



Counselling & Psychotherapy



Postgraduate Psychology & CPD Courses



Short Term Courses



Tailor-made Training Courses



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“Managing Stress – 5 areas we can work on”

Eoin Stephens

President, PCI College



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When we are experiencing difficult and painful levels of stress,

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

suggests that we can help ourselves and improve the situation if we focus on 5 areas:

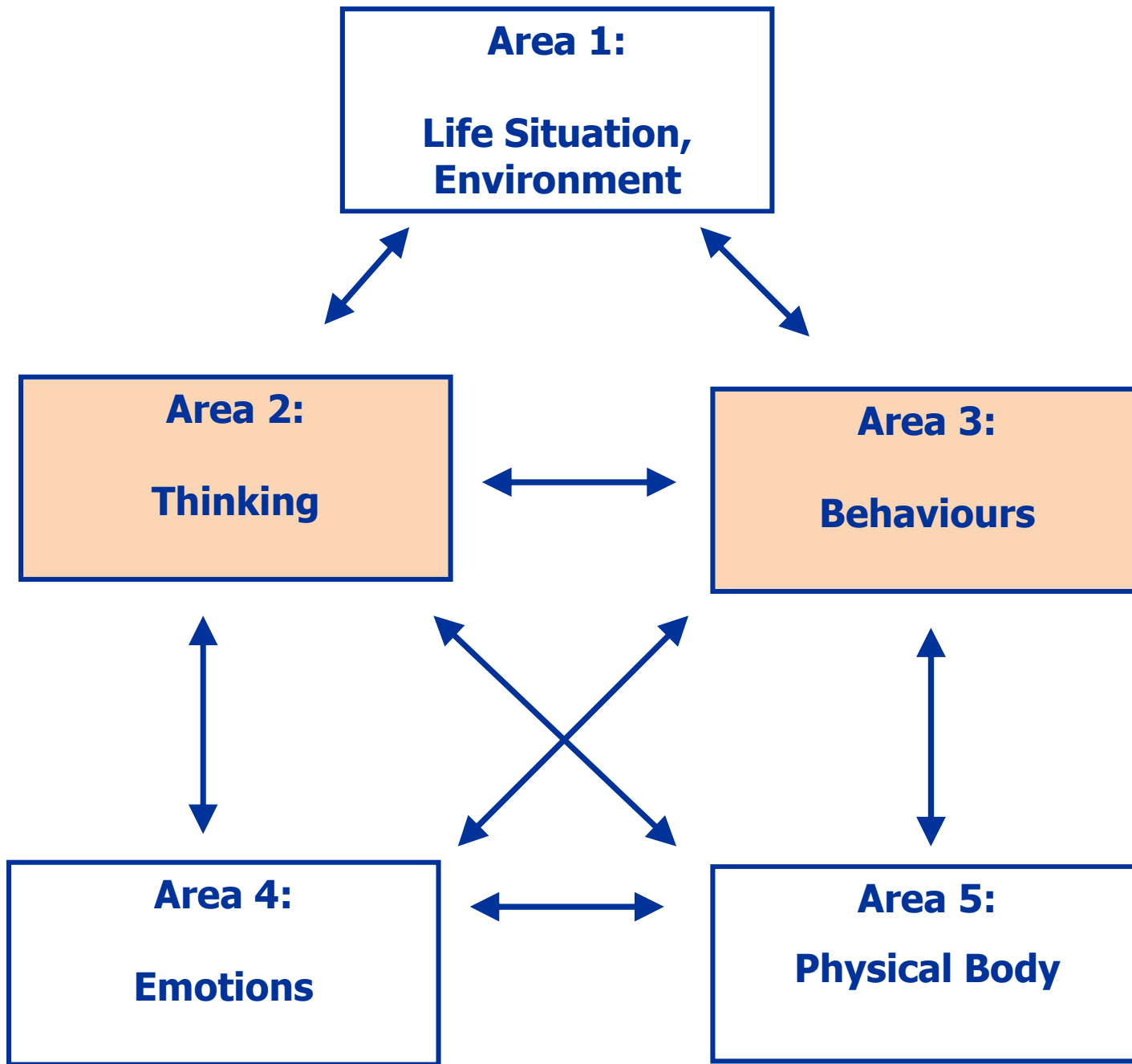


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**Our Environment,
our Thinking,
our Behaviour,
our Emotions and
our Physical Body.**





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**Small improvements in any or all
of these areas can lead to
noticeable reductions in our stress levels,
and/or increase in our ability to cope.**

**This lecture will give participants
some guidelines about tackling these 5 areas.**

overcoming

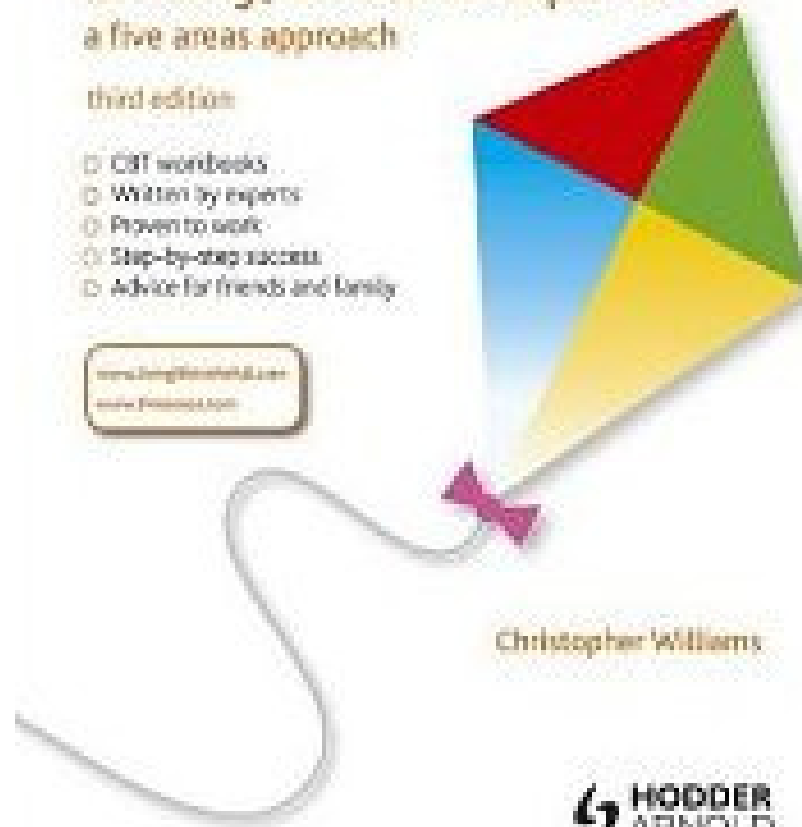
anxiety, stress and panic

a five areas approach

third edition

- CBT workbooks
- Written by experts
- Proven to work
- Step-by-step success
- Advice for friends and family

www.hodderarnold.com
www.psychology.com



Christopher Williams

 **HODDER
ARNOLD**

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Overcoming-Anxiety-Stress-Panic-Approach/dp/1444163140>



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Area 1: Environment

***We tend to underestimate the effects
of environmental factors***



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Change what you can, when you can

- Physical environment
 - Resources
 - People



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Area 2: Thinking

We tend to underestimate the effects of Cognitive factors



- Interpretations
- Assumptions
- Self-talk



Techniques for Challenging Thought Distortions

- **Identifying distortions.** Get familiar with your favourites! (They may vary depending on situation).
- **Examining the evidence.** Think about what exactly would count as evidence for or against your thinking about a situation.
- **Devising experimental tests of beliefs.** Cognitive change is often best achieved through behavioural “trial & review.”
- **Continuum thinking.** Try to see things in “shades of grey”.
- **Double-Standard method.** “Would you see it that way if it was a friend?”
- **Cost-benefit analysis.** Pros and cons of this way of thinking?
- **Defining Terms.** “What do you mean by *stupid* or *failure*?”
- **The Semantic Method.** Substitute softer language for “shoulds” etc.
- **Re-attribution.** Investigate all possible factors contributing to your situation, rather than putting all the blame on yourself or another.
- **Polling of friends and acquaintances.** “How would someone else see this?”

Types of Distorted Thinking

1. **All-or-nothing thinking:** You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories.
2. **Overgeneralization:** You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. **Mental filter:** You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.
4. **Discounting the positives:** You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities "don't count."
5. **Jumping to conclusions:** (A) Mind reading: you assume that people are reacting negatively to you when there is no definite evidence for this; (B) Fortune-telling: you arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.

6. **Magnification or minimization:** You blow things up way out of proportion, or you shrink their importance inappropriately.
7. **Emotional reasoning:** You reason from how you feel: "I feel like an idiot, so I really must be one." Or "I don't feel like doing this, so I'll put it off."
8. **Should statements:** You criticize yourself or other people with "shoulds" or "shouldn'ts." "Musts," "oughts," and "have tos" are similar offenders.
9. **Labeling:** You identify with your shortcomings. Instead of saying, "I made a mistake," you tell yourself, "I'm an idiot," or "a fool," or "a loser."
10. **Personalization and blame:** You blame yourself for something you aren't entirely responsible for, or you blame other people and overlook ways that your own attitudes and behavior might be contributing to a problem.



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Area 3: Behaviours

*This is the area where we have the
most direct influence*

*(but change requires
Planning, Practice & Persistence)*





- Clear communication
 - Time-planning
 - Self-Care
- (includes Emotional & Physical)



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Area 4: Emotions

Emotions are there to give us quick information about our relationship to our environment

(not always reliable, but should be checked out)



- Anger
- Anxiety
- Low mood
- Etc





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Area 5: Physical Body

*Our stress levels influence the state of our
body,
the state of our body influences our stress
levels*



Area 5: Physical Body

- Sleep
- Exercise
 - Diet
- Drugs
 - Etc



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