

Relationships

**Welcome back to  
CALM**

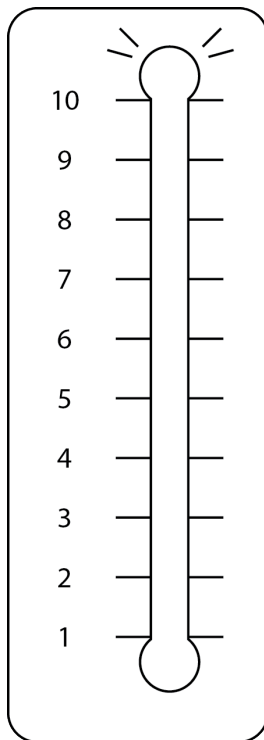
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**Calming  
Anxiety  
Living  
Mindfully**

Chapter 6

# My Anxiety Meter

Please think back on the past week, and rate your weekly average on this scale of 0-10.



- 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

## Check-in:

How did managing moments of anxiety go this week?

How was practicing the What-Went-Well Exercise, worry exposure, or mindful worry free zones?

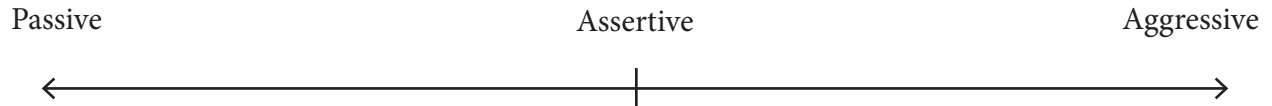
## **3-Minute Breathing Space Meditation**

In our final session of CALM, we'll focus on enhancing communication and effectiveness in relationships. This helps reduce anxiety and increase opportunities for connection, self-care, and movement toward your goals.

# What is Assertiveness?

Assertive communication involves the balance of expressing your feelings, needs, wants, and rights...without violating the rights of others. It also involves considering the other person's feelings and needs, and being a good listener.

Activity: Where do you see yourself on this spectrum?



Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
“Too Nice”	“Fair”	“Mean”
Deny My Rights	Acknowledge Everyone’s Rights	Deny Others Rights
Suppress My Emotions	Respect Emotions	Explosive Emotions
Not Expressing My Needs	Uses “I” Statements	“You” Statements/Threats
Disempowered	Empowered	Hostile
Limited Boundary Setting	Healthy Boundaries	Rigid Boundaries
Needs Other’s Acceptance	Self-Sufficient	Needs Power & Control

## Reflection Question:

Wherever you find yourself on this spectrum, consider “How Can I Move Closer to the Middle?”

Consider people and areas of your life where you are more or less assertive, such as: family, friends, classmates, coworkers, employers, professors, strangers, or dating relationships.

Want to set a goal?

One area of my life (or person) I want to practice being more assertive with is:

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## Does Niceness Cause Anxiety...wait, what!?

Dr. David Burns is a professor of psychiatry with Stanford University and world-famous author of books on topics like anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. In his book, “When Panic Attacks” (2006), he explains **The Hidden Emotion Model**.

This model contends that “...niceness is the cause of all anxiety.” Specifically, this perspective sees “nice people” suppressing emotions, which leads to anxiety issues. People who suppress emotions tend to be overly people-pleasing, and avoidant of “negative” emotions and interpersonal conflict.

From this perspective, feelings such as anger are suppressed quickly and automatically. This leads to overly focusing on others’ needs, and having feelings like anger resurface in disguise as anxiety.

Anxiety is relieved once the hidden emotions are acknowledged and expressed in a healthy way.

*“When you’re anxious, you’re almost always avoiding a problem that’s bothering you, but you’re not aware of it”*

– David Burns

**Discussion Question:** Can you see any ways “hidden emotions” or being “too nice” may be playing a role in your anxiety?

## What is Passive-Aggressive Behavior?

Passive-aggressive behavior is an expression of anger and hostility through indirect ways. Although we have all acted passive-aggressively at times, it’s not effective for healthy communication.

A few common examples of Passive-Aggressive behavior include:

Agreeing to do what someone asks, then intentionally “forgetting” to do this, or doing it poorly

Saying you are not upset, but then using “the silent treatment,” or “cold shoulder”

Using disguised insults or microaggressions like, “You’re a lot smarter than I thought!”

## Culturally-Informed Assertiveness

Our cultural context always shapes the meaning of our interactions. For example, some assertiveness trainings say you need to have “good eye contact.”

What does that really mean though? Whose values determine if the eye contact is “good?”

In many cultures frequent eye contact is seen as being attentive and displaying self-confidence, while at the same time, this is seen as defiance and disrespect in some others. Remember to consider how culture shapes the way we each communicate.

Expanding cultural awareness, like other forms of awareness, serves us well in understanding and relating to ourselves, others, and the world. Also, being mindful of judgments as they arise can help us overcome this obstacle to greater understanding and connection.

**Discussion Question:** What are ways your culture(s) influences how you express yourself?

### “I” Statements

One of the core skills of assertiveness, which you may be familiar with, is called “I” Statements.

How to use “I” statements to express your feelings

I felt [emotion] when [what happened]. Next time [specific request].

I felt \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_. Next time \_\_\_\_\_.

**Example:** “I felt let down and worried when you missed our study session.”

“I need you to call me ahead of time if you can’t make it.”

This is typically much more effective than other ways of communicating that provoke defensiveness, like “Why are you so disrespectful!” or “Stop being so inconsiderate!”

### Group Activity: Let’s practice “I” Statements

**Situation:** One of your group members who has not contributed much agreed to work together on the project yesterday. He did not show up or return your call after you waited 30 minutes.

**Practice:** In pairs, take turns and practice using an “I” statement to assert yourself.

## Active Listening Skills

Active listening involves focusing on what the person is communicating and showing that you understand what's being expressed. It works best when we can suspend judgment and focus on understanding. This skill can increase understanding, as well as opportunities to resolve disagreement and strengthen relationships.

**Paraphrasing (restatement):** summarizing back what you just heard, without interrupting

“It sounds like you’ve tried several things and feel really stuck right now.”

**Emotional Validation:** Expressing understanding and empathy for the other’s feelings

“That seems super frustrating and discouraging”

**Silence and semi-verbal responses:** Body language and sounds can convey listening

You can be present and silent (consider head nodding, eye contact, “uh huh”).

## Holding Your Ground: Saying “No.”

Do you find yourself putting other’s needs above your own, time and time again?

Many feel pulled to constantly say “yes” to whatever is asked due to fears of letting people down, conflict, or losing friends.

It’s not just these fears that stop us from turning down requests, we may simply be caring, empathic, and driven to help others as well!

Have you ever considered this idea?

### Whenever you say “Yes” you also say “No”

By saying “yes,” let’s say to driving your friend to the airport, you are saying “no” to resting, studying, or whatever else you would have done instead. You may be saying no to something you needed or really wanted without even realizing it.

Sometimes when you say “No” you also say “Yes” to your needs! CALM is not trying to convince you to stop helping others at all. We simply ask you to consider “Before I say yes, what would I be saying no to?”

Finally, it does not have to be expressed as just “No.” You have the right to just say this, but consider what fits you. Perhaps, “I definitely can’t this weekend even though I wish I could help..”

**“Empathic Assertion”** has 2 parts

1. Recognize and validate the other person’s needs, wants, beliefs, and/or situation
2. Re-Assert your needs and wants as well.

Validate the person AND hold your ground!

Example:

1. “I know you have so much going on right now. You’ve been working extra hard on your project. It seems stressful to be constantly juggling so much”
2. “I still need you to let me know whenever you’re coming home late. I feel worried something has gone wrong if not, and knowing that helps me plan my evening.”

### **Group Activity: Let’s practice asserting our boundaries.**

Let’s break up into pairs and take turns. First, choose one person to make the requests below, while the other declines in different ways. Then, switch with your partners so you can each practice assertiveness.

“Can you help me edit my final paper this weekend?”

“Will you help me move this weekend?”

“I’m so overwhelmed, will you write my essay for me this one time?”

“Can you skip work to drive me to the airport?”

“Can I cut in front of you in line? I’m kind of in a hurry.”

“Want to go on a date tonight?”

“Why don’t you talk very much?”

“Will you fill out this survey for me? It just takes a few minutes.”

## Types of Interpersonal Effectiveness

In any situation, it's helpful to consider these types of effectiveness. It's also important to recognize when we need to prioritize one over another, especially when they are in conflict.

### **Objective Effectiveness: Getting Your Goals Met**

Questions to ask:

- “What results do I want in this situation?”
- “What is the best approach to reach my goal?”

### **Relationship Effectiveness: Getting & Keeping Healthy Relationships**

Questions to ask:

- “What would strengthen this relationship?”
- “How do I want them to feel about me afterward?”

### **Self-Respect Effectiveness: Building & Maintaining Self-Respect**

Questions to ask:

- “How do I want to feel about myself after?”
- “How can I be fair to myself here?”
- “What ways can I be assertive?”

Here's an example of a person dealing with conflicts between these 3 types of effectiveness.

“Tosha” is planning to move in with her partner this summer. She must move out of housing anyway, and just found an amazing apartment she and her partner really love. Tosha's partner said she can afford \$800 a month at most, but the apartment costs \$1,800. They both really want it, but the only way is if Tosha pays \$1,000 each month.

What should Tosha do? The answer all hinges on weighing the different priorities she has. For some, paying more may result in relationship strain and resentment. For others, it may lead to feeling reduced self-respect. For some, getting the dream apartment (objective) in this situation is clearly top priority. Remember, there are no universal right-or-wrong priorities in this scenario; it is about deciding what's most effective for you in each situation.

**Reflection Question:** Which effectiveness would you prioritize in this situation?

*\*Please also see Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheet in Appendix to assist anytime you are struggling with identifying goals and priorities\**



## Let's Consider Forgiveness for a Moment: Why Forgive?

Dr. Fred Luskin, co-founder of the Stanford Forgiveness Project, has spent his life's work uncovering benefits of practicing forgiveness, and pioneering strategies to do so.

In his book, "Forgive for Good" he shares findings that forgiveness reduces depression, stress, and anger. Forgiveness also improves physical health and emotional well-being such as increased: hopefulness, spiritual connection, self-confidence, and healing in relationships.

*"Learning to forgive is good for ... your mental and physical well-being and your relationships"*

– Fred Luskin

### What is Forgiveness?

Dr. Luskin explains that "Forgiveness is the moment to moment experience of peace and understanding that occurs when an injured party's *suffering is reduced* as they transform their grievance.."

*"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies"*

– Nelson Mandela

### Am I the Hero of my Story?

It makes sense that we often see ourselves as the victim in our "grievance stories" (painful memories and stories of hurt we haven't yet healed from, that we replay often).

Please consider: "Am I acknowledging that I am the survivor and hero of my story?"

### What is a Loving Kindness Meditation?

Loving kindness (also known as "metta") is a compassion meditation that involves sending compassion, good will, and kindness to all. In this exercise, we will first increase compassion for ourselves, then the people we care about, and eventually to all people, even difficult ones in our lives. This practice can help reduce harmful resentment and judgment that we may hold towards ourselves and others.

*"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about"*

– Wendy Mass

## **Preparing for a Loving Kindness Meditation**

Let's have compassion for how difficult being self-compassionate can be, as well as the challenge of sending positive wishes toward someone that hasn't treated you well. Give yourself permission to feel a struggle or challenge at points during the meditation.

Also, consider for a moment someone in your life you can try to extend well wishes too. First, consider someone you can easily extend this to, and then someone who brings up some feelings of frustration or annoyance. It's usually best to not start with the most difficult person.

### **Group Activity: Let's Practice a Loving Kindness Meditation**

#### Group Check-Out:

How was your experience in CALM?

What did you find most helpful or challenging?

What skills and concepts do you want to continue applying to your life?

## **Weekly Mindful Exercises**

Thank you for being a part of CALM and completing the program!

To get the most out of this experience, consider practicing the skills and techniques you found most helpful on a regular basis. Please review the checklist and decide what you want to make a regular part of your mindfulness practice.

Finally, please complete the "Anxiety Flare-ups: Early Warning Signs" and "Anxiety Action Plan" to be prepared to manage future anxiety flare-ups skillfully and effectively.

# CALM Concepts & Skills Checklist

## Chapter 1

- The Stress Response – Changes and functions
- Cycle of Anxiety
- My Signs of Anxiety
- Mindfulness
- Mindfulness of Breath
- Diaphragmatic Breathing - “Smell the flower, blow out the candle”

Handouts and skills below are included in appendix

- Strength-Based Safety Plan
- Messages about Anxiety
- My Anxiety Right Now: Am I ready, willing & able to change?
- My Life with Optimal Anxiety
- “Thoughts are just Thoughts” Log
- One-Minute Mindfulness Exercises

## Chapter 2

- The Cognitive Model of Anxiety
- Acceptance Model of Anxiety
- Automatic Thoughts & Self-Talk
- Storytelling
- The Body Scan Meditation
- Mindful Daily Activity
- Identifying Cognitive Distortions
- Hyperventilation Syndrome
- Identifying Cognitive Distortions

Handouts and skills below are included in appendix

- Panic Medical Realities vs. Common fears
- Self-defeating Beliefs

### Chapter 3

- 3-Minute Breathing Space Meditation
- Acceptance & Change
- Dialectical World View – Dialectics
- Pain & Panic Analogy- Getting unstuck from quicksand
- Pain vs. Suffering
- Radical Acceptance
- Turning the Mind - Willfulness versus willingness
- Willing Hands
- Anxiety & Me – How anxiety reflects my strengths & values

Handouts and skills below are included in appendix

- States of Mind: Emotional Mind, Reasonable Mind, Wise Mind

### Chapter 4

- Functions of Emotions
- Action Urges of Emotions
- Opposite Action
- Urge Surfing
- “Building my Buffer”
- R-E-S-E-T (Rest - Eat - Sleep - Exercise - Talk with someone supportive)
- Mindfulness of Emotions Meditation

Handouts and skills below are included in appendix

- 3 States of Mind: Emotional, Reasonable, and Wise Mind
- Primary and Secondary Emotions

## Chapter 5

- Body Scan for Worry
- 7 Rules of Highly Worried People
- Productive vs. Unproductive Worry
- The “What if” Monster
- Grounding
- Self-soothing with the Five Senses
- Mindful eating
- Worry Time & Worry-Free Zones
- The “What-Went-Well” exercise

Handouts and skills below are included in appendix

- Skills for Better Sleep
- Worry Time Practice Sheet
- Worry-Free Zones Practice Sheet
- Dr. Leahy’s 7 Steps “To Stop Worry from Stopping You”

## Chapter 6

- Assertiveness Spectrum
- “Niceness” and Anxiety
- Culture, Judgment & Assertiveness
- “I” Statements
- Active Listening Skills
- Saying “No!”
- When you say “Yes” you also say “No”
- Empathic Assertion
- Boundary Setting
- 3 Types of Effectiveness- Objective, relational, and self-respect
- Forgiveness
- Loving Kindness Meditation

Handouts and skills below are included in appendix

- Being Effective- Interpersonal effectiveness worksheet
- Anxiety Flare-ups - My early warning signs
- Anxiety Action Plan

## References & Recommended Resources

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