SYMPTOMS CHECK IN

OBSESSIVE SYMPTOMS

Recurring thoughts, urges, or images cause distress. The person tries to suppress or neutralize them, often through compulsive actions.

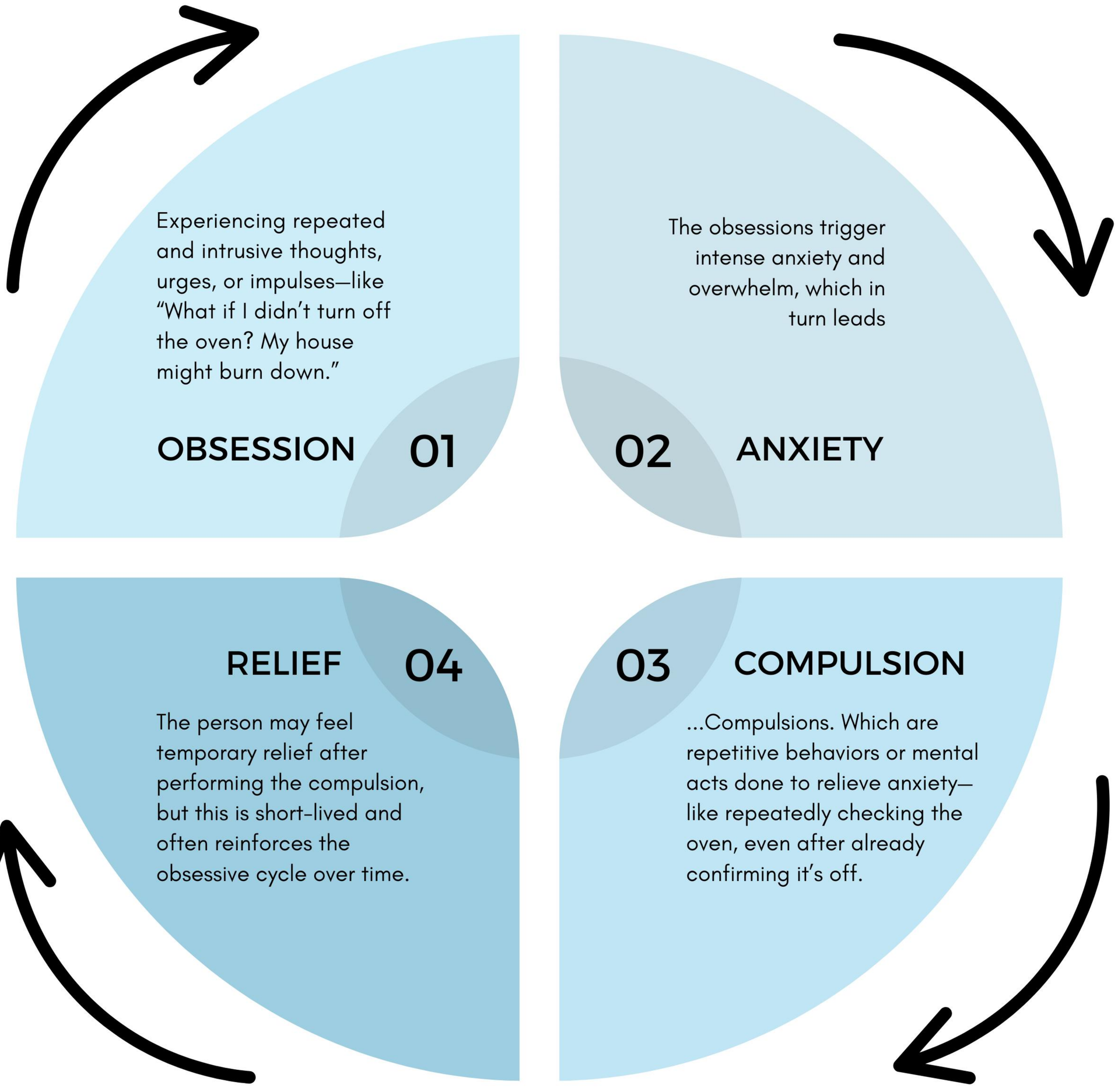
COMPULSIVE SYMPTOMS

The person feels driven to perform repetitive behaviors or mental acts (like washing, checking, or counting) to reduce anxiety or prevent a feared event. These actions are often unrealistic or excessive and can take up significant time or cause serious distress or life disruption.



THE OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE CYCLE

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is an anxiety disorder involving unwanted, recurring thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions) to ease distress. While symptoms vary, OCD typically follows a consistent cycle.

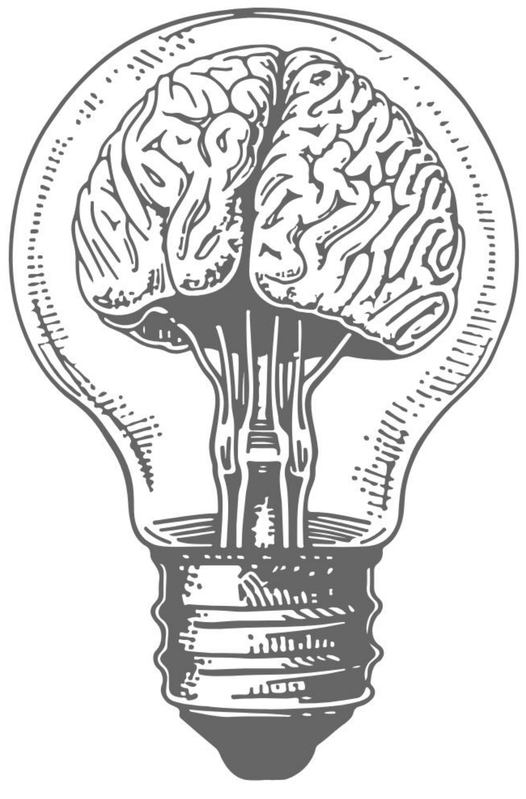


WHAT IS COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)?

HOW WILL CBT HELP ME?

CBT helps you see how your thoughts affect your feelings and actions. Just like a movie makes you feel something based on what you believe is happening, your daily thoughts shape how you react to stress, anxiety, or overwhelm.

Using CBT exercises, you'll learn to spot and shift unhelpful thought patterns, leading to better emotional control and healthier responses. CBT also gives you tools to change habits like avoidance or procrastination and teaches you how to manage emotions and stress so you can feel calmer and more in control.



MANAGING PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

WHY MANAGING PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS MATTERS

Stress and fear often cause changes in breathing and muscle tension. This can lead to aches, fatigue, and increased feelings of panic or anxiety—especially if shallow breathing continues for long periods.

Think about how your body reacts to stress. Do you tense up? Get headaches or sore shoulders? Though anxiety is psychological, it often shows up physically. For many, the physical symptoms can feel more intense than the emotional ones. That's why managing the physical side of stress is key. Having strategies to ease tension and calm the body helps prevent overwhelm and supports recovery. Controlled breathing and muscle relaxation are simple yet powerful tools to help with this.

The next two pages will guide you through easy breathing and muscle relaxation exercises.



MANAGING SYMPTOMS

During stress, the body activates a “stress response” with fast breathing, a quickened heart rate, and tense muscles. The opposite is the “relaxation response,” where breathing slows, the heart rate steadies, and symptoms ease. To trigger relaxation, slow and steady breathing helps.



One simple method is the 4-2-6 rhythm: inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 2, exhale for 6.

- Find a safe, calm space. Sit comfortably and relax.
- Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 2 seconds.
- Exhale through your nose for 6 seconds, then pause briefly.
- Repeat for 10-20 breaths or as needed.
- Practice twice a day. Once comfortable, use this technique anytime anxiety arises.

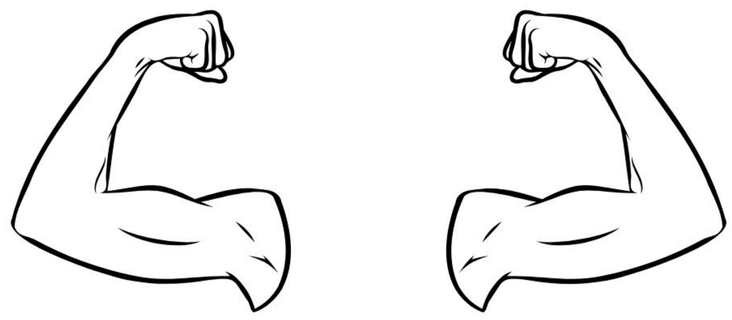
MANAGING SYMPTOMS CONTINUED...

One way to reduce muscle tension and ease physical symptoms of stress is through Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR). This technique involves gently tensing and relaxing different muscle groups to help calm the body and mind.

- Sit in a quiet, comfy place, close your eyes, and take 5 slow, deep breaths.
- Focus on one muscle group, breathe in, and tense it hard for 5 seconds.
- Breathe out and fully release the tension, letting the muscle go limp.
- Notice the difference between tension and relaxation.
- Stay relaxed for 15 seconds, then move to the next muscle group.
- Repeat the process for all areas, then rest and enjoy the calm.

RECOMMENDED MUSCLE GROUP SEQUENCE

- Recommended Muscle Group Sequence:
- Right foot and lower leg
- Right leg
- Left foot and lower leg
- Left leg
- Right hand and forearm
- Right arm
- Left hand and forearm
- Left arm
- Abdomen and chest
- Neck, shoulders, and face



Note: Never tense to the point of pain. Stop if you feel sharp or intense discomfort.

UNCOVERING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

We know our thoughts affect how we feel. Positive thoughts often lead to positive feelings, while negative thoughts can lead to anxiety, sadness, or low motivation. These are called unhelpful thoughts because they contribute to unpleasant emotions or behaviors. Everyone has them from time to time, but if they happen often and cause distress, it may help to take a closer look at your thinking.

Changing unhelpful thoughts can lead to more helpful emotions and behaviors. The first step is becoming aware of these thoughts so you can begin to challenge and balance them. One useful tool for this is the ABC model, which shows how our emotions and actions come from our thoughts.

A – Activating event/situation
Something that happens externally or internally (e.g. an event, memory, or thought).

B – Beliefs and thoughts
These include automatic thoughts, self-talk, and underlying beliefs (e.g. "I'm a failure" or "I can't do this").

C – Consequences
The feelings, behaviors, and physical responses that follow (e.g. anxiety, low mood, avoidance).



PRACTICING YOUR ABC'S

Doing the ABC analysis is taking the first step toward learning how to understand your thought cycle and learning the skills to manage your thoughts/emotions/behaviours.

Below is an example of an ABC analysis recorded in a Thought Diary of a person with body dysmorphia:

A - SITUATION	**B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS**
This may be either: An actual event or a situation, a thought, a mental picture or recollection. E.g. Planning to go to the shops	1. *List all statements that link A to C. Ask yourself: "What was I thinking?" "What was I saying to myself?" "What was going through my head at the time?"* 2. *Find the most distressing (hot) thought and underline it* E.g. "Everyone will notice my scar" "People will judge me and laugh at my appearance"
C - CONSEQUENCES	
1. Write down words describing how you feel. *2. Underline the one that is most associated with the activating event.* *3. Rate the intensity of those feelings (0 to 100).* E.g. Anxious (90) Ashamed (60)	*4. Jot down any physical sensations you experienced or actions carried out.* E.g. - Heart pounding, lightheaded, dry mouth, fast breathing - Decided to put off going to the shops

Now it's your time to practice! Follow the steps and examples listed above and practice identifying any recent situations that have caused you to experience for example stress, overwhelm, or anxiety. Take your time to outline the situation, any thoughts or beliefs that you noticed running through your mind in response to this, and the consequent feelings and sensations that occurred as a result.

A - SITUATION	**B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS**
C - CONSEQUENCES	

PRACTICING YOUR ABC'S

A - SITUATION	B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS
C - CONSEQUENCES	

A - SITUATION	B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS
C - CONSEQUENCES	

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PRACTICING YOUR ABC'S

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A - SITUATION	B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS
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A - SITUATION	B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS
C - CONSEQUENCES	

BALANCING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

Now that you've been practicing the ABC thought monitor, it's time to move on to managing those thoughts.

To recap: when you use the thought diary, you describe the activating event (A), identify your automatic, unhelpful thoughts and beliefs (B), and note the emotional and behavioral consequences (C).

The next step is D - Disputation, where you challenge the unhelpful thought by reviewing the evidence for and against it. This helps you start thinking in a more balanced way to improve how you feel.
Keep in mind, changing your thinking doesn't mean just flipping it to the opposite. Overly positive thoughts can be just as unhelpful. Instead, aim for balanced thinking—consider both the positives and negatives, like weighing evidence in a courtroom without judgment or emotion.

Once you've done this, move to E - New Effect or Thought.
Ask yourself: "How can I rewrite this unhelpful thought based on the evidence I've reviewed?" Your answer becomes the new, balanced thought—one that's grounded in facts and considers multiple perspectives.
You may not fully remove the emotion, but with practice, you can reduce its intensity to a level that feels manageable.
When you're ready, turn the page and begin practicing the full ABCDE model using the example provided.



PRACTICING YOUR ABCDE'S

A - SITUATION

This may be either: An actual event or a situation, a thought, a mental picture or recollection.

E.g. Planning to go to the shops

B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS

1. *List all statements that link A to C. Ask yourself: "What was I thinking?" "What was I saying to myself?" "What was going through my head at the time?"*
2. *Find the most distressing (hot) thought and underline it*

E.g. "Everyone will notice my scar"
"People will judge me and laugh at my appearance"

C - CONSEQUENCES

1. Write down words describing how you feel.
2. Underline the one that is most associated with the activating event.
3. Rate the intensity of those feelings (0 to 100).

E.g.
Anxious (90)
Ashamed (60)

4. Jot down any physical sensations you experienced or actions carried out.

E.g.
- Heart pounding, lightheaded, dry mouth, fast breathing
- Decided to put off going to the shops

D - DISPUTING THOUGHTS

Take some time to consider evidence for and against your thought.

E.g. "I do have a scar and I was teased for this in school"
"I have been to the shops before and as far as I know no one laughed at me"
"People are probably too preoccupied with their own thing to notice my scarring"

E - EVALUATION/END RESULT

After looking at all the evidence for and against your hot thought, and having considered the disputation questions, replace the unhelpful thought with helpful, balanced thought/s. Finally, rerate the emotions felt after establishing the balanced thoughts when thinking about the situation.

E.g. ""Most people will probably be too busy with their own shopping to notice my scar. Even if someone does notice and reacts negatively, this says a lot more about their personality than it does about me. The people I care about do not judge me for my scar"

E.g.
Panic (25)

A - SITUATION	B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS
C - CONSEQUENCES	D - DISPUTING THOUGHTS
E - EVALUATION/END RESULT	

PRACTICING YOUR ABCDE'S

A - SITUATION	B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS
C - CONSEQUENCES	D - DISPUTING THOUGHTS
E - EVALUATION/END RESULT	

A - SITUATION	B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS
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PRACTICING YOUR ABCDE'S

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A - SITUATION	B - THOUGHTS/BELIEFS
C - CONSEQUENCES	D - DISPUTING THOUGHTS
E - EVALUATION/END RESULT	

CHALLENGING THOUGHTS TIPS & TRICKS

Changing your thinking takes time, but it gets easier with practice. Here are four simple ways to assess unhelpful thoughts and find a more balanced view.

LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE

Looking for evidence means focusing on facts, not opinions or feelings. Ask yourself: Do I have solid, objective proof that this thought is true? Think like you're in a courtroom—only clear facts count.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Ask yourself: Do these thoughts help me reach my goals, support my relationships, improve how I feel, and offer more benefits than drawbacks?

DECATASTROPHISING

'What if' thoughts often expect the worst and create anxiety. Remind yourself you can cope, and view change as a chance for growth and new opportunities.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THINKING THIS WAY

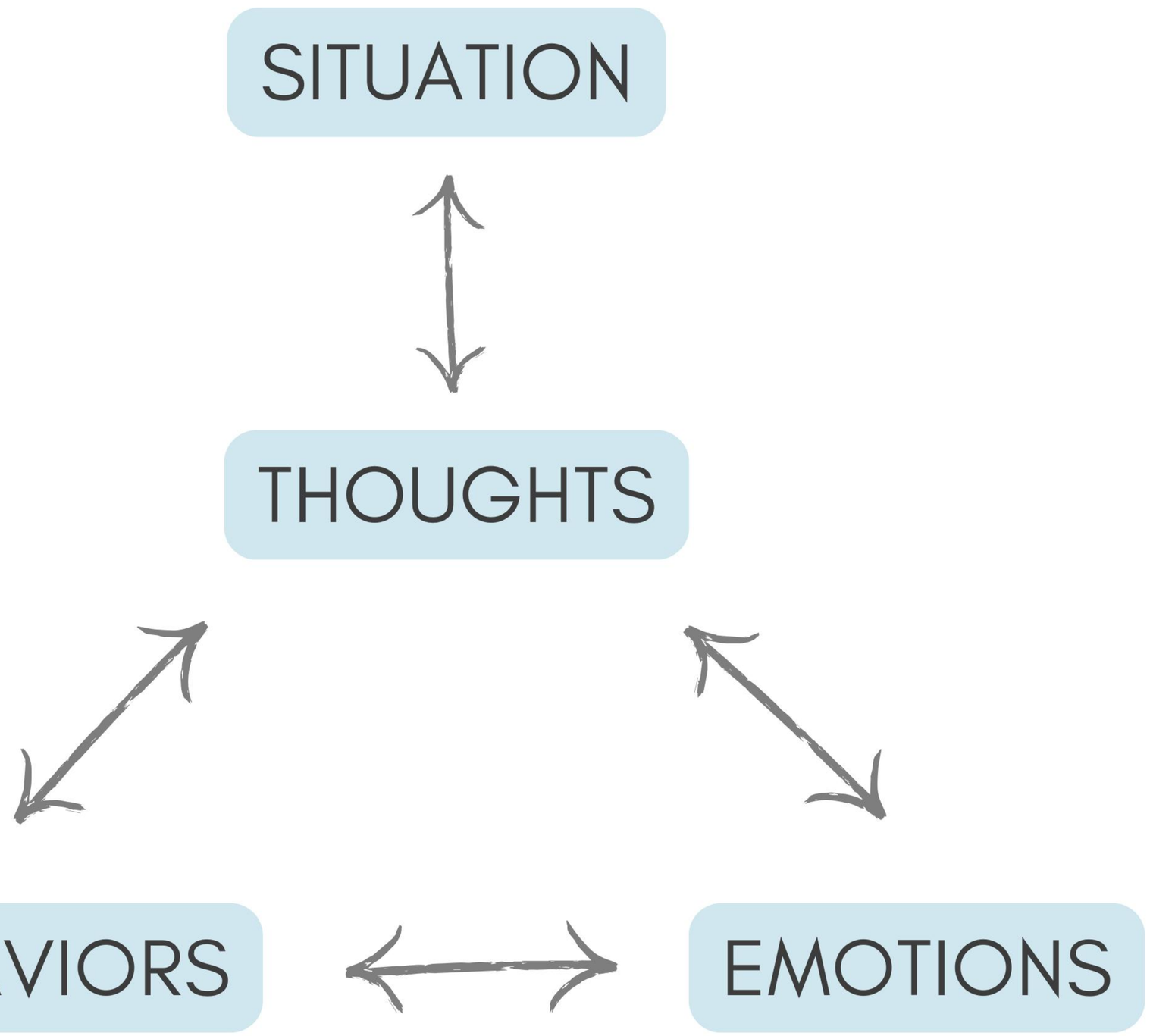
- What else could explain my assumptions or conclusions?
- Is there a more positive way to view this?
- What would someone I trust think?
- What advice would I give to someone with this problem?

WYLDE COLLECTIVE

modern mental healthcare for all

WHAT IS COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a widely used, research-backed therapy that helps people understand how their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected. It teaches practical tools to manage issues like anxiety and depression by changing unhelpful thought patterns and reactions.



BEHAVIOURAL EXPERIMENTS

NEGATIVE PREDICTIONS

People with anxiety, depression, or perfectionism often expect the worst, overestimating problems and underestimating their ability to cope. This leads to avoidance or safety behaviors, which prevent them from testing their fears. While this may ease stress briefly, it reinforces negative predictions long-term.

TESTING THE PREDICTIONS

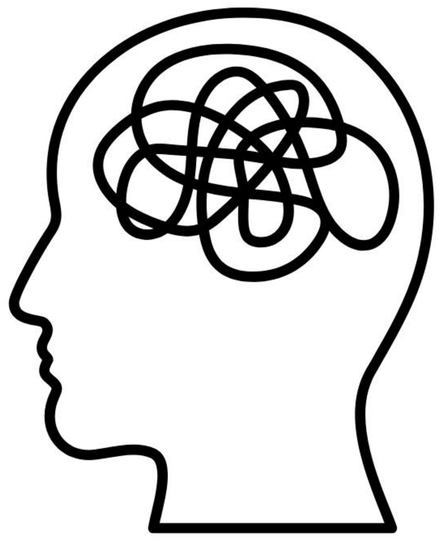
Instead of avoiding feared situations, we can test our negative predictions like a science experiment. This involves identifying the situation, planning a new approach, using calming strategies, and trying the behavior. Doing this helps challenge unhelpful thoughts, build confidence, and show your brain it was wrong.



BEHAVIOURAL EXPERIMENTS

BEHAVIOURAL EXPERIMENTS STEP BY STEP

- Be clear: The experiment's purpose is to test your negative predictions and develop more balanced ones.
- Identify the thought or belief you want to test and rate your belief in it (0-100).
- Find an alternative prediction or belief and rate how strongly you believe it (0-100).
- Design the experiment: Decide what you'll do, when, how long, and with whom. Be specific and creative; asking for help is okay.
- Start small with less stressful tasks, then gradually increase difficulty. Plan for problems and how to handle them.
- Carry out the experiment, noting your thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- Record what happened and observe evidence for and against your original prediction.
- Reflect on what you learned from the experiment.
- Re-rate your belief in the original and alternative predictions (0-100).



BEHAVIOURAL EXPERIMENTS

BEHAVIOURAL EXPERIMENTS WORKSHEET

Using the steps above, choose a situation that feels doable to test. Save bigger challenges for later. Follow your plan, and after trying the experiment, return to the worksheet to finish the last two sections.

PREDICTION

Specifically what are you afraid will happen?

-
-
-

EXPERIMENT

How will you test your prediction?

-
-
-

EVIDENCE TO LOOK FOR

What will I/others observe if prediction is true?

-
-
-

ACTUAL OUTCOME

(stick to facts)

-
-
-

What have I learned?

-
-
-

GRADED EXPOSURE

GRADED EXPOSURE

We've seen how behavioral experiments help test negative thoughts, but sometimes fears feel too overwhelming to face all at once. That's where graded exposure comes in. It works the same way but gradually. By slowly facing stressful situations step-by-step, graded exposure helps your brain get used to the stress and learn it can cope safely over time.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Here's how it works: First, identify a situation you fear and tend to avoid, like socializing or being assertive. Then, break that situation into smaller steps and list them. For each step, rate how much distress it causes you on a scale from 0 to 100. Finally, arrange the steps in order from least to most distressing.

LADDER TO CHANGE

With your list of steps, start working through them one by one toward your main goal. Higher distress goals (80+) may need more steps than medium distress ones (40+). You can break steps down by changing who is there, what you do, when, where, and how long. The goal is to tackle each step from the easiest up, moving on as you feel more comfortable.



EXPOSURE & RESPONSE PREVENTION

With your exposure hierarchy ready, start facing these situations while delaying safety behaviors like over-checking or excessive cleaning (e.g., repeated hand washing). Follow the steps below when ready.

Choose a task to work on today and note your usual safety behaviors or compulsions related to it.

The goal is to do the task without using those behaviors for at least 2 hours. If that feels too hard, start by delaying them for a few minutes and build up gradually.

Break the task into smaller steps if needed—e.g., touch the doorknob with one finger before using your whole hand.

Practice daily. Once the anxiety feels manageable, move to the next item on your hierarchy.

You don't need to be completely anxiety-free—just ready to take on the next challenge.



This exercise may increase your anxiety in the short term—this is normal and expected. To help manage thoughts and feelings during practice, try using strategies like paced breathing or thought balancing alongside exposure.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Stress and overwhelm can make it hard to move forward, as even small problems may feel daunting. A clear problem-solving strategy, like the SOLVE model below, can help you get unstuck.

SPECIFY THE PROBLEM

Be specific. Ask yourself "why is this a problem for me?"

-
-
-

OPTIONS

Add any ideas you can think of. Do not evaluate at this step.

-
-
-

LIST PROS & CONS

What are the advantages & disadvantages of each option?

-
-
-

VERIFY THE SOLUTION

Choose the best solution and Action your solution.

-
-
-

EVALUATE

What went well? what did not go well (if anything)?

-
-
-

SELF CARE GRID

Like a battery, some things recharge us while others drain us. Each day this week, take a moment to reflect on what boosted your energy and what left you feeling drained or low.

DAY	WHAT DID I DO TODAY THAT MADE ME FEEL ENERGISED OR INCREASED POSITIVE EMOTIONS?
MON	
TUE	
WED	
THU	
FRI	
SAT	
SUN	

DAY	WHAT DID I DO TODAY THAT DRAINED MY ENERGY OR INCREASED NEGATIVE EMOTIONS?
MON	
TUE	
WED	
THU	
FRI	
SAT	
SUN	

MY TRIGGERS

Triggers are things we see, hear, or experience that spark anxiety, negative thoughts, or compulsions. Take a moment to list any triggers you notice related to your body or appearance.



Things that I see that trigger me:

-

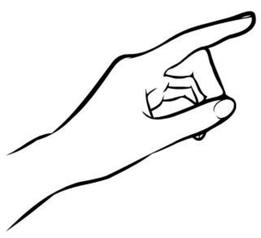
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Things that I hear that trigger me:

-

-



Things that I touch that trigger me:

-

-



Situations that happen that trigger me:

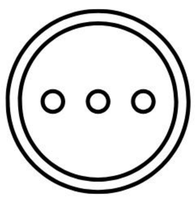
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Things others do that trigger me:

-



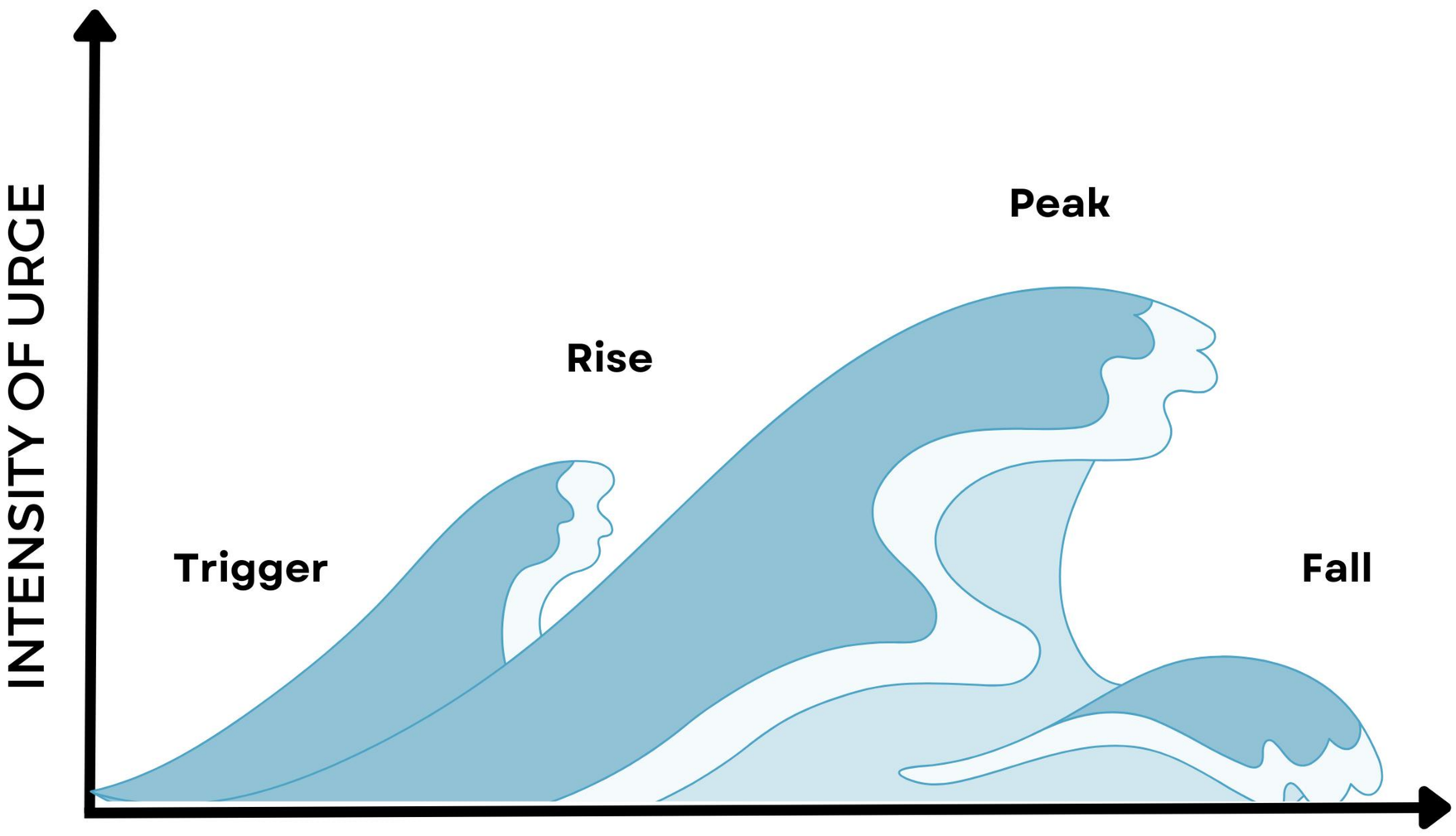
Other things that trigger me:

-

-

URGE SURFING

Urge surfing helps you manage unwanted behaviors by riding out the urge instead of giving in. Like a wave, the urge will rise and pass. It's especially useful for resisting safety behaviors.



PRACTICE URGE SURFING

- Acknowledge that you're experiencing an urge.
- Notice your thoughts and feelings without trying to change or suppress them—some discomfort is normal.
- Remind yourself:
    - It's okay to have urges—they're natural.
    - Discomfort is manageable; I don't need to fix it.
    - An urge is just a feeling, not a command.
    - It's temporary and will pass on its own.

SELF-SOOTHING

When you're upset, self-soothing through the five senses can help. Check off any strategies you find helpful or want to try, and feel free to add your own under each sense.

VISION

- [ ] Look through a photo album
- [ ] Take a walk in a park or a scenic hike
- [ ] Go people-watching
- [ ] Go to a museum or gallery
- [ ] Read a book
- [ ] Watch a movie or tv show
- [ ] Watch a sunrise or a sunset
- [ ] Watch the clouds or stars
- [ ] Other_____

HEARING

- [ ] Listen to soothing music
- [ ] Pay attention to the sounds of nature
- [ ] Listen to a podcast
- [ ] Use a meditation audio app
- [ ] Express my feelings through art
- [ ] Sing along to your favourite songs
- [ ] Play an instrument
- [ ] Open the window & listen to the sounds outside
- [ ] Other_____

SMELL

- [ ] Use your favourite soap or perfume
- [ ] Light a candle
- [ ] Burn incense
- [ ] Open a package of coffee
- [ ] Smell an essential oil
- [ ] Buy some fresh flowers
- [ ] Use a scented bath bomb or bath salts
- [ ] Open a window & smell the air
- [ ] Other_____

TASTE

- [ ] Make yourself a cup of tea
- [ ] Mindfully eat a piece of fruit
- [ ] Chew your favourite gum
- [ ] Suck on a piece of peppermint candy
- [ ] Make your favourite meal
- [ ] Enjoy a sweet dessert
- [ ] Other_____

TOUCH

- [ ] Take a long warm bath or shower
- [ ] Cuddle your pet
- [ ] Hug someone
- [ ] Hold on to a soft pillow or blanket
- [ ] Get a massage
- [ ] Put on lotion
- [ ] Other_____

SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep is essential for mental health. While needs vary, 7–9 hours is commonly recommended. Poor sleep can raise anxiety, lower mood, and affect focus, mood, and judgment. Struggling with sleep?
Try the tips below to help improve it.

- Here's a shortened version of your dot points:
- Stick to a routine: Go to bed and wake up at the same time daily, even on weekends.
- Sleep when tired: Only go to bed when you feel sleepy.
- Get up if needed: If you can't sleep after 15–20 minutes, do something calming, then try again.
- Track your sleep: Use a sleep diary to spot helpful or harmful habits.
- Bed = sleep: Use your bed only for sleep and intimacy to build a strong sleep association.
- Skip naps: Avoid daytime naps to stay tired at bedtime.
- Create a routine: Do calming activities before bed like stretching, breathing, or a warm shower.
- Avoid clock-watching: Checking the time can keep you awake and increase stress.
- Make it comfy: Keep your room cool, dark, and quiet for better sleep.



DAILY SELF CARE

Self-care is doing things you enjoy to support your overall well-being—physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Use the checklist below to see which areas you're supporting and where you may need more focus.

EMOTIONAL

- [ ] Participate in hobbies
- [ ] Get away from distractions (e.g. phone)
- [ ] Learn new things
- [ ] Express my feelings through art
- [ ] Regularly communicating with family/friends
- [ ] Find reasons to laugh
- [ ] Watching an enjoyable movie
- [ ] Go on holidays or day trips
- [ ] Recognising/celebrating your achievements
- [ ] Other_____

PHYSICAL

- [ ] Eat healthy foods
- [ ] Look after personal hygiene
- [ ] Regular exercise
- [ ] Do enjoyable activities
- [ ] Getting good quality sleep
- [ ] Get regular health checks
- [ ] Taking time off/resting
- [ ] Stretching/relaxation exercises
- [ ] Other_____

SPIRITUAL

- [ ] Spend time in nature
- [ ] Meditate
- [ ] Pray
- [ ] Act in accordance with my values
- [ ] Set aside time for thought and reflection
- [ ] Participate in a cause that is important to me
- [ ] Other_____

SOCIAL

- [ ] Spend time with people I like
- [ ] Make a phone call to a friend
- [ ] Have stimulating conversations
- [ ] Meet new people
- [ ] Spend time with my friends
- [ ] Ask others for help when needed
- [ ] Try a new class or activity
- [ ] Other_____

GOAL SETTING

Reflect on your goals—whether it's building confidence, reducing worry, or overcoming anxiety to try new experiences. No matter the goal's size, using the 'SMART' method can help you set clear intentions for your mental wellbeing journey.

SPECIFIC

What goal do I want to accomplish?

-
-
-

MEASURABLE

How will I know when I have met the Goal?

-
-
-

ACHIEVABLE

Is the goal able to be accomplished? How?

-
-
-

RELEVANT

Is the goal relevant to me and my circumstances?

-
-

TIME BOUND

When can I accomplish this goal By?

-
-
-

GOAL BREAKDOWN

Facing new challenges can feel overwhelming, but breaking larger goals into smaller steps builds momentum and confidence. This approach reduces stress and helps prevent procrastination.

Below is an example of goal breakdown for finding a new job.

GOAL TASK	TIME REQUIRED	SCHEDULE
Research jobs I may be interested in.	30 minutes	Sunday afternoon
Look through job ads to get an understanding of the job description/qualifications needed for these jobs.	45 minutes	Monday when I come home from work
Update my resume to include relevant skills, qualities and qualifications.	30 minutes	Wednesday after dinner
Apply for 3 jobs I have found on local job search sites.	1 hour	Saturday morning

TIPS FOR BREAKING GOALS DOWN IN STEPS

1. **Keep it short & sweet.** Keep tasks under an hour. For larger tasks, split them into smaller, more manageable parts.

2. **Use a timer.** For tasks that can't be split into smaller steps, use a timer to set a focused duration, like 45 minutes for job searching.

3. **Nothing is set in stone.** Flexibility is key—if a step feels too large or draining, revisit and revise your plan. Adjustments are perfectly okay!

4. **Minimise distractions.** Eliminate distractions to stay focused—turn off notifications and create a disturbance-free environment.

GOAL:

GOAL TASK	TIME REQUIRED	SCHEDULE
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		

STAGES OF CHANGE

PRECONTEMPLATION

At this stage, the person is in denial and not yet considering change, as they don't recognize the costs of their compulsive behavior.

CONTEMPLATION

At this stage, the person feels torn—they see reasons to change but still hesitate. The problem behavior continues at the same level.

PREPARATION

At this stage, the person has decided to change and starts planning and making small steps, though the behavior may still occur.

ACTION

At this stage, the person takes active steps to stop the behavior—avoiding triggers, seeking support, and resisting obsessive thoughts and compulsions.

MAINTENANCE

In this stage, the person maintains the changes made. While challenges may still arise, the behavior has been successfully changed for a sustained period.

RELAPSE

Relapse can occur at any stage, with some individuals returning to old behaviors. It's a common part of the process, though not everyone will experience it.

PROS & CONS GRID

Addressing compulsive behaviors can be challenging, and motivation may fluctuate. A pros and cons grid helps identify what's keeping the behaviors going and what might motivate change, both short- and long-term.

What is positive for me, or what do I gain from engaging in the compulsive behaviors?	What is negative, or what do I lose from engaging in compulsive behaviors?
What would be positive about, or what could I gain from engaging in compulsive behaviors less or not at all?	What would be negative about, or what could I lose from engaging in compulsive behaviors less or not at all?