**Description:** This bulletin board packet covers anxiety management techniques through understanding your brain, managing the anxious body, managing the anxious mind, and managing anxious behavior using an *Inside Out* theme. All of the information provided here is adapted from *The 10 Best-Ever Anxiety Management Techniques* by Margaret Wehrenberg. If you have any questions or would like additional information or materials, please contact the Office of Health Promotion at (610) 519-7407 or e-mail us at healthbytes@villanova.edu.

**When to display the board:** October (mid-terms), December (finals), February (mid-terms), and April (finals)

**Ways to alter the board:** Use the *Inside Out* theme all semester and feature one anxiety-related strategy on your bulletin board each month. Add relevant quotes from the movie to supplement the information provided. Supplement the bulletin board with key campus resources related to the various components covered in this bulletin board. Print the provided door hangers for a floor meeting and invite your residents to color them and use them throughout the year to let everyone know how they are doing. Make copies of the provided coloring book pages and tack to your bulletin board for people to take with them as a stress reliever.
DO YOU EVER LOOK AT SOMEONE AND WONDER, WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE THEIR HEAD?
23% of Villanova students report feeling overwhelmed with anxiety in the last 12 months, 11% in the last 30 days, and 21% in the last two weeks.

That’s 55% of Villanova students who report overwhelming anxiety!

Villanova National College Health Assessment (2015)
A GREAT STARTING POINT FOR ANYONE WHO IS EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY IS TO TALK WITH A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL.

SOMETIMES THESE SYMPTOMS MIGHT BE THE RESULT OF HEART, HORMONAL AND/OR BLOOD SUGAR ISSUES THAT COULD BE RESOLVED THROUGH MEDICAL TREATMENT ALONE.

AT VILLANOVA, A GREAT STARTING POINT WOULD BE THE STUDENT HEALTH CENTER WHICH IS OPEN 24/7 WHEN CLASSES ARE IN SESSION.

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER, HEALTH SERVICES BUILDING THIRD FLOOR 610-519-4070
Stop Catastrophizing

A feeling is just a feeling. A pounding heart, an upset stomach, a flushing face are just feelings. They are unpleasant, but they are not lethal. Thinking through “then what?” questions about what could happen in any given scenario, particularly with the guidance of a counselor, can be tremendously helpful to help someone prepare and plan for panic in the future.

The experience of anger is definitely one that causes significant anxiety for people. It is not about showing anger but knowing anger. Learning how to process your anger and ways to appropriately express it is a worthwhile exercise if you are someone who expresses with managing and expressing anger.
We already know how to do it, but are we using it to our advantage?
Different aspects of breathing can impact different experiences of anxiety. Focusing on your breath can prevent anxiety from building.

- Progressive muscle relaxation reduces physical and cognitive symptoms of anxiety
- Deep breathing can stop panic once it has started
- Diaphragmatic breathing interrupts panic before it starts
Create breathing minutes for the next 30 days when you are:
Waiting in line
At a red light
Walking to/from class
Waiting for your laptop to power up
Waiting for your professor to hand out/back an exam
Waiting for class to start
Waiting for an email or text message
In between episodes on Netflix

After one week, pick one time of day when you can predictably commit to uninterrupted breathing for a few minutes. During this one interrupted time of day, you will add one minute per day.

For the next 7 days, continue 1-2 minute breathing breaks for 7 to 9 times per day. By the end of the week, you should be practicing breathing up to 9 minutes per day.
Be Persistent like Bing Bong! Implement a SMART Plan and Practice

Specific: answer who, what, where & when
Measurable: establish concrete criteria for determining success
Achievable: how you will make it happen
Realistic: grounded in what is possible
Timely: grounded within a time frame
Substitute with a positive thought (affirmation, poem, prayer).

Refocus on the work or activity you were doing when you first had the anxious thought(s).

Compete with it by reciting it out loud.

Distract yourself by changing your location (e.g., getting outside) or changing your activity (e.g., watch YouTube clip).

**stop anxious thoughts**

replace negative thoughts with these

Sometimes self-talk requires talking with others! Consider making an appointment with the University Counseling Center to strategize about how to challenge your own self-talk!
Call 610-519-4050 or stop by their office Monday-Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm to schedule an appointment.
Persistence pays off: stop anxious thoughts as persistently as they occur.

Focus on your breathing

Use your body to change your mind

Make a list with time frames of things that need to be done.

Do the worst first. If there is something that you are dreading or do not enjoy, do it first.
These substances can trigger and exacerbate anxiety.

Limit coffee, alcohol, tobacco, sugar & sweeteners.
Anxiety is impacted by what you eat and how you sleep

Eat regular meals and get consistent sleep (8 hours per night). Most neurotransmitter production occurs while you are sleeping!

Your brain makes neurotransmitters from the nutrients in the food you eat! Increase your intake of leafy greens and be sure to get three servings of protein per day (no more than 4 ounces per sitting).
Goals, actions & intentions that raise anxiety: Start school in 6 weeks

First thought: I may not be able to meet the deadline. I always miss them.

Replace first thought with: I have filled out applications before and I know I have time to do this. I will use my support system to encourage me.

TALK YOURSELF INTO CHANGING BEHAVIOR

Give yourself a break every 90 minutes:

- Get up and stretch
- Get outside
- Take a drink of water and have a snack
- Pull up a picture, quote or image that calms you
- Close your eyes and imagine a place that you love through your five senses – what does it look like? Sound like? Feel like? Taste like? Smell like?
CONTAIN YOUR WORRY

People may try to cover up or get rid of worry without dealing with it directly. It is important as a friend of someone who experiences significant anxiety, to express confidence in their ability to handle problems and not to respond with platitudes like “everything will be alright.” Reminding them of strategies that have worked for them in the past and/or that they have committed to trying is also a gentle nudge in the right direction.

One strategy to contain your worry:

Dedicate a specific amount of time for worrying your way to a plan (e.g., 15 minutes).
Make a list of the thing you are worried about.
Do anything that must be done and do not delay (e.g., e-mail professor).
Note the things that must be done if some particular other “thing” happens (e.g., if X, then Y).
Ask yourself: should I be worried about anything else with this thing? If so, make note of it and move on.
Set aside time to review your plan with a time limit so that you can plan to revisit it at that time.
Mindfulness is the antithesis of anxiety.

It diminishes the physical impact of stress.

Simple mindfulness exercises:
- Shift your eyes downward and breathe or
- Listen to a guided exercise on your phone.

The present moment.
PLAN YOUR "FREE" TIME

People often feel agitated when they are not doing something. If you are someone who needs to be busy, try these:
Every time you say to yourself "If I ever have a few hours (or few minutes), I want to: ________" make a note.
Transfer your note to a written or electronic list.
Divide this list into: things that take 30 minutes, things that take an hour, things that take 3 hours, and things that take a day.
Whenever you feel faced with expected or unexpected free time, select something that is achievable in the time that you have.
4 TECH-FREE STRATEGIES FOR YOUR WEEK

깐 Tech-free Start
Avoid checking e-mail and social media accounts within the first hour of your day.

 Hits the Mute Button
Turn off things that ring and ding while focused on work.

Mindful Meals
Make meals a tech-free zone.

Ent Business or pleasure?
Limit your personal communication during the "school day" and limit your school communication during your "personal time." Limit your expectations for "school" communication during others' "personal time."

TOO MUCH TECHNOLOGY

Make a conscious decision to create demand delays when it comes to technology. By managing others’ expectations of you, you will also be better able to manage your expectations of them. This helps with anticipating communication for which you may already have anxiety.
RELAX!

It is not necessary to BELIEVE that these strategies will reduce anxiety – simply practicing them WILL reduce experience(s) of anxiety.

What are you waiting for?
HEADQUARTERS
DOOR HANGER

MAKE THIS SIMPLE DOOR HANGER AND SHOW PEOPLE HOW YOU'RE FEELING

STEP 1:
CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE ON THE FOLLOWING THREE PAGES.

STEP 2:
FOLD EACH HANGER IN HALF AND GLUE OR TAPE TOGETHER.

STEP 3:
SLIDE THE DOOR HANDLE THROUGH THE SLIT TO HANG. CHOOSE WHICH HANGER REFLECTS HOW YOU'RE FEELING!