

# Understanding and Managing Anxiety

## Worksheet

We all experience worry, anxiety, and stress sometimes. But did you know they're not the same thing? Knowing the difference can help you feel more aware of your experiences and less overwhelmed by them. This guide walks you through the differences between each feeling, with targeted exercises to manage each one more effectively.



### NAME IT TO TAME IT

If we can label our experiences, it can help reduce the intensity.

	Triggers	Experience	Symptoms	Examples
Worry	Specific event	Thought-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worry happens in your mind.</li> <li>It's usually about <b>specific future events</b>, like a presentation, health, or finances.</li> <li>Often shows up as repetitive "what if" thinking.</li> <li>Worry can feel <i>somewhat controllable</i>, and sometimes even helpful if it leads to problem-solving.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"What if I forget what to say in the meeting?"</li> <li>"What if I don't get the promotion?"</li> <li>"What if I'm late to work?"</li> </ul>
Stress	Response to pressure	Body-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stress is your body's <b>response to a challenge or threat</b> (real or perceived).</li> <li>Can be <b>external</b> (work, family, deadlines) or <b>internal</b> (self-pressure, perfectionism).</li> <li>Often includes physical changes: tense muscles, headaches, fatigue, trouble focusing.</li> <li>Stress can be <b>short-term and motivating</b> or <b>chronic and exhausting</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>You're under a tight deadline at work and feel overwhelmed and snappy.</p> <p>You have a big college exam coming up, but thinking about it gives you headaches and fatigue.</p>

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## Worksheet-2

	Triggers	Experience	Symptoms	Examples
Anxiety	Uncertainty about the future	Thought & Body-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety is a <b>felt experience</b> that is often about <b>possible events</b>, not certainties.</li> <li>It's a <b>sense of unease</b> or dread about something uncertain or uncontrollable.</li> <li>Common <b>physical symptoms</b> include a tight chest, racing heart, restlessness, nausea, difficulty sleeping, shallow breathing, or stomach pain.</li> <li>Can feel vague, like "something bad might happen," even if you're not sure what.</li> </ul>	<p>You feel tense, irritable, and can't sleep, even though nothing "specific" is wrong.</p> <p>You feel chest tightness and a racing heartbeat most days at work, even though you're doing well at your job.</p>



### HOW THEY INTERACT

- Worry can lead to anxiety when it becomes constant or overwhelming.
- Chronic stress can make you more vulnerable to both worry and anxiety.
- All three can show up together, and may need different responses.

#### Worry

Specific event →

#### Anxiety

Overactive mind becomes the new default →

#### Stress

Increased sensitivity to worry & anxiety triggers



A stressed brain is more prone to worry and anxiety.



# Understanding and Managing Anxiety

## Worksheet-3



### MANAGING WORRY, ANXIETY, AND STRESS

Focus	Try This
Worry (Thinking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write it out. Try some of these journal prompts:</li> <li>• “Is this true? Is this kind? Is this helpful?”</li> <li>• “Do I have enough information to worry about this yet?”</li> <li>• Set a worry timer. Worry as much as you like in that time until the timer goes off.</li> <li>• Talk it out with someone you trust.</li> </ul>
Anxiety (Feeling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique: name <b>5 things</b> you can see, <b>4 things</b> you can touch, <b>3 things</b> you can hear, <b>2 things</b> you can smell, <b>1 thing</b> you can taste.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Try deep breathing, including box breathing.</a></li> <li>• Name it to tame it. If we can label our experiences, it can help reduce the intensity. (“I feel nervous,” or “My chest feels tight.”) Can you remind yourself that this feeling is temporary?</li> <li>• Try a body scan. Notice what sensations are present with curiosity, not judgment.</li> </ul>
Stress (Reaction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify stressors. What might have triggered this feeling?</li> <li>• Set boundaries.</li> <li>• Take creativity breaks. Listen to music, create art, or cook a new recipe.</li> <li>• Move your body. Bonus points if it’s outside!</li> <li>• Practice self-care, including quality sleep, nourishing food, and gentle movement.</li> </ul>

You don’t need to eliminate worry, anxiety, or stress; they’re all natural human experiences. But you *can* learn how to respond in ways that bring you calm, clarity, and control. If any of these become overwhelming or interfere with your daily life, consider bringing it up with your therapist.

You’re not alone.