

## Managing daily activities, stress and anxiety

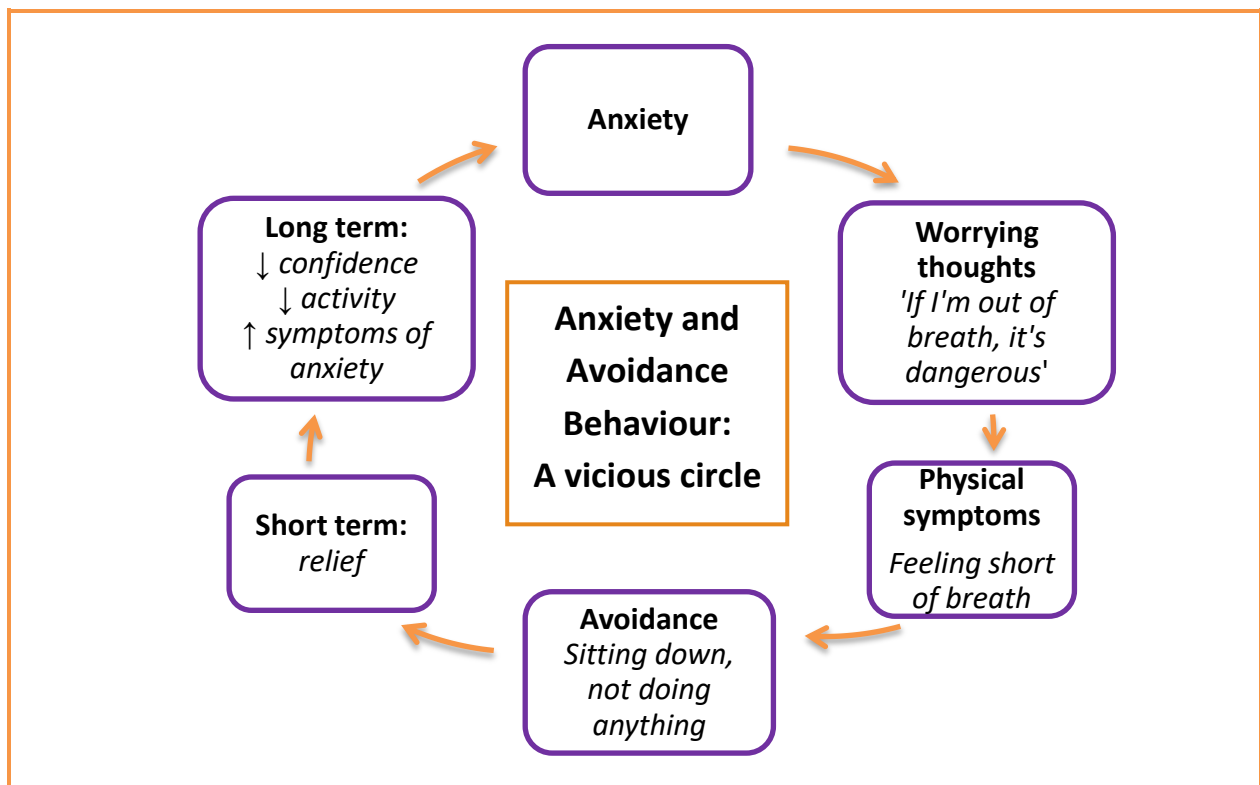
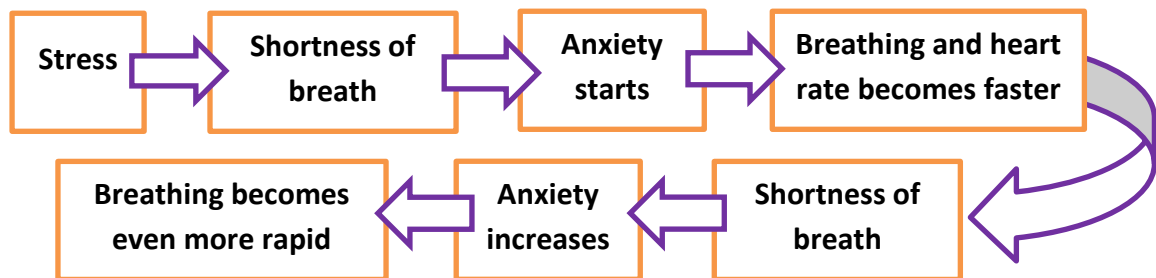
Chronic Respiratory Disease is associated with high levels of anxiety and stress that can negatively affect your quality of life. Ultimately the feelings of stress and anxiety are a normal thing to feel when faced with a long term lung condition.

### Feelings of stress and anxiety are common due to:

- Worries about physical health and medical condition
- Feelings of loss of control
- Lifestyle changes and physical limitations due to pulmonary disease

### Why does it affect me?

- Breathlessness can feel very threatening and trigger anxiety
- When our bodies think it is in danger an automatic mechanism springs into action, this is called the “*fight or flight*” mechanism, it is a normal reaction and not dangerous
- Adrenaline will cause increased heart rate and breathing rate
- When triggered by breathlessness it is not very helpful and makes you feel ill



## Coping mechanisms

- Learn about your condition and how to manage your symptoms
- Support mechanisms (family and friends, Breathe Easy)
- Talk Liverpool - A free NHS service offering psychological therapies to adults in Liverpool who are feeling depressed or anxious. Talk to the team for more information or you can self-refer via 0151 228 2300.
- Avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs
- Stay active and eat a healthy diet
- **Plan ahead and use pacing techniques**
- **Energy conservation**
- **Relaxation techniques**
- Make an appointment with your GP if your symptoms are severe

## Planning

- Schedule events or appointments for times that are best for you
- Leave time for inhalers and medications in morning
- If you struggle with fatigue later in the day, try not to plan things for this time

## Pacing

It is common for people living with chronic respiratory disease to rush activities that they know they find difficult, so they can 'try and get it over and done with'.

- Use pacing techniques on stairs and slopes, stop for rest before becoming breathless
- Do not rush- take your time of activities that you find difficult
- You are likely to manage to do more within a day when working at a slower pace

## Energy conservation

If you are having an exacerbation or flare up of symptoms, or have more severe respiratory disease, you are likely to be fatigued and struggle to do activities.

It is important to conserve your energy as you will not have an endless supply, be willing to think about doing things differently.

- Spread out the time you spend on a task, you do not have to do it all in one go
- Sit down to do tasks or alternate sitting and standing
- Consider the storage of items, for example, store items that you use regularly at chest level
- Learn how to say no and delegate things to others if needed

Community Occupational Therapists can assess for adaptations and equipment to help make things easier for you at home

## Relaxation

Take 15 minutes a day to yourself, no distractions, calming music *'Me Time'*

- ★ Breathing Control
- ★ Get in a comfortable, supported position
- ★ Relax your shoulders, arms and hands, with both feet flat on the floor
- ★ Breathe in gently through your nose (letting your stomach rise) and breathe out through your nose or mouth
- ★ Try to feel more relaxed each time you breathe out

**Relaxation audios are available on the website**



**Liverpool Heart & Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**