

Mindfulness in Schools Project in association with the University of Exeter's Mood Disorders Centre: evidence for the impact of mindfulness on children and young people.

<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/MiSP-Research-Summary-2012.pdf>

Evidence (based on hormones and inflammatory markers) that mindfulness techniques may imbue resilience to 'stressful psychological challenges'.

<https://www.madinamerica.com/2017/02/research-shows-mindfulness-can-decrease-anxiety/>

Social anxiety disorder and regulating emotions with mindfulness-based therapy.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4203918/>

A literature search of studies on the effect of mindfulness-based therapy on anxiety and depression.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2848393/>

See previous page for references and further reading.