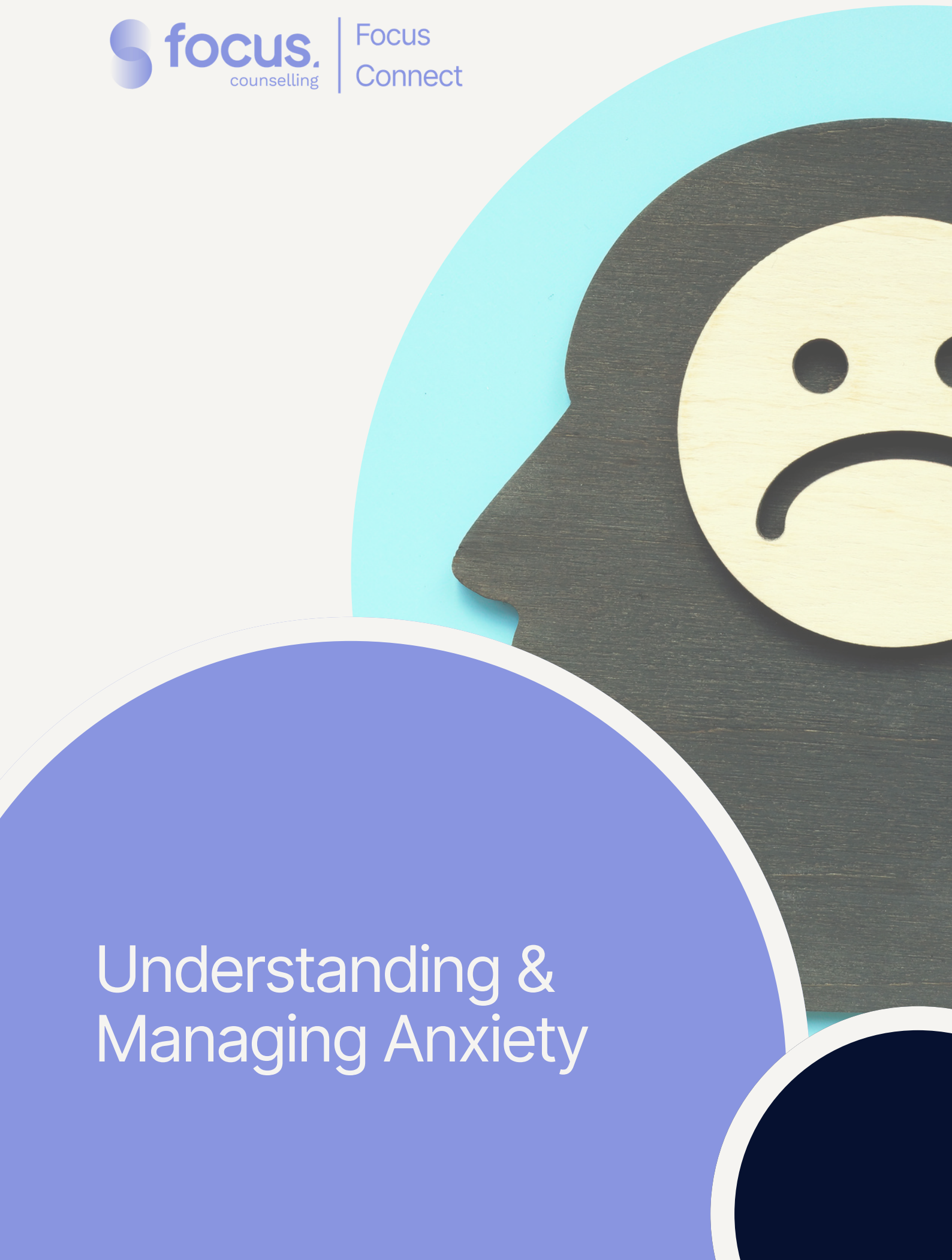




Understanding & Managing Anxiety



Understanding Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal human response to pressure, uncertainty and challenge.

It exists to protect us by preparing us to respond to perceived threats, risks and difficult situations. While anxiety can feel uncomfortable, it is a natural and often helpful part of being human.

What Is Anxiety?

Anxiety is your mind and body's natural response to perceived threat or uncertainty.

Anxiety can be helpful when it:

- Motivates us
- Improves focus
- Helps us prepare

However, anxiety can become difficult when it starts to:

- Affect concentration
- Impact confidence
- Interfere with decision-making
- Affect sleep and wellbeing
- Lead to avoidance

Common workplace anxiety triggers:

- Heavy workloads
- Tight deadlines
- Organisational change
- Difficult conversations
- Conflict at work
- New responsibilities
- Presentations and meetings
- Uncertainty about the future





Common Signs of Anxiety

Thoughts

- Worrying about what might happen
- Overthinking
- Self-doubt
- Catastrophising



Physical Responses

- Racing heart
- Muscle tension
- Fatigue
- Restlessness

Behaviour

- Avoidance
- Procrastination
- Reassurance-seeking
- Withdrawal



Remember:

Everybody experiences anxiety differently. Some people become quieter and withdrawn. Others become busier, perfectionistic, or find it difficult to switch off.





Breaking the Anxiety Cycle

*Anxiety Often
Follows a Pattern*



Catch
What am I thinking right now?
What is the thought driving this anxiety?

Check
What evidence supports this thought?
Is there another way of looking at this?
What would I say to a colleague in this situation?
Am I treating this thought like a fact?

Change
Create a more balanced perspective.

*Catch, Check,
Change*





Practical Techniques

Grounding Exercise

Use the 5-4-3-2-1 technique:

- 5** things you can see
- 4** things you can feel
- 3** things you can hear
- 2** things you can smell
- 1** thing you can taste

Focus on What You Can Control

Ask:

Can I control this?

If yes:

- Take action
- Problem solve

Can I influence this?

If yes:

- Have a conversation
- Make a plan

Can I control neither?

If no:

- Practice acceptance
- Redirect attention

“

Remember:

The more we focus on what we can control, the less power uncertainty tends to have over us.

”

Reducing Overthinking

Overthinking can make anxiety feel bigger, more urgent and more difficult to manage.

When you notice yourself spiralling:

Ask Yourself

- Have I made progress by thinking about this?
- Is this helping me solve a problem?
- Is there a practical action I can take?
- Am I preparing, or am I just worrying?

If There Is A Practical Action

→ Make a plan and take the next step.

If There Isn't A Practical Action

→ Refocus your attention on something meaningful in the present moment.

Looking After Yourself

Small habits can make a significant difference:

- Regular breaks
- Healthy boundaries
- Good sleep habits
- Physical activity
- Social connection
- Managing workload realistically
- Speaking to somebody you trust

Personal Action Plan

What situations tend to increase my anxiety?

What signs tell me I may be becoming overwhelmed?

What helps me feel calmer and more in control?

Who can I talk to for support?

One thing I will do differently after reading this guide:

Useful Resources

NHS Every Mind Matters

Practical NHS advice and tools for managing anxiety, stress, sleep problems and low mood.

 www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

NHS Talking Therapies

Free NHS support for anxiety, worry, stress and depression, including self-referral options.

 www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-nhs-talking-therapies-service

Mind

Information, advice and self-help resources covering anxiety, panic, wellbeing and workplace mental health.

 www.mind.org.uk

Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI)

Free evidence-based self-help workbooks covering:

- Anxiety
- Worry
- Overthinking
- Perfectionism
- Tolerating Uncertainty

 www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself

TalkPlus: Worry Management Workbook

A practical self-help workbook exploring:

- Worry
- Overthinking
- Problem solving
- Managing uncertainty

 www.talkplus.org.uk/resource/worry-management/



Remember:

Anxiety is a normal human response to uncertainty and challenge. If anxiety is starting to affect your wellbeing, work or relationships, support is available.
Seeking help early can often make a significant difference.

