

How to support young people with climate anxiety

Training program overview and script for the trainer



Aim

As a result of the training program, participants will have basic knowledge about climate emotions and initial competence to teach young people aged 16–25 to relieve their climate anxiety.

Learning outcomes

On completing the training course, the participant will:

- + Understand the main features of climate emotions, focusing on climate anxiety
- + Be able to carry out simple activities with young people that help to relieve climate anxiety
- + Know the signs that indicate a young person needs additional help with their climate anxiety and be able to respond

Target group

- + People working with young people in various environments – schools, youth centres, etc.
- + Up to 20 participants per group

Duration

6 hours = 8 academic hours

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Coping with Climate Anxiety:
Learning Methods for
Mental Health of European Youth

Structure of the training course

The training course includes four 1.5 h face-to-face sessions, which are carried out during one training day, usually by one trainer. Our plan suggests starting the day at 9 a.m., so it ends around 5 p.m.

- 1. First session (1.5 h)** ————— p 5
 - 1.1 Intro
 - 1.2 Climate change – overview
 - 1.3 What we need to understand about climate anxiety
- 2. Second session (1.5 h)** ————— p 8
 - 2.1 What are emotions and why do we need them?
 - 2.2 Overview of anxiety
 - 2.3 How to normalise emotions?
- 3. Third session (1.5 h)** ————— p 11
 - 3.1 How to deal with difficult emotions: CBT basic model
 - 3.2 Further support measures
 - 3.3 Anxiety relief techniques for youth
 - 3.4 Preparation for practising the methods
- 4. Fourth session (1.5 h)** ————— p 14
 - 4.1 Practising the methods
 - 4.2 Self-care
 - 4.3 Outro

Criteria for the trainer

- + Understanding of environmental issues and how they impact mental health.
- + Previous experience as a trainer, preferably in the field of youth work (and experience in training people who work with youth).
- + Knowledge of the youth work field to be able to put the topic of the training into their context.
- + Competence to lead active learning methods (including discussions etc) and ability to create a safe training space where different feelings and thoughts are accepted.
- + Knowledge of how to react in a situation in which someone expresses mental health problems and in a mental health crisis situation (based on regional/national possibilities).
- + Awareness of the mental health field – e.g. how mental health support structures function in your country/region, the main signs of mental health struggles, how to start a conversation about mental health struggles, etc.

Pre-prepared training materials included in this course

- + Three Google Slides presentations
- + One set of Menti slides (optional)
- + One 2-page reading homework for the participants
- + One 10-page handout to be shared with the participants before or during the course
- + Certificate of participation template

Find the materials here: www.calm-ey.eu/training-programme.

Preparations before the training

A WEEK OR TWO BEFORE:

+ Book/find a suitable training space.

The training room should be spacious enough to accommodate 20 people and have the necessary technical equipment – facility to show slides, use a whiteboard or something similar. We also recommend having the participants sit in a circle.

KEEP IN MIND!

Some parts of the training course involve screening and following pre-prepared Google Slides presentations. Other parts are more improvisational and interactive, involving physical group exercises (the Methods). If you have access to a nearby outdoor space, we encourage moving there to practice and facilitate some of the Methods.

+ Make a plan for lunch and snacks.

Book a catering service, reserve a table at a restaurant with daily offers or find another suitable option. Let participants know about the arrangement beforehand (whether this is included in the participation fee or they pay on the day). Think through whether you can offer snacks and coffee or ask participants to bring their own snacks.

+ Think through the participation fee.

Do you have funding that allows participation free of charge? If not, how much would you need to ask for participation?

+ Make and send out the registration form.

Find out each participant's name, contact, field of work, why they want to participate, and what they expect from the training.

+ Send preparatory homework and practical information about the training in advance of the course.

For the first session, participants have to read a short summary about the climate crisis at home (Session 1 – Climate crisis reading – Homework for participants, 2 pages). Send it to them at least a week before the training course and ask them to read it.

In the third session, participants will have to use the list of methods (Session 3 – Handout – Anxiety Relief Methods For Youth, 10 pages). You can also send this handout to them beforehand, but stress that they don't need to read it through yet. Guide them to print out the Methods if they want, and/or offer to print them out yourself if requested.

Find the materials here: www.calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

- + If you're using Menti or another online voting platform (see below), let participants know to take their phone or computer with them.

A FEW DAYS BEFORE:

+ Print out the Method-handouts if you were planning to do so + the certificates of participation if you want to use them.

+ Work through the script, the slides and the Method-exercises.

For sessions 1, 2 and 3, you will use and present pre-prepared Google Slides presentations (Slides 1, 2, 3). In session 3, you will conduct 3 Methods.


Find the materials here: www.calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

Read the notes and clarifications below each slide beforehand so that you can use your own words when presenting the slides. You can use the script to keep yourself on track throughout the training.

- + **NB! Fill in slide 3.18 on resources in your local area for further mental health support!**

THE METHOD-HANDOUT

The handout "Anxiety Relief Methods" for the participants is almost identical to pages 15–25 of the training programme at hand. There are a few changes in content to make it more relevant to participants (instead of facilitators), and the page numbers are different, but the order of the Method-exercises remains the same.



Mental health resources

Estonian/Tartu example

- **Lasteabi**/Help for children: 116111 (24h)
- **Help for victims**: 116 006 (24h)
- **Emotsionaalne toetus** ja hingehäire toetus/ Emotional support and kind support: 116 123 (every day 14-24)
- **Liikeline** 6508 088 (Estonian), 655 5688 (Russian) (every day 15-27)
- Your school or region school psychiatrist
- **Ambulance**: 112 (24h)
- The psychiatric clinic's emergency room in Tartu: 711 8764 (24h), Raja tn 31. (Also in Tallinn, Pärnu, Viljandi, Narva, Abnna)
- **Lahenda.net** – free and anonymous counselling
- **Psyhilane** – ask questions anonymously and free – if you don't know how to move on, how to support yourself, who to talk to or which specialist to contact: <https://psyhilane.psssi.ee/psyhilane>
- **Online Counselling of the Social Insurance Board for Mental Health** – Free in Estonian, English, Ukrainian and Russian – you can discuss with the counsellor how to better help yourself and where to go for professional help.

Slide 3.18: list of local resources for getting mental health help. Fill this in for your local area!

RIGHT BEFORE THE TRAINING:

+ Set up Menti or a board/flipchart for interactive discussions.

We recommend using Menti (www.mentimeter.com) or a similar online live feedback platform as an interactive way of engaging all participants, asking questions and seeing opinions without taking up too much time. These moments are marked with “**In Menti**”. Sign up in Menti and create an interactive questionnaire to use this solution.

Alternatively, if it makes more sense to you, feel free to ask the questions in a group without using this tool wherever you see “**In Menti**” in the training programme. In that case, use Post-It notes and a board or a flipchart to collect participants’ answers.

+ Test the Google Slides (+ Menti).

The Slides 1–3 are prepared in Google Slides. You can present them straight from the Google folder or download them as PowerPoint slides at calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/. In order to view the slide notes while presenting, go to Slideshow → Presenter View. Make sure your screening setup allows for this, as well as switching between the slideshow and Menti.

DURING THE TRAINING:

+ Make sure to keep track of time.

Throughout the whole course, keep the time in mind. The training is content heavy and it is easy to run out of time. **Keep on track to address all the topics by the end of the day.**

In the script, the time that should be dedicated to each part is marked next to the session's name. In the slides, it is marked in the slide notes.

Use a timer and/or ask another person to act as timekeeper.

+ Tackle provocations gently, but firmly.

When somebody brings up topics that are not directly part of the training, let them know that this is not the topic at this time and move on. For example, if somebody claims that climate change is not caused by humans, direct them to the latest IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) 6th Assessment report where they can look for further information themselves. This training is based on the latest and best scientific evidence. These kinds of interactions are likely uncomfortable and loaded, so just keep your calm and firmly but gently move on.

If possible, move outdoors to conduct the Methods (in sessions 3 and 4).

THE MENTI SLIDES

The training programme includes pre-prepared Menti slides with 9 interactive question moments suggested in the following script. To use it, open the link, sign up in Menti and copy the presentation to your account. You should be able to customise the slides too.



Make sure there is enough space to host discussions in small groups.



FIRST SESSION: GOOD TO KNOW

SESSION 1
9:00–10:45

In the first session, you will tune in and get to know each other, discuss the reading homework that was sent ahead to the participants, and present an interactive lecture on what climate anxiety is.

- + You should use Slides 1 throughout the entire first session. Pages 2, 7, 9, 10, 12, 42 demand extra attention before beginning the session.
- + You should have sent the reading homework (1.2) to all participants at least a week before the training.
- + Subsession 1.3 is the most theory-heavy part of the training. If you wish, you can only use the Slides 1 for this part (starting from p 11).
- + Session 1 includes 4 Menti-moments and 3 Method-exercises.

1.1 Introduction to the training

→ s 1.1–1.2: Welcoming/opening.

Say Hello, thank everyone for coming and being open to support youth with climate anxiety. Introduce yourself: Who are you? – What kind of work experience do you have? – Why are you doing this training?

→ s 1.3: Introduction circle.

Let everyone share quickly: Name? – What is your profession? – What do you appreciate most about nature?

→ Divide participants into buzz groups of 2–4 people.

Buzz groups are small groups where participants have a short, intense discussion on a defined question. With each new question, make new groups. The size of the groups depends on the number of participants, type of question (questions with shorter and less personal answers can be in bigger groups) and the amount of time you have (discussions are shorter in smaller groups).

The aim is to help participants to feel comfortable and engaged. You can create your own questions, but ask something that's not going to bring up difficult situations.

→ s 1.4: First buzz group prompt:

“Share a highlight of your last week.”

→ s 1.5: Second buzz group prompt:

“Share among each other why you are here.”

→ s 1.6: Then come back to the big group and **let 2–3 people share what was talked about in the buzz groups.**

→ s 1.7: Introduce the agenda.

Add correct times yourself.

→ s 1.8: Explain the aim of the exercises conducted during the training.

Throughout the training, we will do exercises that are helpful and grounding for ourselves. The same exercises are part of the programme and in the toolbox that will be useful to do with young people as well. These exercises are part of a learning outcome: participants will be able to carry out simple activities with young people that helps to relieve climate worry.

Add that no one has to do the exercises if they feel uncomfortable but encourage them to try first and stop when they need to.

→ s 1.9: Do a grounding exercise to start up the sessions:

Embodied Check-in (p 20)

or **Anchor To The Ground (short version)** (p 18)

Follow the instructions for the practices in the Methods part in the pages noted.

30 min  9:00–9:30

SESSION 1.1 MATERIALS

You should use Slides 1 to conduct the whole session. Slide pages 2, 7, 9, 10, 12, 42 demand extra attention before beginning the session.

However, if you wish, you can skip the slides for sub-sessions 1.1 and 1.2 and begin presenting later. If you save a copy of the pre-prepared presentation, you can customise it according to your preference.

Find Slides 1 here in Session 1:
calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

THE AGENDA

First session (1.5 h): intro; overview of climate change; looking at the concept of climate anxiety.

Break (15 min)

Second session (1.5 h): what emotions are and why we need them; overview of anxiety; how to normalise emotions.

Lunch (1 h)

Third session (1.5 h): the CBT model and how to deal with difficult emotions; further support measures; anxiety relief techniques for youth; preparing to practice the methods.

Break (15 min)

Fourth session (1.5 h): practising the methods; self-care; outro.

1.2 Climate change – overview

→ s 1.10: Summarise the paper that everyone has read.

Participants will have read a short overview of climate change and its main consequences for Earth and people.

→ In Menti, ask everyone individually to write down 3 highlights/most important parts they took from the paper.

Have a look at the answers and go through them together.

In the end, participants should have concluded that the average temperature on Earth is rising and unequivocally driven by human actions. The consequences of climate change for society and Earth ecosystems are serious (from soil degradation and biodiversity loss to food shortages to wars and health impacts).

Based on what is seen as the biggest problems and solutions, youth have different perspectives of the problem in hand and their climate anxiety might be fueled from different sources. Climate change is an equality problem and marginalised groups are unproportionally more affected and the main inequalities are economic, racial, regional and generational.

1.3 What we need to understand about climate anxiety

→ Present the content of Slides 1, starting from s 1.11: “What we need to understand about climate anxiety”

You can follow the slides, but keep an eye on the script, which lists all the most important moments and key concepts.

→ s 1.12: Start the session with an Imagining Emotions (p 20) or Slow Breathing With Prolonged Exhalations (p 22).

→ s 1.13: In Menti, ask participants: “What is your experience with climate anxiety?”

Look at the answers and conclude what the group’s experience is. Have a short discussion if issues come up.

→ s 1.14–1.17: Explain the definition of climate anxiety.

Using the slides and the notes under the slides, explain what each part of climate anxiety means and what the term itself means.

→ s 1.18: Ask from the group: “Can you name the most common climate emotions that young people describe experiencing?”

Let anyone who wants answer out loud.

→ s 1.19–1.20: Read out loud the list of most common climate emotions, then introduce the climate emotions wheel.

→ s 1.21–1.25: Introduce the climate anxiety range of feelings.

Read out loud the descriptions for Mild, Medium, Significant and Severe climate anxiety feelings.

→ s 1.26: In Menti, ask participants: “Do you recognise this range of feelings in yourself or others? What thoughts arise?”

Look at the answers and have a very short discussion. Articulate the most prevalent thoughts from the group.

10 min  9:30–9:40

SESSION 1.2 MATERIALS

You should send the 2-page homework “What do we need to know about climate change?” to all participants at least a week before the training course.

Here, you will also begin showing the Menti slides, if you are using them. Be prepared to guide participants how to use this solution.

Find the materials here in Session 1: calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

GOOD TO KNOW

For background information, read the handbook chapter “Who knows about climate change?”

65 min  9:40–10:45

SESSION 1.3 MATERIALS

Use Slides 1 starting from page 11 to conduct this session. This is the most theory-heavy part of the training course.

Find Slides 1 here in Session 1: calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

GOOD TO KNOW

For background information, read the handbook chapter “What do we need to know about climate anxiety?”

Climate Emotions Wheel

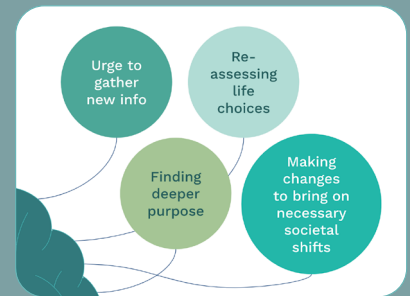


Slide 1.20: Climate Emotions Wheel (based on the research of Panu Pihkala)

- **s 1.27–1.28: Introduce the research on climate anxiety.**
Two different international surveys show that a large percentage of (young) people feel worried about climate change.
- **s 1.29–1.31: Explain the effects of inaction and aloneness.**
Young people are especially affected and sometimes paralysed by these conditions. Read out loud the quotes on slide 1.31, then check the audience to see if a reflection moment is necessary.
- **s 1.32: In Menti, ask participants:**
“What do you think: how can climate anxiety have a positive impact on one’s life?”
Discuss what was written in Menti.
- **s 1.33–1.35: Explain the conditions necessary for climate anxiety to have a positive impact.**
If there is support, emotional regulation skills, meaningful outlet through action and the possibility to distance, well managed climate anxiety can be a powerful resource and a source of motivation.
- **s 1.36–1.41: Introduce and discuss different coping responses to climate anxiety.**
The Climate Psychology Alliance community has listed maladaptive (unhealthy) and adaptive (healthy) responses to climate change. The path for a climate anxious young person could be to move from the first list to the second.
- **s 1.38: Ask the group:**
“Have you noticed, in yourself or some young people, maladaptive coping responses?”
Give 2–3 people time to answer.
- **s 1.39: Ask the group:**
“What do you think would be adaptive coping responses?”
Give 3–4 people time to answer.
- **s 1.40: Compare the answers with the list of adaptive coping responses.**
- **s 1.41: Introduce the concept of “toggling”.**
Climate awareness therapist Leslie Davenport stresses that even healthy coping responses to climate anxiety involve moving back and forth between states of distress and contentment. It is important to become familiar with this motion.
- **s 1.42: End the session with a Shake Stretch Soothe (p 23).**

NOTE ON THE RESEARCH

The researches will need to be updated in 2026. Please send an email to karola.kivilo@gmail.com when it is 2026 and the slides will be updated within a month.



Slide 1.35: The four main positive impacts climate anxiety can have

- Seeking information, engagement with facts about ecological crisis
(NB! Could also be maladaptive, depending on person)
- Engaging with and regulating associated emotions (e.g. through mindfulness)
- Compassion, self-transcendence, values orientation (care for humans and non-humans)
- Connecting with nature
- Considered reflection on death and impermanence
- Collaborative problem-solving

Slide 1.40: list of adaptive coping responses (by the Climate Psychology Alliance)

ENDING THE FIRST SESSION

Depending on how much time you have, do a shorter or longer version of the Shake Stretch Soothe exercise. Check how participants feel and if they need more or less time for grounding. When participants seem to need more time to process the information, **guide them to the break with the intention to take time for themselves and give them instructions to find 3 things around them that they feel grateful about or in their life.**

The aim is to use this break for grounding and calming so they can return to the second session in a good place.

Break**15 min** 🕒 **10:45–11:00**

SECOND SESSION: GOOD TO KNOW

SESSION 2
11:00–12:30

The second session is all about emotions and looking at them with a fresh analytical perspective. Together with the group, you will untangle emotions (2.1), anxiety (2.2), and understanding & active listening (2.3).

- + You should use Slides 2 to conduct all three parts of this session.
- + Session 2 includes 3 Menti-moments and 1 Method-exercise.

2.1 What are emotions? Why do we need them?

→ s. 2.1: Present the content of Slides 2:

“What are emotions? Why do we need them?”

You can follow the slides, but keep an eye on the script, which lists all the most important moments and key concepts.

→ Ask the group four kick-off questions.

You can ask these questions in the big group or in Menti. We suggest the following:

→ s 2.2: Ask from the group:

“What emotions do you know?”

Let anyone who wants answer out loud.

→ s 2.3: In Menti, ask participants:

“What emotions have you already felt this morning?”

Discuss what was written in Menti.

While commenting about the emotions, you can ask for a bit of background from the group. In general, bring out that there are a lot of emotions and they change many times during the day (e.g. has the feeling changed since morning?)

→ s 2.4: In Menti, ask participants:

“What emotion do you want to feel more?”

Very quickly, look at the answers together.

→ s 2.5: Ask the group / in pairs:

“What can you do to feel this way?”

This is a good question to discuss quickly with a neighbour. As a conclusion, bring attention to the fact that emotions can be directed and changed.

→ s 2.6: Introduce the wheel of emotions.

It is generally agreed that there are 6–8 primary emotions, and up to thousands of nuanced variations of these. If you have time, let participants discuss about a few of them, see similarities and differences between diverse feelings.

→ s 2.7: Ask the group:

“If you needed to explain what is emotion to a 5-year-old, what would you say?”

Let anyone who wants answer out loud.

→ s 2.8: Introduce the ‘official’ definitions of “emotion”.

Etymologically, emotion is something that moves in us and from us – an energy that is in constant motion. Read out loud the Wikipedia definition and stress that there is no scientific consensus on a definition.

→ s 2.9: Divide into groups of 2–3 and ask the groups in Menti:

“Why do we need emotions?”

Ask each group to write down a few points.

Look at the answers together.

→ s 2.10: Introduce three key reasons why we need emotions.

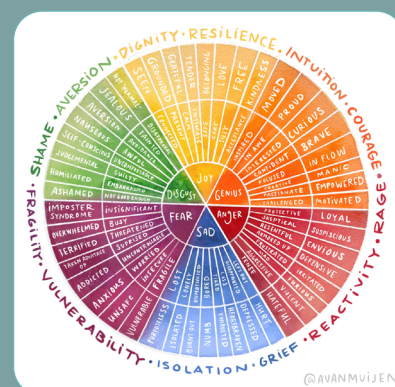
Emotions are a source of information; they help us interact with each other; they motivate us and prepare us for action. Connect this input with the participants’ answers.

45 min 🕒 11:00–11:45

SESSION 2 MATERIALS

You should use Slides 2 to conduct all three parts of this session.

Find Slides 1 here in Session 2:
calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.



Slide 2.6: Wheel of emotions
(by Abby Vanmujen)

→ s 2.11: **Ask the group:**

“Do you remember which emotions young people most experienced in connection with climate change?”

Let anyone who wants answer out loud.

→ s 2.12: **Ask them to show by raising their hands:**

“How many of you have talked with young people and those people have expressed [feeling x], [feeling y], [feeling z]?”

→ s 2.13: **Show the list of the most common feelings young people experience.**

Stress that it is important that a person who works with young people puts the emphasis on validating and normalising the diverse feelings they feel about the climate at the moment. It is the best thing they can do, because it helps to connect with young people, and supports them. Difficult climate emotions are a normal reaction to our situation.

2.2 Overview of anxiety – one of the common feelings connected to the climate situation

→ s 2.15: **Ask the group:**

“In which situations have you felt anxiety?”

“What kind of physical reactions have you felt when you are anxious?”

Let anyone who wants answer out loud, and discuss.

→ s 2.16–2.18: **Show the symptoms of general anxiety.**

Introduce the the Fight – Flight – Freeze effect.

Read out loud the comparison with climate anxiety.

To conclude, create a transition for the group from anxiety as a feeling that a lot of us have felt and know to the question: "How to normalise emotions? If anxiety is a normal feeling, how we can support people's understanding that it is OK to feel a variety of feelings?"

2.3 How to normalise emotions?

→ s 2.20: **Ask participants to discuss in pairs:**

“Think back to a situation where you felt understood and heard.”

What did the other person do? What was helpful for you?
What made you feel understood?

→ s 2.21: **Then, ask the big group:**

“What is needed for a person to feel that they are understood/heard?”

s 2.22: **“Is there anything specific for a young person?”**

It is important to make participants understand that they should not try to take away the emotion that a young person has. In order to create the possibility that the methods you introduce later have a chance to relieve the feelings of a young person, it is important to make sure that the person feels that they are heard and understood.

10 min  11:45–11:55

Climate anxiety

It is known that negative changes are coming, only the volume of them is unknown.

The magnitude of the threat is real. One has to learn to deal with climate anxiety and reframe how to live and function in this situation.

Climate anxiety is a societal problem that is shared globally.

Challenges societal structures, growth economy, justice and capitalism, which may lead to disillusionment.

Slide 2.18: differences between general and climate anxiety

35 min  11:55–12:30

→ **s 2.23–2.25: Read out loud the key elements of active listening. Show the example of reflective listening.**

Understanding is more important than responding.

Validating phrases such as “It is normal to feel that way”, “It sounds like a normal reaction to a difficult situation” are important to remember and use.

It is OK to guess wrong while reflecting the other person’s emotion, as long as you use a tentative formulation like “it sounds as if” or “it seems like”.

It is OK to share your emotions as the reflector, but it is important to not to start to tell your story at length (don’t take the other person’s stage).

→ **s 2.26: Ask participants to practice active listening in pairs:**

One of you describes a situation where you felt some difficult emotions.

The other reflects on the feelings they hear. Repeat the other way around.

Guide them not to pick a situation that is too difficult for them.

→ **s 2.27: Shake off the feelings!**

Everyone should move a little, so they don’t get stuck in the difficult emotions they were describing. You can also use **Shake Stretch Soothe** (p 23).

→ **s 2.28: Reflect on the exercise in the big group.**

How did it feel? What did you notice?

NOTE: OPTIONAL EXERCISE

If you run out of time to have the full session on active listening (~ 20 min), it's alright. In this case, just **emphasise that active listening skills are very important** and encourage participants to look into it on their own.

END OF THE SECOND SESSION

Lunch

60 min  12:30–13:30

THIRD SESSION: GOOD TO KNOW

The third session is dedicated to ways of relieving climate anxiety. You will introduce the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) model to the participants via a simple example (3.1), inform them of indicators and resources for when professional mental health help is needed (3.2), facilitate a few Anxiety Relief Methods (3.3), as well as prepare them for facilitating a few Methods themselves (3.4).

- + Use Slides 3 to conduct the first two parts of this session.
- + NB! You should have filled in slide 3.19 on local mental health resources!
- + Participants should have access to the handout “Anxiety Relief Methods For Youth” (10 pages), which involve the images of the CBT model and the example situation. You should have shared this with them beforehand and/or be prepared to share it with them during the session (print it out or share it online).
- + Session 3 includes 1 Menti-moment and 3 Method-exercises.

3.1 How to deal with difficult emotions: CBT basic model

→ s 3.1: Present the content of Slides 3: “Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) model”

Follow the slides and read out loud the input in the slide notes.

→ s 3.2: Read out loud the definition of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a form of psychological treatment that explores the links between thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. It is common in dealing with relieving the symptoms of anxiety.

→ s 3.3–3.12: Present the model as instructed by the slides. Ask the questions to the big group, letting anyone who wants answer out loud.

The slides present participants with a situation where two people with different experiences are walking towards a dog on a street: one of them has a positive, the other a negative, anxious response. The “Anxiety Relief Methods For Youth” (p 15) includes a more thorough description of it.

In conclusion: a situation first influences one’s thoughts, then emotions and then behaviour. We can try to change the meaning we give to situations we come across, including to situations regarding climate change.

→ s 3.13: In Menti, ask participants: “How do we encourage constructive behaviour?”

Look at the answers together.

→ s 3.14: Compare and conclude.

In order to help a young person to move from non-productive behaviour (scrolling etc) to productive behaviour in dealing with the emotions and the problem at hand, it is important to make clear that we can

- + dispute and analyse thoughts, and create more useful ones
- + accept the feelings and let them subside
- + change our behaviour, do things differently.

We are going to look at methods that help us do each of those in the next sessions.

20 min  13:30–13:50

SESSION 3.1 MATERIALS

You should use Slides 3 to conduct this sub-session.

Find Slides 3 here in Session 3: calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

GOOD TO KNOW

Read about the CBT model below in the Methods section on page 15–16 in this document for a more thorough explanation.

3.2 Further support measures

→ s 3.16: Read out loud the indicators for when further support is needed.

In some cases, working with feelings, thoughts and behaviours according to the CBT model is not enough. We need to know when additional help by professionals is definitely needed:

- + suicidal thoughts
- + self harming behaviour
- + no supportive network
- + very strong emotions that interfere with everyday life

→ s 3.17–3.19: Describe what to do to help in this case.

Most importantly:

- + Express your worry and willingness to help
- + Ask if they have contacted someone already or have a trusted adult to turn to
- + Introduce the possible ways (based on the local resources on [slide 3.19](#)) to access psychological support, especially in crisis situations (112). If possible/ needed, take the first steps with a young person in your group.

→ s 3.20: Conclude by describing ongoing support measures.

Recommendations for supporting oneself in climate anxiety:

- + Join an environmental organisation
- + Spend time outdoors
- + Be an active citizen
- + Have fun

If further support is not immediately needed, we will now move on to look at the Methods that can be used at diverse points of the CBT model to influence our thoughts, feelings or behaviour.

3.3 Anxiety Relief Methods For Youth

You will now instruct and try out three different Methods with participants, one from each category: thoughts, feelings, behaviour (read more about them on p 15–16 in this document). The list below contains three examples from which to choose in each of the categories. You can decide which ones to try based on the time remaining.

→ s 3.21: You can leave this slide open or close the slides presentation here.

NB! There is going to be one more Menti-moment later. If you are using it, don't disconnect the screening setup yet.

→ With the whole group, **instruct an exercise from each category:**

→ **1 for thoughts** – **STOPP Method** (p 17)

NB! This should definitely be tried out!

→ **1 for feelings** – **Anchor To The Ground** (p 18) / **The 5 Senses Exercise** (p 18) / any **Mindful Breathing Exercise** (p 19 or other not included in this program)

→ **1 for behaviour** – **Slow Breathing With Prolonged Exhalations** (p 22) / **TIPP Skills** (p 22)

20 min  13:50–14:10

SESSION 3.2 MATERIALS

You should use Slides 3 starting from p 15 to conduct this subsession. You should have filled in p 19 beforehand.

Find Slides 3 here in Session 3: calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

NOTE: LOCAL RESOURCES

On slide 3.19, put together information from the current year about the different helplines, webpages, emails, where to contact when support or help with mental health is needed. See the Estonian example from 2024 (slide 3.18).

30 min  14:10–14:40

SESSION 3.3: METHODS

You should have picked out and prepared to conduct the Method-exercises listed below beforehand.

3.4 Preparation for practising the Methods

→ After participants have experienced various Methods together in a group facilitated by the trainer, **have them study the Method-handout (“Anxiety Relief Methods For Youth”).**

If you have already sent it to them online beforehand, ask them to find the file in their online device (phone/computer/tablet), or take it out if they have printed it. If you have printed the handouts yourself, now is the time to hand them out to the participants who requested it.

Remind the participants that the handout includes information about the CBT model and the example situation. These are key topics of the training programme that they can work through at their own pace during the training or later at home.

→ **Ask participants to prepare to carry out the STOPP Method (exercise 1 in the list of Methods).**

They should read the instructions and mentally prepare to facilitate this method.

→ **After that, ask participants to choose one other exercise to prepare from the list of Methods.**

This exercise may be new or may have been practised in the group in the last section.

Participants will prepare both exercises to carry them out after the break.

END OF THE THIRD SESSION

Break

15 min  15:00–15:15

20 min  14:40–15:00

SESSION 3.4 MATERIALS

You should have the handout “Anxiety Relief Methods For Youth” ready to share or already shared with all participants (print it out or share it online).

Find the Method-handout here in Session 3: calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

NOTE

If you have time, let them carry out both the STOPP Method and one they can choose themselves. If there's not so much time, let them facilitate just one exercise – either STOPP or the one of their choice.

FOURTH SESSION: GOOD TO KNOW

In the fourth session, participants will try facilitating the Anxiety Relief Methods themselves (4.1). Then, you will conclude the day with reflections on self-help (4.2) and looking back on the day (4.3).

- + There are no slides for session 4, but it includes 1 Menti-moment.
- + To end the training, you can hand out certificates of participation.

SESSION 4
15:15–16:40

4.1 Practising the methods

→ **Divide participants into pairs.**

Ask them to carry out the STOPP method with each other.

Each person conducts the method once.

→ **Then, let them reflect on it between themselves.**

- + How was it to carry out such a method?
- + What did you notice in yourself?
- + What worked very well? What can be improved?

→ **Divide participants into groups of 3 people.**

Each person in the group carries out the Method that they chose for the other group members.

The listening group members are essentially playing a role game and pretending they are youngsters with climate anxiety.

→ **Encourage participants to give immediate feedback to each other.**

- + How was it to carry out such a method?
- + What worked very well? What can be improved?

→ **Come back to the big group and reflect. Ask the participants:**

“How was it to instruct the exercises to others?”

“How was it to follow the instructed exercises?”

“What could be better?”

“What was difficult? What was good?”

4.2 Self-care

→ **Discuss in pairs:**

“What helps you when you feel difficult emotions?”

“What is something small that you would want to do more for your mental health?”

“How can you do it more?”

→ **Come back to the big group and ask participants in Menti:**

“Share your key methods, thoughts and tips for self-help.”

This can also be done as a discussion with the whole group.

4.3 Outro

→ **Ending circle. Sitting in a circle, ask everyone to share:**

“What emotions am I feeling right now?”

As a facilitator, make the connection with aspects of learning different emotions.

“What was most useful for me from this training?”

→ **Hand out the certificates of participation, if using them.**

65 min  15:15–16:20

SESSION 4.1 MATERIALS

You should have shared the Method-handout (“Anxiety Relief Methods For Youth”) with all participants.

Find the Method-handout here in Session 3:
calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

20 min  16:20–16:40

20 min  16:40–17:00

SESSION 4.3 MATERIALS

You should have printed out and filled in the certificates of participation, if you want to use them.

Find the print file here in Session 4:
calm-ey.eu/training-programme-resources/.

END OF THE FOURTH SESSION AND THE PROGRAMME

Anxiety Relief Methods for Youth

Methods that can be carried out with young people to relieve and healthily process climate-change-induced emotions

THE LIST OF METHODS

THOUGHTS

1. STOPP _____ p 17
2. Radical Acceptance _____ p 17
3. Values And Goals _____ p 18

FEELINGS

4. Anchor To The Ground _____ p 18
5. The 5 Senses Exercise _____ p 18
6. The Mindfulness Of Breathing - p 19
7. Embodied Check-In _____ p 20
8. Imagining Emotions _____ p 20
9. Progressive Muscle Relaxation - p 21

BEHAVIOUR

10. Slow Breathing With Prolonged Exhalations _____ p 22
11. TIPP Skills _____ p 22
12. Connecting With Others _____ p 22
13. Meaningful Action _____ p 22
14. Soothing Through The Senses - p 23
15. Mental Health Vitamins _____ p 23

FEELINGS

BEHAVIOUR

16. Shake Stretch Soothe _____ p 23
17. Being In Contact Mindfully _____ p 24
18. Radical Joy _____ p 24

Although all climate emotions are valid and natural, they can be very difficult to bear and climate anxiety can become a problem when its intensity interrupts daily functioning and coping strategies, which can lead to paralysing distress and have a negative impact on health.

Therefore, skills for healthily coping, relieving and shifting our overwhelming climate anxiety are crucial. Emotions can sometimes be shifted and calmed more quickly and effectively through the body and movement, rather than the mind. However, it is also important to be aware of and able to work with the repetitive thoughts that come into mind and influence your well-being.

An important skill of mental health and the healthy process of climate change induced emotions is the ability to shift one's body state from anxious to calm.

In this chapter, you will find a variety of exercises to relieve the intensity of the feelings and help the person to move into a more tolerable state of mind to function well and find opportunities to take needed action. This is not supposed to be a conclusive list.

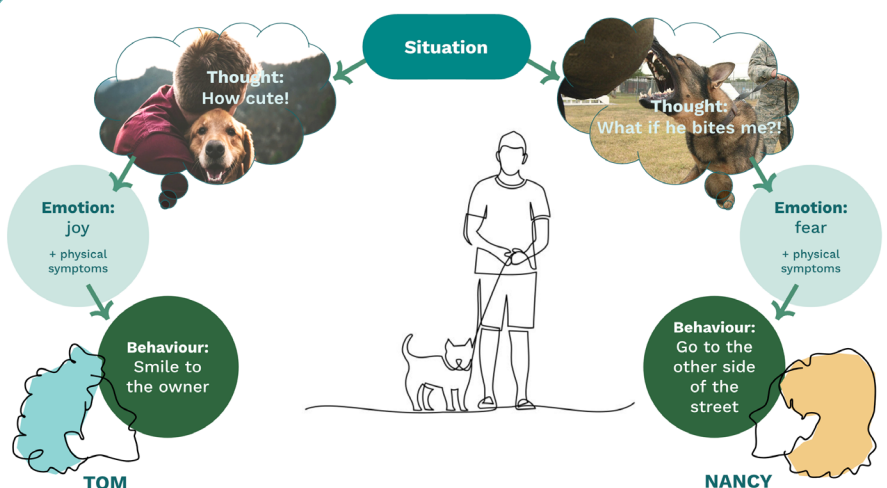
The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy model

A very useful model for understanding how thoughts, emotions and actions influence us and our wellbeing, is the CBT model. This model forms the basis of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which was created by the psychologist Aron Beck.

Imagine a situation. A dog comes towards two people walking on the street. Let us call the first one Tom and the second Nancy. How do they react to the dog? This depends on many conditions.

Let us imagine that Tom likes dogs, he has one at home and he is used to them. Nancy, however, has been bitten by a dog as a child. Probably, Tom's and Nancy's thoughts, feelings and actions will be very different from one another.

Image 1



From this, it follows that feelings do not come directly from the situation. In between, there are our thoughts about what is happening, which are based on our previous life experiences. Our actions, in turn, are influenced by our thoughts and feelings.

What could Tom and Nancy do?
 Their possible thoughts, feelings and actions are depicted in image 1.

From this example, we can construct a simplified CBT model (image 2).

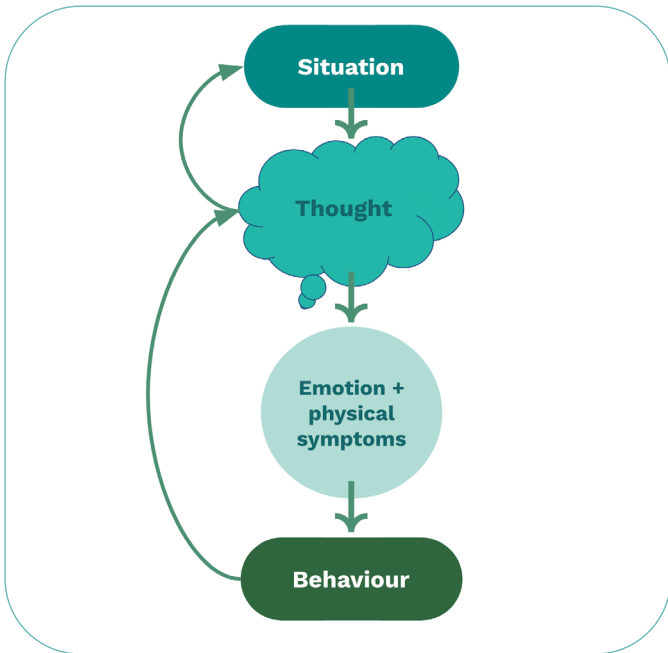


Image 2. Simplified CBT model

However, things are a bit more complex. Most parts of the model influence each other directly (image 3).

Note that according to this theory, the situation influences other parts of the model only through our thoughts and cognitions. This means that our brain always interprets a situation in some way before the situation can influence our emotions, physical reactions and behaviours. This interpretation can be so quick and automatic that we are not aware of it, but it is still there. The cognition can be a verbalised thought or just a quick mental image (for example, an image of an angry dog).

How can we influence ourselves according to this model?

This can be done by:

- + Analysing thoughts and changing them into more realistic and/or motivating ones
- + Accepting emotions
- + Doing something differently

In the following pages, different techniques are introduced. Above the descriptions, there are labels showing which part of the CBT model the technique influences most.

NOTE FOR FACILITATORS

It is important for trainers to understand and explain the CBT model since it shows difficult feelings can be addressed in various ways and helps clarify why different techniques are effective. During training, trainers should encourage youth workers to grasp the model themselves, but they do not need to explain it to the young people they support. Understanding the model and its techniques allows youth workers to tailor their approach to meet individual needs, as some may prefer working with thoughts while others may favor physical exercises. You don't need to be a mental health expert to benefit from this understanding, but remember that you are not providing cognitive behavioral therapy; rather, you are using its basic principles and simpler techniques.

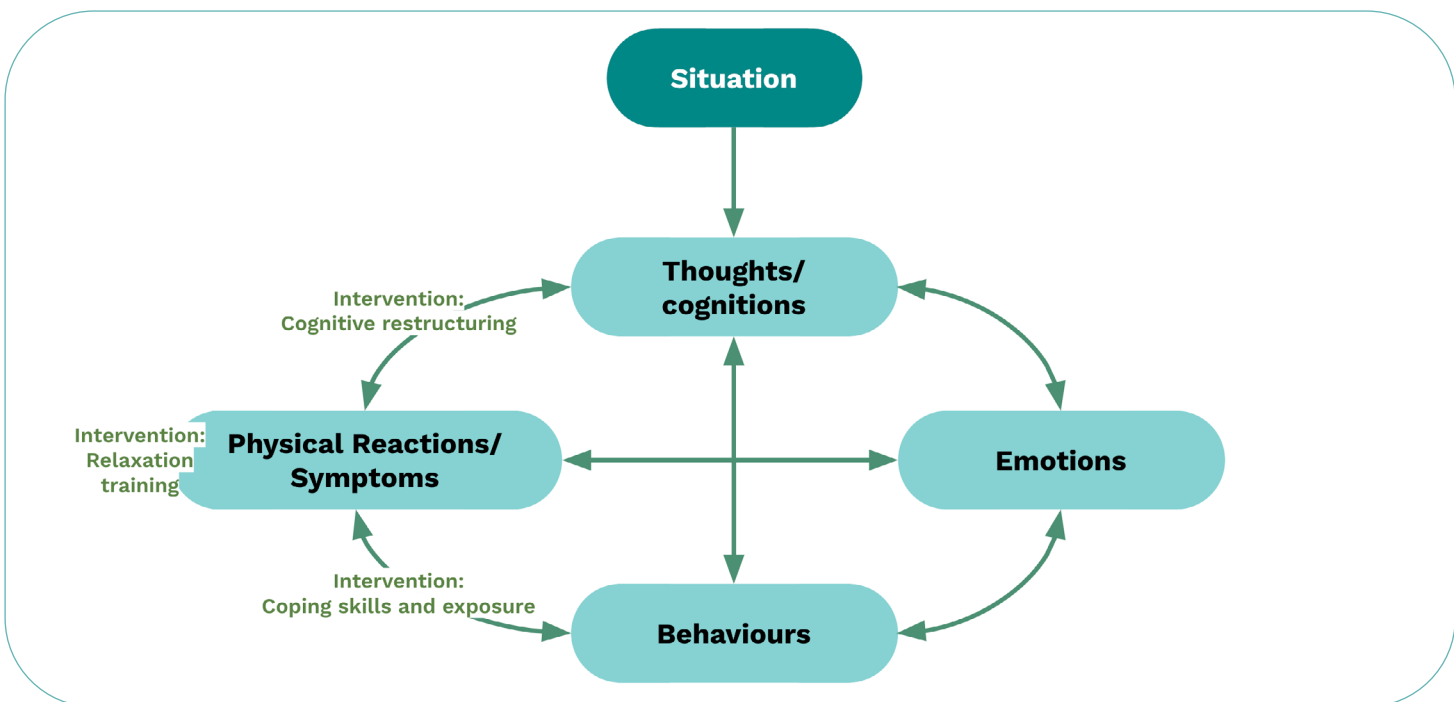


Image 3. The CBT Five Areas Model

1

THOUGHTS

STOPP: an exercise for taking a step back and analysing thoughts

In this exercise, it may be useful to ask the young person to write things down. This helps to sort out thoughts better. It is best to start with a moderately difficult situation and work towards more challenging ones. Explain to the young person that it is a skill to be learned and practised. Only then can it become a natural thing to do in your head or on paper when facing challenging situations.

STOP! – Just pause for a moment.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH – Notice your breathing, the sensations that arise when the air enters and leaves your body.

OBSERVE – Try to look objectively at what is happening without making judgements.

1. What emotions do you feel? (*Use a list of emotions or the emotion wheel if needed*)
2. What thoughts are going through your head?
3. What sensations can you feel in your body?
4. How can the situation at hand be described as objectively as possible?

PULL BACK – Put in some **PERSPECTIVE**.

Choose a distressing thought that came into your mind. There are several paths here that you can take to analyse the thought.

1. **Look at the evidence.** Is the thought in accordance with reality? What are the arguments that speak for and against the thought being true? What would be a more balanced way of looking at the situation that takes into account all the evidence?
2. **What is the effect of believing this thought to be true?** Is it good for you to hold on to it? Does it help you live in accordance with your values and move towards your aims? Is there another way to see the situation?
3. **What advice would you give a friend who is thinking this thought?** What would another person you trust think of the situation?

PRACTICE – Think of what it would be best to do in this situation, now that you have looked at it in a balanced way.

- + Do you need to act or just let things be as they are?
- + If you already acted in a way you do not like, how can you do better next time?
- + What can you do that fits your values?
- + Where can you focus your attention?
- + What did you learn from this exercise?

GOOD TO KNOW

It is important not to invalidate a thought that is true (e.g. the world and humanity are in great danger). In case of a thought that is in accordance with reality, it would be better to choose options 2 or 3 from the list under “Pull back”. You can let the young person read the questions and ask them which block seems to speak to them the most at a given moment. There is no need to cover all the blocks in the “Perspective” part or answer all the questions in the “Practice” section.

2

THOUGHTS

FEELINGS

Radical Acceptance

This skill is inspired by Marsha Linehan’s work and is used in dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT). This is a bit of a difficult skill to teach if you have not practised it yourself. However, it is an important prerequisite to working towards change. In order to change something, you first need to accept things as they are now and face the truth. Perhaps the most important thing is to make sure the young person understands what is *not* radical acceptance: it is *not* approving of things that are not okay, and it is *not* giving up or being passive. It is a deep process of acceptance in your mind, heart and body. It happens when you stop fighting the reality of things and let go of bitterness.

BEFORE THE EXERCISE: THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING

WHAT DO WE NEED TO ACCEPT?

1. Reality (the facts about the past and present, even if we do not like them)
2. That there are limits to the way you can influence the future (but you only need to accept realistic limits)
3. Life is worth living, even if there are painful things in it

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RADICALLY ACCEPT?

1. Denying reality does not change it
2. To change reality, you first need to accept it
3. It is not possible to completely avoid pain in life
4. Denying reality makes pain into suffering
5. Not accepting can cause feelings such as bitterness, unhappiness, anger and sadness to spiral endlessly
6. Acceptance can cause sorrow, but usually it is followed by a deep sense of peace

EXERCISE:

1. Just notice how you are denying reality or fighting against it.
2. Remind yourself that things are just as they are. You cannot change the past.
3. Remind yourself that reality has its causes. A myriad of conditions has led to the way things are now. Notice how these conditions have influenced your life. Due to these conditions, it is practically logical that things are as they are now.
4. Practice radical acceptance with your entire being (mind, body and soul). Be creative in how you do it (use mindfulness, relaxation, praying, imagination, drawing, going to places that help you etc.)
5. Pay attention to your bodily sensations as you are trying to radically accept them.
6. Tell yourself that life can be worth living, even though there is also pain in it.
7. If this kind of acceptance seems unpleasant, consider its pros and cons (on paper, if possible).
8. If you cannot totally accept at this point, accept that you cannot accept.

3

THOUGHTS

Values And Goals

It can be beneficial to talk to young people about their values. Explain that it is never possible to “achieve” a value like you would achieve a goal. Life can be seen as a never-ending journey of moving towards and trying to live in accordance with your values (like a moth flying towards the moon).

It can be helpful to show them a list of values and discuss which are most important to them.

CORE VALUES LIST

Authenticity	Justice
Achievement	Kindness
Adventure	Knowledge
Authority	Leadership
Autonomy	Learning
Balance	Love
Beauty	Loyalty
Boldness	Meaningful Work
Compassion	Nature
Challenge	Openness
Citizenship	Optimism
Community	Peace
Competency	Pleasure
Contribution	Poise
Creativity	Popularity
Curiosity	Recognition
Determination	Religion
Environment	Reputation
Fairness	Respect
Faith	Responsibility
Fame	Security
Friendships	Service
Fun	Spirituality
Growth	Status
Happiness	Success
Honesty	Trustworthiness
Humour	Wealth
Influence	Wisdom
Inner Harmony	

Then you can take a few values and discuss how to formulate clear goals that the young person can work towards to live in accordance with their values.

SMART GOALS

It is good to keep in mind **SMART** goals. A good goal is:

Specific – It should be narrow enough for more effective planning. You can divide big goals into small steps.

Measurable – It is good if you have an objective way to measure if the goal has been achieved or not.

Achievable – Make sure you can reasonably accomplish your goal within a certain time frame.

Realistic/Relevant – It should be realistic and align with your values.

Timely/Time-based – Set a realistic end date to enhance motivation.

4

FEELINGS

Anchor To The Ground

This is a grounding exercise that helps the young person to anchor their awareness into the present moment. When anxious, we tend to get lost in our heads, so it is a good technique to fix your awareness into the farthest point possible from your head. That is, your feet. This is a good alternative for people who do not like breathing exercises. The best way is to do this while standing, but it can be adapted to a sitting position. Then, awareness should be directed toward the buttocks. It can be done both with the eyes open and with the eyes closed.

SHORT VERSION:

1. Stand with your feet firmly on the ground.
2. Feel the ground under your feet. Feel the gravity pulling you towards the earth.
3. Sense the tension in your feet and legs as you hold yourself upright.
4. Sense how your feet are holding the weight of your whole body. This feeling of heaviness flows from your head, through your spine into your legs and feet.

FOR LONG VERSION, ADD THESE:

5. Imagine you are a tree in the wind. Gently adjust the weight of your body to your toes, then to your heels, to the right, to the left.
6. Now put almost the entire weight of your body on your right foot. Then, on your left foot.
7. If you would like to, you can now take a few mindful steps, noticing how your weight moves from one foot to the other.
8. Stand again and feel your weight flowing evenly into both of your feet.
9. Now broaden your awareness. Take notes of what you hear and see. Where are you?

5

FEELINGS

The 5 Senses Exercise

This is a good grounding exercise. It helps the young person to get away from their thoughts for a while and tune in to the present experience as it is here and now. It is important to note that it is OK also to sense nothing. Then the exercise is to experience the lack of any sensation (e.g., lack of smell). The exercise can be done in two ways: either silently or saying the things you notice out loud.

1. Notice five things that you can see. Look around you.
2. Notice four things that you can feel. Tune in to your sense of touch.
3. Notice three things you can hear. Listen carefully.
4. Notice two things you can smell. Notice and name two smells you recognise.
5. Notice one thing you can taste. Think of its flavour on your tongue.

The Mindfulness Of Breathing Exercise

...has 4 basic steps. The first two include counting breaths, the other two do not. It is important that in this exercise, the young person should not try to change their pattern of breathing in any way. It can be quite difficult, though, to let go and just observe. You can say that this is also completely normal.

It is important to explain the steps briefly before starting the exercise for the first time with the young person. The length of the exercise can vary, but it might be better not to make it too long when trying it for the first time.

During each stage it is helpful to occasionally say something like: "If you get carried away by thoughts, it is normal, it happens to all of us. Just notice this and turn your attention back to your breathing." Staying still for so long can cause tensions and even pain. Make sure to tell the participants that they are free to change their position during the exercise, if necessary.

When reading out the script, do it slowly and make sure to pause between sentences.

INTRODUCTION

For this exercise, you can either sit or lie down. The traditional way is sitting. Pay attention to your posture. It is good to find a position where your back can be naturally straight (e.g., kneeling on a couple of pillows, or sitting cross-legged on a pillow). Make sure that the nape of your neck is not tense. For that, you can gently move your jaw towards the front of your neck and let the back of your neck lengthen. Feel how gravity pulls your body to the ground and, at the same time, imagine that your head is reaching upwards (upwards and slightly to the front, so that you do not strain the nape of your neck).

(longer pause)

Now, notice any sounds you can hear around you. Do not judge them as good or bad, just observe them.

(pause)

Pay attention to your emotions. How are you feeling right now?

(pause)

Notice any thoughts that come to your head. Try not to get carried away by thoughts, just let them come and fade away again. If, at any time during the exercise, you notice that you have become lost in your thoughts, it is normal, it happens to everyone. Just take note of that and turn your attention back to your breathing.

STAGE 1

Now, turn your attention to your breathing. Just observe, do not try to change the way it is. Pay attention to how your body expands and shrinks. Also, you can notice the little pauses between in-breath and out-breath. Count your breaths after each out-breath from 1 to 10. Then start again from 1 and so on. If you lose track, just start again from 1.

STAGE 2

Count your breaths just before each in-breath from 1 to 10. Then start again from 1.

STAGE 3

Let go of the counting. Just observe your breathing. You can be aware of your whole body, as it moves gently with each breath.

STAGE 4

Turn your attention to the place where the air first touches you when it enters your body. It can be somewhere in the nose, throat or the upper lip. Pay attention to the subtle sensations.

ENDING THE EXERCISE

Now, take your mind off your breathing. Just take a few moments to notice how you are feeling now.

What does your body feel like?

Has anything changed?

(pause)

Do you feel any emotions?

Where are they in your body?

(pause)

What thoughts are going through your head?

(pause)

When you are ready, open your eyes and finish the exercise.

NOTE ON BREATHING EXERCISES

Breathing exercises can be done in two different ways. One method involves simply paying attention to the breathing as it is, constituting a mindfulness exercise. The other method deliberately makes exhalations longer than inhalations, activating the parasympathetic nervous system, known as the "rest and digest" mode, and inducing relaxation.

At the beginning, it is important to say that not everybody benefits from breathing exercises; some might feel more anxious. Tell the young person that it is always OK to stop if they get uncomfortable.

7

FEELINGS

Embodied Check-In

This could be a group exercise to start with a session, to ground and help to bring participants into the present moment and into their bodies.

BEFORE THE EXERCISE

Before starting with the check-in, guide them to take a comfortable position sitting or standing, put foot soles to the ground and feel the support of the ground or the chair.

Take a moment to consider where you are.

Close your eyes if you want,
and make your body comfortable.

Notice if you are IN your body
and to what degree.

Feel the contact of your body
with the surfaces supporting it.

Can you rely on the support of the
ground/chair/wall?

Move your attention to your breath:
where is it? How is it?

Following your breath,
move your attention to the lower belly.

Can you soften it?
Stay for a moment, notice the breath,
but also any sensation or perception.

Can you move or change the sensation
you are experiencing?

Notice if you are in your body,
and to what degree.

Open your eyes and see where you are.

8

FEELINGS

Imagining Emotions

This exercise helps to visualise emotions and thus gain distance from them (and perhaps a sense of clarity). It is important to note that not every person has a natural knack for imagining things visually. So, it would be good to tell the young person before the exercise that it is also OK to not get a clear picture of the emotion in your mind's eye.

It may be good to first practice with a pleasant emotion and then work towards more challenging ones. If the young person currently does not feel any emotions, it would be a good idea to help them remember and imagine a recent situation where emotions came up. It is easier to do this exercise with the eyes closed, but if that feels uncomfortable, the young person can fix their gaze on a neutral point (e.g., the wall, the floor). It is also good to say that it is normal for other thoughts to come and interfere with the exercise: you should just take note of this and focus your mind on the exercise again and again.

Many people find doing this exercise a bit strange at first and this is normal, but the exercise can still help one accept one's feelings more readily.

1. What are you feeling right now?
What do you feel in your body?
Give a name to the emotion (*with the aid of a list, if necessary*). If you have several, just choose one.
2. Close your eyes and imagine that you take the emotion out of your body and place it about a metre in front of you. Don't worry, you will be putting it back in a few minutes!
3. If the emotion had a size, how big would it be?
4. If the emotion had a shape, what would it be?
5. If the emotion had a colour, what would it be?
6. What are its edges like? Clear or soft or blurry?
7. Does it look solid or transparent?
8. Does it stay still or move?
9. Does it remind you of a specific thing?
10. Now imagine the emotion with the size, shape and colour you gave it. Just look at it for a few moments and let it be just as it is.
11. When you are ready, put the emotion back into your body where you took it from.
12. Notice what happens to the emotion in your body when you breathe in and out, how it moves with each breath.
13. Take a deeper breath. Notice what happens to the emotion.
14. When you are ready, open your eyes and come back to the present moment and your surroundings.

AFTER THE EXERCISE

1. Did you notice a change in your emotion when you took a little distance from it?
2. How is your reaction to the emotion different?
3. Are you more distressed than before or less?
4. Did the emotion look or feel different after the exercise?
5. Did you notice your thoughts interfering with the exercise? This is completely normal.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that reduces stress and anxiety in one's body by slowly tensing and then relaxing each muscle. It is important to note that the relaxing effect is enhanced by practice. It is good to make it a daily routine.

When leading the exercise, make sure you leave enough time for the participants to really feel and experience the relaxation. The tensing phase can be relatively short (5 seconds, for example). The classical way is to start with the feet, but it is also possible to start with the head. Both have their own benefits.

Begin by sitting or lying on your back.
If you feel comfortable, close your eyes.

Take a deep breath and hold it for a few seconds.
Feel the tension related to that.
(5 second pause)

Release your breath and breathe normally,
feel the relaxation in your chest.
(10–15 second pause)

Tense your feet by curling your **toes** and the arch
of your foot.
(5 second pause)

Release the tension. Notice the relaxation, possible
feelings of warmth.
(10–15 second pause)

Focus on your **calves**. Hold them tightly!
(5 second pause)

Now relax your calves and notice what it feels like.
(10–15 second pause)

Next, tense your **upper legs and pelvis** by squeezing
your thighs together.
(5 second pause)

Release the tension in your upper legs and pelvis.
Notice the sensations that come with it.
(10–15 second pause)

Tense your **stomach**. You can do this by sucking
your stomach in.
(5 second pause)

Release the tension, notice the relaxation in your
stomach.
(10–15 second pause)

Now tense the **muscles in your back**. You can bring
your shoulders together behind you.
(5 second pause)

Release the tension. Notice the difference it brings
into your body.
(10–15 second pause)

Now, tense the **muscles of your arms**.
(5 second pause)

Release the tension in your arms and experience the
feeling of relaxation.
(10–15 second pause)

Tense your **hands**. To do that, make a fist.
(5 second pause)

Now release your hands. Notice how they feel limp
and at ease.
(10–15 second pause)

Tense your **shoulders** by bringing them up towards
your head.
(5 second pause)

Relax your shoulders. Let them go limp.
(10–15 second pause)

Tense your **jaw** by pushing your teeth together.
(5 second pause)

Relax your jaw. Feel the sides of your head relaxing.
(10–15 second pause)

Tense your **face** by distorting the muscles around
your eyes and mouth. You can do this by making a
funny face.
(5 second pause)

Relax your face. Feel the muscles around your eyes
and mouth loosen.
(10–15 second pause)

Finally, tense your **entire body**. Your feet, legs,
stomach, chest, arms, head, neck.
(5 second pause)

Relax your entire body. Allow your whole body to go
limp. Notice any sensations of warmth or tingling.
Feel as if your entire body is very heavy. Feel the
gravity holding you, pulling you towards the ground.
(longer pause)

When you are ready, begin to gently move your
fingers and toes.
(10–15 second pause)

Stretch your muscles and open your eyes when you
are ready.

10

FEELINGS

BEHAVIOUR

BREATHING

Slow Breathing With Prolonged Exhalations

This exercise has many variations. It is important to tell the young person that it is not essential to aim for any specific number of seconds. The main objective is to make exhalation longer than inhalation. It is important to listen to what your body needs at that given moment. Some options:

OPTION 1

Count to 4 while breathing in,
count to 6 while breathing out.

OPTION 2

Count to 4 while breathing in,
count to 8 while breathing out.

THE 4-7-8 TECHNIQUE

Breathe in for 4 seconds,
hold your breath for 7 seconds,
exhale for 8 seconds.

NOTE ON BREATHING EXERCISES

Breathing exercises can be done in two different ways. One method involves simply paying attention to the breathing as it is, constituting a mindfulness exercise. The other method deliberately makes exhalations longer than inhalations, activating the parasympathetic nervous system, known as the “rest and digest” mode, and inducing relaxation.

At the beginning, it is important to say that not everybody benefits from breathing exercises; some might feel more anxious. Tell the young person that it is always OK to stop if they get uncomfortable.

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BEHAVIOUR

TIPP Skills

When in crisis, when emotions feel overwhelming, these skills can be helpful.

TEMPERATURE

Splash cold water on your face or dunk your head into a sink filled with cold water and hold your breath for a while.

Hot temperatures can theoretically also be used (e.g., a hot sauna), but cold is the more classical way.

Important! Do NOT use the sink technique without talking to your doctor if you have heart problems, bulimia or anorexia nervosa!

INTENSE EXERCISE

Go for a run or cycle for at least 20 minutes.

If you do not have the time, just run, jump or dance on the spot for a while.

PACED BREATHING

The exhalations should be longer than inhalations.

See the breathing exercises on the left.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

See exercise 9 for more information.

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BEHAVIOUR

Connecting With Others

Encourage the young person to get in contact with other like-minded people. This can be done in designated groups, individuals, or environmental organisations.

It is very important not to be alone with your worries.

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BEHAVIOUR

Taking A Meaningful Action

Taking actions that are meaningful in the context of the climate crisis is one of the best antidotes, together with connecting with others. Actions can be divided into 6 basic frameworks to help to solve the climate crisis: **equity, reduce, protect, sequester, influence and support**.

Those actions can be from learning about regenerative agriculture, using your influence to start a community compost, growing a diversity of plants in your garden, leaving spots in your garden for bugs, volunteering in your local NGO-s, joining a community garden, buying your food from local markets (when possible, from woman-owned, regenerative companies), writing an opinion piece to a newspaper, joining workparties to restore a natural area, and so much more.

LEARN MORE

Look for more about the frameworks of meaningful action in here: regeneration.org/frameworks-for-action

Look for the variety of actions to take here: regeneration.org/nexus

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BEHAVIOUR

Soothing Through The Senses

When upset, soothing sensual experiences can be of great help. You can conduct the 5 Senses Exercise first (exercise 5).

For each of the five senses, brainstorm positive activities and experiences together with the young person. You can also share the following list for further inspiration:

SIGHT: Look at something pretty, people watch, window shop, go to an art gallery, go to the cinema or watch a beautiful video

HEARING: Listen to soothing music, pay attention to sounds, sing your favourite song, play an instrument

TOUCH: Take a hot bath or shower, pet your dog or cat, hug someone, put on comfy clothes

SMELL: Use a favourite soap/perfume, burn a scented candle, smell flowers, make popcorn, peel an orange

TASTE: Chew your favourite gum, eat a favourite food, eat mindfully, drink hot chocolate

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BEHAVIOUR

Mental Health Vitamins

Young people, and especially young activists, can lose sight of taking care of their own needs and mental health. It is important to go back to the basics – to mental health vitamins.

REST
during the day and night

EAT
balanced nutrition

MOVE
physical activity

FEEL
pleasant emotions

SOCIALISE
good relationships

A great feature of mental health vitamins is that you can choose how you will take them yourself. It is up to your preferences, depending on what you choose to do as a physical activity or for pleasant emotions. Nevertheless, we recommend you to find ways how to do them also outside and in natural surroundings, as this can give an extra value.

Mental health vitamins support the prevention of mental health challenges, but also help you to recover when you face them.

LEARN MORE

A list of pleasant activities could be helpful. These can readily be found on the internet: peaasi.ee/en/mental-health-vitamins

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BEHAVIOUR

FEELINGS

Shake, Stretch, Soothe

This tool for stress and nervous system regulation takes less than a minute and involves different parts of the body by movement. This self-regulation tool comes from the embodied trauma and resilience research by Jo McAndrews, who is a psychotherapist, environmental campaigner and trainer for parents and professionals who work with children.

SHAKE: Stand up and start by shaking your body – hands, feet, shoulders, following what feels good. Do that until you feel it is enough or about 20 seconds. If you feel comfortable, add your voice to the shakes, letting out the “aaa” sound and letting it vibrate with your body movements.

STRETCH: Stretch out your hands and legs while taking up as much room as you can, making your body big. Follow your body’s impulses (try to notice which parts of your body need stretching). You can stretch your lower back, arms, shoulders or any other part of your body. Finish when you feel ready or after about 20 seconds.

SOOTHE: Stand with your legs wider than your hips, steady with weight divided evenly between the legs. When you are ready, start swaying/swinging from side to side like rocking a baby. Add sweeping movement from your shoulders to the tips of your fingers. Do that at the same rhythm, so swinging side to side carrying your weight from one leg to another and alternately stroking one arm and then the other arm.

Finish by standing on both legs evenly again with one hand on your belly and the other arm on your heart, if this feels good. Additionally, to bring language in with brain integration, say out loud what you need to hear or, for example: “I am safe and I am loved”.

Give participants a moment to return from this movement exercise to their seats or places.

GOOD TO KNOW

Shaking – This helps to release the body if it is stuck and allows it to move on and finish the trauma response cycle. For example, deer shake off their stress after they have been chased by a wolf, and then move on.

Stretching – opens up the body, which is the opposite of the fight-flight-freeze response, where under threat the body will make itself as small as possible. Physically opening up the body and stretching it messages the nervous system that it is safe. Nobody faces an attacking tiger with open arms.

Soothing – a mixture of swaying and sweeping alternative arms engages lateral integration. Soothing integrates the nervous system across its two sides. The pressure from swaying and the feeling of touch helps to regulate and calm us. Our skin is linked to the immune and sensory systems in the neuro-immuno-cutaneous system. Cutaneous innervation is a key part of the peripheral nervous system, creating an instant connection to the body from the outside world (Vidal Yucha et al 2019).

Spoken words – by saying out loud how we want ourselves to feel, the left and right side of the brain are integrated through language to the feelings.

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BEHAVIOUR

FEELINGS

Being In Contact With Living Things And Nature Mindfully

This exercise grounds us to the present moment and helps us appreciate the beauty of living things that are still there, and to benefit from the calming effect that nature tends to have on us. One problem with this exercise is that it can sometimes lead to strong emotions of grief for the disappearing nature. Then, it is important to normalise the emotions, help the young person articulate them and just be with the grief.

Any living or non-living thing from the natural world can be observed, but it may be helpful if the chosen object does not run away in the middle of the exercise (i.e. pick a body of water, a stone, a plant). Here is an example with a tree.

1. Go outside to a reasonably private location and choose a tree.
2. Take a close **look** at the tree. What colours does it have? What are its roots like? Its trunk? Its branches? The leaves or needles? Does it have blossoms or fruits?
3. Do you **hear** something from the tree? A rustling of the leaves?
4. Now **touch** the tree. What is the texture of the trunk like? Can you reach a leaf/needle or pick one up? What does it feel like to touch it? If you like, you can rest your back on the tree or put your arms around it.
5. **Smell** the tree. Do you sense any smells from the trunk or leaves?
6. If the tree has ripe fruit, you may want to try one. Feel the **taste** and texture in your mouth.
7. What does the tree do for you? Do you perhaps **feel thankful** for the tree for providing the oxygen you breathe? For the shade it provides from the sun? For being a shelter from rain? A place to live for animals and insects? For the beauty of its blossoms? For the nourishment its fruits bring you? Do you feel the impulse to do something for the tree in turn?
8. Now bring your attention to **yourself**. What kind of emotions do you feel after doing this exercise? Where are they located in your body? Welcome every emotion, pleasant or unpleasant. Whatever you feel, it is fine and normal. If you feel nothing special, this is also completely normal.
9. When you are ready, **say goodbye** to the tree, if you would like to, and finish the exercise.

THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS

Optional: If you and the young person both appreciate poetry, you can also read this poem by **Wendell Berry**.

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

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BEHAVIOUR

FEELINGS

Radical Joy For Hard Times

This is an initiative (see www.radicaljoy.org) of being creatively in contact with wounded places. It includes being creative and leaving a "gift" to the place by creating something beautiful from the materials that are there. It is best to do it as a group of people – then you can validate each other's feelings and support each other.

From the website of the initiative: "There are countless ways to do the RadJoy Practice! You can do it alone or with a group. You can do it spontaneously or plan weeks in advance. Only Steps 1 and 5 are essential. You make the experience your own by adding details that feel right for your community, your place, and your traditions."

1. Go, alone or with friends, to a wounded place.
2. Sit awhile and share your stories about what the place means to you.
3. Get to know the place as it is now.
4. Share with the others what you discovered.
5. Make a simple gift of beauty for the place.

Make your gift out of materials the place itself offers: seashells, stones, the limbs of cut trees, trash, sand, your own bodies, or other "art supplies." By creating your gift with what is on hand, you remember that places, like people, already have all they need to become beautiful.

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