



Anxiety management for palliative and progressive conditions

Anxiety is a complex emotion which affects people's bodies and minds.

It reduces concentration, confuses decision-making and can lead to psychological difficulties such as depression. It can affect performance and participation, lowering life quality in every area, and may even reduce effectiveness of treatments. Even small amounts of anxiety can reduce both social interaction and engagement in meaningful activities.

Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care: A national framework for local action

2021-2026* identifies the need for health professionals to recognise and address distress; however, a common misconception from patients and health-care professionals is an expectation that it is 'normal' for people living with palliative and progressive conditions to experience anxiety.

Additionally, patients and family members may mask anxiety due to fear of 'mental health' labelling.

The physical effects of anxiety often result in further treatments or investigations for symptoms including nausea, bowel problems or pain. The emotional and cognitive affects can affect relationships; affect interactions with healthcare professionals, and can even affect professional working environments.

Some health professionals recognise anxiety but lack knowledge or confidence of when or how to intervene or refer on. For reasons such as these, anxiety is often ignored, left unexplored or treated only with medication.

Who this course is for:

This course is suitable for occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, complementary therapists and other health professionals who may already have a basic knowledge of anxiety management. Whilst this course has an emphasis on palliative care and progressive conditions, much of the knowledge and skills learned on the course are transferable to most other patient groups where anxiety is a feature.

Aims:

The aims of this course are to give you:

- Appreciation of how anxiety links mind and body systems; with particular reference to palliative care and progressive conditions
- Better understanding of factors which can cause and perpetuate anxiety within this patient group
- Insight into how understanding anxiety can improve your clinical interventions
- Useful formal and informal ways to assess anxiety and identify appropriate goals and interventions
- A range of practical and effective techniques for reducing and managing anxiety
- Ideas to increase your confidence and effectiveness in your role and to help build resilience

* <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/ambitions-for-palliative-and-end-of-life-care-a-national-framework-for-local-action-2021-2026/>



Positive Energy Partnership Ltd.

The trainer:

Mara Sheldon is an experienced palliative care occupational therapist who enjoys sharing her knowledge. She has worked in community and hospice in-patient and out-patient environments. Mara has created and facilitated training and education sessions for over 30 years.

Some feedback from attendees at previous anxiety management courses:

- “A fantastic trainer with calm and well-paced delivery”
- “The content was excellent and gave a good overview and different tools/tips/techniques to try. Was also really insightful looking at my own anxiety”
- “The combination of training methods made it varied and interesting”
- “For me personally, it was pitched very well, reinforced some things I already do, but also gave me some new ideas. I have learnt a lot”
- “It really has been great [using the techniques] with my son. His Grandfather is very poorly at the moment and we have been able to manage [my son’s] emotions with calm and focused talking. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the skills you taught me”



Anxiety management in palliative and progressive conditions

2-day training course overview:

This training provides a broad introduction and overview of anxiety management in the palliative care environment, and is suitable for people who may already have a basic understanding of anxiety. The structure incorporates elements of psychoeducation, CBT, mindfulness and acceptance-commitment therapy (ACT), and encourages group interaction, experience-sharing and discussion.

The subject matter is split broadly as follows:

Day 1: Physical aspects of anxiety in palliative care and progressive conditions, informal assessment, psycho-education, physical management techniques, for patients, families and MDT members:

- Introduction to anxiety, body/brain mechanisms, symptoms and causes
- Considering anxiety for patients (including people with brain involvement), families, MDT members
- Evidence and guidance for interventions
- Recognising anxiety
- Recognising and managing panic attacks
- Identifying risk of suicide/considerations for risk of suicide
- Physical management techniques

Day 2: Cognitive/behavioural aspects and management techniques, assessment etc.

- Barriers to exploring anxiety
- Communicating with anxious people
- Thoughts/working with thoughts
- Behaviours/working with behaviours
- Formal and informal assessment, including identifying treatment priorities
- Problem solving and other treatment interventions
- Client studies

We include management techniques, personal resilience points, considerations for managing anxiety within the MDT environment, treatment ideas and real-life examples throughout the two days. We also actively encourage peer learning and information-sharing.

Please contact Mara directly if you require any further information, or would like to arrange a course: email mara@positiveenergypartnership.co.uk or call 01223 295860.