

# Welcome to **CALM**



## **Calming Anxiety Living Mindfully**

### Chapter 1

## **What are the Goals of CALM?**

C.A.L.M (Calming Anxiety, Living Mindfully) is a program designed to help you effectively manage anxiety and improve your quality of life.

This includes you if anxiety is an obstacle to your optimal well-being and performance. This program provides helpful education and skills that can benefit people with wide-ranging experiences of anxiety. Please combine individual therapy with this program if you have an anxiety diagnosis currently or concerns around your safety or mental health.

## **What is CALM Based on?**

CALM integrates concepts and techniques from several fields of psychology that have been highly beneficial to people affected by anxiety, as well as many other concerns. Mindfulness is a foundational skill that is integrated throughout this experience. CALM is also influenced by several established forms of therapy, such as: cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, multiculturalism, and positive psychology.

## **Acknowledgments:**

CALM has been especially influenced by the pioneering work of: Drs. Jon Kabat-Zinn, Marsha Linehan, David Burns, Robert Leahy, Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal, Susan Orsillo, Lizabeth Roemer, and Steven Hayes, amongst many others. Please see references to books and publications from these authors (in chapter 6) for additional resources for effectively managing anxiety and increasing well-being.

Finally, I wish to express appreciation to San José State University (SJSU) for providing the resources needed to create this program, SJSU Counseling & Psychological Services for tremendous support, and Monica Luong for graphic design work included in this manual.

## CALM Guidelines:

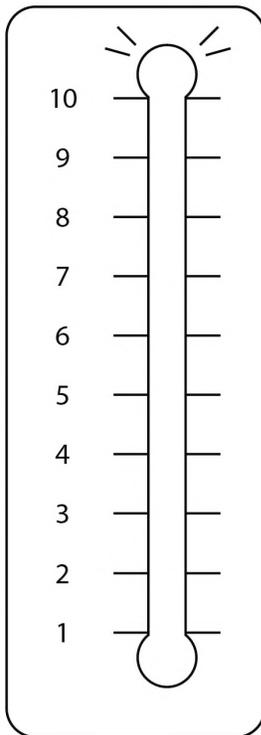
### To help you get the most out of this program:

- This is an environment where everyone is welcomed and respected.
- You'll be asked to participate in activities and discussions at times. It's always an option to pass on a question or discussion. We hope you will push yourself a little out of your comfort zone at times, which takes courage to do. Participating and practicing skills together benefits us all in CALM.
- When you share, it's usually more helpful to speak from your own experience rather than giving direct advice, like saying, "Exercising in the mornings helped me sleep better at night" instead of "You should exercise."
- What is said in this room stays in this room. Please do not share any personal stories of other members with anyone outside this class. Of course, you may always share your own experiences and all skills or concepts from this class.
- Please put your cell phone on silent and don't record our meetings.
- Mental health counselors are mandated reporters and are required to report safety emergencies for protected populations, such as the abuse or neglect of children (17 or younger), elder adults (65 or older), or adults legally declared dependent due to a physical or mental health condition. Please review our center's confidentiality form for additional details.
- If you experience any urgent safety concerns, such as being in danger of attempting suicide or seriously harming another, please either: inform one of the instructors, meet with a crisis counselor afterward, dial 9-1-1, or be safely taken to the nearest emergency department. Please don't carry this alone, and know counseling is here to help you find ways to stay safe during a crisis.
- Please also use the *Strength-based Safety Plan* included in the appendix to prepare steps and skills to help get through a future crisis.

# My Anxiety Meter

It can be helpful to monitor and track changes in your anxiety over time. This can assist you with identifying factors playing a role in your anxiety and potential benefits of using your new skills.

Each week, we'll take a moment to check-in and rate our anxiety levels. Below is a version of a SUDs scale, meaning "subjective units of distress." This allows you to rate how much anxiety is limiting and distressing you. Please reflect on how much anxiety has been affecting you and rate this using the scale below.



- 10 - Highest anxiety/distress you have ever felt, unable to function
- 9 - Extremely anxious/distressed, highly affecting performance
- 8 - Very anxious/distressed, significantly impacting performance
- 7 - Quite anxious/distressed, moderately impacting performance
- 6 - Elevated anxiety/distress, some impact with performance
- 5 - Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable, can still perform well
- 4 - Mild/moderate anxiety/distress, hard to ignore, fairly uncomfortable
- 3 - Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
- 2 - Minimal anxiety/distress
- 1 - Alert and awake, concentrating well
- 0 - Totally relaxed

First, please rate:

Over the past MONTH, my average anxiety level has been around: \_\_\_/10

0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Now, please rate:

Over the past WEEK, my average anxiety level has been around: \_\_\_/10

0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

## CALM Workshop Outline

1. Understanding Anxiety .....	5
2. Perception .....	16
3. Acceptance & Change.....	23
4. Emotions .....	34
5. Worry.....	43
6. Relationships.....	51
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Session	Date	Goals for the Week	Goals Met?	Weekly Anxiety SUDs Average (0-10/10)
1		<b>Chapter 1 Weekly Practice</b> Diaphragmatic Breathing & One-minute Mindfulness Personal Goal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2		<b>Chapter 2 Weekly Practice</b> Mindful Daily Activity & “I’m having the thought...” defusion Personal Goal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3		<b>Chapter 3 Weekly Practice</b> Radical Acceptance & Labeling “Suffering” Personal Goal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4		<b>Chapter 4 Weekly Practice</b> Primary vs secondary emotions Buffer building & Urge Surfing Personal Goal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5		<b>Chapter 5 Weekly Practice</b> Worry Exposure & “What-Went-Well” exercise Personal Goal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6		<b>Chapter 6 Weekly Practice</b> Anxiety Flare-ups: Warning Signs & Anxiety Action Plan Personal Goal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# CALM Session 1: Understanding Anxiety

Welcome to CALM!

To begin, What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is an emotion that functions to help protect our physical, emotional, and social well-being. At the same time, anxiety can play a powerful role by limiting us and increasing suffering. There are many different ways anxiety can be defined, and here are a few examples:

The American Psychological Association (APA) has defined anxiety as:

*“...an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure”*

Oxford Dictionary describes anxiety as:

*“A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome”*

And some simply describe it as:

*Fear that something bad is going to happen*

*Sources: apa.org; oxforddictionaries.com*

How is Anxiety Different than Fear?

The two are similar, yet anxiety is related to an expectation of a future threat. This is different than fear, the body’s response to immediate danger. So, if you see a bear charging toward you, you feel intense fear. If you worry about a bear attacking you during your hike, you feel anxious.

	FEAR	VS	ANXIETY
<b>Nature of Threat</b>	Immediate		Future
<b>Physical Response</b>	Surge of Panic		Tension & Arousal
<b>Function</b>	Survival		Preparedness

Source: Orsillo & Roemer, 2011

## How is Anxiety Different than Stress?

Stress is the mental and physical reaction to any kind of demand, threat, challenge, or change. Stress can trigger many physical reactions and emotions, including anxiety.

The stress response (“fight-flight-freeze”) is a survival system we all have. This system releases powerful stress hormones like “adrenaline” (epinephrine) and cortisol. This allows us to be more alert and enhances our ability to run or fight for survival. Since the focus is on survival, digestion and immune functioning are reduced. These hormones surge during a “panic attack.” It’s considered a “false alarm” if triggered and we’re not in a life-or-death emergency.

### The Stress Response (Fight-Flight-Freeze)

What Changes	Adaptive Functions
Faster, Stronger, Heartbeats	Brings more oxygen to muscles (to run or fight)
Rapid Breathing	Brings oxygen to muscles
Cold, Tingling, Lightheadedness, or Numbness	Blood moves away from hands/feet to major muscles. Lessens pain & bleeding. Hyperventilation creates lightheadedness & tingling
Feeling Hot or Flushed	Blood is being pumped through out your body
Chest Tightness/Discomfort	Many reasons. Increased muscle tightness & breathing to prepare for action
Stomach Aches and Nausea	Blood moves away from digestive system
Shaking or Trembling	Muscles tense & active, ready to be used
Muscle Tension	Body is prepared to use muscles
Trouble Sleeping	Mind is alert for safety
Feeling You Must Do Something	Body is ready to act to protect from danger
Visual Changes	Improved ability to see threats
Feeling Not in Reality (“Derealization”, or Detached from self / body (“Depersonalization”))	Reduces emotional intensity and overwhelm during panic. Can also be related to trauma
Sweating	Prevents overheating; makes body slippery

Sources: Medford et al., 2016; Nesse & Young, 2000

## The Good News!

Our bodies are built to handle anxiety and stress well, especially if we give our mind and body frequent opportunities for rest and calmness.

### What is an Anxiety Disorder?

Worrying often, feeling anxious around people, or having panic attacks does not by itself mean a person has a diagnosable anxiety disorder. An anxiety diagnosis should only be given by a health professional, and requires certain symptoms, time frames, and “clinically significant” distress or impairment in functioning.

Anxiety disorders are the most common of all the categories of mental health concerns. In fact, research by the American College Health Association (2018) found that:

About 60% of students “felt overwhelming anxiety” during the past 12 months
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## What Happens When Anxiety is Triggered?

**Emotionally**, we begin to experience a sense of threat or danger. Many emotional reactions can be triggered, and we almost always feel multiple emotions at once. Feeling tense, overwhelmed, nervous, and restless are just a few common responses.

**Physically**, the body’s stress response (“fight-flight-freeze”) is activated. This survival system involves the release of powerful stress hormones, and can allow us to run faster and longer, become motionless, or fight harder to stay alive in an emergency.

**Intellectually**, clear and rational thinking is likely to be impaired as our “primitive” mind is triggered; this is like a bodyguard always trying to keep us away from harm. Our bodyguard operates more automatically, which is fast, but doesn’t operate based on all the facts. After being triggered, we want to engage our advanced cerebral cortex, our “thinking” mind. The thinking mind is a problem solver, evaluates danger rationally, and learns from facts.

**Behaviorally**, we try to get away from danger immediately and avoid it in the future. Sometimes this works well. Yet, often we can’t avoid the trigger, there’s not actually danger (“false alarm”), or avoidance leads to loss of freedom and joy. Safely approaching anxiety, rather than avoiding it, is a key to empowering yourself and regaining freedom.

# My Signs of Anxiety

Please take a few minutes to think about some of the signals that you've had when feeling anxious. Then, circle and write down examples for each area.

I notice **Physical changes** like:

(muscle tension, rapid heartbeat, rapid breathing, shakiness, dizziness, lightheadedness, stomach ache, chest pressure, feeling on edge, fatigue, difficulty focusing, blushing, sweating, restlessness, headaches...)

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My actions and **Behaviors change** like:

(avoiding friends/school/work, withdrawing from others, partner relationship changes, fidgeting, picking at nails/skin/hair, compulsive behaviors, alcohol/substances, turning down invitations, hobbies, eating, computer/t.v./gaming habits, body posture...)

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I feel affected by **Thoughts** like:

("I'm going to fail," "I'm losing it," "they probably all think I'm \_\_," "I feel like I can't breathe,")

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Emotionally, I **start feeling**:

(overwhelmed, frustrated, sad, annoyed, frantic, panicked, worried, afraid, uneasy, numb, scattered, doomed, restless...)

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**Any additional signs:**

(friends and family tend to notice \_\_\_\_\_)

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# Cycle of Anxiety

## Risk Factors

## Triggers

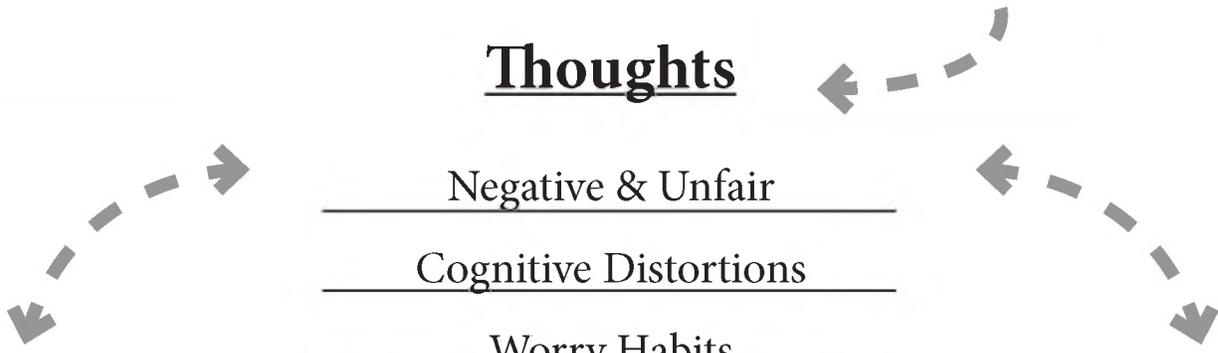
Genetics Health Concerns  
Trauma Substance Misuse  
Learning: family, culture, society



Stress & Change, such as:  
School, Relationships  
Injustices, Finances

## Thoughts

Negative & Unfair  
Cognitive Distortions  
Worry Habits



## Behavior

## Feelings

Avoidance Over-preparedness  
Reassurance-seeking  
Substance use Procrastination

Guilt Anxiety  
Frustration Sadness  
Embarrassment Fear

## Physical Changes

Muscle Tension Reduced Focus  
Rapid Heart rate Stomach Issues  
Sleep Issues Restlessness Fatigue

## Discussion:

Please share a few ways you can tell your anxiety is increasing

## Hopes & Goals:

Please check the goals below that match what you want to achieve,  
and write in a few of your own!

- Increase my understanding of anxiety
- Learn new skills to manage anxiety
- Reduce ways anxiety is limiting me
- Increase acceptance of my anxiety
- Increase awareness of my emotions
- Gain insight into patterns that don't help me
- Increase my ability to focus my attention and awareness
- Enhance emotional intelligence
- Increase assertiveness skills
- Practice being more present and grounded
- Enhance compassion for myself
- Enhance compassion for others
- Personal Goal:
- Personal Goal:
- Personal Goal:

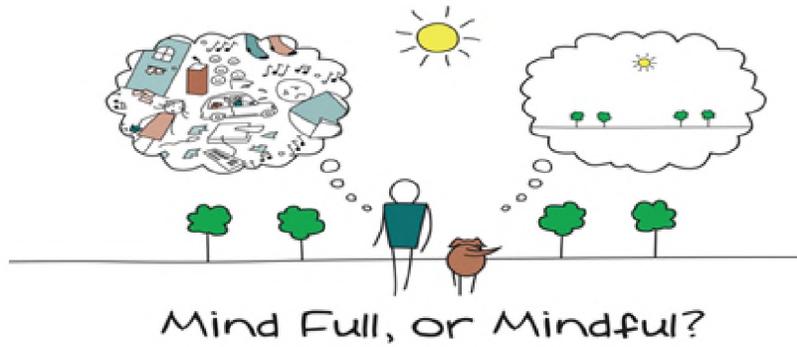


Image by Henck van Bilsen

## Living Mindfully

An important goal of CALM is to empower you to change your relationship with your anxiety, emotional pain, and the present moment through something called “mindfulness.”

## What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness meditation has been defined by a leader in this field as:

*“...paying attention in a particular way:  
on purpose,  
in the present moment,  
and nonjudgmentally”*

-Jon Kabat-Zinn

This form of attention cultivates greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of our present-moment reality. Mindfulness is unique from other forms of meditation since the focus of attention is on the present moment experience.

Mindfulness involves honing a skill you already possess and practicing waking up to your life in this moment, over and over again. Mindfulness practice can help us increase awareness of patterns, habits, and ways of responding to anxiety that are limiting us.

Dan Harris, author of the book “10% Happier,” describes mindfulness as:

“The skill of knowing what’s happening in your head without getting carried away with it.”

*“Every time you are tempted to react in the same old way, ask yourself if you want to be a pioneer or a prisoner?”*

-Deepak Chopra

# Mindfulness: What Benefits has Modern Science Uncovered?

## **Mindfulness practice decreases:**

*Anxiety, re-occurrence of depression, risk of heart disease, stress level, substance use, chronic pain, and insomnia...just to name a few.*

## **Mindfulness practice increases:**

*Quality of life, immune system functioning, attentional control, and relationship satisfaction.*

Source: Orisillo & Roemer, 2011

## What are Some Tips to Practice Mindfulness?

### **Choose to be present:**

Your mind will often wander

Practice returning to the present moment, over and over again

### **Observe:**

Notice internal & external experiences: thoughts, emotions, urges, and all 5 senses

Notice, with curiosity, where your attention went when your mind wanders

### **Describe nonjudgmentally:**

Describe with your senses rather than judging as “good” or “bad”

“This coffee is bad” vs. “This coffee is cold and bitter”

Put words to your experiences

“I just had the thought ‘I’m going to fail this test.’ I notice my heart beating a little faster. I’m feeling the urge to leave”

### **Participate:**

Participate by fully immersing yourself into the activities of the moment

Source: Linehan, 2015

*“The ability to be in the present moment is a major component of mental wellness”*

- Abraham Maslow

## Check-in: When was the last time you really felt in the moment?

Please take a moment to reflect on a time when you were truly present to the moment (not distracted, worried about future, or stuck in past). If you are willing, please share what it was like in our short discussion.

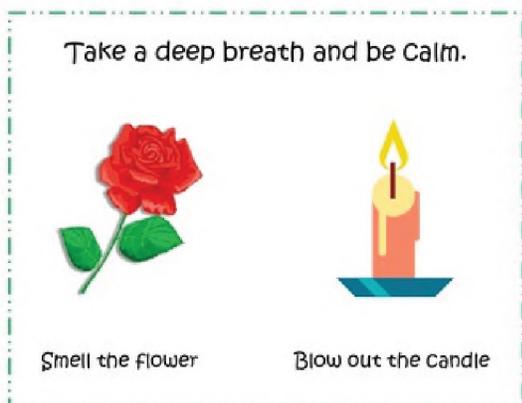


Image: teacherspayteachers.com

### Diaphragmatic Breathing: “Smell the Flower, Blow Out the Candle”

A foundational skill for mindfulness practice involves retraining ourselves to breathe, as we naturally did when we were babies. This was before we developed a habit of breathing in a more rapid and shallow way.

**Diaphragmatic breathing (DB) is also known as: deep breathing, abdominal breathing, and belly breathing.**

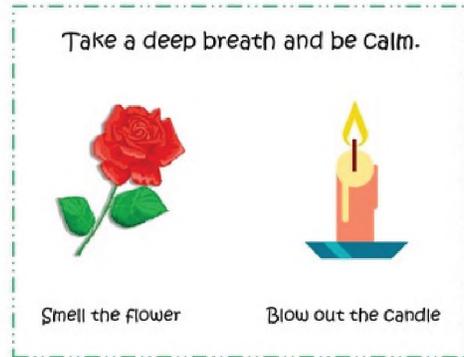
DB has been shown to have many health benefits, such as lowering heart rate and blood pressure. It is used in combination with many other techniques, and is a powerful tool on its own.

DB is done by using the diaphragm, a dome-shaped muscle at the base of the lungs. When you use DB and breathe in, the diaphragm creates more space for air in your lungs, and directs the air toward your stomach. You'll notice your stomach expand and your chest stay still when practiced.

Shallow “chest breathing” interferes with our ability to take in as much oxygen, as well as fully release carbon dioxide as we exhale. This doesn't allow for a full oxygen exchange. Also, DB helps create a physical “relaxation response” communicating to your mind that you are safe and relaxed.

The relaxation response brings the exact opposite reactions of the stress response: decreased blood pressure, lowered heart rate, slowed and deeper breathing, relaxed muscles, improved digestion and immune functioning.

## Let's Practice Diaphragmatic Breathing!



### Steps:

- Place one hand on your upper chest and the other on your belly, just below your ribcage. Your pinky should be on or near your belly button.
- Slowly breathe in through your nose, directing air toward your belly, so that your stomach expands. The hand on your chest should remain still, as the hand on your stomach rises.
- When you breathe out, allow your stomach to fall inward, like a deflating balloon. Exhale through pursed lips- The hand on your belly should move down to its original position.
- Then, start slowing down your breathing. If you like, you can count in your mind to slow yourself down: counting to 4 with your in-breath, pausing between in and out-breaths, and counting to 8 with a slow out-breath.

## Tips for Practicing at Home:

You can also practice at home, or anywhere you can lie down comfortably!

- Lie on your back on your bed (or any flat surface) with your knees bent. Place a small pillow (or other light object) on your stomach, just below the ribcage.
- Slowly breathe in through your nose, allowing air to go deeply toward your belly. The small pillow should rise as your chest remains still.
- Allow your stomach to fall inward as you slowly exhale through pursed lips. Exhale fully. Let the pillow on your belly drop down to its original position.

Practice for five minutes or more, several times a day if possible

Source: [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu)

**Now let's use our breathing skills for a  
mindfulness of breath meditation.**

Remember, you can always stop practicing  
the exercise if you decide to.



**Reflection Questions:**

~What was your experience like?

~What challenges did you have?



**Weekly Practice**

Thank you for being here today! We hope you will continue next week.  
To get the very most out of this experience, please try the exercises below over the  
next week.

1. When you notice anxiety rising during the week, practice diaphragmatic breathing!
2. Practice one-minute mindfulness exercises (in appendix) daily this week.