



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

# Managing Stress & Anxiety Wellness Workshop

Student Wellness Services

# Acknowledging the Land and the People

We acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes

the **Blackfoot Confederacy** (the **Siksika**, **Piikani**, and **Kainai First Nations**), the **Tsuut'ina First Nation**, the **Stoney Nakoda** (the **Chiniki**, **Bearspaw**, and **Goodstoney First Nations**), and **Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III**.

The University of Calgary is situated on land adjacent to where the Bow River meets the Elbow River. The traditional Blackfoot name of this place is “**Moh'kins'tsis**.”

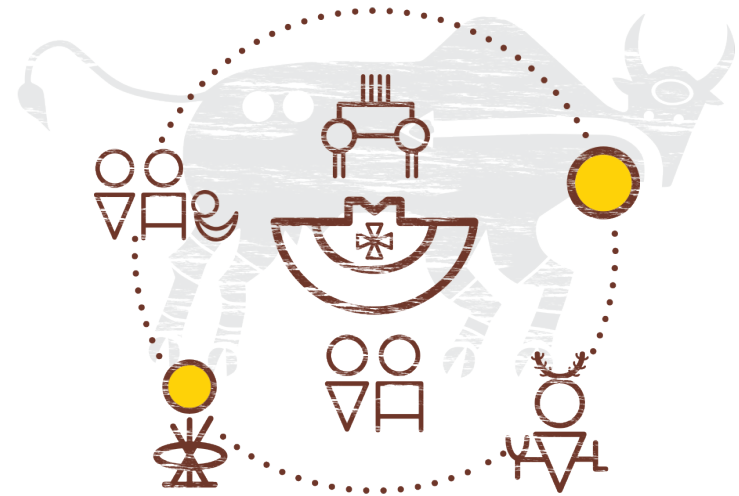


Image: The Cultural Model for the University of Calgary's Indigenous Strategy, ii' taa'poh'to'p

- Learn the typical behaviours, thoughts, and physical sensations associated with anxiety and stress
- Develop an increased self-awareness of our personal experience of anxiety and stress
- Learn strategies to improve relaxation and build resilience to stress
- Learn about additional support and resources for anxiety management

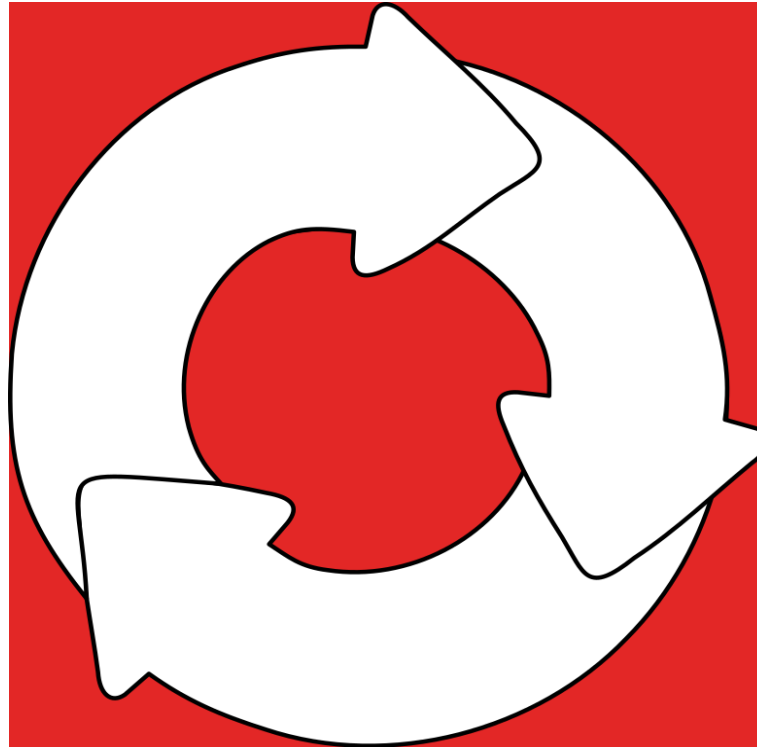
Anxiety is a state of apprehension, uncertainty, and fear resulting from the anticipation of a realistic or imagined threatening event or situation.

Situational  
Anxiety

Anticipatory  
Anxiety

Spontaneous  
Anxiety

1. Sense a  
danger/ threat;  
see self as  
vulnerable.



2. Experience  
thoughts and  
imagery that  
are catastrophic

3. Behave in  
ways that avoid  
anxiety triggers;  
seek safety

# Anxiety is a part of life!

- Normal and Inevitable
- Adaptive
- Safe
- Temporary
- Anonymous
- 71.2% of UCalgary students report that they felt overwhelming anxiety at some time during the last 12 months  
(National College Health Assessment, 2019)



# When does it become a problem?

- Anxiety and stress become a problem when they start to interfere with our daily functioning.



# Anxiety vs. Anxiousness

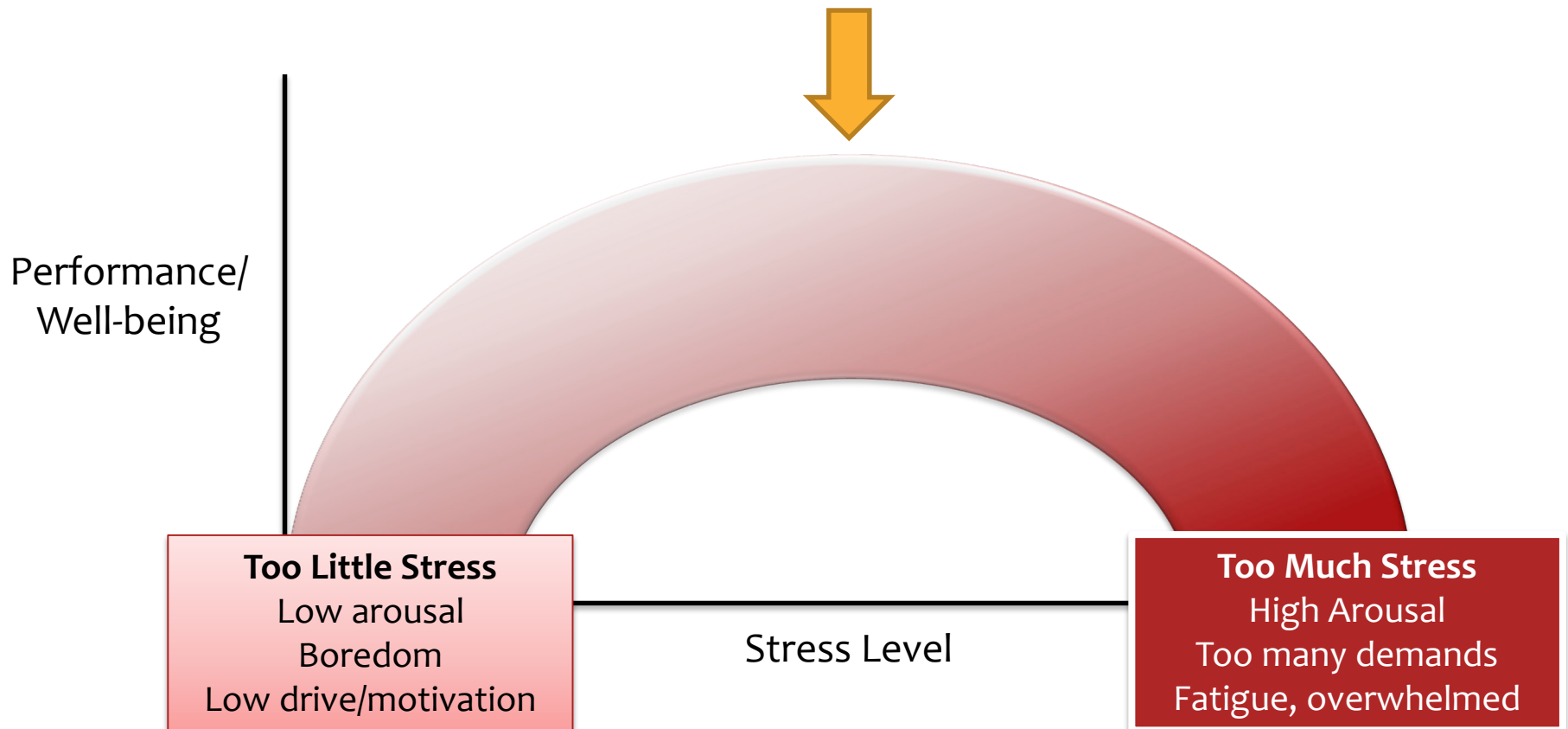
	<b>Anxiousness</b>	<b>Anxiety disorder</b>
<b>What is it?</b>	a natural response to potential threat	an out-of-proportion response to perceived threat
<b>When do you feel it?</b>	before or during a stressful event	any time, or in certain situations where others wouldn't feel anxious
<b>How does it feel?</b>	tension, alertness, and physical reactions like sweating or shaking	longer-term physical symptoms, like headaches or muscle soreness, in addition to the symptoms of regular anxiety
<b>Causes</b>	stressful life events and change	genetic factors, like temperament, and environmental factors, like upbringing
<b>Impacts</b>	more worry during stressful chapters of life	missed opportunities due to avoidance and/or physical symptoms due to long-term stress

- Stress is our body's response to pressure.
- Stress is typically associated with external pressures.
- Often triggered when we experience something new, unexpected or that threatens our sense of self, or when we feel we have little control over a situation.
- Stress can be short-term or long-term, both can lead to a variety of symptoms

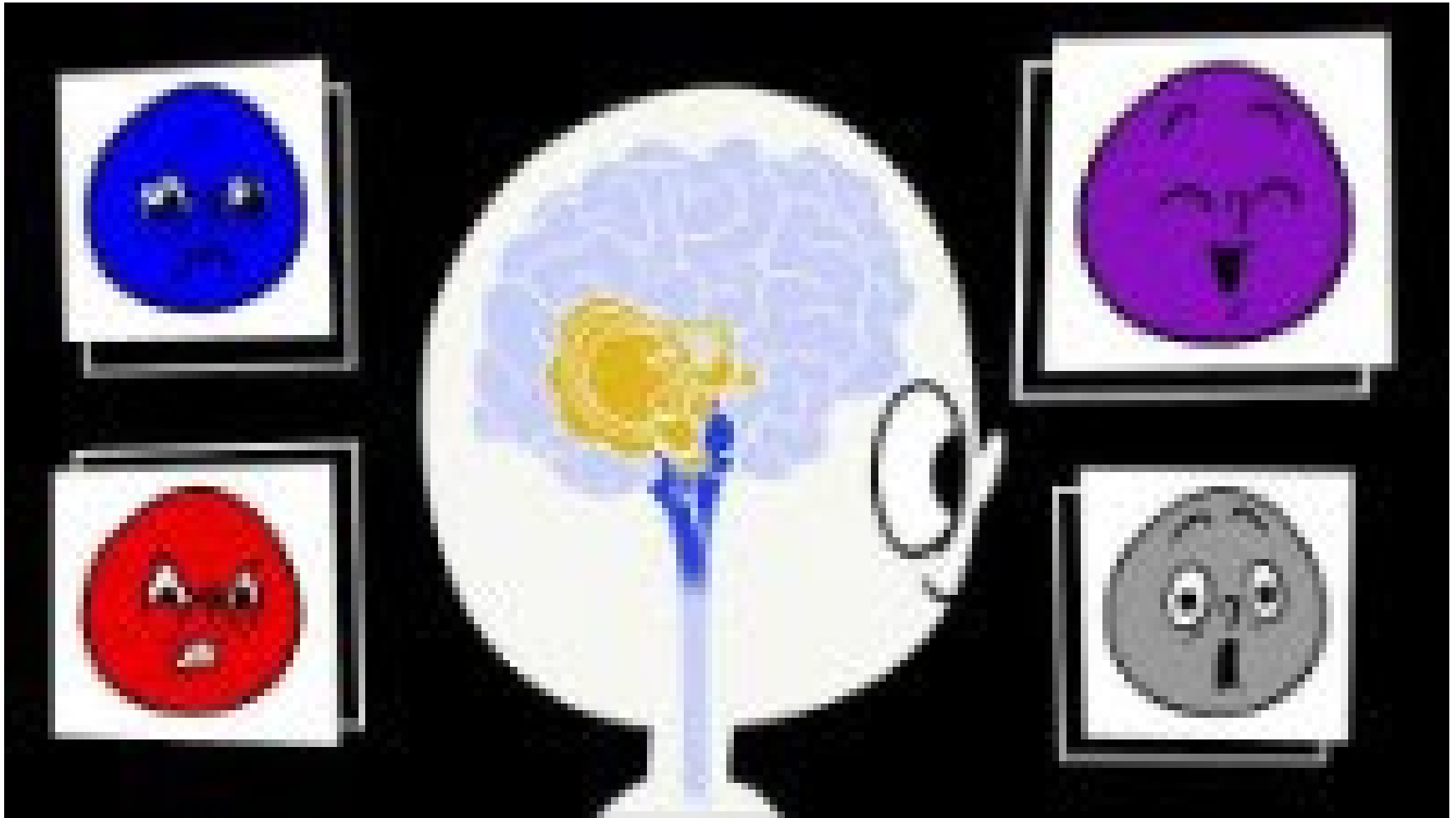
(Mental Health Foundation UK, n.d.)



Eustress  
(Optimal Performance)



# Physical Reactions



Self-awareness is an **essential** first step in managing anxiety.

- What situations do you generally experience anxiety in?
- Where in your body do you feel stress or anxiety?



# Anxious Behaviours



Avoid



Control



Distract



Mask



Images retrieved from:

<http://publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?large=1&image=24078>

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Scared\\_cat2.jpg](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Scared_cat2.jpg)

<http://www.practicallyfunctional.com/diy-refillable-catnip-toys-caturday-7/>



Over-estimating a Negative Outcome

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Under-estimate your ability to cope



**ANXIETY**

Self-awareness is an **essential** first step in managing anxiety.

- When you feel anxious:
  - How do you generally behave?
    - Keep in mind avoid, control, distract, mask?
  - How does anxiety show up in your thoughts?



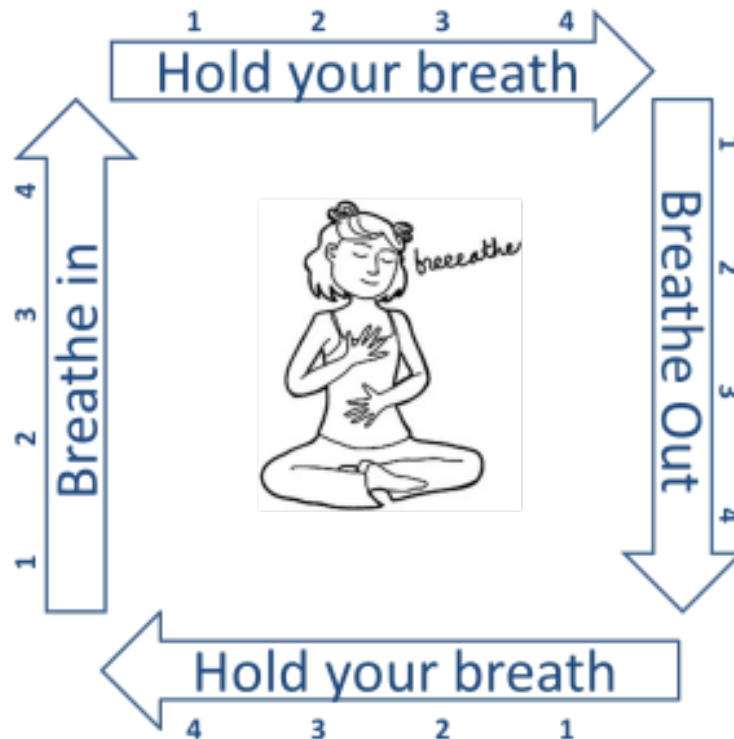
## ■ Relaxation

- Calm Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Mindfulness

## ■ Change

- Challenging anxious self-talk
- Catch, Check, Challenge
- Developing a stress-positive mindset

- Delivers oxygen to the brain and triggers the parasympathetic nervous system
- **Diaphragmatic breathing** aka “belly breathing”



## **Definition:**

**“paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”**

**(Jon Kabat-Zinn)**

# Practice: 3-Minute Breathing Space

3 minute  
breathing space



# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Systematically tensing and relaxing muscle groups to help “cue” a relaxed state at the first sign of muscle tension that comes with anxiety
- Steps:
  - Find a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths
  - Focus on a target muscle group, squeeze the muscles as hard as you can for 5 seconds
  - Release the tension and exhale, remain in relaxed state for 15 seconds and move to next muscle group



# Challenging Anxious Self-Talk




# Catch, Check, Challenge

Identify a situation where you noticed anxious thinking. What happened?

What thoughts, emotions, and physical feelings resulted?

What are some more realistic and balanced ways to think about this situation?

Repeat this revised way of thinking over to yourself a number of times for different situations



With time and practice you can learn to think in a more healthy way.

# Developing a Stress-Positive Mindset



**Rise to the challenge** – Focuses attention, heightens senses, increases motivation, mobilizes energy



**Connect with others** – Activates prosocial instincts, encourages connection, dampens fear and increases courage



**Learn and grow** – Initiation of recovery process, restores nervous system balance, helps the brain learn and grow

## Creating a Mindset Shift:

- What are the personal skills and strengths I have that can help me through this?
- What have I done to prepare for this situation that will benefit me?
- Have I overcome similar challenges in the past?
- Is there anyone who can help me with this?

*View your stress response as a resource, rather than a sign that things are not going well!*



- **Anxiety Canada** ( [www.anxietycanada.com](http://www.anxietycanada.com) )
- **Frantic World** (<http://franticworld.com/> )

## UCalgary Student Wellness Services

- Anxiety Self-Help videos and worksheets
- Anxiety Management group
- One at Time Counselling

- Make a commitment and plan!

What strategies will you use moving forward?  
When and how will you use these strategies?



# Conflict Management Digital Badge

## Earn the Conflict Management Digital Badge

**Conflict management is a key skill for relationship building and achieving success**

Increase your confidence in your ability to manage conflicts at school, work and in other parts of your lives. Training within the Conflict Management Digital Badge includes learning about conflict styles, navigating conflict in relationships, and intercultural communication.

Get a virtual LinkedIn badge to show your skill development in this area!



Check out our other wellness workshops:

- Healthy Thinking
- Motivation & Time Management
- Boosting Self-Compassion
- Pushing Past Perfectionism

For the most up-to-date information on our resources and services, visit our website!

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services>

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