

Anxiety

Introduction

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear that can be mild or severe. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life, and usually this is a necessary feeling in order to help us cope with challenges and to keep ourselves safe. For example, you may feel worried and anxious about sitting an exam or having a medical test or job interview. During times like these, feeling anxious can be perfectly normal. General anxiety symptoms can last for extended periods; it is more than just being nervous.

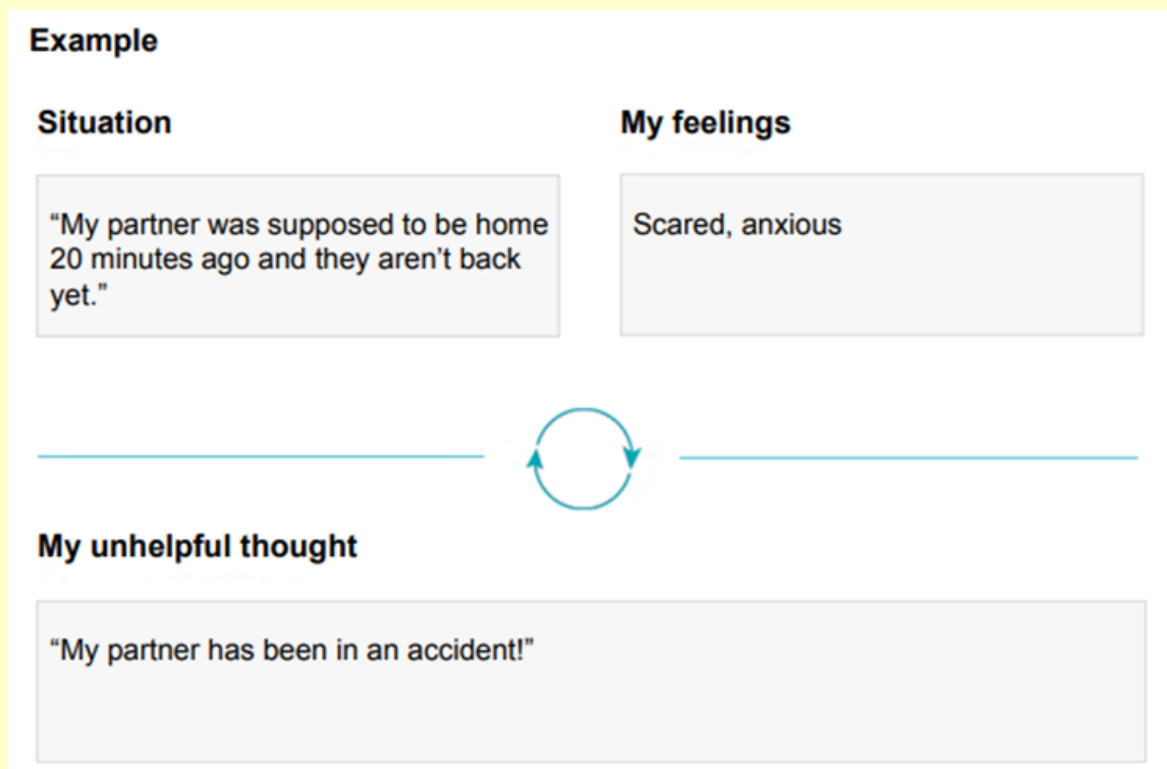
Last week's article looked at examples of unhelpful thoughts:

- Being unable to cope
- Something terrible is happening
- Being unable to control worry

This week, we will be looking more at challenging unhelpful thoughts.

Once you have recognised an unhelpful thought, the next stage is to challenge it. To do this, you can ask yourself a series of questions. The example below outlines the cycle of anxious thoughts and feelings. It shows how a situation, combined with negative feelings, can create a cycle with unhelpful thoughts. When you, or your child, have an unhelpful thought, it makes you, or your child, feel anxious, which creates more negative feelings. It also works the other way around – negative feelings make it more likely you will have unhelpful thoughts, which create more anxiety.

This is an example of what it might look like.....



Try using the boxes overleaf to write about a time when you, or your child, had an unhelpful thought. This will support you understanding and remembering how the cycle of anxious thoughts and feelings works. The next time you find or your child find yourselves feeling low or

experience an unhelpful thought, it will be easier to remind yourselves of what is happening and challenge the thought.

Situation	My feelings

Next week we will look more in depth as to who to challenge unhelpful thoughts by asking a series of questions.

Working together to keep our children safe and happy.

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