

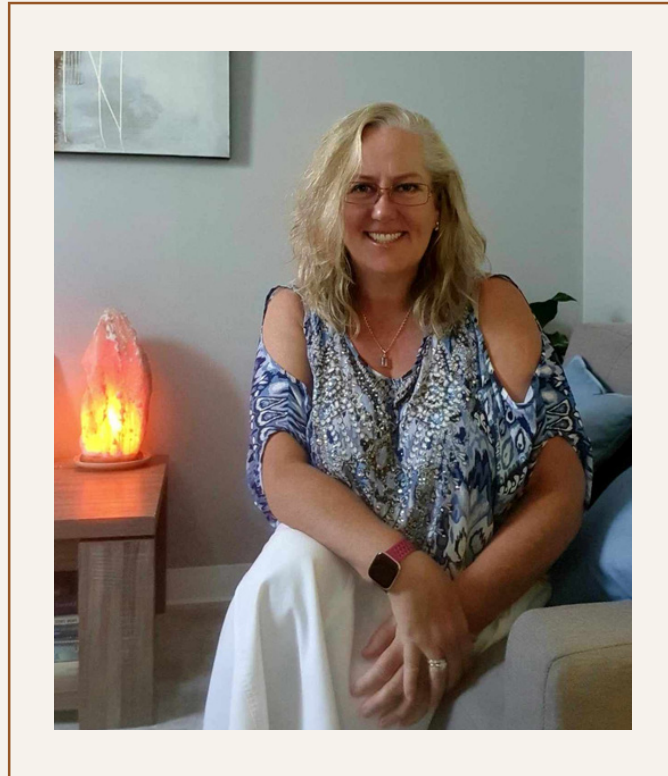
DRIVING ANXIETY TOOLKIT



ZAR WELLNESS
EMPOWERING MINDS
INSPIRING CHANGE



ZAR Wellness Counselling



MARYANNE ZARTH

www.zarwellness.com.au



My name is Maryanne and I am a Registered Counsellor, based in Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast, QLD.

At some stage in life we face challenges or difficulties which can leave us feeling overwhelmed, stressed, lost and/or alone. I am passionate about helping people, and by drawing upon my own lived experiences, professional experience, and knowledge, my goal is to help people find their inner strength and develop coping strategies to regain control, their sense of self and to live life to the fullest.



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ZAR WELLNESS

WELCOME

I love what I do and I take great pride in the quality of my services. ZAR Wellness is owner-managed and driven by a strong passion to help people.

I know how difficult it can be to take that step to see someone, and yes, I've been there and sat in the counselling chair so I have appreciation for what it's like and what it takes to take that first step.

I hold a safe space for my clients. Please know that I am non-judgmental, approachable and down to earth. My main focus is to make sure you feel comfortable, heard and understood. Together we will identify your goals and define a path forward.

Maryanne Zanth



ANXIETY

Everyone experiences anxiety from time to time.

Anxiety happens when fear and worry hang around with no apparent cause even after stress, pressure, or threat are no longer present.

Normal worry can be motivating – it can help you with things such as getting to work on time or studying for a test. But in some people, anxious feelings don't go away and are out of proportion to the situation.

High levels of anxiety affect your ability to: concentrate, sleep and carry out ordinary tasks.

WHAT ARE PANIC ATTACKS

Panic attacks are brief periods of overwhelming fear or anxiety. The intensity of a panic attack goes well beyond normal anxiety, and can include a number of physical symptoms. During panic attacks, people often fear that they are having a heart attack, they cannot breathe, or they are dying.

Panic Attack Facts

Panic attacks may feel scary, but they don't actually cause physical harm. The most common fears associated with panic attacks (having a heart attack or fainting) are not actually a threat.

Panic attacks are usually brief but intense. The symptoms of panic typically peak within 10 minutes, and end within 30 minutes. However, some lingering symptoms can last over an hour.

Panic attacks can seem to occur randomly, or they can be closely linked to a specific source of anxiety such as driving, crowded places, or simply leaving home.

Panic disorder occurs when a person has frequent worry or fear of future panic attacks, or when they change their behavior in order to avoid attacks (such as avoiding a feared situation).

During a panic attack, it's essential to remind yourself that you are safe and grounded in reality. Here are some reassuring statements you can tell yourself to help manage a panic attack:

"I am experiencing a panic attack, but I am safe right now."

"This feeling of panic is temporary and will pass."

"I have been through this before, and I know I can get through it again."

"I am in control of my breathing, and I can slow it down."

"It's okay to feel anxious, but I am not in any real danger."

"I can use relaxation techniques to calm my body and mind."

"I have coping strategies that I can use to manage this panic attack."

"I trust myself to handle this situation with strength and resilience."

ANXIETY ATTACK VS. PANIC ATTACK

What's the difference between a panic attack and an anxiety attack?

The main difference is that certain stressors often trigger anxiety attacks, and they may build up gradually.

In contrast, panic attacks typically happen unexpectedly and suddenly.

Anxiety often causes physical symptoms, such as a racing heart or knots in your stomach. But these symptoms are generally less intense and last longer than a panic attack, which has very intense but brief symptoms.

SYMPTOMS OF A PANIC ATTACK

A panic attack happens suddenly. Symptoms usually peak within 10 minutes after it starts and then disappear soon after. Physical symptoms of a panic attack include:

Chest Pain | Racing Heart | Chills | Nausea
Sweating | Trembling | Shaking | Numbness

You may also feel:

Intense terror | Fear of Losing Control | Detached from Yourself
Choking or Smothering Sensation | Like you're going to Die

Panic attacks are very unpleasant and can be frightening.

WHAT IS AMAXOPHOBIA?

Fear of Driving: Amaxophobia (also called hamaxophobia) makes you feel anxious or fearful when you drive or ride in a vehicle, such as a car, bus or plane. With it, you have a fear of driving and may also get anxious being a passenger. This fear can interfere with work, socializing and travel.

Up to 79% of Australians have reported feeling anxious about driving.

Driving anxiety is a common issue that affects many individuals, ranging from mild discomfort to debilitating fear. Whether it stems from a traumatic experience, lack of confidence, or general apprehension, driving anxiety can impact one's quality of life and limit personal freedom.

However, with the right support and techniques, individuals can learn to manage and overcome their fear.

Common symptoms of driving anxiety include sweating, racing heart, trembling, and difficulty breathing. These reactions often arise from a combination of factors such as a fear of accidents or losing control, while for others it could be related to specific driving situations such as highways, bridges, or congested traffic.

Additionally, past negative experiences or underlying mental health conditions can contribute to driving anxiety.

COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES

Counselling Techniques for Overcoming Driving Anxiety:

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a widely used approach in treating anxiety disorders, including driving anxiety. CBT is a widely used therapeutic approach for treating anxiety disorders, including driving anxiety. It focuses on identifying negative thought patterns and replacing them with more rational, constructive thoughts. In the context of driving anxiety, CBT helps individuals challenge irrational beliefs about driving dangers and develop coping strategies to manage their fear.

Relaxation Techniques

Learning relaxation techniques can be immensely beneficial for reducing driving anxiety. Counsellors may teach clients deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or mindfulness meditation to alleviate stress and promote a sense of calmness while driving. Practicing these techniques regularly can help individuals reduce physical tension and calm their mind making it easier to cope with and respond to anxiety triggers on the road.

COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES

Visualisation and Imagery

Visualisation techniques involve mentally rehearsing driving scenarios in a relaxed state. By visualising themselves driving safely and confidently, individuals can build positive associations with driving and reduce anxiety. Guided imagery sessions with a counsellor can further enhance this technique.

Gradual Exposure

Gradual exposure involves systematically exposing individuals to feared driving situations in a controlled and supportive environment. Counsellors work collaboratively with clients to create a hierarchy of driving-related activities, starting from less anxiety-provoking scenarios, including visual exposure, and progressing to more challenging ones. This gradual approach allows individuals to confront their fears gradually, building confidence and resilience along the way.

BENEFITS OF COUNSELLING

Increased Confidence:

Counselling equips individuals with the skills and tools needed to manage their anxiety effectively, leading to increased confidence behind the wheel.

Improved Safety:

By addressing driving anxiety, individuals become more aware of their triggers and learn how to respond to them proactively, ultimately enhancing their driving safety.

Enhanced Independence:

Overcoming driving anxiety enables individuals to regain their independence and freedom to travel without relying on others for transportation.

Better Quality of Life:

By conquering their fear of driving, individuals gain a sense of empowerment and can participate more fully in activities, pursue employment opportunities, and enjoy social interactions without the limitations imposed by anxiety.

Long-term Relief:

Counselling techniques aim to address the root causes of driving anxiety, providing individuals with sustainable tools and strategies for long-term symptom management.

DRIVING ANXIETY WORKSHEET

Confront the root of your anxiety: What aspects of driving trigger your anxiety?

What unhelpful thoughts do you have during driving?

Relaxation Techniques: Identify some techniques you can practice to help stay calm

What positive affirmations can you develop to help you keep calm in the car?

DRIVING ANXIETY WORKSHEET

Driving outside your comfort zone: What small goals can you set to challenge your driving comfort slowly?

Identify different ways you are learning to confront your symptoms of driving anxiety?

Relaxation Techniques: Identify some techniques you can practice to help stay calm

What kind of support can you engage in to help you gain control over your driving anxiety?

THOUGHT LOG

Our thoughts control how we feel about ourselves and the world around us. Positive thoughts lead to us feeling good and negative thoughts can put us down. Sometimes our thoughts happen so quickly that we fail to notice them, but they still affect our mood.

These are called Automatic Thoughts.

Often, our automatic thoughts are negative and irrational. Identifying these negative automatic thoughts and replacing them with new rational thoughts can improve our mood.

TRIGGER

Example:

Everyone is driving too fast around me. I'm too scared to drive on the highway.

AUTOMATIC THOUGHT

Example: I can't drive fast like them. They are speeding and will cause an accident and I'll have a panic attack.
Stay home where I'm safe!

NEW THOUGHT

Example: Everyone is driving to the speed limit. It's ok. I can also drive to the speed limit safely. I'm a good driver. I've never had an accident.

TRIGGER

AUTOMATIC THOUGHT

NEW THOUGHT

TRIGGER

AUTOMATIC THOUGHT

NEW THOUGHT

CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Anxiety, Depression and Poor Self-Esteem are often the result of irrational negative thoughts. Thoughts impact our feelings and behaviours. Challenging irrational thoughts can help us change them.

These questions are designed for you to consider the situation and thoughts from a new perspective and lead you to look at your negative thoughts more objectively.

Answer the following questions to assess your thought:

Is there substantial evidence for my thought?

Is there substantial evidence contrary to my thought?

Am I attempting to interpret this situation without all the evidence?

What would a friend think about this situation?

If I look at this situation positively, how would it be different?

COPING STRATEGIES

Coping strategies are actions we take - consciously or unconsciously- to deal with stress, problems, or uncomfortable emotions. Unhealthy coping strategies tend to feel good in the moment, but have long-term negative consequences. Healthy coping strategies may not provide instant gratification, but they lead to long-lasting positive outcomes..

Unhealthy Coping Strategies	Healthy Coping Strategies
Substance use – Drugs / Alcohol	Exercise
Overeating	Talking about your problem/s
Procrastination	Healthy eating
Sleeping too much or too little	Seeking professional help
Social withdrawal	Relaxation techniques
Self-harm	Using social supports
Aggression	Problem-solving techniques

Describe a problem you are currently dealing with:

My “unhealthy” coping strategies:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

Consequences of my unhealthy coping strategies:

My “healthy” coping strategies:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES MONTHLY PLANNER

Self-care is paramount when coping with anxiety, as it plays a crucial role in managing symptoms and maintaining overall well-being. Taking time to prioritise self-care activities such as exercise, adequate sleep, nutritious eating, and relaxation techniques can significantly alleviate anxiety symptoms by reducing stress levels and promoting physical and mental health. Engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation, such as spending time in nature, practicing mindfulness, or pursuing hobbies, can also provide much-needed relief from anxiety. Moreover, establishing healthy boundaries, seeking social support, and seeking professional help when needed are essential components of self-care for anxiety management.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

NOTES:

THOUGHT JOURNAL

DATE:

GOAL

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TO DO LIST

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My aim in creating this toolkit was to offer you a compassionate partner on your path towards regaining control over your fears.

Driving anxiety can be a challenging obstacle and have a significant impact on an individual's life, but it is a challenge that can be overcome with the right support and techniques.

Counselling offers a range of effective strategies for addressing driving anxiety, empowering individuals to confront their fears and regain confidence on the road.

By investing in counselling for driving anxiety, individuals can unlock the benefits of increased confidence, improved safety, and enhanced quality of life.

If you're struggling with driving anxiety, seeking support can be the first step towards a more empowered and fulfilling relationship with driving.

Maryanne Zarth



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Empowering Minds, Inspiring Change

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