



NHS Fife Department of Psychology

Distraction

CBT Tools

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Distraction

Distraction is an effective short-term technique that can help reduce anxiety quickly. There are different types of distraction that you can try. It is difficult for our minds to focus on more than one thing at a time, by using distraction techniques we are simply moving our attention away from our worry or fear and paying attention to something else.

Distraction works by:

Providing something else for your mind to focus on rather than your worry or fear
Increasing your sense of control over anxiety
Demonstrating that you are able to cope with anxiety

Activities

Sometimes engaging in activities can be a good way of helping you to switch off from your worries and emotional distress. Examples of activities you may try are:

Reading
Watching TV
Listening to Music
Exercise
Focus on your breathing
Visualise being in a pleasant safe place

Thinking Puzzles

Counting backwards from 100 in 7's
Puzzles
Crosswords
Sudoku

Environmental Focus

Choose something in your immediate environment and describe it to yourself in detail. It's a good idea to choose something with a lot of detail. For example, a picture or a poster. Focusing on the outside helps to distract from the inside.



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