



1. ME, ANXIOUS...?

Specific workshop objectives

At the end of the workshop, the student will be able to:

- Get to know the facilitator and the other group members;
- Understand the concept of comfort zone and make a connection with their personal objective.

How the workshop works

Welcome the students and present the workshop objectives and how it will work.

A. A picture that represents me (15 min)

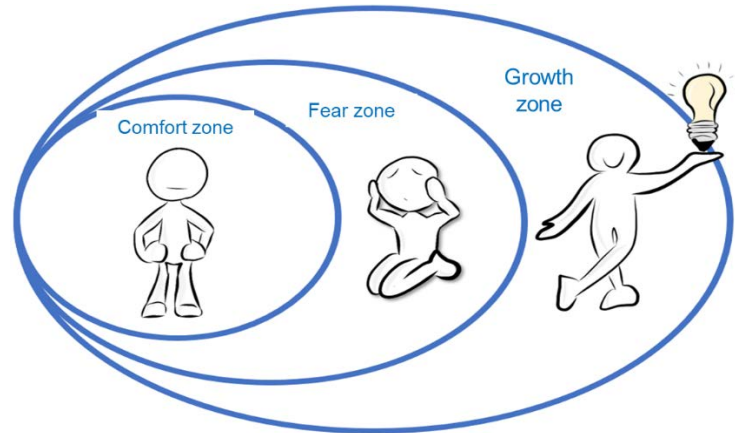
1. Ask the students to look carefully at the pictures in their *Handy student guide*. Each student must identify a picture that represents them and then introduce themselves to the group based on that picture. The pictures can represent one or more aspects of the student.
2. On the board, write the name of each student and a few main points from their presentation. Try to identify each person's strengths.

For example: Rosalie chooses the picture of a group of friends because she enjoys spending time with her friends. You can ask her if she thinks she's a good friend and what people like about her. On the board, list some characteristics of a good listener.

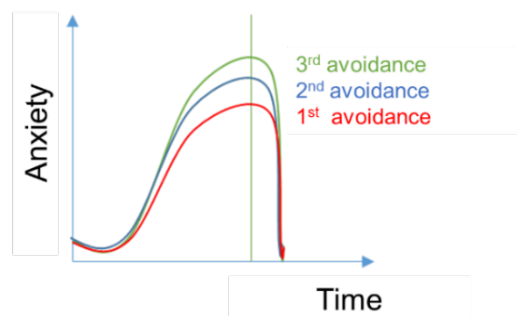
B. Expanding my comfort zone (30 min)

1. Now, present the concepts of comfort zone, avoidance and exposure using the diagrams in the *Handy student guide* and the following explanations:

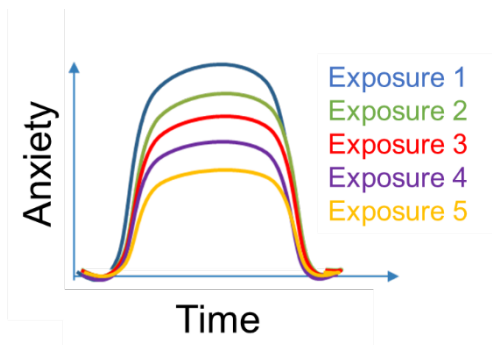
Your comfort zone is those parts of your life where you feel good or on familiar territory. It's the relationships, events, and environments where you know the routine and don't need to ask too many questions. In short, you're comfortable. Or so you think! ... (White, 2009)



Anxiety can often happen when you step outside of your comfort zone or think about situations that are outside of your comfort zone. That's when you step into the fear zone. You don't know how to react, you're afraid of the unknown, and you don't feel well. You're tempted to avoid these situations and retreat back into the cozy familiarity of your comfort zone. This is called avoidance. Avoidance feels good in the short term because it instantly lowers your anxiety levels.



The problem with avoidance is the more you avoid a situation, the more frightening it becomes. Your comfort zone shrinks and you start to feel trapped inside it, or you begin to feel more uncomfortable each time you step outside it. You then need to face your fears, knowing that by facing them, they will diminish and even disappear. This is called exposure. Exposure can be very uncomfortable in the short term because facing the scary situation will cause your anxiety levels to rise. Remember that anxiety isn't dangerous; it's temporary and it eventually goes away. The more you expose yourself to a situation, the less anxious you'll feel about it (Forsyth and Eifert, 2007; Gosselin *et al.*, 2019; Harvey and Ilic, 2014).



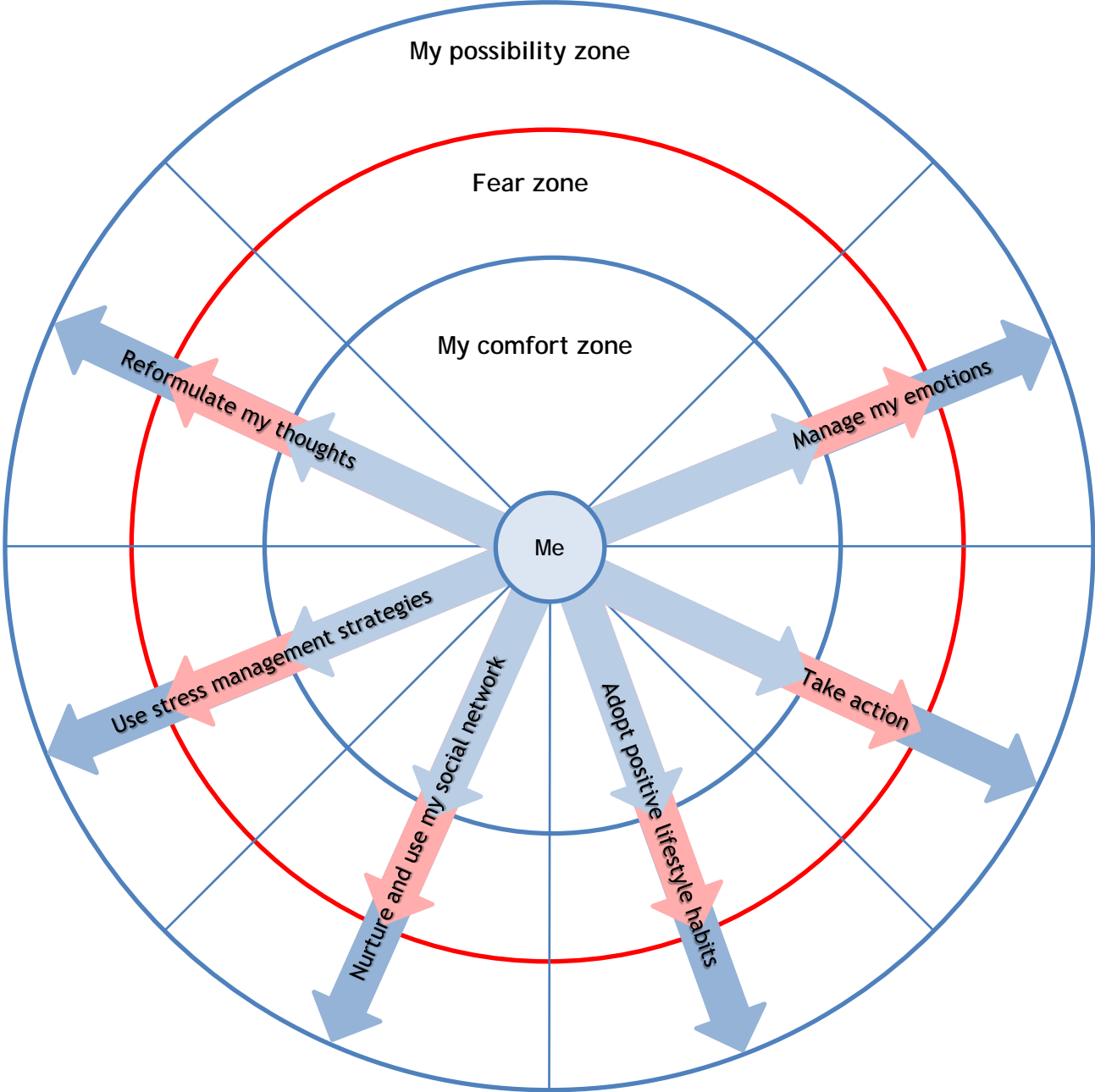
You will become more comfortable, more confident and freer. Stepping outside of your comfort zone is therefore a great learning opportunity.

Remind the students that the goal of the program is to help them expand their comfort zone so they'll feel more relaxed—and less anxious—in the situations they've identified as anxiety-provoking.

2. Use the comfort zone diagram to explain to the students that in order to expand their comfort zone, they will need to gradually expose themselves to anxiety-provoking situations, by learning to:
 - Reformulate their thoughts into helpful ones;
 - Manage their emotions to better cope with them;
 - Adopt new behaviours (take action!);
 - Adopt positive lifestyle habits;
 - Use stress management strategies;
 - Nurture and properly use their social network.



My comfort zone



3. Now, ask the students to answer these questions individually.

- What is my objective for this program? An objective needs to be specific and concrete. It helps to ask the following question: "What would I like to be able to do at the end of this program that I can't do now because of my anxiety?" This corresponds to my new comfort zone.

For example: Instead of saying to myself, "I'd like to be less shy," I should say, "I want to be able to assert myself in a group."

- What are the seven small steps I can take to get closer to my objective? The idea is really to take it one step at a time. The first step (1) needs to be easy, and the others more and more anxiety-provoking (7) ... for now.

For example:

1. Say hi to a classmate when I walk into class
2. Ask a classmate a question during group work
3. Ask the teacher a question at the end of class
4. Start a conversation with a friend
5. Share my opinion during a family discussion
6. Share my opinion during group work
7. Raise my hand in class to give my opinion on a topic



- What are the obstacles I might encounter? What thoughts and emotions do I feel when I imagine myself acting?

For example: I'm too shy. No one is interested in me. I'm scared people will laugh at me.

4. Ask each student what they wrote down. Some may have a hard time answering the questions. Ask the others for suggestions about how their classmates could reach their objectives and overcome the obstacles they're facing.



C. My contract (10 min)

Present the contract in the *Handy student guide* and ask the students to sign it.

Student contract

To make the workshops fun and helpful, here are some basic rules to follow:

1. I will respect others. That's it. It's non-negotiable.
2. I will keep everything I hear confidential. In other words, what's said in the workshops stays in the workshops.
3. I will use "I" statements. I. That's you. Not the others. Talk about your experiences, your feelings.
4. I will only talk about the things I feel comfortable sharing. Basically, no one is forcing you to say anything. (But, trust us, it feels good to talk.)
5. I will listen to others, without judging. That's expert-level respect.
6. I will wait my turn before speaking. Once again, that's just a given.
7. I will help others express and share their opinions.
8. I will participate in the workshops. Otherwise, what's the point? No, but really?
9. Between meetings, I will practise the tips I've learned. I will continue to think about the topics discussed and try new things.
10. I will remember that I am surrounded by friends, family, counsellors, and teachers I can confide in and ask for help.

By participating in the HORS-PISTE Expedition program workshops, you commit to following—to the best of your ability—these 10 basic rules.

(Signature)



D. This week's challenge (5 min)

1. Explain that this week's challenge (also in their *Handy student guide*) is to try to recognize situations they tend to avoid. Explain and give examples, as needed.

