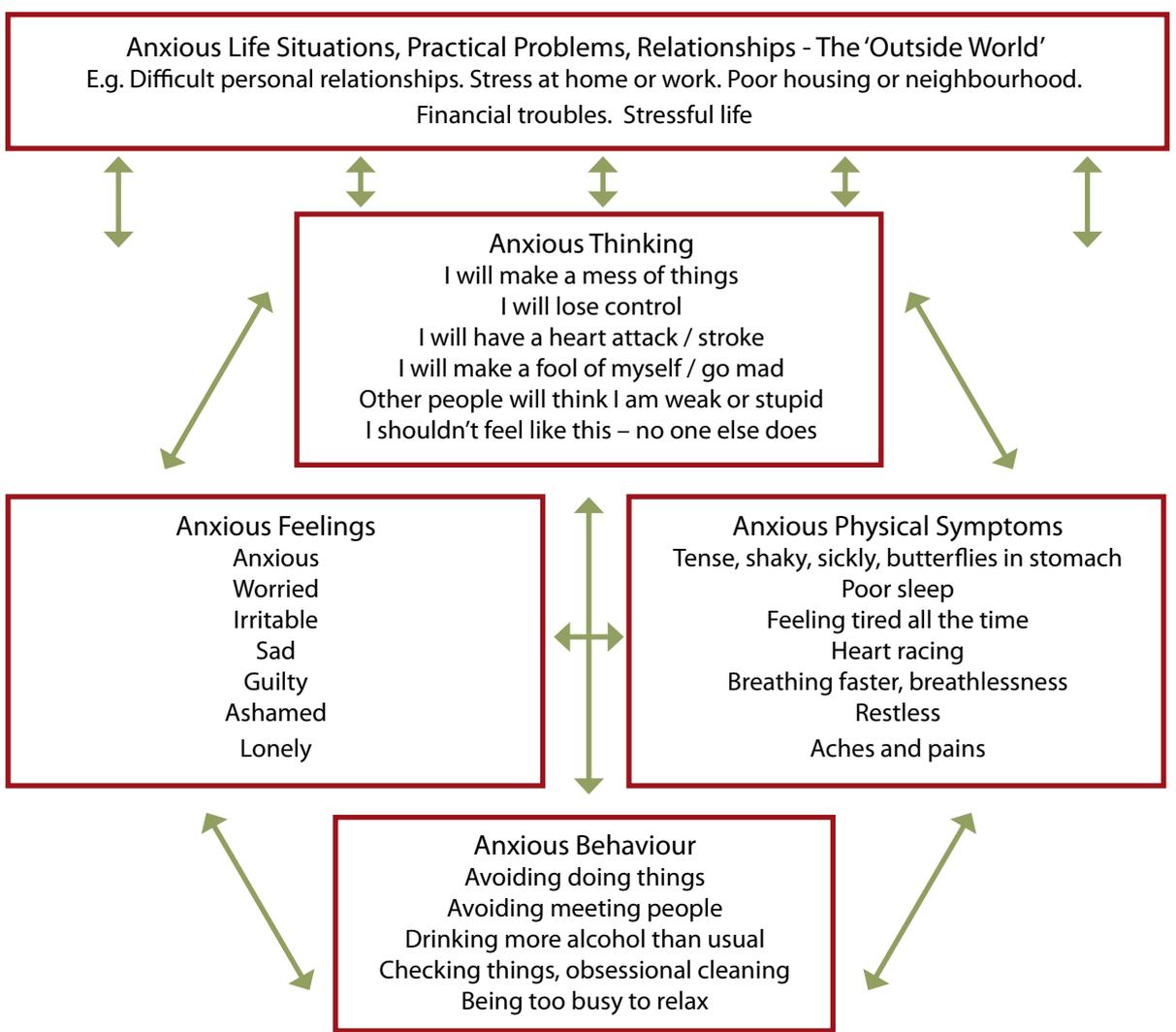


## Anxiety – A ‘Five Areas’ Model



Anxiety is a term used to describe uncomfortable feelings of nervousness, worry, and tension, which we all feel from time to time. Anxiety can affect anyone. It affects our thoughts, physical reactions, moods and behaviours. Anxiety can also cause us to feel panicky and frightened and prevent us from doing things. Too much stress in our lives can result in higher levels of anxiety that can reach the level of panic if no action to reduce anxiety is taken.

Below are some of the signs or symptoms you may notice when you are too anxious. We have divided these into anxious thinking, anxious feelings, anxious physical symptoms and anxious behaviour. The outside world or environment can also have a major effect on our anxiety. This is known as the ‘FIVE AREAS MODEL’.



Related leaflets include:  
 > Changing Unhelpful Thinking (1), (2) & (3)  
 > Recognising Helpful & Unhelpful Behaviours  
 > Recognising Practical Problems & Difficulties



## Anxiety – A ‘five areas’ model

### Contd.

Anxiety is a perfectly normal response to stress, and in situations that are really stressful some degree of anxiety can be helpful in preparing us for action such as job interviews, taking exams, sporting events, or even helping us to pay our bills on time! However, if anxiety occurs too often and for no apparent reason, or if it begins to interfere with our life, then it has become a problem. We may also get anxious about being anxious (the ‘fear of fear’) which makes us feel worse and may make our problems harder to tackle.

We know from research that at any one time, there are many people experiencing anxiety that is a problem to them. Anxiety can either be very general, affecting many areas of our lives, or it may be more specific to certain situations such as crowded places, talking to people or traveling on public transport. It may occur as a specific phobia such as a fear of lifts or a fear of spiders.

The diagram shows how these five areas (the outside world, thinking, feeling, physical symptoms and behaviour) all link together and affect each other. It shows how every aspect of a person’s life influences all the others. For example, changes in our thoughts influence our physical reactions, which influence our mood and behaviour.

#### Remember

Anxiety is NORMAL

Anxiety is a healthy response to threat or danger

Anxiety can increase or reduce many times during our lives

Anxiety can become a problem when you:

- Have too much stress and anxiety in your day-to-day life
- Become more anxious about something than it deserves
- Become anxious about things that you cannot change, or that haven’t happened yet
- Become anxious about being anxious (‘Fear of Fear’)
- Do unhelpful things to ease your anxiety such as drink too much alcohol or stop going out

#### Anxiety DOES NOT:

- Kill you
- Make you go mad
- Make you lose control

#### Related leaflets include:

- > Changing Unhelpful Thinking (1), (2) & (3)
- > Recognising Helpful & Unhelpful Behaviours
- > Recognising Practical Problems & Difficulties

