The procedures in this staff training manual are meant to be used by agency staff, as part of the broader services they provide, or under supervision of agency staff.
Dedication

*For Josh and Brady.*

*Amitiae nostrae memoriam spero sempernam fore.*

~

*Cicero*
Abstract

The prevalence of anxiety disorders is significantly higher in incarcerated populations, in comparison to the general population in Canada. This suggests that there is a need for effective treatments to target symptoms of anxiety in offenders. However, a review of the current research, identified a gap in the research literature pertaining to treating symptoms of anxiety in offenders using evidence-based treatment methods; specifically designed to meet the needs of this population. In addition, there is a gap in the use of relaxation training as a stand-alone treatment for anxiety (i.e., without CBT) and in the use of a combination of the three specific relaxation techniques, outlined in this thesis. Therefore, this thesis sought to develop a comprehensive treatment manual for correctional staff to use with clients with anxiety, using three effective relaxation techniques. Thus, permanent products in the form of a facilitator relaxation training manual and a participant relaxation manual were created. The primary skills described in the manuals are progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation. These skills were chosen based on an extensive literature review, input from correctional staff, and input from offenders. It was hypothesized that these manuals would allow staff members to later treat symptoms of anxiety in their clients. However, due to time constraints, the author was not able to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the manuals. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the development of the treatment manuals, guided primarily by current research. Furthermore, strengths, limitations, multilevel challenges to service implementation, and recommendations for future research are discussed.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Anxiety is an emotional response to anticipated future threats. Anxiety tends to produce behavioural tendencies to be overly cautious or avoid people, places, and/or things. Evidently, these behaviours are healthy to a certain extent; however, when the avoidance begins to hinder one’s ability to engage in daily living activities or causes the individual a significant amount of distress, the anxiety becomes problematic (American Psychological Association, 2013). For example, it may be healthy for someone to avoid dark alleyways at night, but it would not be considered normal to completely avoid walking through the neighborhood during the day.

Anxiety disorders are one of the most prevalent psychiatric illnesses worldwide (Miller, 1994) and in offender populations in Canada (Beaudette, 2014). The Bradley Report (Bradley, 2009; Dadi, Dachew, Kisi, Yigzaw, & Azale, 2016) indicated that anxiety disorders are significantly more prevalent in offender populations than in the general population. Therefore, teaching strategies to individuals on how to deal with these feelings may be useful to a wide range of populations.

In order to target anxiety disorders, cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), including the use of relaxation, has been identified as the most effective and evidence-based treatment modality to date (Hofmaan, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer, & Fang, 2012). The two basic concepts of CBT, which formed the basis of this thesis, include (1) cognitions influence one’s thoughts and behaviours and (2) behaviours, in turn, influence one’s thoughts and emotions (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). Based on these central tenets, basic skills training, including relaxation training, was created. Therefore, the purpose of relaxation training is to initiate mental and physical calmness in clients, thus facilitating calmness in their behaviours, thoughts, and emotions (Wright et al., 2006). However, studies have indicated the usefulness of administering relaxation training alone, in comparison to CBT (e.g., Arntz, 2003; Ost & Breitholz, 2000). These studies demonstrated that relaxation training may be equally as effective as CBT, in treating anxiety (Arntz, 2003; Ost & Breitholz, 2000). Additionally, relaxation techniques have been shown to be effective in treating a wide range of populations (Francesco, Mauro, Gianluca, & Enrico, 2009), including offenders (Marquis & Gendreau, 1975).

Due to the evidence to support the effectiveness of using relaxation training on its own (i.e., without CBT), this thesis focuses on progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), cognitive imagery¹, and mindfulness meditation. Firstly, when PMR was developed in 1934, it included the systematic tensing and relaxing of 16 muscle groups (Field, 2009). According to Field, several therapists have since adapted this original version (e.g., tensing and relaxing 7 muscle groups) in order to accommodate a wider range of clients and settings. Furthermore, PMR has been shown to diminish symptoms of anxiety, psychological distress, and fatigue, while increasing subjective wellbeing (Vancampfort et al., 2011).

Secondly, cognitive imagery is intended to provide a diversion to individuals having troubling thoughts, allowing them to focus on relaxing images (e.g., waves crashing along the shoreline at the beach; Wright et al., 2006). Additionally, McEvoy and Saulsman (2014) found that cognitive imagery enhanced the effectiveness of CBT for symptoms of anxiety. Also, progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery have been used together in order to successfully diminish anxiety (Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009).

¹ The terms cognitive imagery, guided imagery, and visualization will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis.
Lastly, mindfulness meditation is the act of clearing one’s mind of thoughts and distractions in order to focus on breathing, while becoming aware of how the senses experience the present moment (Ong, 2017). This allows one’s cognitions to achieve a state of calmness, in turn affecting the individual’s mind, body, and behaviours (Ong, 2017). According to Lyons and Cantrell (2016), mindfulness-based interventions are becoming standard practice in the treatment of physical and mental disorders alike in offender and non-offender populations. Furthermore, in a meta-analysis conducted by Hilton et al. (2016) meditation practices were shown to diminish symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety, while increasing quality of life. To conclude, meditation has been identified as an effective treatment and rehabilitative strategy for offenders (Lyons & Cantrell, 2016).

Moreover, while studies have demonstrated a strong positive correlation between mental illness and offending behaviour, mental health services for offenders continue to be limited compared to services offered to the general population (McConnachie, Moolla, & Davies, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2011). As well, the federal institution for which this thesis was created consisted of an intermediate level mental health treatment unit. This unit was in the process of formulating interventions to target a number of mental health symptoms, including anxiety. Thus, the evidence-based treatment manuals outlined in this thesis were designed to address the deficit in treatment programs offered to offenders, the need for intervention programs in the mental health unit, and the evidence to support the usefulness of teaching relaxation techniques to individuals with anxiety. It is hypothesized that the development of manuals to teach relaxation techniques (i.e., progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation) to offenders in a group therapy setting will assist the offenders to later diminish their symptoms of anxiety.

The thesis contains five chapters, first of which is the Introduction (Chapter I). Then, a comprehensive literature review (see Chapter II) is presented, including subject matter such as the effectiveness of relaxation training, cognitive imagery, mindfulness meditation, and deep breathing. Next, the methodology (see Chapter III) of the treatment is described and the manuals are discussed. The methodology section, based on the findings of the literature review, includes a description of participants, selection procedures, and intended program administrators. Chapter III also includes a detailed explanation of the research design, setting and apparatus, materials, consumer satisfaction measures, and research implementation procedures. This chapter also includes a description of the sections in the relaxation training manuals, including a brief literature review, a session by session guide, key references/resources, and satisfaction surveys. Thereafter, the results section will not only present the empirical findings of the Treatment Needs Questionnaire data, but also refer to the full participant and facilitator training manuals in the appendices (see Chapter IV). Lastly, the conclusions, discussion, and limitations (see Chapter V) are discussed in order to review both the facilitator and participant manuals and their contribution to the field, and make recommendations for future study.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review was to inform the creation of an empirically validated method to decrease symptoms of anxiety experienced by adult male offenders in the specialized mental health unit of a federal institution. Note that the adult male offenders targeted for treatment had been identified as having intermediate mental health needs, including diagnoses of schizophrenia, substance abuse disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, schizotypic personality disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder (J. Smith, personal communication, October 7, 2016). Many of the individuals had also experienced depression and/or had engaged in self-harm or attempted suicide (J. Smith, personal communication, October 7, 2016). However, the majority of the individuals in the specialized mental health unit require intervention in regards to their symptoms of anxiety (J. Smith, personal communication, October 7, 2016). Therefore, the methodology (Chapter III) of this applied thesis was created, with the purpose of developing a resource that can later be used to treat symptoms of anxiety of the inmates in the specialized mental health unit, based on the literature that follows.

Impact of Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotion, described in terms of feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes (e.g., increased perspiration and/or heart rate; American Psychological Association, 2013). In a study conducted by Dadi et al. (2016), they discovered that based on a random sampling of 949 prisoners, 36.1% appeared to have an anxiety disorder. This is in contrast with 18.1% of the adult population in the U.S. (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005), and indicates that anxiety may be twice as prevalent in incarcerated populations as in the general population.

Furthermore, anxiety may affect individuals’ ability to function in a number of ways. For example, Beier (1951) conducted a study which concluded that individuals in a state of anxiety lose some ability to think in abstract ways, flexibility in intellectual functioning, and visual-motor coordination. Another study demonstrated that rats with high anxiety, who were subjected to high stress situations over a period of time, were at a much greater risk of developing symptoms of depression (Wislowska-Stanek, Lehner, Skórzewska, Krząścik, & Płaźnik, 2016). In addition, anxiety has been shown to have a negative impact on individuals’ reaction time and cognitive control, as well as one’s ability to plan accurately in order to solve problems or complete tasks (Jones, Chase, & Fournier, 2016). Moreover, according to Santini, Koyanagi, Tyrovolas, and Haro (2015), anxiety has a considerable negative impact on the formation and maintenance of social relationships and marital relationships.

While little research has been conducted on the direct relationship between anxiety and reoffending, many of the factors mentioned above are predictive of recidivism rates (e.g., Peterson, Skeem, Kennealy, Bray, & Zvonkovic, 2014). In this study, it was shown that 3% of crimes were preceded by symptoms of depression (Peterson et al., 2014). As well, a lack of problem solving skills was identified as a prominent risk factor in predicting recidivism (Travers, Mann, & Hollin, 2014). Additionally, a study by Rocque, Bierie, Posick, & Mackenzie (2013) demonstrated that social relationships may be strong predictors of reoffending. Based on this evidence, it can be tentatively surmised that targeting anxiety in a correctional facility may

2Note that all names that appear as personal communications in this thesis are fictional, as a means of ensuring confidentiality.
reduce symptoms of depression and rates of recidivism, while increasing problem solving skills and ability to form and maintain social and romantic relationships.

**Benefits of Relaxation Training**

In contrast with the costs associated with symptoms of anxiety, there has been shown to be many benefits associated with achieving a state of relaxation. Behavioural researchers have demonstrated the usefulness of relaxation training in targeting the symptoms of individuals with a range of anxiety disorders (Borkovec et al., 1987). Moritz et al. (2015) demonstrated how the use of relaxation training successfully diminished symptoms of depression in individuals with psychosis. While the study by Moritz et al. was not intended to address the effects of relaxation on an offender population, the study remains relevant to the current thesis, in that many of the individuals in the specialized mental health unit experience symptoms of psychosis, among other symptoms associated with their diverse diagnoses (J. Smith, personal communication, October 7, 2016). In another study, it was shown that relaxation-based interventions were effective in reducing the frequency and intensity of trauma-related nightmares, as well as nightmares in general (Davis & Wright, 2005). Davis and Wright also demonstrated the use of relaxation training in improving overall quality of sleep while decreasing symptoms of PTSD and depression. Moreover, relaxation training was shown to improve emotion regulation and self-control (e.g., reduce drug abuse; Tang, Tang, & Posner, 2016). The precise methodology used within these studies varied; however, there was recurrent and successful use of relaxation training skills including PMR, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation. For this reason, the present literature review will provide an overview of the methodology used in order to administer PMR, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation to clients.

**Cognitive Behaviour Therapy**

A brief overview of the theory behind CBT is presented in this section, in order to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the mechanisms through which behavioural interventions are successful in targeting symptoms associated with mental health issues. Cognitive behaviour therapy has been shown to be effective in treating a number of psychological conditions, including depression, anxiety, personality disorders, and substance abuse disorders (Farmer & Chapman, 2016). Furthermore, the main idea surrounding CBT is that there is a reciprocal relationship between one’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, in that each directly influences the others (Farmer & Chapman, 2016). Within the CBT model, a number of therapeutic approaches have been developed, which address cognitions, emotions, environmental factors, and behaviours (Farmer & Chapman, 2016). Additionally, skills training has been a component of CBT since it was first developed (Farmer & Chapman, 2016). According to Farmer and Chapman, skills training most often involves teaching or changing a behaviour, or set of behaviours, while consequently having the participant implement effective alternative behaviours (e.g., using relaxation skills). Therefore, skill building, such as relaxation, increases the participants’ engagement in behaviours that affect their thoughts and emotions in a way that moves them towards the overall goal of their engagement in therapy (Farmer & Chapman, 2016). Moreover, evidence-based treatments that involve skills training can be presented in two ways; either skills training is used as one component of a treatment, or as a treatment alone (Farmer & Chapman, 2016), as outlined in this thesis.
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Relaxation Training in Correctional Settings

The idea of delivering mental health services to inmates is a relatively new concept within correctional facilities; the traditional response to inmates with mental illness or abnormal behaviour was to deliver punishment in the form of isolation or segregation (DeGroot, 2003). This being said, CBT has been shown to be notably cost-effective and efficient when used to treat mental illness with offender populations (DeGroot, 2003). Overall, according to DeGroot, there is a lack of research on empirical behavioural interventions for inmates, for which reason much of the research in this literature review pertains to non-offender populations with mental illnesses, such as anxiety disorders. However, the research in this section of the literature review will present evidence to support the use of cognitive behaviour therapy and relaxation training specifically with incarcerated populations.

According to Landenberger and Lipsey (2005), a number of meta-analyses have demonstrated the effectiveness of CBT in correctional settings. However, these findings should be considered with some skepticism due to the broad range of offender types and inclusion of differing versions of CBT, among other factors (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). The 58 studies included in the meta-analysis by Landenberger and Lipsey were conducted mostly with adult male offenders, opposed to juvenile offenders, and lasted less than 20 weeks. The CBT treatments were considered successful based on whether or not the inmates reoffended within the post-intervention interval of approximately one year (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). Overall, the participants of the CBT were 1.5 times more likely (M = 1.53, p < 0.001) to succeed than control groups. Landenberger and Lipsey maintain that overall the effectiveness of CBT has been well established; however, further research must be conducted in order to determine which specific characteristics of CBT contribute to the diminished recidivism rates.

Furthermore, a study by Lutz (1990) demonstrated the usefulness of relaxation training for increasing sleep and decreasing anxiety in a prison population. Forty adult incarcerated males were involved in the study, half of which were part of a control group (Lutz, 1990). Trends were recorded in the intended direction for both anxiety and sleep following the treatment; although the results were not statistically significant. Therefore, these results demonstrate that relaxation may be effective in treating symptoms of anxiety in incarcerated populations. Additionally, Bassett, Blanchard, and Estes (1977) evaluated the effectiveness of relaxation training with inmates by conducting a study with incarcerated offenders. The relaxation training groups included three groups of 10 adult male prisoners (Bassett et al., 1977). The relaxation sessions were comprised of three, 1-hour sessions where anxiety level was measured before and after each session using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory and a 10-centimeter anxiety continuum (i.e., rating scale; Bassett et al., 1977). The authors noted that each relaxation training group were given differing instructions on how to perform the relaxation techniques. While the differing instructions seemed to influence the participants’ expectancy for success of the training, there was no discernable difference in the effect on the symptoms of anxiety (Bassett et al., 1977). Bassett et al. therefore note that clinicians may use their own version of instructions in order to administrate relaxation training. Moreover, the relaxation training in all three groups showed a statistically significant decrease in symptoms of anxiety (Bassett et al., 1977). Consequently, the authors go on to note that relaxation training is a worthwhile endeavor towards which to devote the time and effort of therapists in a correctional setting, in order to diminish symptoms of anxiety in adult male offenders. The section below will outline specific skills used in relaxation training, in order to target symptoms of anxiety.
Relaxation Skills Training

**Progressive muscle relaxation.** In a study conducted by Kushner et al. (2013), the effects of a hybrid CBT versus progressive muscle relaxation training (PMRT) were compared in regards to diminishing symptoms of co-occurring anxiety and alcohol disorder. For the purpose of this literature review, the effects of PMRT on the symptoms of anxiety are discussed. Participants included 247 residential patients aged 18 years and over with an anxiety disorder (Kushner et al., 2013). PMRT treatment consisted of six, 1-hour group sessions (Kushner et al., 2013). In session 1, the administrators guided the participants through PMR using instructions to tense and release 16 muscle groups (Kushner et al., 2013). During the following session, the administrators provided training on how to use PMR while tensing and releasing seven muscle groups (Kushner et al., 2013). The next three sessions were taught by instructing the participants to tense and release four muscle groups (Kushner et al., 2013). In the final session, the administrators instructed the participants to practice a whole-body relaxation using cued muscle memory (Kushner et al., 2013).

Additionally, Kushner et al. described using a script in order to administer the PMRT and homework assignments to reinforce the participants’ learning in-session. In order to measure symptoms of anxiety, the authors used the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Spielberger & Sydeman, 1994). This measure includes one state anxiety inventory, consisting of 20 items and one trait anxiety inventory, consisting of 20 items (Spielberger & Sydeman, 1994). The participants are asked to rate the items on a 4-point Likert scale and responses are added together for a potential minimum score of 20 and maximum score of 80 (Spielberger & Sydeman, 1994). Further, Kushner et al. noted that they considered participants to have clinical anxiety if there score was 44 or above on either measure. The participants showed a mean reduction in trait and state anxiety of 13.20 points (SD = 9.72) and 12.32 points (SD = 12.63), respectively (Kushner et al., 2013). Kushner et al. described the results as showing a large reduction in both trait and state anxiety from baseline to post-treatment and baseline to 4-month follow-up; however no statistical analyses were presented to confirm the effect size.

Similarly, Meyer et al. (2016) taught PMR by first having the eight participants tense and relax 16 muscle groups, then seven muscle groups, followed by four muscle groups. The fourth session involved a visualization exercise without the use of muscle tension and the fifth session involved conditioned relaxation (Meyer et al., 2016). The final group therapy session involved a conditioned relaxation technique (Meyer et al., 2016). While the purpose of the sessions was to target the participants’ migraines, it remains that the participants successfully learned how to use each relaxation technique in order to achieve a state of relaxation (Meyer et al., 2016). These results provide support for the use of PMR in reducing symptoms of anxiety in an adult population as well as support for fading the PMRT, which provides potential for participants to use the less-intensive skill in a wider range of settings. A less intensive skill discussed in this literature review includes cognitive imagery, presented in the section below.
Cognitive imagery. Another aspect of the treatment manual is cognitive imagery, which has been shown to increase the efficacy of CBT in patients with social anxiety disorder (McEvoy & Saulsman, 2014; McEvoy, Erceg-Hurn, Saulsman, & Thibodeau, 2015). Furthermore, Holmes and Mathews (2010) found that visual imagery invokes a greater emotional response than verbal strategies, indicating that using visualization when treating emotional disorders increases the effectiveness and maintenance of treatment.

Moreover, in a study conducted by Apóstolo and Kolcaba (2009), participants included psychiatric inpatients with depressive mood disorders. The purpose of the study was to evaluate how guided imagery affected the comfort, depression, anxiety, and stress of the participants (Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009). For the purpose of this literature review, the effects of the guided imagery on the anxiety of the participants will be discussed. A CD, 21 minutes in length, was distributed to the participants to listen to each night for 10 consecutive days (Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009). The CD included PMR and guided visualization of relaxing natural scenes. Apóstolo and Kolcaba concluded that the treatment group showed statistically significant lower levels of anxiety than the control group after the 10 days of intervention ($F = 11.76$, $p = .00$). This study supports the use of PMR, as well as imagery in order to target symptoms of anxiety.

In another study, Jewell and Elliff (2013) investigated the effectiveness of relaxation training in working with juvenile detainees. The Relaxation Skills Violence Prevention program was administered by trained psychology students, who were supervised by the main investigator and more experienced facilitators, in a closed group format (Jewell & Elliff, 2013). The first 1-hour session of the group focused on psycho-education regarding stress, as it affects the mind and body, and general tips for coping with stress (Jewell & Elliff, 2013). Second, the participants were taught to use deep breathing as a means of attaining relaxation (Jewell & Elliff, 2013). In the third session the participants were taught how to use PMR and in the fourth session the participants were taught to use cognitive imagery (Jewell & Elliff, 2013). The fifth, and final, session comprised of a review of all three skills taught throughout the sessions (Jewell & Elliff, 2013). In general, each session provided psycho-education as well as interactive discussions on topics relating to stress, anger, and relaxation (Jewell & Elliff, 2013). Furthermore, the detainees were expected to use self-monitoring outside of group sessions in order to monitor the frequency of their use of the relaxation skills in their daily lives (Jewell & Elliff, 2013).

Jewell and Elliff (2013) found that all three relaxation techniques had a statistically significant ($p < 0.1$) effect on the incarcerated youths’ perceived stress. Jewell and Elliff also report a large effect size in comparing the interaction effect between group, pre-test data, and post-test data, as determined by a repeated measures ANOVA ($F(1, 135)=22.70$, $p<.01$, partial $\eta^2=.14$). Additional self-monitoring data were gathered in regards to the frequency that the participants used the relaxation techniques in a given day, including deep breathing ($M=2.27$, $SD=2.48$), PMR ($M=1.61$, $SD=1.82$), and imagery ($M=2.58$, $SD=3.67$; Jewell & Elliff, 2013). These data were presented in order to demonstrate the frequency in which the participants decided to use each relaxation technique on a daily basis, although no data analyses were conducted (Jewell & Elliff, 2013). Moreover, 53% of participants preferred using deep breathing, 33% preferred using guided imagery, and 14% preferred PMR (Jewell & Elliff, 2013).
This study further supports the use of cognitive imagery as a skill to allow participants to achieve relaxation, including in an incarcerated environment and with the use of both PMR and deep breathing. The additional data reported in the study by Jewell and Elliff (2013) support the notion that the incarcerated participants were able to learn each skill and use them in their daily lives within the institution. Lastly, this study provided information regarding the fact that the participants seemed to implement and prefer less intensive skills (i.e., deep breathing and cognitive imagery) more frequently (Jewell & Elliff, 2013). Another less-intensive, or less physically demanding, skill presented in this thesis includes meditation, in the following section of this literature review.

**Mindfulness meditation.** In a literature review conducted by Delmonte (1985), it was established that meditation is an effective therapeutic technique for symptoms of anxiety. Overall, Delmonte reported that while meditation is comparable to other interventions intended to reduce anxiety, regular use seems to be crucial in maintaining the effects of mindfulness meditation. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter I: Introduction, Lyons and Cantrell (2016), identified meditation as an effective method in diminishing recidivism in incarcerated populations. Thus, it is hypothesized that meditation will be an effective method in reducing symptoms of anxiety in offenders.

In contrast, Toneastto and Nguyen (2007) presented a literature review which concluded that mindfulness-based stress reduction is not a reliably effective method in improving anxiety and mood symptoms. However, Toneastto and Nguyen describe the precise relationship between practicing meditation and changes in depression and anxiety as either being infrequently assessed or equivocal. In addition, a qualitative study was conducted in order to evaluate the specific mechanism by which meditation seems to target anxiety (Stelter, 2009). The findings of this study were based on qualitative information from diary entries from clients who had undergone mindfulness meditation training to target their anxiety (Stelter, 2009). Stelter found, based on the qualitative data, that mindfulness meditation targets rumination, a major component of anxiety, because it demands that the participants focus on the present moment, while bringing awareness to the body and to the individual’s surroundings.

Furthermore, Hilton et al. (2016) conducted a meta-analysis in order to determine the effectiveness of meditation for adults with post-traumatic stress disorder. Hilton et al. also reported findings related to the participants’ symptoms of depression, anxiety, quality of life, ability to function, and unfavourable events. This study did not evaluate the effect of meditation involving an incarcerated population; however, Weeks and Widom (1998) reported a link between experiencing trauma and committing crimes. Also, Weeks and Widom found that there was a greater prevalence of PTSD in adult male offenders than in the general population. For this reason, the meta-analysis by Hilton et al. was deemed relevant to the current literature review. Ten studies met the criteria to be included in the study, which involved 643 participants in total (Hilton et al., 2016). Within these studies, meditation, yoga, and mantra repetition improved symptoms of PTSD and depression, in comparison to control groups (Hilton et al., 2016). Moreover, effects on anxiety and quality of life were also positive, but not statistically significant (Hilton et al., 2016). Hilton et al. go on to note that the overall quality of the studies were moderate or low; therefore more high-quality studies are required in order to increase the confidence level in the findings of their analysis.
Additionally, Walach et al. (2007) found that mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) was an effective intervention to diminish symptoms of stress. The participants included 11 subjects, who were each employees of a service center (Walach et al., 2007). The MBSR trainers were clinical psychologists, therapists, and MBSR trainers (Walach et al., 2007). The classes were comprised of eight, 2.5-hour sessions and one, 6-hour session (Walach et al., 2007). The MBSR sessions were comprised of teaching, formal meditation practice, and sharing of experiences (Walach et al., 2007). In addition, the formal meditation consisted of a progressive and mixed sequence body exercises and formal mindfulness meditation (Walach et al., 2007).

The study demonstrated a nonsignificant difference in scores on the Stress Questionnaire SVF 120, corresponding to the participants’ use of positive coping strategies when encountering a stressful antecedent, at pre-treatment between the treatment group ($M=51.7, SD=13.6$) and the control group ($M=47.9, SD=7.6$; Walach et al., 2007). Thereafter, Walach et al. found a significant difference in post-treatment data ($p=.039$) between the treatment group ($M=57.6, SD=9.8$) and the control group ($M=48.4, SD=10.7$). Lastly, Walach et al. also found a significant difference in follow-up data ($p=.067$) between the treatment group ($M=54.2, SD=11.9$) and the control group ($M=45.9, SD=9.8$). Also note that the treatment group showed an increase in their use of positive coping strategies from pre-treatment to post-treatment and pre-treatment to follow-up (Walach et al., 2007). Walach et al. noted the opposite effect on the negative coping strategies of the participants and control group. Additional qualitative data demonstrated that the participants found that the training was useful, they would recommend the training to others, and they were able to use the meditation practices in their everyday life (Walach et al., 2007). In general, these findings support the use of mindfulness meditation as an effective treatment to use as a technique for stress-management in a high-stress environment.

Another intervention conducted by Kimbrough, Magyari, Langenberg, Chesney, and Berman (2010) assessed the use of MBSR with 27 clients who were child abuse survivors. The sessions for this intervention included eight, weekly 2.5-hour sessions, followed by a 5-hour mindfulness meditation session (Kimbrough et al., 2010). The sessions included sitting meditation, with attention to the present moment (i.e., breath, sound, body sensations, or overall awareness), guided meditation, including positivity towards self and others, progressive body meditation, contemplative walking, and gentle yoga exercises (Kimbrough et al., 2010). Outside of sessions participants were also asked to partake in informal mindful activities of daily living (e.g., mindful eating or mindful communication with others; Kimbrough et al., 2010).

For the purpose of this literature review, the effects of the mindfulness meditative activities on the anxiety of the participants will be discussed (Kimbrough et al., 2010). The participants’ anxiety was measured using the Brief Symptom Inventory (Kimbrough et al., 2010). The mean anxiety score was 1.7 ($SD=0.2$) at baseline and dropped 47% by the end of the 8-week intervention ($M=0.9, SD=0.1$; Kimbrough et al., 2010). This demonstrated a large effect size, according to a Cohen’s $d$ of 1.1 ($F=15.0, p<0.0001$). Note that according to Cohen (1977), Cohen’s $d$ above 0.8 represents a large effect size. To conclude, these findings provide some evidence to support the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation in treating anxiety. Also noteworthy was the importance of having the clients use mindfulness in daily life as well as consistently use relaxation techniques, in order to maintain effects.
Deep breathing. Throughout research relating to relaxation techniques, deep breathing is consistently mentioned as a useful technique. According to Jerath, Crawford, and Barnes (2015), there is a strong, yet complex, relationship between respiration and emotions and, therefore, they suggest that respiratory techniques be used in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and other emotional disorders. Additionally, using deep breathing, among other relaxation techniques, affects emotions and stress at the physiological level (Jerath et al., 2015; Prinsloo, Derman, Lambert, & Laurie, 2013). Moreover, many of the negative effects of anxiety, stress and depression have been shown to be reversed through the use of meditation, relaxation techniques, and breathing techniques (Jerath et al., 2015). Similarly, Fahrion and Norris (1990) conducted a literature review in which they conclude that diaphragmatic breathing should be included in all self-regulatory techniques, where the purpose is to regulate symptoms of anxiety. Jerath et al. went on to note that breathing and meditation techniques are simplistic, easy-to-use, and cost-effective, yet are relatively unused.

Furthermore, Taylor (2001) conducted a literature review which outlined the efficacy of using breathing interventions in the treatment of panic disorder. This treatment typically consists of brief voluntary hyperventilation with the purpose of inducing a mild panic attack, followed by an explanation as to how over-breathing can affect feelings of panic or anxiety. Lastly, breathing retraining is included in the treatment to teach clients how to use deep diaphragmatic breathing to control stress caused by hyperventilation or shallow breathing. Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of this approach and have showed that only 2-3 sessions are needed to decrease frequency of panic attacks (e.g., Salkovskis, Jones, & Clark, as cited in Taylor, 2001). Taylor goes on to note that while the treatment seems to be effective, it is important to explain to the clients that the breathing exercise is designed to remove an unpleasant sensation (i.e., hyperventilation), although the sensation is ultimately harmless.

Moreover, studies have shown that using deep breathing practices while engaging in relaxation techniques is effective. Firstly, a study conducted by Apóstolo and Kolcaba (2009), demonstrated that having psychiatric inpatients with depressive disorders engage in a deep breathing exercise, followed by a guided imagery exercise, successfully decreased their symptoms of anxiety, according to the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21). Secondly, Chen et al. (2009) demonstrated the effectiveness of significantly diminishing symptoms of anxiety in patients with acute schizophrenia using an intervention consisting of progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing. Lastly, a study by Lee et al. (2007) demonstrated a statistically significant decrease in symptoms of anxiety in patients with anxiety disorder after undergoing an 8-week clinical trial based on meditative practices in conjunction with mindful breathing. These studies support the use of deep breathing when facilitating relaxation training, including the skills mentioned above (i.e., cognitive imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, and mindfulness meditation.)
Group Therapy

There have been shown to be benefits of implementing group therapy as an evidence-based, effective, and cost-effective treatment modality (Puskar, et al., 2012), opposed to individual behaviour therapy. For example, a study assessed the cost effectiveness of administering group CBT versus individual CBT in diminishing symptoms of depression and anxiety (Shapiro, Sank, Shaffer, & Donovan, 1982). Forty-four outpatients were administered either group CBT or a process-oriented interpersonal group (Shapiro et al., 1982). All treatments consisted of 10, 1.5-hour weekly sessions, conducted by clinicians with over 5 years’ experience in delivering CBT (Shapiro et al., 1982). The group and individual CBT was composed of relaxation training, cognitive restructuring, and assertion training (Shapiro et al., 1982). The main implications of the outcome of this study was that group CBT was less costly than individual CBT, while both therapies were shown to significantly decrease symptoms of anxiety and depression (Shapiro et al., 1982).

Puskar et al. (2012), describe group therapy as a platform for members to form positive relationships with others experiencing similar symptoms, while gaining from the differing viewpoints and experiences shared within the group. Furthermore, there are two major components of group therapy to consider: content and process (Puskar et al., 2012). According to Puskar et al. it is crucial for the administrator of the group to have an understanding of group content and group processes in order to understand the needs of the group throughout therapy and in order to provide appropriate therapeutic interventions. The following subsections highlight some crucial elements of the content and process delivered in group therapy.

Social activities. Icebreaker activities are often used within group therapy in order to build relationships in the beginning sessions of therapy. It is important for members of the therapy group to feel comfortable, in order to facilitate open communication (DeSilets, 2008). DeSilets (2008) wrote that icebreakers are able to initiate increased interactions, creativity, and energy of participants in a group. This assertion was based on an icebreaker activity, a personality analysis using colours, which was implemented in a gathering among institute employees prior to the opening of the institute (DeSilets, 2008). Additionally, Brue (1985) suggested using social activities to begin workshops in order to create a certain climate in which the group will be able to make more progress, feel more comfortable, and where the administrators have a better understanding of the individuals in the group. Based on this information, icebreaker activities were considered for implementation in this thesis.

Self-monitoring. Cammin-Nowak et al. found that homework compliance, discussed in the following section, is a larger contributor to favourable outcomes of CBT in comparison to using self-monitoring. In contrast, Cohen, Edmunds, Brodman, Benjamin, and Kendall (2013) describe self-monitoring as a prominent clinical technique to use in order to establish collaborative empiricism. Self-monitoring may allow the therapists and the clients to gain a better understanding of the frequency and the intensity of the clients’ anxiety in order to choose the best method of treatment (Cohen et al., 2013). Moreover, the self-monitoring may be used as a basis of comparison from before treatment to after treatment (e.g., intensity and frequency of symptoms of anxiety lowered 50% from before treatment to after treatment; Cohen et al., 2013). Given the above information, self-monitoring techniques were considered for use in this thesis, in conjunction with homework assignments.

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3 Collaborative empiricism refers to both therapists and clients working together using empirically validated methods in order to address the clients’ symptoms or presenting issues (e.g., using data or conducting experiments; Cohen, Edmunds, Brodman, Benjamin, & Kendall, 2013).
**Homework assignments.** A study was conducted in order to evaluate how compliance with homework assignments affected the outcome of group CBT for individuals with depression (Neimeyer, Kazantzis, Kassler, Baker, & Fletcher, 2008). The cognitive group therapy session ran once per week, for 10 weeks (Neimeyer et al., 2008). Neimeyer et al. discovered that willingness of participants to complete homework assignments as well as the individuals’ mastery of skills taught in session was directly linked to homework compliance and reduced symptoms of depression. Furthermore, Westra, Dozois, and Marcus (2007) also studied the relationship between homework completion and CBT outcome in clients with anxiety disorders. The authors found that homework compliance was positively related to overall treatment outcomes, which was mediated by initial changes in symptoms. As well, initial homework compliance was identified as a likely indication that participants would continue to engage in homework throughout the 10 sessions, due to initial symptom changes as a result of the compliance (Westra et al., 2007). In addition, according to Paul (1969), relaxation training is typically taught by allotting half of each therapy hour to the training procedure, while also asking participants to practice each skill between sessions, as homework. The above studies will inform the assignment of homework within the sessions of the manuals created for this thesis.

**Surveys**

Edwards and Thomas (1993) reviewed best practices and practical considerations when creating a survey. This review was relevant to the current thesis in that surveys were constructed in order to obtain valuable feedback on the administrator and participant relaxation training manuals. The first task in constructing a survey is to obtain content information, followed by writing the items themselves, while ensuring clarity, grammar, and appropriate readability level (Edwards and Thomas, 1993). According to Edwards and Thomas (1993), the next step is to consider the rating scales or categorical alternatives. For instance, if all possible instances are not presented in a multiple choice question, then “other” should be presented as an option (Edwards & Thomas, 1993). As well, Likert-format rating scales, including five points are the most commonly used form of rating scale in surveys (Edwards & Thomas, 1993). Typically, the ratings range from a 1, reflecting strongly disagree to a 5, for strongly agree. Furthermore, Edwards and Thomas stressed the importance of including both positively and negatively worded items, in order to avoid response bias. Additionally, in order to determine appropriate length of survey it is important to consider the practicality of the survey, included factors such as the length of time it may take participants to fill out the survey (Edwards & Thomas, 1993). These guidelines were taken into consideration when creating surveys for this thesis.

**Summary**

The research presented above was reviewed with the purpose of determining the most effective and evidence-based practices to reduce symptoms of anxiety in adult male offenders in a federal institution. The rationale for this endeavor was the detrimental effects of anxiety on the mind and body (e.g., Jones et al., 2016), in contrast with the benefits of relaxation training (e.g., Borkovec et al., 1987). Furthermore, the theory surrounding the use of cognitive behavioural techniques, including relaxation training, was discussed in order to inform the reader of the theoretical explanation for the effectiveness of CBT. Cognitive behaviour therapy is based on the notion that thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are interconnected, each affecting one another (Farmer & Chapman, 2016). Thus, relaxation training is seen as effective due to the fact that it encourages behaviours associated with relaxation, which in turn affects the individuals’ thoughts and emotions (Farmer & Chapman, 2016).
Additionally, the effectiveness of CBT (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005), and relaxation training (Bassett et al., 1977) in correctional settings was discussed. Following, based on the literature outlined above, PMR (Kushner et al., 2013; Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009), cognitive imagery (McEvoy & Salsman, 2014; McEvoy et al., 2015; Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009) and mindfulness meditation (Delmonte, 1985; Walach et al., 2007) have been established as effective methods in diminishing symptoms of anxiety in non-offender populations. For this reason, the use of these techniques is hypothesized to be effective in the treatment of anxiety in offenders. Next, the cost-effectiveness and efficacy in the use of group-based CBT was presented (Puskar, et al., 2012). Furthermore, the use of social activities (Brue, 1985), self-monitoring (Cohen et al., 2013), and homework assignments (Neimeyer et al., 2008), when administering group therapy was presented. Lastly, findings regarding the creation of surveys were reviewed, as means of obtaining feedback on the manuals to be created in this thesis (Edwards & Thomas, 1993).

In conclusion, this research supports the hypothesis presented in Chapter I, that the development of manuals to teach relaxation techniques (i.e., progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation) to offenders in a group therapy setting will later enable correctional staff to assist offenders to diminish their symptoms of anxiety. As mentioned, the research supported each of the three relaxation skills in diminishing symptoms of anxiety. As well, support was demonstrated for the use of relaxation training and group CBT with offender populations. However, as there is insufficient research that integrates all three skills of PMR, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation to treat this population, this thesis will design a manual to provide the needed synthesis, as a treatment for offenders. As well, these three relaxation training skills were not used on their own, (e.g., without CBT), to treat anxiety in offender populations. Therefore, this thesis manual may also make future studies possible, which could fill the gap in the research pertaining to the use of these three relaxation training techniques, as a stand-alone treatment for offenders.

Word Count: 5914
Chapter III: Method

Participants

The training manual was created for participants including adult (i.e., 18 years and older) male offenders in a federal institution. These offenders were part of a specialized intermediate mental health unit within the institution, who had been identified as requiring more intensive mental health services than the regular population. However, the participants could be inclusive of a wide range of individuals, since relaxation techniques can be applicable for a variation of diagnoses and situations. Specifically, the participants of this relaxation training program would be those who report symptoms of anxiety and/or have difficulty with achieving relaxation. Exclusion criteria would include individuals with a reading level below grade 8, as identified in the offender’s file. The offender manual was created for those with an 8th grade reading level, which was reviewed by a classroom teacher who had been working in a federal institution for 29 years (G. Hill, personal communication, 2016-11-01).

Selection procedures and consent. Six to eight offenders should be referred to the group therapy program by their individual mental health worker, based on how the program may meet the needs of the client. The individual mental health worker may refer the inmate to the relaxation program, should the professional identify needs such as experiencing anxiety or difficulty with relaxation. Also, the facilitators of the relaxation training should obtain consent from each participant, prior to starting the program. During consent procedures, the facilitator should explain that participation in the group is voluntary, as well as explain the potential benefits and risks associated with participation. Overall, all typical consent procedures used within the institution should apply. Note that no formal consent procedures were required in the creation of the training manuals, as the author did not collect any formal evaluative data with human participants.

Program Facilitators

The program described in the manual should be administered by one or two correctional professionals in the psychology field. These professionals should possess a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree related to the field of psychology. Experience in the field of psychology, especially CBT, may be an asset in the administration of the relaxation program. Furthermore, the program facilitator should possess skills regarding building rapport with clients and ability to accurately identify the needs of the clients. The correctional staff members should also be able to facilitate group discussions throughout the group program and minimize actual or potential conflicts and/or barriers within the group. However, the manual was designed to be easily implemented by a range of professionals in the field.

Design

The relaxation manual was created as an applied thesis in partial fulfillment of the Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology program. The author was on a 14-week placement at a minimum/medium multi-level security federal institution when the manual was constructed. The purpose of the manual was to provide agency staff with an easy-to-use and evidence-based practice in order to target symptoms of anxiety in the offender population, including offenders in an intermediate level mental health unit. This specialized unit had only been in operation for just over a year (since October 5, 2015) and was in the process of establishing effective treatment programs for the offenders (J. Smith, personal communication, October 21, 2016). Due to time constraints, the author was unable to implement the procedures outlined in the manuals, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment; however, the manuals were created based on
empirical evidence (Chapter II) and informal input from mental health correctional staff members (Appendices A to C).

Moreover, the manuals were intended to teach the participants skills relating to relaxation, (i.e., PMR, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation) as a stand-alone treatment of symptoms of anxiety. Each relaxation skill was to be taught to offenders over the eight sessions outlined in the manuals. Additionally, the program was designed to be offered for 1-hour per week, over a 10-week period; however, modifications may be required in order to ensure practicality. In addition to the eight sessions, homework assignments should be given to the participants each week to reinforce learning in session, as outlined in the manuals. For example, if the participants were taught to use 16 muscle group PMR in session, they would be asked to use this skill as homework, before the following session.

**Research design.** In order for the program facilitators to informally evaluate the effectiveness of the relaxation program, the facilitator’s manual includes instructions on using a pretest-posttest design. The rationale behind this is to allow the facilitators to compare the participants’ experience of symptoms of anxiety before and after the relaxation training, as determined by their scores obtained on the subjective units of distress scale (SUDS; Appendix D; Wolpe, 1969). The dependent variable in this case would be the anxiety level of the participants and the independent variable would be the relaxation training.

**Setting and Apparatus**

The group therapy sessions should take place in a programs room in the intermediate level mental health care unit within the institution, or in a programs room throughout the institution. The room should contain plastic or cushioned chairs for each participant and for both facilitators, based on the availability. Note that cushioned chairs would be preferable, in order to encourage relaxation. Furthermore, chairs should be angled towards each other to form a circle, for the purpose of encouraging an inclusive environment. Next, there should be a whiteboard in the room, when possible. This may be used for brainstorming activities, involving the whole group. Furthermore, the door should be closed in order to ensure minimization of loud noises or distractions. Lastly, all security measures must be followed according to the security level of the institution, including the use of personal portable alarms.

**Materials**

Materials to be used in this program include the relaxation training manuals for each facilitator and for each offender, which were developed by the Behavioural Psychology placement student. The manual outlines how each session should be administered, including psycho-education regarding the participants’ symptoms of anxiety, psycho-education regarding relaxation techniques, relaxation training, and discussion surrounding homework assignments. As mentioned, homework assignments include relaxation exercises taught in session. Other required materials for the therapy sessions include a notepad for the therapist to record any pertinent information, as identified by the therapist. Lastly, both the therapist and participants require a writing utensil, which should be provided by the facilitators and collected at the end of the session.
Measures

SUDS. The measure that should be used to collect informal pre- and post-data when the program is being administered is the SUDS (Wolpe, 1969). The SUDS, shown in Appendix D, is designed to teach the participants to monitor their level of anxiety before and after each session. This will provide both the participants and the program facilitators with a reference point from which to determine whether or not the training in a given session is affecting the anxiety levels of the participants. This measure was chosen based on its simplicity to implement. In addition, a number of studies have demonstrated the validity of the SUDS (e.g., Thyer, Papsdorf, & Vallecorsa, 1984; Bae, Kim, & Park, 2008; Kaplan, Smith, & Coons, 1995). Firstly, a study by Thyer et al. was conducted in order to demonstrate the validity of the SUDS by determining whether or not there was a relationship between the SUDS scores and physiological symptoms of anxiety (i.e., constriction of peripheral blood vessels, autonomic arousal, and heart rate). The results demonstrated a significant correlation between the SUDS scores and the physiological indices of anxiety, which supported the continued use of the SUDS in clinical assessment (Thyer et al., 1984).

Secondly, Bae et al. (2008) conducted a study with 61 adolescent patients undergoing eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EDMR) in order to target depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. SUDS scores were obtained before and after each session and were compared with the scores obtained on the Symptom Checklist-90-Revised – the Positive Symptoms of Distress Index (PSDI of SCL-90-R), Impact of Event Scale – Revised (IES-R), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), State and Trait Anxiety Inventory (SAI and TAI), and the Clinical Global Impression – Change Scale (CGI-C; Bae et al., 2008). Bae et al. noted that some scales were not based on a normal distribution; therefore, nonparametric tests were used to conduct statistical analyses. The mean SUDS score, on a scale of 1 to 10, was 7.86 (SD=3.23) at the beginning of session 1 and was 5.61 (SD = 3.23) at the end of the session (Bae et al., 2008). Next, the mean score was 7.18 (SD=2.26) at the beginning of the second session and was 4.34 (SD=2.91) at the end of the session (Bae et al., 2008). Lastly, the mean score was 8.24 at the beginning of the third session and lowered to 4.51 (SD=2.83) at the end (Bae et al., 2008).

Convergent validity was demonstrated by a significant correlation in initial first session scores between the SUDS and BDI (Spearman rho=.28, p<.05) and SUDS and SAI (Spearman rho=.31, p<.05; Bae et al., 2008). This indicated that the SUDS scores are related to state anxiety and depression; however, there was no significant correlation with the SUDS rating and trait anxiety (Spearman rho= -.21, p=.05; Bae et al., 2008). This demonstrates discriminative validity, further supported by the lack of correlation between the scores and age, level of education, and income of the participants (Bae et al., 2008). Furthermore, modest predictive validity was demonstrated as there was a significant correlation between the SUDS score of the first session and the CGI-C score at the end of the session (Spearman rho=.32, p<.05; Bae et al., 2008). Next, moderate concurrent validity with level of symptomatic distress was shown in the correlation between the initial first session ratings on the SUDS and the PSDI (Spearman rho=.50, p<.001; Bae et al., 2008). Further supported by the significant correlation between the initial SUDS scores and the IES-R (Spearman rho=.46, p=.001), which measures level of distress relating to stressful or traumatic events (Bae et al., 2008). According to Bae et al., these findings provide preliminary and promising evidence to support the validity of the SUDS.

In conclusion, the SUDS is intended to be used within sessions and for homework assignments in order to obtain informal results as to the effectiveness of the relaxation techniques, for each individual. The validity of the measure has been demonstrated; however, further investigation of the psychometric properties is needed, such as reliability (Bae et al., 2008).
2008). Overall, this measure was chosen based on its simplicity and short amount of time required to complete it (i.e., less than 1 minute).

**Satisfaction surveys.** Additionally, satisfaction surveys, which are included at the back of the manuals, are available for both the facilitators and participants to fill out after completion of the relaxation training program. This allows the facilitators to make future changes to the manual that may increase the satisfaction of the mental health professionals and inmates.

**Procedures**

Please view a brief outline of the training manuals in Appendix E. Both the facilitator training manual and the participant training manual follow a similar outline. This organization of both training manuals was designed to allow the participants to easily follow along with the facilitators during each session of the relaxation training.

**Facilitator relaxation training manual.** The facilitator training manual (Appendix F) includes four sections. Firstly, there is an introduction and literature review. The introduction section provides a brief overview of the purpose, rationale, and objectives of the training manuals. Also, the introduction provides an overview of the contents of the manual. Next, the literature review includes relevant research that guided the creation of the relaxation program. In addition, the introductory section includes a description of the target participants and facilitators. Then, the needed setting, apparatus, and materials are presented. Lastly, the measure and data collection procedures are outlined for the facilitators.

The second section consists of a session by session guide to administering the relaxation program to the target population, throughout all eight, 1-hour sessions. Each session follows a similar format, including 8 steps. The sessions generally include 1) introductions, 2) social activity, 3) discussion regarding homework from the previous week, 4) psycho-education of given topic, 5) use of SUDS, 6) practicing relaxation technique, 7) use of SUDS, and 8) assignment of homework for the following week. Introductions include each member of the group greeting one another, introducing themselves, and/or sharing information about themselves. Second, the social activities involve a prepared game or activity for the purpose of reinforcing relationships between the members of the group as well as with the facilitators. This should create a more therapeutic environment. Next, discussions regarding homework and experiences from the previous week should be discussed. Members should all be encouraged to participate in this discussion in order to identify and meet the needs of each group member. The fourth component, psycho-education, will be presented by the group facilitators in a way that is logical and comprehensive for the participants. Then, the SUDS will be used by the participants before and after practicing the given relaxation technique. Results and changes in the SUDS ratings of the participants will be discussed as a group. The last component, assignment of homework, will be explained by the facilitators, before ending the session.

Thirdly, there will be references. The references will include all citations used throughout the manual. Further, additional resources, such as key articles or clinical materials, will be provided, should the facilitators wish to access other sources related to administering group therapy or relaxation training. Facilitators are encouraged to explore the research presented in this section in order to gain knowledge regarding the subject matter that they will be teaching to their clients.

The last section includes a facilitator survey in order to evaluate how the program and manual met the needs of the facilitator. As previously mentioned, these surveys can be used, in future, to make appropriate improvements and changes to the manuals, based on the feedback. The facilitators should also review the surveys from the participants (i.e., section 3 of participant...
In order to make additional improvements and changes. Furthermore, an additional resource was included for the program facilitators, at the back of the training manual. The author created a CD which contained an audio-tape of the three skills taught in the relaxation training sessions. The purpose of this addition to the manual was to provide the program facilitators and the participants with a lasting resource which they could use to lend to offenders in the group, to become more familiar with the skills, or to relax. The CD was included as part of the facilitator training manual, opposed to the participant training manual in order to ensure the security guidelines of the institution were met.

**Participant relaxation training manual.** Following similar guidelines as the facilitator training manual, the participant training manual (Appendix I) includes two sections. The first section consists of an introduction and key points for the participants to review before beginning relaxation training. Then, the second session includes a session-by-session guide including psycho-education of what is being taught and instructions on how to use the relaxation skills, from session 1 to 8. Find a more detailed description of the sessions in the section above.

**Supporting Information**

In addition to the literature review presented in Chapter II, a number of correctional mental health professionals and offenders were consulted for input regarding relaxation training. The modality through which input was obtained included the questionnaires shown in Appendix A, Appendix B, and personal communication interactions, summarized in Appendix C. These questionnaires were created by the author of this thesis. Firstly, the author administered a questionnaire in order to gain insight regarding the current use of relaxation techniques and the perceived usefulness of the training manual, among mental health professionals in federal institutions (see Appendix A). Secondly, the author administered a survey in order to determine the effectiveness of meditation for inmates within the institution where the Behavioural Psychology student was completing placement, as there were meditation sessions being held in the institution chapel each week (Appendix B). Lastly a summary of the findings, as a result of various personal communications, is discussed (Appendix C). The purpose, participants, measure, and administration procedures of the surveys are discussed in the following sections and the results will be discussed in the following chapter (Chapter IV: Results).

**Treatment Needs Questionnaire.** The purpose of the Treatment Needs Questionnaire was to gain insight into the perceived usefulness of the proposed training manuals. In addition, the questions asked enabled the author to determine which relaxation skills that the professionals find the most useful in diminishing anxiety in their clients. This provided evidence to support the usefulness of certain relaxation techniques, which was taken into account when the participant and facilitator manuals were created.

Firstly, Appendix A: Treatment Needs Survey was delivered to numerous mental health professionals in federal institutions across two different regions. Responses were received from 22 mental health professionals, from six federal institutions. These included seven psychologists, seven behavioural science technologists, three psychology doctoral interns, two psycho-educators, one aboriginal liaison officer, one correctional programs officer, and one social worker.

The questionnaire included seven questions (Appendix A). The first four questions were multiple-choice questions, the fifth question was a short-answer question, the sixth question was a rating scale questions, and the last question was open ended. Additionally, the questionnaires were delivered to the participants via email. The participants were asked to fill in their answers and send an email back to the author, at their earliest convenience. This enabled an efficient
method of communication, as the questionnaire only took participants approx. 2 minutes to complete.

**Inmate Meditation Questionnaire.** The purpose of the Inmate Meditation Questionnaire was to obtain information regarding the usefulness of practicing meditation for inmates. This provided insight into the reasons why the inmates chose to practice meditation and in what ways it had helped them, if any. In addition, the offenders were asked to rate how useful they would find a relaxation program, which demonstrated an interest in learning relaxation techniques. The participants included three offenders. These offenders were participants in weekly meditation sessions, held in the prison chapel. Each participant had already been practicing meditation for a minimum of six months.

The measure consisted of seven questions (Appendix B). The first question was a short-answer, followed by five multiple choice questions. Lastly, was one rating-scale question. In order to administer the questionnaire, the author attended and participated in the one-hour meditation session. Following the session, each of the three participants were met with individually. This took place in the meditation area in the chapel, each on their own plastic chair. The questions were asked orally and the placement student wrote down each answer, word for word. The questionnaire took approximately 5 minutes to complete.

**Personal communications.** As a last source of supporting information, five mental health professionals within federal institutions were consulted. The professionals within the federal institution for which this thesis was created included the chief of psychology and psycho-educator. Professionals from other institutions included chief of mental health services, behavioural technologist, and victim services officer. A summary of these personal communications is presented in Appendix C. Overall the correctional staff members indicated that creating a relaxation training manual was a worthy endeavor. The mental health professionals also indicated that they found relaxation training effective and that they use it in their own clinical practice. Further, the personal communications gave insight into which relaxation techniques were most useful. Note that deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, and mindfulness meditation were all identified. This provides further support for the usefulness of the training manuals, as well as the specific skills described in the literature review.

**Participant and Facilitator Feedback on Manuals**

In addition to the preliminary data presented above, two mental health professionals were asked for input regarding the relaxation training manuals, upon completion of the first drafts. Input was obtained by way of one-on-one meetings between the professionals and the placement student. Based on this feedback, the placement student was able to make applicable adjustments to both the facilitator and participant manuals. These findings will be presented in the following chapter.
Chapter IV: Results

Supporting Information

Treatment Needs Questionnaire. The results of the Treatment needs questionnaire, described in Chapter III, are presented in Table 1 below. As shown in question 1, 95.95% of participants indicated that they believed that at least one of their current clients could benefit from a relaxation training program. The main finding in question 2 was that 69.56% of participants felt that 61% or more of their current clients could benefit from a relaxation training program. Next, 95.65% of participants indicated that they currently use relaxation training as one of their therapeutic tools. Question 5 identified deep breathing (45.45%), progressive muscle relaxation (22.73%), and visualization (13.64%) as the most used techniques, of which deep breathing was indicated as the most useful technique. Additionally, the majority of participants (i.e., 73.91%) rated the usefulness of the proposed relaxation training manual at 4 or above on a scale of 1 to 5 in question 6 of the questionnaire, where 1 indicated not very useful and 5 indicated very useful.

Table 1
Responses to Treatment Needs Questionnaire (Q1 – Q6)

Q1. Do you think any of your current clients might benefit from a relaxation training program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. What percentage of your clients might benefit from a relaxation training program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% - 20%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21% - 40%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41% - 60%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61% - 80%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81% - 100%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. Do you use relaxation training as one of your current therapeutic tools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4. If you marked yes above, which specific relaxation skills do you teach to your clients?45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep breathing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive muscle relaxation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>77.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualization</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5. If you identified relaxation skills above, please indicate which skill you find the most useful and effective, in your experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep breathing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive muscle relaxation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q6. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not very useful and 5 being very useful, please indicate how useful a relaxation training program would be within the correctional facility.

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4 For Q4 and Q5 percentages are calculating by dividing by 22 instead of 23, because one of the respondents did not mark Yes to the question above, nor did they indicate any relaxation skills for the current question.

5 Note that for this question participants were asked to select each response that applied to them. Therefore, each participant may have indicated multiple answers.
Lastly, the participants were asked to leave any additional comments. These comments are presented in Table 2 below. Overall, the comments supported the creation of the relaxation training manual. These comments included the need for a compilation of materials to deliver relaxation training, the usefulness of relaxation for staff, as well as clients, and the usefulness of such a manual in a number of institutions. However, participants also included concerns such as ensuring that the participants practice the skills taught in session in order to reinforce learning. As well, one participant indicated that relaxation techniques may not be useful for individuals with vulnerable psychological structures, such as psychosis.

Table 2
*Responses to Treatment Needs Questionnaire (Q7)*

Q7. Please leave any additional comments.

It’s always good to refresh skills. If staff are relaxed, then so tends to be interactions with clients.

What a fantastic idea that could be implemented across different sites and institutions. Not only would this be beneficial for clients, the staff could utilize many of the skills to manage their stress and burnout.

Like coping mechanisms, relaxation training is only effective with practice. So if the client does not practice it often, it is less likely to benefit them; but rather bring more frustration.

I think it’s important to consider the psychological structure beyond the difficulties brought up by the patient. A more fragile structure (psychotic per say) is often more at risk of decomposition when using relaxation strategies.

Although these skills are frequently taught to and reviewed with offenders, a comprehensive training package of skills would be useful for clinicians to have at the ready, and helpful, at least to some degree, for most offenders.

I don’t know neither which theoretical model shows relaxation nor which skills might have been taught before and after this tool. Therefore, it is difficult for me to say more.  

Any new techniques/ideas are welcome and would provide me with a variety of things to offer.

---

6 This response is translated from French.
In summary, the results of the Treatment Needs Questionnaire indicate that the mental health professionals within the incarcerated environment would find a relaxation training manual very useful. In addition, the questionnaire provided support for the specific relaxation techniques to be included in the manual (i.e. deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, and mindfulness meditation). This information was used in order to confirm that the proposed thesis project would be used by professionals in the field and aided the placement student in selecting the relaxation techniques to include in the manuals.

**Inmate Meditation Questionnaire.** The results of the Inmate Meditation Questionnaire are presented in Table 3, below. Firstly, the participants indicated that their reasons for attending meditation session included having difficulty with sleeping, emotion regulation, and concentration. Next, all participants disclosed that relaxation had helped them in some way. Question 3 identified relaxation and stress management as the most popular ways in which relaxation had helped the three participants (i.e. 100%). Furthermore, 2 out of 3 participants said that they used meditation outside of the weekly session. Next, in question 5 two of the three participants said that they used other relaxation techniques, including deep breathing and sweat lodges. Lastly, 100% of participants said that they would find a relaxation training program useful to them and 100% rated the usefulness of a relaxation training program as 4 or above out of 5, where 1 indicated *not very useful* and 5 indicated *very useful*.

Table 3
*Responses to Inmate Meditation Questionnaire (Q1 – Q7)*

Q1. Please explain why you choose to attend meditation session.

I have a hard time sleeping at night.

I used to get angry at everything and have a hard time staying calm.

I have difficulty concentrating.

Q2. Do you feel as though relaxation has helped you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3. Circle the following ways in which meditation has helped you?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To relax</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To manage stress</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To sleep</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel happier</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel confident</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To concentrate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. Do you use meditation as a skill outside of weekly meditation sessions?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5. What other skills do you use in order to relax?  

I don’t use any other skills.  
I use deep breathing.  
I participate in sweat lodges, once per month.  

Q6. Would you find a relaxation group, in which you are taught to use different relaxation skills useful?  

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that for this question participants were asked to select each response that applied to them. Therefore, each participant may have indicated multiple answers.
Q7. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning *not useful* and 5 meaning *very useful*, how useful would you find a relaxation training program?

<p>| | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. All responses were translated from French.*

Overall, while the sample size of this survey was small, the results indicated that the inmates would find a relaxation training program useful to them. In addition, the clients seemed motivated to not only learn relaxation techniques, but practice them on their own time as well.

**Feedback from Agency Staff**

The first draft of the facilitator manual was reviewed by two agency staff members. The staff members included one psycho-educator and one psychologist working within the intermediate level mental health care unit at the institution. Overall, both mental health care professionals expressed their belief that the manual was well done and would be very useful within the unit. Both indicated that the detail used in the session-specific guide had exceeded their expectations and they found that the guide would meet their needs in facilitating the relaxation training group. Lastly, the overall content and curriculum used within the manuals was deemed appropriate for the intended population.

However, the staff also indicated that there were some minor issues with the structure of the weekly sessions. It was thought that the structure of the sessions went against the norm of therapy session structure. Next, one professional indicated that it may be useful to make the examples given within the manuals more relevant to the target population (i.e. adult male inmates). Therefore, in order to optimize the session structure and content of the manuals, it was recommended that the homework review section preceded the topic discussion sections and that the case study examples were made more applicable to the lives of the offenders.

**Changes to Manual**

The agency feedback, described above, was used in order to make changes to the facilitator and, in turn, the participant manual. While the changes were relatively minor, they contributed to the overall usefulness of the manuals. Firstly, the homework review part of the sessions was changed to be before the topic discussion. Secondly, the examples given throughout the manuals were changed to be more pertinent to life as an offender. Other changes were made after input from the college supervisor of the placement student. After making major decisions regarding the thesis project, these changes primarily included correcting grammatical errors and ensuring APA formatting. In sum, it should be noted that no major changes were made to the content or criteria within the manuals.

**Final Products**

The permanent product, in the form of the training manuals, provided the psychology department of the institution with an easy-to-use resource for implementation of an evidence-based treatment to target symptoms of anxiety. The manuals not only included the facilitator
manual (Appendix F), but also a participant manual (Appendix G), which allows participants to follow along with their session-by-session guide. The facilitator manual includes an introductory section, a session-by-session guide, key resources and references, and consumer satisfaction surveys for both the facilitators and the participants to fill out. These manuals were specifically designed to be used by adult male offenders with intermediate mental health needs. These final products served their purpose of providing the staff at the institution with an easy to use empirical method of service delivery for offenders to manage their symptoms of anxiety.
Chapter V: Discussion

Thesis Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to provide mental health staff within an intermediate mental health care unit at a federal institution with a relaxation program to later target symptoms of anxiety in their clients. The research outlined in the literature review of this thesis supports the use of relaxation training in treating symptoms of anxiety. In addition, the relaxation techniques (i.e. PMR, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation) have been shown to be effective in working with a range of populations with difficulty pertaining to anxiety and/or with obtaining relaxation. Based on this research, it was hypothesized that developing a treatment manual that uses PMR, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation would have the potential, in future, to effectively diminish symptoms of anxiety in adult male offenders. The hypothesis was further supported by preliminary data, presented in Chapter IV: Results, including feedback and suggestions given by mental health professionals and by offenders. As discussed in further detail in Chapter IV, these data were collected by the Treatment Needs Questionnaire, the Inmate Meditation Questionnaire, and feedback from mental health care staff.

The manuals sought to provide the staff members with an easy-to-use and evidence-based resource. Firstly, the facilitator relaxation training manual includes an introductions section, a session guide, a list of key resources, and a survey for data collection. Second, the participant relaxation training manual includes an introductory section and a session guide, enabling the participants to easily follow along with the facilitator.

The content and structure of the manuals were based on several resources. For example, the relaxation skills (i.e., deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation) were selected based on the empirical evidence to support their effectiveness, input from correctional staff, and input from offenders at the institution. Additionally, the theoretical foundation of both manuals was based on the central tenets of cognitive behaviour therapy. These core tenets are that behaviours influence thoughts and feelings and that thoughts influence behaviours and feelings (Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006). Lastly, the structure of the manuals was designed by incorporating these main concepts into the group sessions. These components are discussed in the Group Therapy section of Chapter II: Literature Review. Overall, the goal was to create an evidence-based relaxation training resource, using best practices in the field of psychology.

Strengths

This thesis was created based on empirical evidence, outlined in the literature review, in order to ensure the use of best practices. The literature review guided the creation of the thesis, including the evidence to support the use of the specific relaxation training skills, the inclusion of certain aspects of group therapy sessions, and information on treating mental health in an incarcerated population. Further, many mental health professionals were consulted in order to determine which relaxation skills they found the most useful in their experience in the field. The use of best practices and the empirical basis of this thesis is considered a core strength.

Another strength of this thesis is the detail included in the manuals. Explicit details and instructions were included in the manual in order to allow easy use of the resource by a number of professionals in the field of psychology. This strength was noted by the mental health staff at the institution and was one of the original goals in creating the relaxation training manuals.

A final strength of the overall thesis project is the creation of a permanent product for the staff at the institution. The staff members expressed their need for a relaxation training manual which they could use in the correctional environment and that was designed for an offender
population. Both the facilitator and the participant manuals provided the staff with a resource that met their needs.

**Limitations and Challenges**

One limitation of creating the manual was that it was not be able to be implemented due to time constraints. For this reason, no formal clinical data were collected. The manual needs to be formally tested beyond the informal feedback received from the agency staff. Moreover, the use of the SUDS throughout the sessions may be considered a limitation in that further research must be conducted to establish the validity and reliability of this measure. The measure also uses subjective data, based on the participants’ view of their current level of distress. Should the therapists wish to empirically evaluate the effectiveness of the manuals and the skills training, it is suggested that they incorporate additional methods of formal evaluation and data collection.

Another limitation of this thesis project included the lack of established research in using the specific relaxation techniques together when treating offender populations. As a result of this, during the creation of this thesis, the author reviewed the existing research indicating the effectiveness of using each of the relaxation techniques with the general population, and when available, with a population of adult male offenders. Furthermore, there were many ethical concerns to be aware of relating to working with offenders. It is important to consider ethical and safety concerns when administering services to this clientele, and in turn, also when creating a guide to service implementation. In order to target this issue, clear boundaries should be in place during therapy sessions and any safety concerns of the offenders should be addressed accordingly.

**Multilevel Challenges to Service Implementation**

Working in a correctional environment presents a number of challenges pertaining to the clients, programs, organization, and society. The following are some examples of multilevel challenges which presented themselves in the creation of this thesis.

**Client level.** The initial ‘client’ in the development of the relaxation training thesis and manuals was the Chief of Psychology at the institution, who also acted as the coordinator within the intermediate mental health care unit. Working with this client presented a challenge in that they had a lack of knowledge of the Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology program. This program is not offered in the province in which the placement was completed; therefore, it was necessary to familiarize him with the program. The clients who will be the ultimate users of the participant training manual, the inmates in the specialized mental health unit, presented a different type of challenge, given their intermediate level of mental health needs. It was pertinent for the placement student to keep this consideration at the forefront when creating the participant manual.

**Program level.** At the program level, or in the development of the relaxation training manuals, there presented challenges with regards to the training of other staff members. While all staff were motivated and accepting throughout the creation of the thesis project, most had a limited background in behavioural training. For example, the Behaviour Science Technician position is not offered within corrections in the region where the placement took place. In light of the diverse educational backgrounds of the staff, it was especially important that there be a sharing of knowledge and ideas between placement student and staff members was important. However overall, behavioural approaches seemed to be widely accepted by the intervention team.
Another concern at the program level, in the future, might relate to the time constraints of the professionals working at the institution. The manual was designed to be delivered in its entirety from session 1 to session 8, using approximately 1.5 hours per session, before adding breaks, in order to systematically develop pre-requisite skills in logical sequence. The mental health professionals may find it difficult to add this new skills training manual to their weekly schedule, based on their already busy schedules.

**Organization level.** A challenge encountered at the organizational level was completing research needed for the development of the manuals and maintaining communication with those outside of the institution. For security reasons, there is limited internet access for staff members within the institution. This inhibited completion of research while at placement and checking emails sent to the placement student’s school email. In contrast, reviewing files of the target clients was only able to be completed while on site. This required increased organization and time management from the placement student.

Also, there may be the additional challenge in the future for the mental health professionals to gain permission to dedicate time and resources to the implementation of this manual. Since the larger correctional agency is a government agency, the services delivered by the front-line staff must align with the priorities of the agency as a whole. It is the hope that the research supporting the use of the methods outlined in the facilitator and participant manuals will offer sufficient rationales for the organization to support the front-line staff in later implementing the relaxation training group.

**Societal level.** Much of society, as a whole, associates a certain stigma with offenders. The placement student often encountered individuals within society that were confused as to the reason why professionals chose to work in this type of environment, with this type of clientele. Some people within society question why offenders seemingly receive so many services, including in mental health, while some individuals in need, who have not committed crimes, receive so few. Of course, the rationale behind providing services to these individuals is to decrease recidivism rates, which is well supported in studies evaluating the relationship between service delivery and rates of recidivism. Ultimately providing these mental health services increases the safety and security of society.

**Contribution to the Behavioural Psychology Field**

This thesis was designed to address the gap in the literature pertaining to the use of relaxation training, as a stand-alone treatment (e.g. without CBT), for offenders who experience symptoms of anxiety. Moreover, there seemed to be insufficient research showing the effectiveness of integrating all three relaxation skills (i.e. PMR, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation) in treating anxiety in this population. This evidence-based thesis contributes to research in the field of behavioural psychology and provides the potential for future formal evaluation of the methods outlined in the relaxation manuals, as a stand-alone treatment for offenders with symptoms of anxiety.

In addition, the overall goal behind the creation of the manuals corresponds with the basic principles behind the field of behavioural psychology. Both the purpose of manuals and the purpose of field of psychology is to improve the quality of life of clients. The manuals, more specifically, are hypothesized to offer a means to effectively diminish symptoms of anxiety in adult male offenders in the future.
Practical Applications and Recommendations for Future Research

The impact of this training manual was to provide the institution with a potentially effective method of treatment for offenders with anxiety, which is a prevalent issue in offender populations, according to Beaudette (2014). Implementing the most effective methods of treatment within a government organization is also a widely-valued endeavor.

Furthermore, future research should be conducted to verify whether the intervention outlined in this manual and informally reviewed by agency staff can be shown in a larger study, that is more rigorously evaluated, to be effective in treating anxious offenders in an incarcerated environment. In the larger study, it is suggested that the researchers adhere to the methods outlined in this thesis, while also evaluating the efficacy of the group sessions for both the facilitators and offenders. The overall goal of the study would be to evaluate the validity and the effectiveness of using the procedures to diminish symptoms of anxiety in offenders. It is further suggested that in order to reach this goal, the researchers should incorporate a valid self-report measures of anxiety, quality of life, and data on institutional misconducts. The purpose of the self-report measure would be to gain insight into how the relaxation training may affect certain cognitions and behaviours in the participants, which are associated with anxiety (e.g. hours of sleep per night).

To conclude, the manual’s curriculum should be regarded as a first draft, since it has not been formally tested to date. Therefore, upon completion of future research, it is suggested that the researchers incorporate changes into the curriculum in order to improve the manuals. Improvements may be made in the structure and content of the manuals to facilitate easier comprehension and generalization of the relaxation skills being taught.
References


Appendices
Appendix A: Treatment Needs Questionnaire

Dear mental health professionals,

I am a fourth year behavioural psychology student at St. Lawrence College in Ontario. I am currently on a 14-week placement at FTC and am working on my thesis. My thesis involves creating a treatment manual for offenders who experience difficulty with symptoms of anxiety or difficulty in achieving relaxation.

I have created a questionnaire, with the purpose of obtaining your input regarding the proposed relaxation training manual. Your experience and expertise would be greatly appreciated.

Please answer the following questions and return the completed survey to me via email, at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time.

Zyeleika A. McTague
Placement Student/Stagiaire
Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology (Hons.) Candidate
1. Do you think any of your current clients may be able to benefit from a relaxation training program? Circle yes or no.
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. What percentage of your clients do you think might benefit from a relaxation training program? Circle one of the following options.
   a. 0% - 20%
   b. 21% - 40%
   c. 41% - 60%
   d. 61% - 80%
   e. 81% - 100%

3. Do you use relaxation training as one of your current therapeutic tools? Circle yes or no.
   a. Yes.
   b. No.

4. If you marked yes above, which specific relaxation skills do you teach to your clients? Circle each answer that applies.
   a. Deep breathing.
   b. Progressive Muscle Relaxation.
   c. Meditation.
   d. Visualization.
   e. Other (specify): ___________________________

5. If you identified relaxation skills above, which relaxation skill do you find the most useful and effective, in your experience? Please name one relaxation technique on the line below.
   __________________________________________

6. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being, not very useful and 5 being, very useful, please indicate how useful a relaxation training program would be within the correctional facility. Circle one of the numbers below.
   1    2    3    4    5

7. Please leave any additional comments:
Appendix B: Inmate Meditation Questionnaire

1. Please explain why you choose to attend meditation sessions.

2. Do you feel as though practicing meditation has helped you? Please circle yes or no.
   a. Yes.
   b. No.

3. Circle the following ways in which meditation has helped you:
   a. To relax
   b. To manage stress and/or anxiety
   c. To get to sleep at night
   d. To feel happier
   e. To feel more confident
   f. To be able to concentrate
   g. Other (specify): ___________________________

4. Do you use anxiety as a skill outside of the weekly meditation sessions? Circle yes or no.
   a. Yes.
   b. No.

5. What other skills do you use in order to relax? Circle those that apply.
   a. Deep breathing.
   b. Progressive Muscle Relaxation.
   c. Meditation.
   d. Visualization.
   e. Other (specify): ___________________________

6. Would you find a relaxation group, in which you are taught to use different relaxation skills, helpful? Circle yes or no.
   a. Yes.
   b. No.

7. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being, not very useful and 5 being, very useful, please indicate how useful you find meditation. Circle one of the numbers below.

   1  2  3  4  5
Appendix C: Summary of Personal Communications with Agency Staff

1. F. Smith\(^8\), Chief of Psychology (2016-10-07)

Mr. Smith was consulted in order to determine the most pressing needs within the psychology department of the institution, in which the placement student was working. Smith described the new mental health unit for offenders with intermediate mental health needs, which had opened on October 5, 2015. The intervention team assigned to the unit were still in the process of developing and offering their clients a number of mental health services. Mr. Smith described the clients as having a wide range of diagnoses, including schizophrenia, substance abuse disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, schizotypic personality disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder. Many of the clients also had a history of suicidal ideation, self-harm, or attempted suicide(s). The Behavioural Psychology placement student then presented Mr. Smith with a number of options for a manual topic, to which Mr. Smith quickly identified relaxation as a priority within the mental health unit. Mr. Smith added that the majority of the clients in the specialized unit would benefit from such a program.

2. G. Black, Chief of Mental Health Services (2016-10-31)

Ms. Black was asked to describe her opinion of relaxation training, in her experience as the Chief of Mental Health Services at a federal institution. Black went on to note, via email, that she valued the use of relaxation training, and used it in practice regularly. Ms. Black indicated her belief that relaxation training could be beneficial to a wide range of clients. She also indicated that it could be very useful for mental health professionals to have a comprehensive manual in order to deliver services relating to relaxation training. Lastly, Ms. Black identified deep breathing, imagery, and mindfulness as the most useful tools for her clients.

3. A. Moore, Psycho-educator (2016-10-28)

Ms. Moore, a psycho-educator working within the intermediate mental health care unit, was asked whether the clients within the unit would benefit from relaxation training. She expressed her interest in the topic and explained that she often found progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, visualization, deep breathing, and yoga helpful to her clients. She indicated that the techniques often effectively diminished her clients’ feelings of anxiety and aided them in sleeping at night. Ms. Moore also noted that all of the clients in the intermediate mental health unit would benefit from such a program. Moreover, the psycho-educator stated that the intervention team was in need of a manual in order to deliver relaxation training and that she would find it very helpful.

4. D. Jackson, Behavioural Technologist (2016-10-28)

Mr. Jackson was consulted in order to gain input from a behaviourist’s perspective of relaxation training. Jackson, who works at a different site from that of the placement student, indicated that such a manual would be beneficial across a number of sites and institutions. In addition, Mr. Jackson stated that he believed almost all clients could benefit from relaxation training, as being institutionalized often causes stress in itself. Mr. Jackson expressed his full support in the project and advised that he has found that using deep breathing with clients is very

\(^{8}\) Note that all names that appear as personal communications in this appendix are fictional, as a means of ensuring confidentiality.
effective, as well as progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness meditation, and sensory awareness.

5. C. Hamilton, Victim Services Officer (2016-11-03)

Ms. Hamilton contacted the placement student via email, after receiving a request to complete the author’s survey from a colleague. Ms. Hamilton stated that while she did not currently have any offender clients in her work as a victim services officer, she was willing to discuss her opinion regarding creating a relaxation training manual to be used in a federal institution. Ms. Hamilton went on to say that she thought that a relaxation manual would be very beneficial in federal institutions; however, she included that in order to be beneficial the program would have to be cost-effective, easily reproduced, and written at a level appropriate for the inmate population. Further, Ms. Hamilton notes that within the offender population there are many individuals with low intelligence, as well as quite high intelligence. In order to target this issue, Hamilton suggested that there may be a need for manuals at multiple levels, in order to accommodate a larger range of clients. While this endeavor might be a large undertaking, it would be most ideal, according to Hamilton. Another feature mentioned by Hamilton was an accompanying audio-tape.

On the subject of relaxation techniques, Hamilton stated that she believes them to be useful, since incarceration can be very stressful. Keeping this in mind, Hamilton said that motivation levels tend to be low in this population, regardless of the potential usefulness of the techniques. In contrast, Hamilton believes that many of the inmates would use these skills. Moreover, Hamilton explained why a comprehensive training manual would be very useful. She said that due to recent policy changes within the federal system, mental health services were often only being offered to individuals with high mental health needs (e.g., suicidal or with active symptoms of Axis I diagnoses). Individuals who do not meet the criteria for ongoing mental health services, are often those asking for help with their level of anxiety or stress. Therefore, according to Hamilton, such a manual may provide these individuals with services, as only one mental health professional would be required to deliver the program, for one hour per week.
The distress thermometer –
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a ‘distress thermometer’ to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

- 100  Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt
-  90   Extremely anxious/distressed
-  80   Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate
-  70   Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance
-  60
-  50   Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform
-  40
-  30   Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
-  20   Minimal anxiety/distress
-  10   Alert and awake, concentrating well
-   0  Totally relaxed
Appendix E: Outline of Training Manuals

Section 1 – Introduction and literature review
- The introduction is intended to give brief overview of the intended topic of the program
- The literature review introduces the effects of both relaxation techniques on anxiety and how they may help participants in achieving relaxation

Section 2 – Session by session guide & homework assignments

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<td>• Deep breathing activity</td>
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<td>• Use SUDS</td>
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<td>• 16 muscle group PMR exercise</td>
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<th>Session 3: Progressive Muscle Relaxation &amp; Cognitive Imagery (1.5 hrs)</th>
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<td>• 7 muscle PMR exercise</td>
<td>• 4 muscle group PMR exercise</td>
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<td>• 15-minute cognitive imagery exercise</td>
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<td>• Discuss homework assignment</td>
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<td>• Use SUDS</td>
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<td>• 20-minute cognitive imagery exercise</td>
<td>• 15-minute cognitive imagery exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use SUDS &amp; discussion</td>
<td>• 10-minute meditation exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discuss homework assignment</td>
<td>• Use SUDS &amp; discussion</td>
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<td>• Discuss homework assignment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• **Session 7: Cognitive Imagery & Mindfulness Meditation Continued**  
  (1.25 hour)  
  o Preparation for session  
  o Introductions and sharing  
  o Topic discussion  
  o Review of homework assignment  
  o Use SUDS  
  o 15-minute cognitive imagery exercise  
  o 15 minute meditation exercise  
  o Use SUDS & discussion  
  o Discuss homework assignment

• **Session 8: Cognitive Imagery & Mindfulness Meditation Continued**  
  (1.5 hour)  
  o Preparation for session  
  o Introductions and sharing  
  o Topic discussion  
  o Review of homework assignment  
  o Use SUDS  
  o 10-minute cognitive imagery exercise  
  o 20-minute meditation exercise  
  o Use SUDS & discussion  
  o Discuss homework assignment

**Section 3 – References**  
• This section includes a list of references for both facilitators and participants to access  
• The facilitator manual also includes a list of additional sources pertaining to group therapy and relaxation training

**Section 4 – Satisfaction survey**  
• Satisfaction surveys will be filled out by both the facilitators and the participants in order to evaluate how the group met their needs  
• How easy the training manual is to understand and implement will also be evaluated
Appendix F: Facilitator Relaxation Training Manual

Relaxation Training Facilitator Manual

Figure 1. Stylized yoga person clip art. Retrieved from http://www.clker.com/clipart-2499.html. Copyright-free image.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Cognitive Imagery, and Mindfulness Meditation

Developed by Zyeleika McTague¹
Honours Bachelor in Behavioural Psychology, St. Lawrence College
2016

¹ Permission must be obtained from the author, Zyeleika McTague, at mctaguez@hotmail.com in order to use this manual.
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Part I: Introduction

Purpose and Rationale

Anxiety disorders are one of the most prevalent psychiatric illnesses worldwide\(^2\) and in offender populations in Canada\(^3\). Furthermore, The Bradley Report\(^4\) indicated that anxiety disorders are significantly more prevalent in offender populations than in the general population. In order to target anxiety disorders, cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), including the use of relaxation, has been identified as the most effective and evidence-based treatment modality to date\(^5\). However, studies have indicated the usefulness of administering relaxation training alone, in comparison to CBT\(^6\).

Additionally, relaxation techniques have been shown to be effective in treating a wide range of populations\(^7\), including offenders\(^8\). Moreover, while studies have demonstrated a strong positive correlation between mental illness and offending behaviour, mental health services for offenders continue to be limited compared to services offered to the general population\(^9\).

Thus, this evidence-based treatment manual was designed to address the deficit in treatment programs offered to offenders and the evidence to support the usefulness of teaching relaxation techniques to individuals with anxiety. Overall, this manual was designed to provide correctional staff in a federal institution with a therapeutic program through which to target symptoms of anxiety for adult male offenders. The manual provides an outline of a relaxation training program including progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation. These relaxation skills were included based on the evidence to support their use in targeting anxiety and inducing a state of relaxation (refer to literature review section below). Note that the methodology outlined in this manual and the participant training manual is based on empirical evidence. Please read the entirety of this manual before beginning training with offenders.

\(^2\) Miller, 1984  
\(^3\) Beaudette, 2014  
\(^4\) Bradley, 2009  
\(^5\) Hofmaan, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer, & Fang, 2012  
\(^6\) E.g. Arntz, 2003; Ost & Breitholz, 2000  
\(^7\) Francesco, Mauro, Gianluca, & Enrico, 2009  
\(^8\) Marquis & Gendreau, 1975  
\(^9\) McConnachie, Moolla, & Davies, 2014; Mitchell, et al., 2011
Summary of Contents

- **Part II: Session Guide** – Provides session by session guidelines for administration of the relaxation training. This includes introductions, social activities, psycho-education, relaxation training, and homework assignments. Participants will have a session by session guide in their manual in order to follow along. Table 1 presents an overview of the 8 sessions
  - Sessions range from 1 hour to 1.5 hours, as shown in Table 1. The timeline does not include breaks, therefore breaks should be discussed and agreed upon between facilitators and participants.
  - The approximate timelines provided throughout the manuals were based off of a group of 6 clients, and must be altered to accommodate the number of participants each time the relaxation training is completed.

 NOTE:
 It is critical that:
  - all sessions be offered in sequence, as each session lays a key clinical foundation for the next
  - all 8 sessions offer a full range of skills including not only the relaxation training but psycho-education regarding the skills being taught in session. For example, it would not be appropriate to offer session 5 (cognitive imagery) on its own, because the psycho-education regarding the cognitive imagery relaxation skill would have only been discussed in sessions 3 and 4. In this case the participants would not be able to gain a full understanding of how the skill works and how to use it properly.

- **Part III: References** – All references throughout the manual will be listed in this section. As well, additional sources will be listed. Administrators are encouraged to access these resources in order to further familiarize themselves with the manual topics.

- **Part IV: Survey** – Includes questionnaire which serves as an evaluation of usefulness of the relaxation training manual, to be completed following the eight group sessions. The participant survey is included in the participant training manual and should also be administered after the completion of the group sessions.

Table 1
**Overview of 8 relaxation training sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Session 1: Deep Breathing &amp; Progressive Muscle Relaxation (1.5 hrs)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Session 2: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Continued (1.25 hrs)</strong></th>
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<td>o Introductions &amp; social activity</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Progressive Muscle Relaxation &amp; Cognitive Imagery (1.25 hrs)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Progressive Muscle Relaxation &amp; Cognitive Imagery Continued (1.25 hrs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cognitive Imagery (1 hr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cognitive Imagery &amp; Mindfulness Meditation (1.25 hrs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cognitive Imagery &amp; Mindfulness Meditation Continued (1 hour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cognitive Imagery &amp; Mindfulness Meditation Continued (1.25 hour)</td>
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</table>
Behavioural researchers have demonstrated the usefulness of relaxation training in targeting the symptoms of individuals with a range of anxiety disorders (Borkovec et al., 1987).

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation.** In a study conducted by Kushner et al. (2013), the effects of a hybrid cognitive behaviour therapy versus progressive muscle relaxation training (PMRT) were compared in regards to diminishing symptoms of anxiety and alcohol disorder. For the purpose of this literature review, the effects of the progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) on the symptoms of anxiety will be discussed. Participants included individuals aged 18 years and over with an anxiety disorder (Kushner et al., 2013). PMRT treatment consisted of six, 1-hour group sessions (Kushner et al., 2013). In session 1, the administrators guided the participants through PMR using instructions to tense and release 16 muscle groups (Kushner et al., 2013). During the following session, the administrators provided training on how to use PMR while tensing and releasing seven muscle groups (Kushner et al., 2013). The next three sessions were taught by instructing the participants to tense and release four muscle groups (Kushner et al., 2013). In the final session, the administrators instructed the participants to practice a whole-body relaxation using cued muscle memory (Kushner et al., 2013). Additionally, Kushner et al. described using a script in order to administer the PMRT and homework assignments to reinforce the participants’ learning in-session. Kushner et al. described the results as showing a large reduction in both trait and state anxiety from baseline to post-treatment and baseline to 4-month follow-up. These results provide support for the use of PMR in reducing symptoms of anxiety in an adult population as well as support for fading the PMRT, which provides potential for participants to use the less-intensive skill in a wider range of settings.

**Cognitive Imagery.** Cognitive imagery has been shown to increase the efficacy of CBT in patients with social anxiety disorder (McEvoy & Saulsman, 2014; McEvoy, Erceg-Hurn, Saulsman, & Thibodeau, 2015). Furthermore, Holmes and Mathews (2010) found that visual imagery invokes a greater emotional response than verbal strategies, indicating that using visualization when treating emotional disorders increases the effectiveness and maintenance of treatment. Moreover, in a study conducted by Apóstolo and Kolcaba (2009), participants included psychiatric inpatients with depressive mood disorders. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effects of guided imagery on the comfort, depression, anxiety, and stress of the participants (Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009). For the purpose of this literature review, the effects of the guided imagery on the anxiety of the participants will be discussed. A CD, 21 minutes in length, was distributed to the participants to listen to each night for 10 consecutive days (Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009). The CD included PMR and guided visualization of relaxing natural scenes. Apóstolo and Kolcaba concluded that the treatment group showed statistically significant lower levels of anxiety than the control group after the 10 days of...
intervention. This study supports the use of PMR as well as the use of imagery in order to target symptoms of anxiety.

**Mindfulness meditation.** In a literature review conducted by Delmonte (1985), it was established that meditation is an effective therapeutic technique for symptoms of anxiety. Overall, Delmonte reported that based on the literature, while meditation is comparable to other interventions intended to reduce anxiety, regular use seems to be crucial in maintaining the effects of mindfulness meditation. Furthermore, Lyons and Cantrell (2016), identified meditation as an effective method in diminishing recidivism in incarcerated populations. Another intervention conducted by Kimbrough, Magyari, Langenberg, Chesney, and Berman (2010) assessed the use of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction with clients who were child abuse survivors. The sessions included sitting meditation, with attention to the present moment (i.e. breath, sound, body sensations, or overall awareness), guided meditation, including positivity towards self and others, progressive body awareness meditation, contemplative walking, and gentle yoga stretching exercises (Kimbrough et al., 2010). Outside of sessions participants were also asked to partake in informal mindful activities of daily living (e.g. mindful eating or mindful communication with others; Kimbrough et al., 2010). Thus, it is hypothesized that meditation will be an effective method in reducing symptoms of anxiety in offenders.

**Summary.** Based on the literature outlined above, both PMR (Kushner et al., 2013; Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009), cognitive imagery (McEvoy & Salsman, 2014; McEvoy, Erceg-Hurn, Salsman, & Thibodeau, 2015; Apóstolo & Kolcaba, 2009), and mindfulness meditation (Delmonte, 1985; Lyons & Cantrell, 2016; Kimbrough, Magyari, Langenberg, Chesney, & Bergman, 2010) have been established as effective methods in diminishing symptoms of anxiety.

**Participant Characteristics**

The training manual was created for participants including adult (i.e. 18 years and older) male offenders in a federal institution. The participants could be inclusive of a wide range of individuals, since relaxation techniques can be applicable for a variation of diagnoses and situations. Specifically, the participants of this relaxation training program would be those who report symptoms of anxiety and/or difficulty with achieving relaxation. Exclusion criteria would include individuals with a reading level below grade 8, as identified in the offender’s file.

**Facilitator Characteristics**

The program described in the manual should be administered by one or two correctional professionals in the psychology field. These professionals should possess a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree related to the field of psychology. Experience in the field of psychology, especially CBT, may be an asset in the administration of the
relaxation program. Furthermore, the program facilitators should possess skills regarding building rapport with clients and ability to accurately identify the needs of the clients. The correctional staff members should also be able to facilitate group discussions throughout the group program and minimize actual or potential conflicts and/or barriers within the group. However, the manual was designed to be easily utilized by a range of psychology professionals who understand the importance of keeping the integrity of the 8 full sessions as well as how best to implement the curriculum.

Setting and Apparatus

The group therapy sessions should take place in a programs room within the institution. The room should contain plastic or cushioned chairs for each participant and for both administrators, based on the availability. Note that cushioned chairs would be preferable, in order to encourage relaxation. Furthermore, chairs should be angled towards each other to form a circle, for the purpose of encouraging an inclusive environment. In addition, the use of a whiteboard with markers may be useful when facilitating group discussions or engaging in psycho-therapy, if available. Also, the door should be closed in order to ensure minimization of loud noises or distractions. Lastly, all security measures must be followed according to the security level of the institution, including the use of personal portable alarms.

Materials

Materials to be used in this program include the relaxation training manuals for each facilitator and for each offender, which were developed by the Behavioural Psychology placement student. This manual outlines how each session should be administered, including psycho-education regarding the participants’ symptoms of anxiety, psycho-education regarding relaxation techniques, relaxation training, and discussion surrounding homework assignments. Also, homework assignments include relaxation exercises taught in session. Other required materials for the therapy sessions include a notepad for the therapist to record any pertinent information, as identified by the therapist. Paper should also be available to the participants, should they wish to take notes during sessions. Lastly, both the therapist and participants require a writing utensil.
Measures and Data Collection

The measure that should be used to collect informal pre- and post-data when the program is being administered is the SUDS\textsuperscript{12}. The SUDS is designed to teach the participants to monitor their level of anxiety before and after each session. This will provide both the participants and the program facilitators with a reference point from which to determine whether the training in a given session is affecting the anxiety levels of the participants. This measure was chosen based on its simplicity to implement. In addition, several studies have demonstrated the validity of the SUDS\textsuperscript{13}.

Firstly, a study was conducted to demonstrate the validity of the SUDS by determining whether there was a relationship between the SUDS scores and physiological symptoms of anxiety (i.e., constriction of peripheral blood vessels, autonomic arousal, and heart rate)\textsuperscript{14}. The results demonstrated a significant correlation between the SUDS scores and the physiological indices of anxiety, which supported the continued use of the SUDS in clinical assessment\textsuperscript{15}. Secondly, another study demonstrated convergent validity, discriminative validity, modest predictive validity, and moderate concurrent validity of the SUDS\textsuperscript{16}.

In conclusion, the SUDS is intended to be used within sessions and for homework assignments to obtain informal results as to the effectiveness of the relaxation techniques, for each individual. The validity of the measure has been demonstrated; however, further investigation of the psychometric properties is needed, such as reliability\textsuperscript{17}. Overall, this measure was chosen based on its simplicity and short amount of time required to complete it (i.e., less than 1 minute).

Should you wish to collect data when administering the relaxation program, simply record the responses of the participants when they indicate their SUDS score before and after using the techniques, each week in session. You will then be able to calculate the average SUDS score before and after each session and determine whether there is a significant difference in the scores. This data could be collected as a formal study, or to obtain valuable information on the individual relaxation techniques and the effectiveness of the training. As a second source of data, use the information gathered from the surveys, which are in the last section of both the facilitator manuals and the participant manuals.

\textsuperscript{12} Wolpe, 1969
\textsuperscript{13} e.g., Thyer, Papsdorf, & Vallecorsa, 1984; Bae, Kim, & Park, 2008; Kaplan, Smith, & Coons, 1995
\textsuperscript{14} Thyer et al., 1984
\textsuperscript{15} Thyer et al., 1984
\textsuperscript{16} Bae et al., 2008
\textsuperscript{17} Bae et al., 2008
Part II: Session Guide

Session 1: Deep Breathing & Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Preparation (20 minutes)

1. Read each section of the session guide carefully. Familiarize yourself with any material or additional information that you may wish to incorporate into the session.
2. Prepare your introduction to the group, including a fact or short story about yourself.
3. If you wish to use name tags for the group, prepare these now.
4. Prepare the social activity by photocopying the cards, on the following page. Print as many copies of the cards as necessary in order to distribute one card to each participant and each administrator. Cut out each card. OR If you wish to prepare another activity, take time to prepare this.
5. Prepare topic discussion questions.
6. Photocopy the SUDS scale, found below the social activity cards, for each participant and each administrator. Prepare your explanation of the SUDS.
7. Prepare explanation of how deep breathing works.
8. Prepare explanation of how PMR works.

Setting up the room: Ensure that there is a chair for each member of the group and each administrator. Note that it would be preferable to have comfortable chairs, in order to facilitate relaxation. Arrange the chairs so that they form a circle. This facilitates an inclusive environment. As well, it may be helpful to have a whiteboard with a marker, should you wish to use it during group discussions or when explaining a concept.

Needed materials:
1. Photocopies made in preparation for group session.
2. Administrator and participant manuals.
3. Pens for administrators and participants.

Tip: Remember that each group is going to be different. Something that has worked for you in the past, may not work this time. Try to keep an open mind and be flexible in order to create a positive and therapeutic environment. If needed, always consult your colleagues!

Note: In following the preparation section of this manual, you will be able to reuse both the facilitator and participant manuals for the next group.
Session 1 Overview (1.5 hours)

- Introductions - 5 minutes
- Social Activity - 10 minutes
- Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
- SUDS - 10 minutes
- Psycho-education - 15 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Deep Breathing - 5 minutes
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation - 15 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Homework - 5 minutes
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The distress thermometer –
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a ‘distress thermometer’ to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

100 Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt
90 Extremely anxious/distressed
80 Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate
70 Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance
60
50 Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform
40
30 Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
20 Minimal anxiety/distress
10 Alert and awake, concentrating well
0 Totally relaxed

Rating before: ________
Situation: _____________________________________________________________
Technique: _________________________________________________________
Rating after: ________

Rating before: ________
Situation: _____________________________________________________________
Technique: _________________________________________________________
Rating after: ________
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the first session, yourself and your co-administrator should introduce yourselves.

**What?** Introduce yourself.

**Why?** This is part of building rapport with your group. They may feel more at ease sharing with you, if you share something with them.

**How?** Start by saying your name. This may also be a good opportunity to let the participants know a little bit about your professional background. As well, you may want to include an interesting fact or story about yourself.

Next, ask each participant to introduce themselves.

**What?** Have the participants introduce themselves.

**Why?** Part of building rapport is getting to know each member’s name. You may want to consider asking each group member and administrator to wear name tags during the first few sessions. Even if the clients and the administrators are already familiar with one another, introducing oneself in front of a small group is a valuable skill.

**How?** Ask the participants to say their name. This can be done by going around the circle, or by having participants jump in at random, until everyone has taken a turn.

**Social Activity (10 minutes)**

Next, you will ask the participants to engage in a social activity.

**What?** The name of the social activity described in this manual is Two Truths, One Lie. However, feel free to choose another social activity of your liking.

**Why?** This game provides a fun way for the participants and the administrators to get to know each other. This activity will also contribute to the rapport of the group. This is your first opportunity to make observations regarding the characteristics of individual group members, as well as how the members interact with one another.
How? Hand out the cards that you printed before the session and some pens. Ask the participants to write down two truths about themselves and one lie. When everyone is finished writing, ask members to volunteer to share what they had written. Other group members should all vote on which statement they believe to be a lie. Keep track of who guesses each statement, using the white board. After everyone has voted, including administrators, ask the individual to disclose which statement was the lie. Each participant who guessed the right answer gets a point. If nobody guessed the right answer, the participant who shared his statements gets a point. Continue on like this until each person has shared their statements. Tally up the points and appoint a winner!

**Topic Discussion (15 minutes)**

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training. Find some possible discussion questions below.

What? Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

Why? Now that you have gotten to know one another a little bit, it is time to begin introducing the purpose of the group therapy sessions. Having an informal discussion about anxiety and relaxation will allow you to become more familiar with the knowledge base within the group, regarding the topics in question.

How? Propose some of the topic questions below, or additional questions that you prepared in advance. Allow the group to have an informal discussion and use your skills as a professional to direct the conversation.

- What do you know about anxiety?
- What does anxiety look, feel, and sound like?
- What kind of experiences have you had with anxiety?
- Does your anxiety stop you from doing some of the things you want to do or should do?
- How does your anxiety affect your life in general?
- How does your anxiety affect how you sleep/eat/interact with others?
- What do you know about relaxation?
- What does relaxation look, feel, and sound like?
- What experiences have you had with relaxation?
- What relaxation techniques, if any, do you use?
- What helps you feel calm?
- How do you think that this relaxation training might help you in your life?
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (10 minutes)

Introduce the SUDS to the group!

What? Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS). This scale is used to rate one’s level of distress and will be used to do so throughout therapy sessions.

Why? This scale will be used as a self-monitoring tool throughout the group sessions. It can be used before and after using relaxation techniques in order to demonstrate the usefulness of the techniques. This will also enable the participants to gain an idea regarding which techniques work best for them, in certain situations.

How? Distribute the SUDS handouts that you printed in preparation for the session. Have a participant read the short blurb on the handout. Explain the SUDS in your own words, including going through what each number of the scale means, as described on the handout. Also explain and discuss the importance of monitoring one’s own anxiety level.

Initiate activity by having group use the rating scale for case study examples.

What? An activity to rate the distress level of the characters in the case studies, below.

Why? This will allow the group to become more familiar with the SUDS scale and provide greater understanding of appropriate ratings for different states of mind.

How? Have participants volunteer to read out the case studies. Then, discuss what rating might be appropriate for the character described. Ask them not to write on their handouts, as they will need them for their homework.

Case study #1
- Tom is feeling extremely anxious; he has never felt this inexplicably worried in his entire life. Tom feels like he may faint or have a heart attack.

Case study #2
- John has just had to move cells. John is usually easy-going and gets along with everyone. However, this is still a big change and he is worried that his neighbours won’t like him or won’t be nice to him.
Psycho-education of relaxation skills (15 minutes)

Introduce the skill of using deep breathing as a relaxation technique.

**What?** Introduce deep breathing to the group.

**Why?** Deep breathing has been identified as an effective and simple relaxation techniques. Deep breathing is easy to use and takes a short amount of time.

**How?** Explain how deep breathing works. Use some of the points below\(^{18}\), in addition to any other information you prepared before this session:
- Shallow chest breathing is associated with hyperventilation.
- Shallow breathing sends a message to the brain to engage in a fight-or-flight response. This response is a natural response to imminent danger.
- In contrast, intentional deep breathing induces a shift to a relaxation response in the body by supplying adequate oxygen to the brain and body.
- It is important to breath using the muscles in your diaphragm, rather than your chest, because muscles in the diaphragm are intended to be used as such. In contrast, using the muscles in your chest requires more energy.
- Discuss with the group!

Introduce progressive muscle relaxation as a skill.

**What?** Introduce progressive muscle relaxation to the group.

**Why?** Progressive muscle relaxation has been identified as one of the most effective skills to achieve relaxation. This will be the second skill introduced to the group.

\(^{18}\) Hazlett-Stevens & Craske, 2008
**How?** Explain how progressive muscle relaxation works. This includes presenting some of the information below\(^{19}\), as well as anything that you prepared in advance.

- Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique developed by a physician named Edmund Jacobson in 1929.
- The main idea behind the technique is that the body responds to stressors by tensing the muscles. This in turn, enhances the experience of anxiety.
- Therefore, relaxing the muscles is contradictory to the feeling of anxiety. One response blocks the other.
- Progressive muscle relaxation can reduce heart rate, blood pressure, fight-or-flight response, perspiration, and respiration rate.
- Progressive muscle relaxation has been shown to be very effective in allowing clients to achieve relaxation.
- Discuss with the group!

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a baseline to reference against the scores that the participants choose after engaging in the relaxation training, which follows.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS, by consulting their SUDS handout, and give a brief explanation of their answer. However, ask them not to write on the sheets before or after the exercise, because they will be using these for homework assignments.

\(^{19}\) Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 2008
Deep Breathing (5 minutes)

Next, practice a short deep breathing exercise with the group.

**What?** Practice a breathing exercise with the group.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to correctly use deep breathing as a relaxation skill. Deep breathing will also be an essential component of the other relaxation techniques, taught throughout the sessions.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a deep breathing exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be breathing into their stomach, rather than chest. Read out the instructions below, talking slowly and soothingly, in order engage in the deep breathing technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.
1. Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body.

2. Gently, put one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly.

3. Sit as comfortably as possible, clear your mind, and close your eyes softly.

4. Count to three, as you breathe in through your nose. 1... 2... 3...

5. Notice the hand on your belly move, as your belly becomes fuller. The hand on your chest should barely move.

6. Again, count to three, as you breathe in through your nose. 1... 2... 3...
Progressive Muscle Relaxation (15 minutes)

Practice the 16 muscle group PMR skill with the group.

**What?** Practice 16 muscle progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to correctly use progressive muscle relaxation. Once the group has become familiar with this skill, they will be able to use it outside of group sessions, in their daily lives or when needed.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a progressive muscle relaxation exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the PMR technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

---

7. Count to three as you let the breath go out of your mouth. 1... 2... 3...

8. Notice the hand on your belly go down. Allow all of the air to exit your belly.

9. Repeat these steps for 2 minutes in silence. In your nose, 1... 2... 3... and out your mouth 1... 2... 3... Becoming more and more relaxed with every breathe.

10. (After 2 minutes) Open your eyes and notice your stress level. Notice the feeling of relaxation and try to compare how you feel now, to how you felt before the activity.

---

Adapted from Bernstein, Borkovec, & Hazlett-Stevens, 2000
1. Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body and begin using the deep breathing practice we just went through. Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible.

2. We will begin with your right arm (or left, if you are left handed). Tense the muscles in your right hand and lower arm by making a tight fist. Feel the tension in your hand and arm as you do this, and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Now let go and feel how the muscles are now relaxed. (Pause.)

3. Next, tense the muscles in your right bicep by pushing your elbow down on the arm of your chair. Try not to use your hand or lower arm muscles when doing this. Feel the tension in your bicep and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Let go of the tension and notice the difference between how the muscle felt when it was tensed, and how it feels now. (Pause.)

4. Now, we move to the left arm (or right, if you are left handed). Make a fist with your left hand and feel the tension in your hand and lower arm. Hold this for 3... 2... 1... Let go of the tension and relax. Check in with your deep breathing pattern now. (Pause.)

5. Next, we will move on to the face. Tense the muscles in your forehead by raising your eyebrows as high as you can. Feel the tension in your forehead and your scalp before releasing it in 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation in your forehead now, compared to when your forehead felt tense. (Pause.)

6. Tense the center muscles in your face by squeezing your eyes shut and wrinkling up your nose. Pay attention to the tension around your eyes and in your upper cheek muscles. Release the tension and relax in 3... 2... 1... (Pause.)
7. Tense the muscles in your lower face by biting your teeth together and smiling with your mouth closed. Hold this tension in the lower part of your face for 3... 2... 1... and let go. Notice how relaxed your face feels. (Pause.)

8. Next we will work on relaxing the muscles in the neck. Bend your neck forward so your chin is almost, but not quite, touching your chest. Feel the tension in the back and front of your neck and hold for 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be aware of the difference between how your neck felt when it was tense, and now as it is relaxed. (Pause.)

9. We will focus on the muscles in your chest, shoulders, and upper back. Take a deep breath in and hold it as you pull your shoulder blades together. Feel the tension in your chest, shoulders, and upper back. Let go in 3... 2... 1... And relax. (Pause.)

10. Now make your stomach hard by tensing your ab muscles. Hold this while paying attention to the tension in your stomach muscles and relax in 3... 2... 1... Be conscious of the feeling of relaxation in your stomach muscles now. (Pause).

11. To tense the muscle in the right thigh straighten your leg out in front and tighten your thigh muscle. Feel the tension in your thigh muscle and release in 1... 2... 3... and relax your thigh muscle.

12. Now, with your right leg comfortably bent at the knee point your toe and clench your calf muscle for three... two... one... and bend your toes up towards the ceiling and hold for 3... 2... 1... and relax, as you notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your lower right leg and your right foot.
Give the participants a few moments to gather their bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before asking them to return to the present moment and begin the following component of the session.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the scores that the participants chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS and give a brief explanation of their answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for them and describe what they liked and/or disliked about the experience.
# Homework (5 minutes)

Assign homework to the group, to be completed by the next session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What?</strong></th>
<th>Homework to be completed by the participants, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercises and SUDS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why?</strong></td>
<td>This will increase familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide greater understanding of the participants’ own distress levels pertaining to certain situations. This will also give the participants and administrators an idea of how useful the participants find the deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How?</strong></td>
<td>Explain the homework assignment to the participants. This includes directing them to the SUDS handout and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session. This means identifying two occasions during which they feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the deep breathing technique. As shown on the handout, the participants are asked to rate their level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique they used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate their level of distress again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 2: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Continued

Preparation (20 minutes)

1. Read each section of the session guide carefully. Familiarize yourself with any material or additional information that you may wish to incorporate into the session.
2. Prepare the social activity by photocopying the cards, following. Cut out each card. OR If you wish to prepare another activity, take time to prepare this.
3. Prepare topic discussion.
4. Photocopy the SUDS scale, found below, for each participant and each administrator.
5. Prepare description of PMR exercise.

Setting up the room: Ensure that there is a chair for each member of the group and each administrator. Note that it would be preferable to have comfortable chairs, in order to facilitate relaxation. Arrange the chairs so that they form a circle. This facilitates an inclusive environment. As well, it may be helpful to have a whiteboard with a marker, should you wish to use it during group discussions or when explaining a concept.

Needed materials:
1. Photocopies made in preparation for group session.
2. Administrator and participant manuals.
3. Pens for administrators and participants.

Tip: It doesn’t hurt to be familiar with the relaxation techniques yourself. Working in a correctional environment can be stressful. Take some time to practice the techniques that you are teaching! Additionally, practice giving instructions to others before sessions. This will ensure that you understand the process and are able to deliver relaxation instructions in a calming manner.
Session 2 Overview (1.5 hours)

1. Introductions - 5 minutes
2. Social Activity - 10 minutes
3. Homework Review - 15 minutes
4. Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
5. Psycho-education - 15 minutes
6. SUDS - 5 minutes
7. Progressive Muscle Relaxation - 15 minutes
8. SUDS - 5 minutes
9. Homework - 5 minutes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sleeping at night.</th>
<th>Germs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other inmates.</td>
<td>Mental health issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking in front of people.</td>
<td>Family and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling lonely or sad.</td>
<td>Work or school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life after release.</td>
<td>Safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What others think of me.</td>
<td>How I look.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment in myself or in others.</td>
<td>Family and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My temper.</td>
<td>Bad habits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The distress thermometer – Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a ‘distress thermometer’ to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

- 100 Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt
- 90 Extremely anxious/distressed
- 80 Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate
- 70 Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance
- 60
- 50 Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform
- 40
- 30 Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
- 20 Minimal anxiety/distress
- 10 Alert and awake, concentrating well
- 0 Totally relaxed

**Rating before:** ______

**Situation:** ______________________________________________________________

**Technique:** _____________________________________________________________

**Rating after:** ______

**Rating before:** ______

**Situation:** ______________________________________________________________

**Technique:** _____________________________________________________________

**Rating after:** ______
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the second session, allow a couple of minute for group members to say hello.

*What?* Allow a couple of minutes to have the group members greet one another, share any news or experiences from the past week, and share how they are feeling.

*Why?* This facilitates a continuation of rapport building and sets the stage for a therapeutic environment, throughout the session.

*How?* You and your co-facilitator should start by greeting the group and letting the group know that you are doing well. Afterwards, either go around the circle or have each participant volunteer to greet the group and share something personal.

---

**Social Activity (10 minutes)**

Next, you will ask the participants to engage in a social activity.

*What?* The name of the social activity described in this manual is *What Stresses Me Out?* However, feel free to choose another social activity of your liking.

*Why?* This game provides an opportunity for the offenders to disclose some information to the group, regarding why they are participating in the relaxation sessions. This may also allow the participants to learn something new about themselves.

*How?* Pass the cards around the circle and ask each person to pick a card, before passing them to the next person. Ask the participants to choose a card that says something that causes them fear, worry, stress, or anxiety. When everyone has a card, ask members to volunteer to share what they chose. First, ask the participant to explain why they chose the card and any experiences they wished to share with the others. Then, ask the participant and the other group members how they think relaxation training might help with the stressor identified by the participant. Each participant should have an opportunity to speak and share what is on their card.
Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)

Review last week’s homework.

What? The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when the participants found themselves feeling anxious or stressed. Following, they were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation technique taught during the first session and rate their stress level again afterwards. The participants were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

Why? Reviewing the homework assignment for the previous week gives the offenders an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using deep breathing helped them. The SUDS gives the exercise a numerical component to refer to when discussing changes in stress level, from before to after using deep breathing.

How? Ask the participants to describe their experience in regards to the homework assignment. Talk specifically about how the relaxation technique worked for them. This discussion can be held in an informal manner; however, it would be best if all participants are able to share their experiences.

Topic Discussion (15 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training.

What? Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

Why? This part of the session should give the participants some information about how stress and anxiety can affect their lives and with potential motivators to develop healthy coping strategies (i.e. relaxation techniques).

How? Present some of the information on the following page, as well as any additional information, that you prepared in advance.

---

21 Nevid, 2012
How can stress affect your physical health?
- You may eat more or less than usual and gain or lose weight.
- You may refrain from doing the things that you used to do (e.g. work out).
- You may feel tired all the time, while not being able to sleep at night.
- Stress can make your hair fall out.
- You are more susceptible to physical diseases when you are stressed.
- You may get sick more often.
- You may often get headaches.
- Your stomach may often feel upset and you could have difficulties with digestion.
- You may experience muscular tension.
- You may experience chest pains.
- You may find yourself grinding your teeth.
- You could feel faint or dizzy.

Discuss with the group.

Psycho-education of relaxation skills (15 minutes)

Further discuss progressive muscle relaxation with the clients.

What? Discuss progressive muscle relaxation with the group.
Why? Progressive muscle relaxation is one of the most effective relaxation techniques.

How? Summarize the information presented from last week regarding the function of progressive muscle relaxation.
- Tensing and relaxing the muscles inhibits the fight-or-flight response.
- This send a message to the brain to relax, thus producing a state of relaxation in the mind and body.
- Discuss with the group!

Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

What? Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.
Why? This will serve as a baseline to reference against the scores that the participants choose after engaging in the relaxation training, which follows.
How? Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS, by consulting their SUDS handout, and give a brief explanation of their answer.

---

22 Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 2008
Progressive Muscle Relaxation\textsuperscript{23} (15 minutes)

Practice the 7 muscle group PMR skill with the group.

**What?** Practice 7 muscle progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to correctly use progressive muscle relaxation, with only 7 muscle groups. The purpose of teaching this skill is to facilitate the potential to use the skill in a wider variety of environments, since it takes a less amount of time and effort to complete. Once the group has become familiar with this skill, they will be able to use it outside of group sessions, in their daily lives or when needed.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a progressive muscle relaxation exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. If available, those who wish to use a cot for this component of the exercise should retrieve a cot from the stack at the side of the classroom and choose a spot to lie down. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the PMR technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

\textsuperscript{23} Adapted from Bernstein, Borkovec, & Hazlett-Stevens, 2000
Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body and begin using the deep breathing practice we just went through. Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible.

We will begin with your right arm (or left, if you are left handed). Tense the muscles in your right hand, lower arm, upper arm, and shoulder by making a tight fist and bring it up to your shoulder. Squeeze your hand, tricep, and bicep. Feel the tension in your hand and arm as you do this, and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Now let go and feel how the muscles are now relaxed. (Pause.)

Now, we will move on to the left arm (or right, if you are left handed). Make a fist with your left hand and bring it up to your left shoulder. Squeeze all of the muscles in your hand and arm. Hold this for 3... 2... 1... Let go of the tension and relax. Check in with your deep breathing pattern now. Ensure that it is slow, steady, and deep.

Next, we will move on to the face and head. Squeeze your forhead muscles by furrowing your brows as if you were angry, close your eyes tight, wrinkle your nose, clench your teeth, and smile with your mouth closed. Feel the tension in your forehead, your scalp, the center of your face, and around your mouth, before releasing it in 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation in your forehead now, compared to when your forehead felt tense. (Pause.)

Next we will work on relaxing the muscles in the neck. Bend your neck forward so your chin is almost, but not quite, touching your chest. Feel the tension in the back and front of your neck and hold for 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be aware of the difference between how your neck felt when it was tense, and now as it is relaxed. (Pause.)

We will focus on the muscles in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Take a deep breath in and hold it as you pull your shoulder blades together. As you do this, engage your stomach muscles by hardening them. Feel the tension in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Let go in 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be conscious of the feeling of relaxation in your muscles now. (Pause.)
Give the participants a few moments to gather their bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before asking them to return to the present moment and begin the following component of the session.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the scores that the participants chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS and give a brief explanation of their answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for them and describe what they liked and/or disliked about the experience.
**Homework (5 minutes)**

Assign homework to the group, to be completed by the next session.

**What?** Homework to be completed by the participants, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercises and SUDS.

**Why?** This will increase familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide greater understanding of the participants’ own distress levels pertaining to certain situations. This will also give the participants and administrators an idea of how useful the participants find the progressive muscle relaxation techniques.

**How?** Explain the homework assignment to the participants. This includes directing them to the SUDS handout and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session. This means identifying two occasions during which they feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the progressive muscle relaxation technique that was taught in-session. As shown on the handout, the participants are asked to rate their level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique they used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate their level of distress again, afterwards.
Session 3: Progressive Muscle Relaxation & Cognitive Imagery

Preparation (20 minutes)

1. Read each section of the session guide carefully. Familiarize yourself with any material or additional information that you may wish to incorporate into the session.
2. Prepare topic discussion.
3. Photocopy the SUDS scale, found below, for each participant and each administrator.
4. Prepare description of cognitive imagery.

**Setting up the room:** Ensure that there is a chair for each member of the group and each administrator. Arrange the chairs so that they form a circle. This facilitates an inclusive environment. As well, it may be helpful to have a whiteboard with a marker, should you wish to use it during group discussions or when explaining a concept.

**Needed materials:**
1. Photocopies made in preparation for group session.
2. Administrator and participant manuals.
3. Pens for administrators and participants.

**Tip:** Try to identify an element of the last session that you wish to improve on. What can you do to enhance the experience of your participants, as individuals and as a group?
Session 3 Overview (1.5 hours)

1. Introductions - 5 minutes
2. Homework Review - 15 minutes
3. Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
4. Psycho-education - 15 minutes
5. SUDS - 5 minutes
6. Progressive muscle relaxation - 10 minutes
7. Cognitive Imagery - 15 minutes
8. SUDS - 5 minutes
9. Homework - 5 minutes
# The distress thermometer – Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a ‘distress thermometer’ to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Extremely anxious/distressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Minimal anxiety/distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Alert and awake, concentrating well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Totally relaxed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating before:** ______

**Situation:** ________________________________________________________

**Technique:** _______________________________________________________

**Rating after:** ______

**Rating before:** ______

**Situation:** ________________________________________________________

**Technique:** _______________________________________________________

**Rating after:** ______
Introductions (5 minutes)

To start off the third session, allow a couple of minutes for group members to say hello.

**What?** Allow a couple of minutes to have the group members greet one another, share any news or experiences from the past week, and share how they are feeling.

**Why?** This facilitates a continuation of rapport building and sets the stage for a therapeutic environment, throughout the session.

**How?** You and your co-facilitator should start by greeting the group and letting the group know that you are doing well. Afterwards, either go around the circle or have each participant volunteer to greet the group and share something personal.

Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when the participants found themselves feeling anxious or stressed. Following, they were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation technique taught during the second session and rate their stress level again afterwards. The participants were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment for the previous week gives the offenders an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using PMR helped them. The SUDS gives the exercise a numerical component to refer to when discussing changes in stress level, from before to after using deep breathing.

**How?** Ask the participants to describe their experience in regards to the homework assignment. This discussion can be held in an informal manner; however, it would be best if all participants are able to share their experiences.

Topic Discussion (15 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion with the group based on the information presented below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.
**Why?** This part of the session should give the participants some information about how stress can affect their mental health.

**How?** Present some of the information below\(^\text{24}\), as well as any additional information, that you prepared in advance.

- *How can stress affect your mental health?*
  - You may often feel anxious or nervous.
  - You may find that your memory is not working so well.
  - Your ability to keep in control of your emotions may be compromised.
  - Your ability to solve problems may be compromised.
  - You might feel overly tired, sad, or angry.
  - You may be overly worried about things in your life that you cannot change.

- Stress can negatively affect your relationships with others, employment, physical health, mental health, and overall wellbeing.
- It is important to be aware of our own triggers and to develop coping strategies that work for us, such as relaxation techniques. Everyone is different.
- Discuss with group!

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### Psycho-education of relaxation skills (15 minutes)

Introduce the skill of using cognitive imagery as a relaxation technique.

**What?** Introduce cognitive imagery to the group.

**Why?** Cognitive is one of the most effective relaxation techniques. Cognitive imagery is easy to implement and is flexible in the amount of time taken to complete.

**How?** Explain how cognitive imagery works by presenting some of the points below\(^\text{25}\).

- Research has shown a more significant link between emotions and imagery than emotions and verbal thoughts; therefore, imagery-based thinking is able to regulate our emotions more effectively than our verbal thoughts.
- Invoking an image of a certain scene or experience and being present in the actual scene or experience produces similar psycho-physiological responses in the body (e.g. relaxation).
- In other words, engaging in an imagery-based relaxation technique produces relaxed thoughts, emotions, and bodily responses.

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\(^{24}\) Smith, 2005

\(^{25}\) Mann & Contrada, 2015
Another advantage to cognitive imagery, unlike the progressive muscle relaxation, is that the content can be tailored to each individual (e.g. some people might find having a hot cup of tea while curled up on the couch more relaxing than being at the beach with the waves crashing along the shoreline).

Cognitive imagery also possesses reciprocally enhancing effects, in that the technique produces a relaxation response, which allows the participant to produce a more vivid relaxing scene.

Discuss with the group!

Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

What? Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

Why? This will serve as a baseline to reference against the scores that the participants choose after engaging in the relaxation training, which follows.

How? Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS, by consulting their SUDS handout, and give a brief explanation of their answer.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation\(^ {26} \) (10 minutes)

Practice the 7 muscle group PMR skill with the group.

What? Practice 7 muscle progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

Why? This gives the group another opportunity to correctly use progressive muscle relaxation, with 7 muscle groups. The purpose of teaching this skill is to facilitate the potential to use the skill in a wider variety of environments, since it takes less time and effort to complete.

How? Let the group know that you are going to practice a progressive muscle relaxation exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the PMR technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

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\(^ {26} \) Adapted from Bernstein, Borkovec, & Hazlett-Stevens, 2000
1. Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body and begin using the deep breathing practice. Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible.

2. We will begin with your right arm (or left, if you are left handed). Tense the muscles in your right hand, lower arm, upper arm, and shoulder by making a tight fist and bring it up to your shoulder. Squeeze your hand, tricep, and bicep. Feel the tension in your hand and arm as you do this, and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Now let go and feel how the muscles are now relaxed. (Pause.)

3. Now, we will move on to the left arm (or right, if you are left handed). Make a fist with your left hand and bring it up to your left shoulder. Squeeze all of the muscles in your hand and arm. Hold this for 3... 2... 1... Let go of the tension and relax. Check in with your deep breathing pattern now. Ensure that it is slow, steady, and deep.

4. Next, we will move on to the face and head. Squeeze your forehead muscles by furrowing your brows as if you were angry, close your eyes tight, wrinkle your nose, clench your teeth, and smile with your mouth closed. Feel the tension in your forehead, your scalp, the center of your face, and around your mouth, before releasing it in 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation in your forehead now, compared to when your forehead felt tense. (Pause.)

5. Next we will work on relaxing the muscles in the neck. Bend your neck forward so your chin is almost, but not quite, touching your chest. Feel the tension in the back and front of your neck and hold for 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be aware of the difference between how your neck felt when it was tense, and now as it is relaxed. (Pause.)

6. We will focus on the muscles in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Take a deep breath in and hold it as you pull your shoulder blades together behind you. As you do this, engage your stomach muscles by hardening them. Feel the tension in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Let go in 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be conscious of the feeling of relaxation in your muscles now. (Pause.)
Cognitive Imagery\textsuperscript{27} (15 minutes)

Practice the cognitive imagery skill with the group.

\textbf{What?} Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 15-minute exercise.

\textbf{Why?} This gives the group an opportunity to use progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery together as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to give the inmates another avenue through which to achieve relaxation. Some skills will work better for certain individuals, than others.

\textbf{How?} Let the group know that you are going to practice a cognitive imagery exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the cognitive imagery technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

\begin{itemize}
  \item To tense the muscle in the right leg straighten your leg out in front and tighten your thigh and calf muscles by pointing your feet for 3... 2... 1... and pulling your toes towards you for 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your leg and think of the difference between the tension you just experienced and the relaxation you are feeling now.
  \item To tense the muscle in your left leg by straightening your leg out in front and tighten your thigh and calf muscles by pointing your feet for 3... 2... 1... and pulling your toes towards you for 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your left leg and be aware of the feeling of relaxation versus tension.
  \item Scan your body now from the tips of your fingers... up to your forearms and your upper arms. Notice how relaxed your shoulders feel, your neck, your face. Bring your attention to the feeling of relaxation in your stomach... your thighs... lower calves... and your feet.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{27} Adapted from Hackmann, Holmes, & Bennett-Levy, 2011
• Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

• Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

• You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

• Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. - 20 seconds)

• What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

• Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 20 seconds)
Give the participants a few moments to gather their bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before asking them to return to the present moment and begin the following component of the session.
**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the scores that the participants chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS and give a brief explanation of their answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for them and describe what they liked and/or disliked about the experience.

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**Homework (5 minutes)**

Assign homework to the group, to be completed by the next session.

**What?** Homework to be completed by the participants, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercises and SUDS.

**Why?** This will increase familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide greater understanding of the participants’ own distress levels pertaining to certain situations. This will also give the participants and administrators an idea of how useful the participants find the PMR and cognitive imagery techniques.

**How?** Explain the homework assignment to the participants. This includes directing them to the SUDS handout and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session. This means identifying two occasions during which they feel anxiety or distress (e.g. neighbour is making too much noise), followed by using the progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery technique that was taught in-session. As shown on the handout, the participants are asked to rate their level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique they used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate their level of distress again, afterwards.
Session 4: Progressive Muscle Relaxation & Cognitive Imagery
Continued

Preparation (20 minutes)

1. Read each section of the session guide carefully. Familiarize yourself with any material or additional information that you may wish to incorporate into the session.
2. Prepare topic discussion.
3. Photocopy the SUDS scale, found below, for each participant and each administrator.
4. Prepare description of cognitive imagery.

Setting up the room: Ensure that there is a chair for each member of the group and each administrator. Arrange the chairs so that they form a circle. This facilitates an inclusive environment. As well, it may be helpful to have a whiteboard with a marker, should you wish to use it during group discussions or when explaining a concept.

Needed materials:
4. Photocopies made in preparation for group session.
5. Administrator and participant manuals.
6. Pens for administrators and participants.

Tip: Pay attention to the group dynamic this week. If there are any identifiable elements of conflict or barriers within the group, make note of this and attempt to address it in a discrete manner during the group this week. The sessions are half-way to finishing, so it is important to ensure a positive environment going forward.
Session 4 Overview (1.5 hours)

- Introductions - 5 minutes
- Homework Review - 15 minutes
- Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
- Psycho-education - 10 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation - 10 minutes
- Cognitive Imagery - 20 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Homework - 5 minutes
The distress thermometer – Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a ‘distress thermometer’ to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Extremely anxious/distressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Minimal anxiety/distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Alert and awake, concentrating well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Totally relaxed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating before:** ________

**Situation:** ____________________________________________________________

**Technique:** ___________________________________________________________

**Rating after:** ________

**Rating before:** ________

**Situation:** ____________________________________________________________

**Technique:** ___________________________________________________________

**Rating after:** ________
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the second session, allow a couple of minutes for group members to say hello.

**What?** Allow a couple of minutes to have the group members greet one another, share any news or experiences from the past week, and share how they are feeling.

**Why?** This facilitates a continuation of rapport building and sets the stage for a therapeutic environment, throughout the session.

**How?** You and your co-facilitator should start by greeting the group and letting the group know that you are doing well. Afterwards, either go around the circle or have each participant volunteer to greet the group and share something personal.

**Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)**

Review last week's homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when the participants found themselves feeling anxious or stressed. Following, they were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation technique taught during the third session and rate their stress level again afterwards. The participants were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment for the previous week gives the offenders an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using PMR helped them. The SUDS gives the exercise a numerical component to refer to when discussing changes in stress level, from before to after using progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery.

**How?** Ask the participants to describe their experience in regards to the homework assignment. This discussion can be held in an informal manner; however, it would be best if all participants are able to share their experiences.

**Topic Discussion (15 minutes)**

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training. Find some information to present below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.
**Why?** This part of the session should give the participants some information how relaxation affects their physical health, mental health, and life in general.

**How?** Present some of the information below\(^\text{28}\), as well as any additional information, that you prepared in advance.

- **How can relaxation affect your physical health?**
  - You may have a regular eating schedule and healthier diet.
  - You find that you enjoy the things that you have always enjoyed (e.g., going for a walk).
  - You may find you have more energy and feel refreshed when you wake up.
  - Your immune system may be stronger and therefore, you may live longer.
  - You may find that you get sick less often.

- **How can relaxation affect your mental health?**
  - Your memory may improve.
  - Your ability to keep in control of your emotions may improve.
  - Your ability to solve problems may improve.
  - You may feel, satisfied, as ease, and calm.
  - You may be able to think through situations by thinking of the best solution, rather than acting on your first instinct.

- Relaxation can positively affect your relationships with others, employment, physical health, mental health, and overall wellbeing.

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**Psycho-education of relaxation skills (10 minutes)**

Further discuss cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Have a discussion about cognitive imagery and how it works with the group.

**Why?** Cognitive imagery has been identified as an effective relaxation technique. Cognitive imagery can be used in a variety of settings, since it only requires the use of one’s mind.

**How?** Summarize the information presented from last week regarding the cognitive imagery\(^\text{29}\).

- Using imagery produces an emotional response.
- The more relaxed you feel, the easier it will be to produce a vivid image, and this in turn creates deeper relaxation.
- When you enter a relaxing scene, the body and mind’s response to the scene is similar to if you were actually there.
- Overall, engaging in the relaxation technique (behaviour), you initiate calming thoughts and emotions.
- Discuss with the group!

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\(^\text{28}\) Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006

\(^\text{29}\) Mann & Contrada, 2015
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a baseline to reference against the scores that the participants choose after engaging in the relaxation training, which follows.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS, by consulting their SUDS handout, and give a brief explanation of their answer.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation\(^{30}\) (10 minutes)

Practice the 4 muscle group PMR skill with the group.

**What?** Practice 4 muscle progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

**Why?** This gives the group another opportunity to correctly use progressive muscle relaxation, with 4 muscle groups. The purpose of teaching this skill is to facilitate the potential to use the skill in a wider variety of environments, since it takes less time and effort to complete.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a progressive muscle relaxation exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the PMR technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

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\(^{30}\) Adapted from Bernstein, Borkovec, & Hazlett-Stevens, 2000
• Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body and begin using deep breathing. Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible.

• We will begin with your arms. Tense the muscles in your hands, lower arms, and upper arms by making tight fists and bring your fists up to your shoulders. Squeeze your hands, triceps, and biceps. Feel the tension in your hands and arms as you do this, and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Now let go and feel how the muscles are now relaxed. (Pause.)

• Next, we will move on to your face, head, and neck. Squeeze your forehead muscles by furrowing your brows as if you were angry, close your eyes tight, wrinkle your nose, clench your teeth, and smile with your mouth closed. As you do this, bend your neck forward so your chin is almost, but not quite, touching your chest. Feel the tension in your forehead, your scalp, the center of your face, around your mouth, and in the front and back of your neck. Release in 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation in your face, head, and neck in comparison to the tension you felt before. (Pause.)

• We will focus on the muscles in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Take a deep breath in and hold it as you pull your shoulder blades together. As you do this, engage your stomach muscles by hardening them. Feel the tension in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Let go in 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be conscious of the feeling of relaxation in your muscles now. (Pause).

• To tense the muscle in both legs straighten your legs out in front and tighten your thigh and calf muscles by pointing your feet for 3... 2... 1... and pulling your toes towards you for 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your legs and think of the difference between the tension you just experienced and the relaxation you are feeling now.

• Scan your body now from the tips of your fingers... up to your forearms and your upper arms. Notice how relaxed your shoulders feel, your neck, your face. Bring your attention to the feeling of relaxation in your stomach... your thighs... lower calves... and your feet.
Cognitive imagery\textsuperscript{31} (20 minutes)

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

\textbf{What?} Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

\textbf{Why?} This gives the group an opportunity to use progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery together as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to give the inmates another avenue through which to achieve relaxation. Some skills will work better for certain individuals, than others.

\textbf{How?} Let the group know that you are going to practice a cognitive imagery exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the cognitive imagery technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

\textsuperscript{31} Adapted from Hackmann, Holmes, & Bennett-Levy, 2011
1. Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

2. Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

3. You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the tress, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

4. Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 30 seconds)

5. What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 30 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

6. Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 30 seconds)
Give the participants a few moments to gather their bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before asking them to return to the present moment and begin the following component of the session.
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the scores that the participants chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS and give a brief explanation of their answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for them and describe what they liked and/or disliked about the experience.

Homework (5 minutes)

Assign homework to the group, to be completed by the next session.

**What?** Homework to be completed by the participants, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercises and SUDS.

**Why?** This will increase familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide greater understanding of the participants’ own distress levels pertaining to certain situations. This will also give the participants and administrators an idea of how useful the participants find the PMR and cognitive imagery techniques when used together.

**How?** Explain the homework assignment to the participants. This includes directing them to the SUDS handout and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session. This means identifying two occasions during which they feel anxiety or distress (e.g. neighbour is making too much noise), followed by using the progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery techniques that were taught in-session. As shown on the handout, the participants are asked to rate their level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique they used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate their level of distress again, afterwards.
Session 5: Cognitive Imagery

Preparation (20 minutes)

1. Read each section of the session guide carefully. Familiarize yourself with any material or additional information that you may wish to incorporate into the session.
2. Prepare topic discussion.
3. Photocopy the SUDS scale, found below, for each participant and each administrator.

Setting up the room: Ensure that there is a chair for each member of the group and each administrator. Arrange the chairs so that they form a circle. This facilitates an inclusive environment. As well, it may be helpful to have a whiteboard with a marker, should you wish to use it during group discussions or when explaining a concept.

Needed materials:
7. Photocopies made in preparation for group session.
8. Administrator and participant manuals.
9. Pens for administrators and participants.

Tip: Pay attention to how you and your co-facilitator interact this week. At the end of the session, you could hold a short meeting to discuss how you are working together and where one another may be able to improve as individual facilitators and as a co-facilitator.
Session 5 Overview (1.25 hours)

- Introductions - 5 minutes
- Homework Review - 15 minutes
- Topic Discussion - 20 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Cognitive Imagery - 20 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Homework - 5 minutes
The distress thermometer – Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a ‘distress thermometer’ to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

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<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Minimal anxiety/distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Alert and awake, concentrating well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Totally relaxed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating before: ________

Situation: __________________________________________________________

Technique: __________________________________________________________________

Rating after: ________

Rating before: ________

Situation: __________________________________________________________

Technique: __________________________________________________________________

Rating after: ________
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the second session, allow a couple of minutes for group members to say hello.

**What?** Allow a couple of minutes to have the group members greet one another, share any news or experiences from the past week, and share how they are feeling.

**Why?** This facilitates a therapeutic environment, throughout the rest of the session.

**How?** You and your co-facilitator should start by greeting the group and letting the group know that you are doing well. Afterwards, either go around the circle or have each participant volunteer to greet the group and share something personal.

**Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)**

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when the participants found themselves feeling anxious or stressed. Following, they were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery techniques taught during the fourth session and rate their stress level again afterwards. The participants were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment for the previous week gives the offenders an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using PMR helped them. The SUDS gives the exercise a numerical component to refer to when discussing changes in stress level, from before to after using progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery.

**How?** Ask the participants to describe their experience in regards to the homework assignment. This discussion can be held in an informal manner; however, it would be best if all participants are able to share their experiences.

**Topic Discussion (20 minutes)**

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training. Find some information to present below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give the participants some information about how cognitive behaviour therapy works.
How? Present some of the information below, as well as any additional information, that you prepared in advance.

- **What is cognitive behaviour therapy?**
  - CBT is a type of therapy, which is comprised off of two central tenets.
    - Firstly, cognitions influence one’s emotions and behaviours.
    - Secondly, behaviours influence one’s thoughts and emotions.

- **For example**
  - You fail a test (behaviour). As a result, you start to have thoughts such as “I am worthless” or “I am stupid” (cognitions/thoughts). After having these thoughts, you feel sad (emotion).
  - You think you will never be able to make friends and have thoughts such as “they won’t like me anyway, there’s no point in trying” (cognition/thoughts). The behaviours that follow include isolating yourself from others (behaviour). This makes you feel lonely (emotion).

- **Discuss examples of how relaxation training could affect your thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Use examples from the psycho-education portion of the previous sessions.**

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a baseline to reference against the scores that the participants choose after engaging in the relaxation training, which follows.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS, by consulting their SUDS handout, and give a brief explanation of their answer.

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32 Wright, Basco, & Thase, 2006
Cognitive imagery\(33\) (20 minutes)

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to cognitive alone as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to on its own is to allow the inmates to see if they prefer using this skill on its own, or with progressive muscle relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a cognitive imagery exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the cognitive imagery technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

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33 Adapted from Hackmann, Holmes, & Bennett-Levy, 2011
1. Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

2. Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

3. You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you.... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

4. Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 30 seconds)

5. What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 30 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

6. Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 30 seconds)
Give the participants a few moments to gather their bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before asking them to return to the present moment and begin the following component of the session.
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the scores that the participants choose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS and give a brief explanation of their answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for them and describe what they liked and/or disliked about the experience.

Homework (5 minutes)

Assign homework to the group, to be completed by the next session.

**What?** Homework to be completed by the participants, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercises and SUDS.

**Why?** This will increase familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide greater understanding of the participants’ own distress levels pertaining to certain situations. This will also give the participants and administrators an idea of how useful the participants find the PMR and cognitive imagery techniques when used together.

**How?** Explain the homework assignment to the participants. This includes directing them to the SUDS handout and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session. This means identifying two occasions during which they feel anxiety or distress (e.g. neighbour is making too much noise), followed by using the cognitive imagery technique that was taught in-session. As shown on the handout, the participants are asked to rate their level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique they used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate their level of distress again, afterwards.
Session 6: Cognitive Imagery & Mindfulness Meditation

Preparation (20 minutes)

1. Read each section of the session guide carefully. Familiarize yourself with any material or additional information that you may wish to incorporate into the session.
2. Prepare topic discussion.
3. Photocopy the SUDS scale, found below, for each participant and each administrator.
4. Prepare psycho-education regarding mindfulness meditation.

Setting up the room: Ensure that there is a chair for each member of the group and each administrator. Arrange the chairs so that they form a circle. This facilitates an inclusive environment. As well, it may be helpful to have a whiteboard with a marker, should you wish to use it during group discussions or when explaining a concept.

Needed materials:
1. Photocopies made in preparation for group session.
2. Administrator and participant manuals.
3. Pens for administrators and participants.

Tip: The sessions will be wrapping up in two weeks. Reflect on how the group has progressed and identify any materials or information that you wish to review with the group over the upcoming couple of weeks.
Session 6 Overview (1.5 hours)

- Introductions - 5 minutes
- Homework Review - 15 minutes
- Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
- Psycho-education - 15 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Cognitive Imagery - 15 minutes
- Mindfulness Meditation - 10 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Homework - 5 minutes
The distress thermometer – Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a 'distress thermometer' to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

- 100 Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt
- 90 Extremely anxious/distressed
- 80 Very anxious/distressed, can't concentrate
- 70 Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance
- 60
- 50 Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform
- 40
- 30 Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
- 20 Minimal anxiety/distress
- 10 Alert and awake, concentrating well
- 0 Totally relaxed

**Rating before:** ______

**Situation:** ____________________________________________________________

**Technique:** ___________________________________________________________

**Rating after:** ______

**Rating before:** ______

**Situation:** ____________________________________________________________

**Technique:** ___________________________________________________________

**Rating after:** ______
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the second session, allow a couple of minutes for group members to say hello.

*What?* Allow a couple of minutes to have the group members greet one another, share any news or experiences from the past week, and share how they are feeling.

*Why?* This facilitates a therapeutic environment, throughout the rest of the session.

*How?* You and your co-facilitator should start by greeting the group and letting the group know that you are doing well. Afterwards, either go around the circle or have each participant volunteer to greet the group and share something personal.

**Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)**

Review last week’s homework.

*What?* The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when the participants found themselves feeling anxious or stressed. Following, they were asked to use the cognitive imagery techniques taught during the fifth session and rate their stress level again afterwards. The participants were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

*Why?* Reviewing the homework assignment for the previous week gives the offenders an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using cognitive imagery helped them. The SUDS gives the exercise a numerical component to refer to when discussing changes in stress level, from before to after using progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery.

*How?* Ask the participants to describe their experience in regards to the homework assignment. This discussion can be held in an informal manner; however, it would be best if all participants are able to share their experiences.
**Topic Discussion (15 minutes)**

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training. Find some information to present below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give the participants an opportunity to have a general discussion about the information about CBT discussed in session 4 and the information discussed about automatic thoughts and schemas in session 5 and 6. This will ensure that the participants have gained a basic understanding of the concepts and allow them to give examples of how they can use this information in their lives.

**How?** Ask some of the questions shown below.

- What are the two central tenets of CBT?
- Give an example of these basic ideas from your own life.
- What are automatic thoughts?
- Give an example of these thoughts in your own life. How do these thoughts affect you?
- How does relaxation training affect your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours?
- Have you noticed this in your own life, since starting relaxation training?

**Psycho-education of relaxation skills (15 minutes)**

Introduce mindfulness meditation as a relaxation skill to the group.

**What?** Have a discussion about mindfulness meditation and how it works with the group.

**Why?** Mindfulness meditation has been identified as an effective relaxation technique. Meditation can be used in a variety of settings, since it only requires the use of one’s mind.

**How?** Explain how meditation works by presenting some of the information below\(^\text{34}\), as well as any additional information prepared in advance.

- When engaging in mindfulness meditation, one is expected to clear their mind of any anxieties, worries, or thoughts.
- When one is relaxed, typically these same cognitions are absent.
- Therefore, mindfulness meditation imitate initiates a relaxed state of mind.
- This, in turn, affects the rest of the mind and body, initiating a relaxation response.

\(^{34}\) Siegel, Germer, & Olendzki, 2008
Notice the similarity between this mechanism of action and that of the other two skills taught in the group. Discuss how they are similar.

Also, relate this back to what you have learned about CBT.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a baseline to reference against the scores that the participants choose after engaging in the relaxation training, which follows.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS, by consulting their SUDS handout, and give a brief explanation of their answer.

**Cognitive imagery**  

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to cognitive alone as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to on its own is to allow the inmates to see if they prefer using this skill on its own, or with progressive muscle relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a cognitive imagery exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the cognitive imagery technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

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Adapted from Hackmann, Holmes, & Bennett-Levy, 2011
• Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

• Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

• You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

• Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 20 seconds)

• What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

• Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 20 seconds)
• Sink even deeper into relaxation as you focus on what you can hear. Do you hear the wind blowing through the leaves or can you hear the waves lapping against the sand? Are there birds chirping in the distance? What can you hear? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now your world gets a little quieter.

• Deeper still. You are starting to feel more and more relaxed. Feel the comfort and warmth surrounding you. Think of what you can smell. Maybe there is a scent of the fresh grass or trees around you or a hint of saltiness from the ocean. Breath in the clean, fresh air. In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3...

• Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this place. Lay down in the tall grass, in the warm sound, lay down in your canoe, become still. Use all of your senses to enjoy this place and every beautiful quality it has to offer. Enjoy the quiet, enjoy the freedom of having nowhere more important to be and nothing more important to do. Enjoy this warmth, and the relaxing comfort coming over you. (1-2 minute pause.)

• Now notice something that you didn't see before. It's a path. You know this path will guide you to the present moment. You feel at ease as you start to move toward this path. But first, choose something from your relaxing scene to bring with you. Choose a rock... a fallen leaf... a shell that has washed up along the shore. What will this item represent for you? What will you take with you into your present setting or situation? Will it be patience, contentment, confidence, appreciation, or perhaps calmness?

• Bring your symbolic object with you as you make your way through your peaceful, quiet, and relaxing setting by using the path, leading to the present moment. Think of how this place has made you feel... think of how this place is always inside of you, awaiting you should you wish to travel there again.

• Slowly become more and more aware of the present moment as you travel further up the path. Come back to this room. Pay attention to the sounds and the feel of the present moment. Take a couple of moments to readjust your state of consciousness to focus on your current setting and to reflect on the journey you have just taken. (Pause. - 1 minute) When you are ready, open your eyes. Sit up straight and look around.
**Mindfulness Meditation**\(^{36}\) (10 minutes)

Practice mindfulness meditation with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 10-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to correctly engage in mindfulness meditation practice, as well as cognitive imagery, as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to provide the inmates with an additional skill with which to achieve relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a cognitive imagery exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the cognitive imagery technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

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\(^{36}\) Marlett & Kristeller, 1999
1. Close your eyes gently and do a body scan from your head to your toes... (Pause.) Readjust yourself if needed, and relax into a comfortable position. Take three deep breaths... In your nose... and out your mouth...

2. Bring your awareness back to your breathing. Breath deeply, naturally, and through your nose. Don't think of anything else but the flow of air into your lungs... and out your lungs. Throughout this exercise you should continue to pay attention to the sensation of breathing.

3. Pay close attention to each component in the process of breathing and be aware of the bodily sensations that go along with it. This includes noticing the rhythm of your breaths, the air flowing in and out of your nose, your stomach rising and falling, the way the air moving in and out of your throat and lungs...

4. Try not to form any thoughts or opinions on the act of breathing, simply be in the present moment. Do not try to stop the thoughts that come into your mind, simply acknowledge them, and refocus on your breathing.

5. If you do notice that you have become distracted by your thoughts, sounds around you, or other bodily sensations, first become aware that you are distracted and next return your attention to your breathing. Treat each distraction in a gentle and passive manner. Continue on like this in silence for the remainder of the exercise...

6. (9 minutes later) Slowly open your eyes and pay attention to how this exercise has made you feel. Allow yourself to feel the relaxation and contentment and bring it with you for the rest of today.
Give the participants a few moments to gather their bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before asking them to return to the present moment and begin the following component of the session.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the scores that the participants chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS and give a brief explanation of their answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for them and describe what they liked and/or disliked about the experience.

**Homework (5 minutes)**

Assign homework to the group, to be completed by the next session.

**What?** Homework to be completed by the participants, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercises and SUDS.

**Why?** This will increase familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide greater understanding of the participants’ own distress levels pertaining to certain situations. This will also give the participants and administrators an idea of how useful the participants find the cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation techniques when used together.

**How?** Explain the homework assignment to the participants. This includes directing them to the SUDS handout and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session. This means identifying two occasions during which they feel anxiety or distress (e.g. neighbour is making too much noise), followed by using the cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation techniques that were taught in-session. As shown on the handout, the participants are asked to rate their level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique they used, and rate their level of distress again, afterwards.
Session 7: Cognitive Imagery & Mindfulness Meditation Continued

Preparation (20 minutes)

1. Read each section of the session guide carefully. Familiarize yourself with any material or additional information that you may wish to incorporate into the session.
2. Prepare topic discussion.
3. Photocopy the SUDS scale, found below, for each participant and each administrator.
4. Prepare psycho-education regarding mindfulness meditation.

Setting up the room: Ensure that there is a chair for each member of the group and each administrator. Arrange the chairs so that they form a circle. This facilitates an inclusive environment. As well, it may be helpful to have a whiteboard with a marker, should you wish to use it during group discussions or when explaining a concept.

Needed materials:
1. Photocopies made in preparation for group session.
2. Administrator and participant manuals.
3. Pens for administrators and participants.

Tip: Use this session and the next session in order to wrap up the information and tools presented in this manual. Ensure that the participants understood the information and make time to re-explain any concepts, if necessary.
Session 7 Overview (1.25 hours)

Introductions - 5 minutes

Homework Review - 15 minutes

Topic Discussion - 10 minutes

SUDS - 5 minutes

Cognitive Imagery - 15 minutes

Mindfulness Meditation - 15 minutes

SUDS - 5 minutes

Homework - 5 minutes
The distress thermometer – Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

Try to get used to rating your distress, fear, anxiety or discomfort on a scale of 0-100. Imagine you have a ‘distress thermometer’ to measure your feelings according to the following scale. Notice how your level of distress and fear changes over time and in different situations.

- 100  Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt
- 90   Extremely anxious/distressed
- 80   Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate
- 70   Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance
- 60
- 50   Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform
- 40
- 30   Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
- 20   Minimal anxiety/distress
- 10   Alert and awake, concentrating well
- 0    Totally relaxed
Introductions (5 minutes)

To start off the second session, allow a couple of minutes for group members to say hello.

**What?** Allow a couple of minutes to have the group members greet one another, share any news or experiences from the past week, and share how they are feeling.

**Why?** This facilitates a therapeutic environment, throughout the rest of the session.

**How?** You and your co-facilitator should start by greeting the group and letting the group know that you are doing well. Afterwards, either go around the circle or have each participant volunteer to greet the group and share something personal.

Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when the participants found themselves feeling anxious or stressed. Following, they were asked to use the cognitive imagery techniques taught during the fifth session and rate their stress level again afterwards. The participants were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment for the previous week gives the offenders an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using cognitive imagery helped them. The SUDS gives the exercise a numerical component to refer to when discussing changes in stress level, from before to after using progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery.

**How?** Ask the participants to describe their experience in regards to the homework assignment. This discussion can be held in an informal manner; however, it would be best if all participants are able to share their experiences.

Topic Discussion (10 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training. Find some information to present below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.
**Why?** This part of the session should give the participants an opportunity to discuss the how the three relaxation techniques work to relax the mind and body. In addition, it will give an opportunity to share ideas as to when and where the techniques can be use in their daily lives. This will ensure that the participants learned throughout the psycho-education components of the sessions and that they will be able to use the techniques in different situations, outside of sessions.

**How?** Ask some of the questions shown below.

- *How does progressive muscle relaxation work?*
- *How does cognitive imagery work?*
- *How does mindfulness meditation work?*
- *In what situations have you used these relaxation techniques throughout the past 6 weeks?*
- *What other situations could you use these techniques in?*
- *What other settings could you use the techniques in?*

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a baseline to reference against the scores that the participants choose after engaging in the relaxation training, which follows.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS, by consulting their SUDS handout, and give a brief explanation of their answer.

**Cognitive imagery**

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to cognitive alone as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to on its own is to allow the inmates to see if they prefer using this skill on its own, or with progressive muscle relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a cognitive imagery exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the cognitive imagery technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

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37 Adapted from Hackmann, Holmes, & Bennett-Levy, 2011
1 • Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

2 • Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

3 • You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you.... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

4 • Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 20 seconds)

5 • What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

6 • Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 20 seconds)
7. Sink even deeper into relaxation as you focus on what you can hear. Do you hear the wind blowing through the leaves or can you hear the waves lapping against the sand? Are there birds chirping in the distance? What can you hear? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now your world gets a little quieter.

8. Deeper still. You are starting to feel more and more relaxed. Feel the comfort and warmth surrounding you. Think of what you can smell. Maybe there is a scent of the fresh grass or trees around you or a hint of saltiness from the ocean. Breath in the clean, fresh air. In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3...

9. Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this place. Lay down in the tall grass, in the warm sound, lay down in your canoe, become still. Use all of your senses to enjoy this place and every beautiful quality it has to offer. Enjoy the quiet, enjoy the freedom of having nowhere more important to be and nothing more important to do. Enjoy this warmth, and the relaxing comfort coming over you. (1-2 minute pause.)

10. Now notice something that you didn't see before. It's a path. You know this path will guide you to the present moment. You feel at ease as you start to move toward this path. But first, choose something from your relaxing scene to bring with you. Choose a rock.. a fallen leaf.. a shell that has washed up along the shore. What will this item represent for you? What will you take with you into your present setting or situation? Will it be patience, contentment, confidence, appreciation, or perhaps calmness?

11. Bring your symbolic object with you as you make your way through your peaceful, quiet, and relaxing setting by using the path, leading to the present moment. Think of how this place has made you feel... think of how this place is always inside of you, awaiting you should you wish to travel there again.

12. Slowly become more and more aware of the present moment as you travel further up the path. Come back to this room. Pay attention to the sounds and the feel of the present moment. Take a couple of moments to readjust your state of consciousness to focus on your current setting and to reflect on the journey you have just taken. (Pause. - 1 minute) When you are ready, open your eyes. Sit up straight and look around.
**Mindfulness Meditation** (15 minutes)

Practice mindfulness meditation with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 10-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to correctly engage in mindfulness meditation practice, as well as cognitive imagery, as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to provide the inmates with an additional skill with which to achieve relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a mindfulness meditation exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the meditation technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

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38 Marlatt & Kristeller, 1999
• Close your eyes gently and do a body scan from your head to your toes... (Pause.) Readjust yourself if needed, and relax into a comfortable position. Take three deep breaths... In your nose.... and out your mouth...

• Bring your awareness back to your breathing. Breath deeply, naturally, and through your nose. Don't think of anything else but the flow of air into your lungs... and out your lungs. Throughout this exercise you should continue to pay attention to the sensation of breathing.

• Pay close attention to each component in the process of breathing and be aware of the bodily sensations that go along with it. This includes noticing the rhythm of your breaths, the air flowing in and out of your nose, your stomach rising and falling, the way the air moving in and out of your throat and lungs...

• Try not to form any thoughts or opinions on the act of breathing, simply be in the present moment. Do not try to stop the thoughts that come into your mind, simply acknowledge them, and refocus on your breathing.

• If you do notice that you have become distracted by your thoughts, sounds around you, or other bodily sensations, first become aware that you are distracted and next return your attention to your breathing. Treat each distraction in a gentle and passive manner. Continue on like this in silence for the remainder of the exercise...

• (14 minutes later) Slowly open your eyes and pay attention to how this exercise has made you feel. Allow yourself to feel the relaxation and contentment and bring it with you for the rest of today.
Give the participants a few moments to gather their bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before asking them to return to the present moment and begin the following component of the session.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the scores that the participants choose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS and give a brief explanation of their answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for them and describe what they liked and/or disliked about the experience.

**Homework (5 minutes)**

Assign homework to the group, to be completed by the next session.

**What?** Homework to be completed by the participants, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercises and SUDS.

**Why?** This will increase familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide greater understanding of the participants’ own distress levels pertaining to certain situations. This will also give the participants and administrators an idea of how useful the participants find the cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation techniques when used together.

**How?** Explain the homework assignment to the participants. This includes directing them to the SUDS handout and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session. This means identifying two occasions during which they feel anxiety or distress (e.g. neighbour is making too much noise), followed by using the cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation techniques that were taught in-session. As shown on the handout, the participants are asked to rate their level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique they used, and rate their level of distress again, afterwards.
**Session 8: Cognitive Imagery & Mindfulness Meditation Continued**

**Preparation (20 minutes)**

1. Read each section of the session guide carefully. Familiarize yourself with any material or additional information that you may wish to incorporate into the session.
2. Prepare end-of-group discussion.

**Setting up the room:** Ensure that there is a chair for each member of the group and each administrator. Arrange the chairs so that they form a circle. This facilitates an inclusive environment. As well, it may be helpful to have a whiteboard with a marker, should you wish to use it during group discussions or when explaining a concept.

**Needed materials:**
- 1. Administrator and participant manuals.
- 2. Pens for administrators and participants.

**Tip:** Last session! Try to gain feedback from the participants and administrators on how the sessions met their needs. Where is there room for improvement the next time around?
Session 8 Overview (1.5 hours)

1. Introductions - 5 minutes
2. Homework Review - 15 minutes
3. Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
4. SUDS - 5 minutes
5. Cognitive Imagery - 10 minutes
6. Mindfulness Meditation - 20 minutes
7. SUDS - 5 minutes
8. End-of-Session Discussion - 15 minutes
9. Survey - 10 minutes
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the second session, allow a couple of minutes for group members to say hello.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Allow a couple of minutes to have the group members greet one another, share any news or experiences from the past week, and share how they are feeling.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>This facilitates a therapeutic environment, throughout the rest of the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How?</td>
<td>You and your co-facilitator should start by greeting the group and letting the group know that you are doing well. Afterwards, either go around the circle or have each participant volunteer to greet the group and share something personal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)

Review last week's homework.

What? The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when the participants found themselves feeling anxious or stressed. Following, they were asked to use the cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation techniques taught during the seventh session and rate their stress level again afterwards. The participants were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

Why? Reviewing the homework assignment for the previous week gives the offenders an opportunity to share with the group members and the facilitators, how using cognitive imagery helped them. The SUDS gives the exercise a numerical component to refer to when discussing changes in stress level, from before to after using cognitive imagery.

How? Ask the participants to describe their experience in regards to the homework assignment. This discussion can be held in an informal manner; however, it would be best if all participants are able to share their experiences.

Topic Discussion (15 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training. Find some information to present below.

What? Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

Why? This part of the session should give the participants an opportunity to discuss the how the three relaxation techniques work to relax the mind and body. In addition, it will give an opportunity to share ideas as to when and where the techniques can be use in their daily lives. This will ensure that the participants learned throughout the psycho-education components of the sessions and that they will be able to use the techniques in different situations, outside of sessions.

How? Ask some of the questions shown below.

- How does progressive muscle relaxation work?
- How does cognitive imagery work?
- How does mindfulness meditation work?
- In what situations have you used these relaxation techniques throughout the past 6 weeks?
- What other situations could you use these techniques in?
- What other settings could you use the techniques in?
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a baseline to reference against the scores that the participants choose after engaging in the relaxation training, which follows.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS, by consulting their SUDS handout, and give a brief explanation of their answer.

Cognitive imagery[^39] (10 minutes)

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to cognitive alone as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to on its own is to allow the inmates to see if they prefer using this skill on its own, or with progressive muscle relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a cognitive imagery exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the cognitive imagery technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

[^39]: Adapted from Hackmann, Holmes, & Bennett-Levy, 2011
• Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

• Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

• You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you.... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you've had today.

• Once you've chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 20 seconds)

• What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

• Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 20 seconds)
7. Sink even deeper into relaxation as you focus on what you can hear. Do you hear the wind blowing through the leaves or can you hear the waves lapping against the sand? Are there birds chirping in the distance? What can you hear? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now your world gets a little quieter.

8. Deeper still. You are starting to feel more and more relaxed. Feel the comfort and warmth surrounding you. Think of what you can smell. Maybe there is a scent of the fresh grass or trees around you or a hint of saltiness from the ocean. Breath in the clean, fresh air. In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3...

9. Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this place. Lay down in the tall grass, in the warm sound, lay down in your canoe, become still. Use all of your senses to enjoy this place and every beautiful quality it has to offer. Enjoy the quiet, enjoy the freedom of having nowhere more important to be and nothing more important to do. Enjoy this warmth, and the relaxing comfort coming over you. (1-2 minute pause.)

10. Now notice something that you didn't see before. It's a path. You know this path will guide you to the present moment. You feel at ease as you start to move toward this path. But first, choose something from your relaxing scene to bring with you. Choose a rock... a fallen leaf... a shell that has washed up along the shore. What will this item represent for you? What will you take with you into your present setting or situation? Will it be patience, contentment, confidence, appreciation, or perhaps calmness?

11. Bring your symbolic object with you as you make your way through your peaceful, quiet, and relaxing setting by using the path, leading to the present moment. Think of how this place has made you feel... think of how this place is always inside of you, awaiting you should you wish to travel there again.

12. Slowly become more and more aware of the present moment as you travel further up the path. Come back to this room. Pay attention to the sounds and the feel of the present moment. Take a couple of moments to readjust your state of consciousness to focus on your current setting and to reflect on the journey you have just taken. (Pause. - 1 minute) When you are ready, open your eyes. Sit up straight and look around.
Mindfulness Meditation (20 minutes)

Practice mindfulness meditation with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 10-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to correctly engage in mindfulness meditation practice, as well as cognitive imagery, as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of teaching this skill is to provide the inmates with an additional skill with which to achieve relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Let the group know that you are going to practice a cognitive imagery exercise. You may want to turn off some lights. Explain to the participants that they should be using deep breathing throughout the exercise. Read out the instructions below in order to engage in the cognitive imagery technique, keeping the SUDS in mind. Ask the participants to notice their level of stress before and after using the technique.

40 Marlatt & Kristeller, 1999
• Close your eyes gently and do a body scan from your head to your toes... (Pause.) Adjust yourself if needed, and relax into a comfortable position. Take three deep breaths... In your nose.... and out your mouth...

• Bring your awareness back to your breathing. Breath deeply, naturally, and through your nose. Don't think of anything else but the flow of air into your lungs... and out your lungs. Throughout this exercise you should continue to pay attention to the sensation of breathing.

• Pay close attention to each component in the process of breathing and be aware of the bodily sensations that go along with it. This includes noticing the rhythm of your breaths, the air flowing in and out of your nose, your stomach rising and falling, the way the air moving in and out of your throat and lungs...

• Try not to form any thoughts or opinions on the act of breathing, simply be in the present moment. Do not try to stop the thoughts that come into your mind, simply acknowledge them, and refocus on your breathing.

• If you do notice that you have become distracted by your thoughts, sounds around you, or other bodily sensations, first become aware that you are distracted and next return your attention to your breathing. Treat each distraction in a gentle and passive manner. Continue on like this in silence for the remainder of the exercise...

• (19 minutes later) Slowly open your eyes and pay attention to how this exercise has made you feel. Allow yourself to feel the relaxation and contentment and bring it with you for the rest of today.
Give the participants a few moments to gather their bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before asking them to return to the present moment and begin the following component of the session.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Have the participants rate their level of distress.

**What?** Have the participants rate their current level of distress, using their SUDS handouts and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the scores that the participants choose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Have each participant indicate where they are currently at on the SUDS and give a brief explanation of their answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for them and describe what they liked and/or disliked about the experience.

**End-of-group discussion (15 minutes)**

Have a discussion with the group pertaining to how the group went and what their biggest take-away was.

**What?** Wrap up the group with a discussion among the participants and facilitators.

**Why?** This will give the participants a sense of closure and a sense of what they have taken away from the group, in the end. The administrators, will also gain an idea of how the sessions went, and how things might be done differently the next time.

**How?** Ask the participants to each name one thing that they learned throughout the sessions. As well, ask the participants to describe something that they wish had gone better. Explain to the participants how the sessions went for you and your co-facilitator. Overall, have an informal discussion about the relaxation training itself.
Fill out the surveys (10 minutes)

Have the group members and the program facilitators fill out their surveys in section 3 and section 4 of their manuals, respectively.

**What?** Have everyone fill out the surveys at the back of their manuals.

**Why?** The data collected

**How?** Ask the participants to each name one thing that they learned throughout the sessions. As well, ask the participants to describe something that they wish had gone better. Explain to the participants how the sessions went for you and your co-facilitator. Overall, have an informal discussion about the relaxation training itself.
Part III: References

References


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**Additional Resources**


**Facilitator Survey**
The purpose of this survey is to gain valuable feedback about the facilitator relaxation training manual and overall experience. Please answer the following questions honestly, as your answers may be used to incorporate modifications to the facilitator and participant relaxation manuals.

1. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate how easy it was to understand and follow the information presented in the manual (1 indicates Very Difficult, and 5 indicates Very Easy).

   1  2  3  4  5

2. Do you feel as though the manual meets your needs, as a mental health professional, should you choose to deliver the relaxation training?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Somewhat

3. Please indicate what you think might help to better meet your needs:

4. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate how useful you found the manual, when delivering the sessions to clients (1 indicates Not Very Useful, and 5 indicates Very Useful).

   1  2  3  4  5

5. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate how satisfied you were, overall, with the relaxation training manual (1 indicates Very Dissatisfied, and 5 indicates Very Satisfied).

   1  2  3  4  5

6. Indicate what changes you think would be helpful to the manual or sessions in general:

7. What was the most useful component of the relaxation training manuals?

8. Please add any additional feedback or advice for the relaxation training program:

   Thank you!
**Participant Survey**

The purpose of this survey is to gain valuable feedback about the relaxation sessions that you participated in with the program facilitators. Please answer the following questions honestly, as your answers may be used to make changes to the participant relaxation manual.

1. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate how easy it was to understand the information presented in the manual (1 indicates Very Hard, and 5 indicates Very Easy).

   1   2   3   4   5

2. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate how easy it was to read the manual (1 indicates Very Hard, and 5 indicates Very Easy).

   1   2   3   4   5

3. Were you able to learn the relaxation skills taught in the relaxation training sessions?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Somewhat

4. Please indicate what you think might help you to learn the relaxation techniques:

5. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate how useful you found the manual during the sessions (1 indicates Not Very Useful, and 5 indicates Very Useful).

   1   2   3   4   5

6. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate how useful you found the relaxation techniques, taught during the sessions (1 indicates Not Very Useful, and 5 indicates Very Useful).

   1   2   3   4   5

7. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate how satisfied you were, overall, with the relaxation training program (1 indicates Very Dissatisfied, and 5 indicates Very Satisfied).

   1   2   3   4   5

8. Indicate what changes you think would be helpful to the manual or sessions in general:

9. What was the most useful portion of the manual or of the sessions?

10. Please add any additional comments or advice for the relaxation training program:

    Thank you
Relaxation Training Participant Manual

Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Cognitive Imagery, and Mindfulness Meditation
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Part I: Introduction

Welcome to the relaxation training program!

How could this relaxation training help me?
- This manual may give you a greater knowledge of anxiety and relaxation.
- This manual is intended to help you with your anxiety.
- You can use the techniques to help you relax.
- You will become more aware of the bodily sensations associated with anxiety vs relaxation.

How long will the session be?
- The sessions will typically last from 1 – 2 hours.

What can you expect to learn?
- How to use multiple relaxation techniques in order to help you with your anxiety
- How to use deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation together
- How to use progressive muscle relaxation, using 16 muscle groups, 7 muscle groups, and 4 muscle groups
- How to use progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery together
- How to use cognitive imagery alone
- How to use cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation together

Will I have to do anything outside of the group?
- You will have weekly homework assignments, including using the relaxation techniques that you learned in the group twice during the week.
- There is an optional 5-minute preparation section at the beginning of each session in your manual.

Overall, try to keep an open mind and contribute to a relaxing environment when in group each week!

Find an outline of the relaxation training sections below!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1: Deep Breathing &amp; Progressive Muscle Relaxation (1.5 hrs)</th>
<th>Session 2: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Continued (1.5 hrs)</th>
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<tr>
<td>o Preparation for session</td>
<td>o Preparation for session</td>
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<td>o Introductions &amp; social activity</td>
<td>o Introductions &amp; social activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Topic discussion</td>
<td>o Topic discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Introduction of SUDS &amp; activity</td>
<td>o Review of homework assignment</td>
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<td>o Deep breathing activity</td>
<td>o Introduction of SUDS &amp; activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Use SUDS</td>
<td>o Deep breathing activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o 16 muscle group PMR exercise</td>
<td>o Use SUDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Use SUDS</td>
<td>o 7 muscle group PMR exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Discuss homework assignment</td>
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<td>o Discuss homework assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 3: Progressive Muscle Relaxation &amp; Cognitive Imagery (1.5 hrs)</td>
<td>Session 4: Progressive Muscle Relaxation &amp; Cognitive Imagery Continued (1.5 hrs)</td>
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<td>o Preparation for session</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Introductions and social activity</td>
<td>o Introductions and sharing</td>
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<td>o Review of homework assignment</td>
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<td>o 7 muscle PMR exercise</td>
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<td>o 15-minute cognitive imagery exercise</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 5: Cognitive Imagery (1.25 hr)</th>
<th>Session 6: Cognitive Imagery &amp; Mindfulness Meditation (1.5 hrs)</th>
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<tr>
<td>o Preparation for session</td>
<td>o Preparation for session</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Introductions and sharing</td>
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<td>o Topic discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Review of homework assignment</td>
<td>o Review of homework assignment</td>
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<td>o Use SUDS</td>
<td>o Use SUDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>o 20-minute cognitive imagery exercise</td>
<td>o 15-minute cognitive imagery exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Use SUDS &amp; discussion</td>
<td>o 10-minute meditation exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Discuss homework assignment</td>
<td>o Use SUDS &amp; discussion</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 7: Cognitive Imagery &amp; Mindfulness Meditation Continued (1.25 hour)</th>
<th>Session 8: Cognitive Imagery &amp; Mindfulness Meditation Continued (1.5 hour)</th>
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<td>o Preparation for session</td>
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<td>o 15-minute cognitive imagery exercise</td>
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<td>o 15 minute meditation exercise</td>
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<td>o Discuss homework assignment</td>
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Welcome to the relaxation training program! Each week, it may be helpful to take a couple of minutes to prepare for the group.

Before beginning the first session:
- Simply reflect on your knowledge of anxiety and relaxation.
- Ask yourself questions about what makes you feel anxious and how this affects your life.
- Ask yourself which tools you use in order to relax, if any.

**Session 1 Overview (1.5 hours)**

- Introductions - 5 minutes
- Social Activity - 10 minutes
- Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
- SUDS - 10 minutes
- Psycho-education - 15 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Deep Breathing - 5 minutes
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation - 15 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Homework - 5 minutes
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the first session, your program facilitators will introduce themselves.

**What?** Get to know the program facilitators.

**Why?** This lets you know a little something about the people that are going to be delivering the relaxation training throughout the groups each week. Hopefully this will allow you to be more comfortable in working with them.

**How?** Listen carefully to what the program facilitators have to say!

Next, each group participant will introduce themselves.

**What?** Listen to the instructions from your facilitators and when it is your turn, introduce yourself.

**Why?** Similar to having the facilitators introduce themselves, the purpose of this part of the session is to make you and the other group members more comfortable talking to one another.

**How?** When it is your turn, introduce yourself to the group.

**Social Activity (10 minutes)**

Next, listen to the instructions to play a game with the group.

**What?** The name of the social activity described in this manual is Two Truths, One Lie. However, your facilitator may have prepared a different activity.

**Why?** This is your chance to interact with your group members and have some fun!
**How?** Collect a card and a pen from the program facilitator. Follow the instructions of the game, as explained by you facilitator. The rules are as follows:
- Write down two truths and one lie about yourself on the card that you received.
- Each member will share what they had written.
- Other group members should all vote on which statement they believe to be a lie.
- The facilitator will keep track of each person`s guess.
- After everyone has voted, including administrators, the individual will tell the group which statement was a lie.
- Each participant who guessed the right answer gets a point.
- If nobody guessed the right answer, the participant who shared his statements gets a point.
- Continue on like this until each person has shared their statements.
- Tally up the points and appoint a winner!

**Topic Discussion (15 minutes)**

Have a discussion with the group about anxiety and relaxation training. Find some possible discussion questions below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** Now that you have gotten to know one another a little bit, it is time to begin talking about the purpose of the group sessions.

**How?** Discuss some of the topic questions on the following page. Try to participate in the conversation, while also listening to others and respecting what others have to say.
- What do you know about anxiety?
- What does anxiety look, feel, and sound like?
- What kind of experiences have you had with anxiety?
- Does your anxiety stop you from doing some of the things you want to do or should do?
- How does your anxiety affect your life in general?
- How does your anxiety affect how you sleep/eat/interact with others?
- What do you know about relaxation?
- What does relaxation look, feel, and sound like?
- What experiences have you had with relaxation?
- What relaxation techniques, if any, do you use?
- What helps you feel calm?
- How do you think that this relaxation training might help you in your life?
**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (10 minutes)**

Talk about SUDS!

**What?** Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS). This scale is used to rate one’s level of distress and will be used to do so throughout sessions.

**Why?** This scale will be used as a self-monitoring tool throughout the group sessions. It can be used before and after using relaxation techniques in order to demonstrate the usefulness of the techniques. This may also give you an idea of how well the relaxation techniques work for you in certain situations.

**How?** Review your SUDS handout with the group and participate in a discussion about how the tool works.

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Participate in a case study activity.

**What?** An activity to rate the distress level of the characters in the case studies, below.

**Why?** This will further familiarize you with the SUDS.

**How?** Volunteer to read out the case studies, if you wish. Discuss with the group where these characters might be on the SUDS, above.
Case study #1
Tom is feeling extremely anxious; he has never felt this inexplicably worried in his entire life. Tom feels like he may faint or have a heart attack.

Case study #2
• John has just had to move cells. John is usually easy-going and gets along with everyone. However, this is still a big change and he is worried that his neighbours won`t like him or won`t be nice to him.

Case study #3
• Dave has to talk in group today. He is feeling very nervous, but he has always been good at talking in front of people. Dave had spent hours preparing and had every word he wanted to say memorized. Even though he was nervous, he felt confident.

Case study #4
• Billy returned to his cell after his meditation session. He had spent one hour meditating and felt very relaxed. Billy put on his comfortable clothes and got into bed. All electronics were off and he was drifting off to sleep.
**Psycho-education of relaxation skills (15 minutes)**

Learn something about relaxation skills.

**What?** Learn about and discuss deep breathing, as a group.

**Why?** Deep breathing is an effective and simple relaxation technique. Deep breathing is easy to use and takes a short amount of time.

**How?** Review some of the information below as a group:
- Shallow breathing, in and out of your chest, is associated with hyperventilating – like when someone has a panic attack.
- Shallow breathing sends a message to the brain to engage in a “fight-or-flight” response. This response is a natural response to imminent danger.
- In contrast, intentionally breathing deeply creates a relaxation response in the body.
- It is important to breathe using the muscles in your stomach, rather than your chest, because muscles in the diaphragm, or stomach, are intended to be used this way.
- Using the muscles in your chest requires more energy!
- Discuss with the group!

Learn about progressive muscle relaxation.

**What?** Learn about and discuss progressive muscle relaxation.

**Why?** Progressive muscle relaxation is one of the most effective skills to achieve relaxation. This will be the second skill that you learn how to use in this group, so it is helpful to know a few things about it.

**How?** Learn something about progressive muscle relaxation by reviewing and discussing the following information with the group.
- Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique developed by a doctor named Edmund Jacobson in 1929.
- The main idea behind the technique is that the body responds to stressful things in your environment by tensing the muscles. Then, this makes the experience of feeling anxious more intense.
- Therefore, relaxing the muscles has the opposite effect of the feeling of anxiety. The relaxation response (relaxing the muscles) blocks the anxiety response (e.g., tense muscles and feeling of anxiety).
- Progressive muscle relaxation can lower the heart rate, blood pressure, fight-or-flight response, sweating, and breathing rate.
- Progressive muscle relaxation has been shown to be very effective helping people achieve relaxation.
- Discuss with the group!
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Rate your level of distress.

What? Rate your level of distress by using the scale shown to the right.

Why? This will give you an idea of where you’re at before doing the relaxation exercises. That way, when you use the scale again after using the technique, you can see how much of a difference using the skill made in your distress level.

How? Take a look at the scale to the right. Take a few moments to decide on your current stress level. Afterwards, share with the group and explain why you chose that rating.

Deep Breathing (5 minutes)

Next, practice a short deep breathing exercise with the group.

What? Practice a breathing exercise with the group.

Why? This gives you an opportunity to correctly use deep breathing as a relaxation skill. Deep breathing will also be an important part of the other relaxation techniques, taught throughout the sessions.

How? Listen to the instructions given by your program facilitator. It is important for you to contribute to a therapeutic and relaxing environment.
1. Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body.

2. Gently, put one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly.

3. Sit as comfortably as possible, clear your mind, and close your eyes softly.

4. Count to three, as you breathe in through your nose. 1... 2... 3...

5. Notice the hand on your belly move, as your belly becomes fuller. The hand on your chest should barely move.

6. Again, count to three, as you breathe in through your nose. 1... 2... 3...
Progressive Muscle Relaxation (15 minutes)

Practice the 16 muscle group PMR skill with the group.

**What?** Practice 16 muscle group progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to correctly use progressive muscle relaxation. Once you have become familiar with this skill, you will be able to use it outside of group sessions, in their daily lives or when needed.

**How?** Continue to contribute to a relaxing environment by remaining quiet and concentrating on achieving relaxation. The facilitator will use the instructions below to guide you through the exercise.

1. Count to three as you let the breath go out of your mouth. 1... 2... 3...
2. Notice the hand on your belly go down. Allow all of the air to exit your belly.
3. Repeat these steps for 2 minutes in silence. In your nose, 1... 2... 3... and out your mouth 1... 2... 3... Becoming more and more relaxed with every breathe.
4. (After 2 minutes) Open your eyes and notice your stress level. Notice the feeling of relaxation and try to compare how you feel now, to how you felt before the activity.
1. Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body and begin using the deep breathing practice we just went through. Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible.

2. We will begin with your right arm (or left, if you are left handed). Tense the muscles in your right hand and lower arm by making a tight fist. Feel the tension in your hand and arm as you do this, and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Now let go and feel how the muscles are now relaxed. (Pause.)

3. Next, tense the muscles in your right bicep by pushing your elbow down on the arm of your charm. Try not to use your hand or lower arm muscles when doing this. Feel the tension in your bicep and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Let go of the tension and notice the difference between how the muscle felt when it was tensed, and how it feels now. (Pause.)

4. Now, we move to the left arm (or right, if you are left handed). Make a fist with your left hand and feel the tension in your hand and lower arm. Hold this for 3... 2... 1... Let go of the tension and relax. Check in with your deep breathing pattern now. (Pause.)

5. Next, we will move on to the face. Tense the muscles in your forehead by raising your eyebrows as high as you can. Feel the tension in your forehead and your scalp before releasing it in 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation in your forehead now, compared to when your forehead felt tense. (Pause.)

6. Tense the center muscles in your face by squeezing your eyes shut and wrinkling up your nose. Pay attention to the tension around your eyes and in your upper cheek muscles. Release the tension and relax in 3... 2... 1... (Pause.)
• Tense the muscles in your lower face by biting your teeth together and smiling with your mouth closed. Hold this tension in the lower part of your face for 3... 2... 1... and let go. Notice how relaxed your face feels. (Pause.)

• Next we will work on relaxing the muscles in the neck. Bend your neck forward so your chin is almost, but not quite, touching your chest. Feel the tension in the back and front of your neck and hold for 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be aware of the difference between how your neck felt when it was tense, and now as it is relaxed. (Pause.)

• We will focus on the muscles in your chest, shoulders, and upper back. Take a deep breath in and hold it as you pull your shoulder blades together. Feel the tension in your chest, shoulders, and upper back. Let go in 3... 2... 1... And relax. (Pause.)

• Now make your stomach hard by tensing your ab muscles. Hold this while paying attention to the tension in your stomach muscles and relax in 3... 2... 1... Be conscious of the feeling of relaxation in your stomach muscles now. (Pause).

• To tense the muscle in the right thigh straighten your leg out in front and tighten your thigh muscle. Feel the tension in your thigh muscle and release in 1... 2... 3... and relax your thigh muscle.

• Now, with your right leg comfortably bent at the knee point your toe and clench your calf muscle for three... two... one... and bend your toes up towards the ceiling and hold for 3... 2... 1... and relax, as you notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your lower right leg and your right foot.
Take a few moments to enjoy being in a state of relaxation.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**
Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Discuss your current level of distress, using their SUDS to the right and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the score that you chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Take a few moments to choose where you are currently at on the SUDS. When you are ready, share your answer with the group and give a brief explanation of your answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for you and describe what you liked and/or disliked about the experience.

- 100  Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt
- 90   Extremely anxious/distressed
- 80   Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate
- 70   Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance
- 60   
- 50   Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform
- 40   
- 30   Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
- 20   Minimal anxiety/distress
- 10   Alert and awake, concentrating well
- 0    Totally relaxed
Homework (5 minutes)

You have homework to be completed by the next session.

**What?** Homework for the next session, involving the relaxation exercises and SUDS.

**Why?** This will increase your familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide you with a greater understanding of your stress levels in certain situations. This will also give you an idea of how useful you find each skill that we use in group.

**How?** Listen to the facilitator’s description of the homework assignment carefully.

- Use the SUDS handout that you received from the facilitator and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session.
- This means identifying two occasions during which you feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the deep breathing technique and progressive muscle relaxation technique.
- To use these techniques follow along with the instructions used in the first session of this manual.
- As shown on the handout, you are asked to rate your level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique you used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate your level of distress again.
Session 2: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Continued

Preparation (20 minutes)

Before beginning the first session:
- If you wish, read through the second session section of the manual.
- Ask yourself more about what makes you feel anxious and how this affects your life.
- Ensure that your homework is completed and reflect on how engaging in the relaxation technique went.

Session 2 Overview (1.5 hours)

1. Introductions - 5 minutes
2. Social Activity - 10 minutes
3. Homework Review - 15 minutes
4. Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
5. Psycho-education - 15 minutes
6. SUDS - 5 minutes
7. Progressive Muscle Relaxation - 15 minutes
8. SUDS - 5 minutes
9. Homework - 5 minutes
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the second session, each group member should take some time to say hello to one another.

**What?** Engage in greeting other group members, and listen to and share any news or experiences from the past week, and any feelings anyone wishes to discuss.

**Why?** The purpose of engaging in conversation with other group members is to make you and the others more comfortable working together.

**How?** Listen to the instructions and introductions given by the group facilitators. Afterwards, listen to the others and take your turn to say hello and share something personal from the past week.

**Social Activity (10 minutes)**

Next, you will ask the participants to engage in a social activity.

**What?** The name of the social activity described in this manual is What Stresses Me Out? However, the facilitator of the manual may have chosen to prepare a different activity.

**Why?** This game provides you and other group members with an opportunity to disclose some information to the group, about why you are participating in the relaxation sessions. This may also allow you to learn something new about yourself, if you keep an open mind.

**How?** Take a look at the cards being passed around the circle. Choose a card that says something that causes you fear, worry, stress, or anxiety. When everyone has a card, listen to others share what they chose, or volunteer to share your choice. First, explain why you chose the card. Then, describe how relaxation training might be able to help you with the thing on your card. Ask the other group members to help you come up with your answer. Each participant should have an opportunity to speak and share what is on their card.
Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when you found yourself feeling anxious or stressed. Following, you were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation technique taught during the first session and rate your stress level again afterwards. You were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment from the previous week gives you an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using progressive muscle relaxation had helped you. The SUDS gives the exercise a number to refer to when discussing changes in your stress level, from before to after using progressive muscle relaxation.

**How?** When it is your turn, describe your experience in regards to the homework assignment. Talk specifically about how the relaxation technique worked for you. Speak when it is your turn, and listen carefully to others when they are speaking. You may learn something!

Topic Discussion (15 minutes)

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give you some information about how stress and anxiety can affect your life and with motivation to develop healthy coping strategies (i.e. relaxation techniques).

**How?** Review some of the following information with the group.

* How can stress affect your physical health?
  - You may eat more or less than usual and gain or lose weight.
  - You may refrain from doing the things that you used to do (e.g. work out).
  - You may feel tired all the time, while not being able to sleep at night.
  - Stress can make your hair fall out.
  - You are more susceptible to physical diseases when you are stressed.
  - You may get sick more often.
  - You may often get headaches.
  - Your stomach may often feel upset and you could have difficulties with digestion
  - You may experience muscular tension.
  - You may experience chest pains.
  - You may find yourself grinding your teeth.
  - You could feel faint or dizzy.
Psycho-education of relaxation skills (15 minutes)

Further discuss progressive muscle relaxation.

**What?** Discuss progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

**Why?** Progressive muscle relaxation is one of the most effective relaxation techniques.

**How?** Review the information presented from last week regarding the function of progressive muscle relaxation.
- Tensing and relaxing the muscles blocks the fight-or-flight response.
- This sends a message to the brain to relax, thus producing a state of relaxation in the mind and body.
- Discuss with the group!

Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Rate your level of distress by using the scale shown to the right.

**Why?** This will give you an idea of where you’re at before doing the relaxation exercises. That way, when you use the scale again after using the technique, you can see how much of a difference using the skill made in your distress level.

**How?** Take a look at the scale to the right. Take a few moments to decide on your current stress level. Afterwards, share with the group and explain why you chose that rating.

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**Progressive Muscle Relaxation (15 minutes)**

Practice the 7-muscle group PMR skill with the group.

**What?** Practice 7 muscle progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to correctly use progressive muscle relaxation, with only 7 muscle groups. The purpose of learning this skill is to enable you to use the skill in a wider variety of environments, since it takes less time and effort to complete. Once you become familiar with this skill, you will be able to use it outside of group sessions, in your daily life or when needed.

**How?** Listen to the instructions being given by the facilitator in order to engage in the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Help create and maintain a relaxing environment both for yourself and those around you.
1. Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body and begin using the deep breathing practice we just went through. Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible.

2. We will begin with your right arm (or left, if you are left handed). Tense the muscles in your right hand, lower arm, upper arm, and shoulder by making a tight fist and bring it up to your shoulder. Squeeze your hand, tricep, and bicep. Feel the tension in your hand and arm as you do this, and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Now let go and feel how the muscles are now relaxed. (Pause.)

3. Now, we will move on to the left arm (or right, if you are left handed). Make a fist with your left hand and bring it up to your left shoulder. Squeeze all of the muscles in your hand and arm. Hold this for 3... 2... 1... Let go of the tension and relax. Check in with your deep breathing pattern now. Ensure that it is slow, steady, and deep.

4. Next, we will move on to the face and head. Squeeze your forehead muscles by furrowing your brows as if you were angry, close your eyes tight, wrinkle your nose, clench your teeth, and smile with your mouth closed. Feel the tension in your forehead, your scalp, the center of your face, and around your mouth, before releasing it in 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation in your forehead now, compared to when your forehead felt tense. (Pause.)

5. Next we will work on relaxing the muscles in the neck. Bend your neck forward so your chin is almost, but not quite, touching your chest. Feel the tension in the back and front of your neck and hold for 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be aware of the difference between how your neck felt when it was tense, and now as it is relaxed. (Pause.)

6. We will focus on the muscles in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Take a deep breath in and hold it as you pull your shoulder blades together. As you do this, engage your stomach muscles by hardening them. Feel the tension in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Let go in 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be conscious of the feeling of relaxation in your muscles now. (Pause.)
Take a few moments to gather your bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before returning to the present moment and beginning the following component of the session.

7. To tense the muscle in the right leg straighten your leg out in front and tighten your thigh and calf muscles by pointing your feet for 3... 2... 1... and pulling your toes towards you for 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your leg and think of the difference between the tension you just experienced and the relaxation you are feeling now.

8. To tense the muscle in your left leg by straightening your leg out in front and tighten your thigh and calf muscles by pointing your feet for 3... 2... 1... and pulling your toes towards you for 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your left leg and be aware of the feeling of relaxation versus tension.

9. Scan your body now from the tips of your fingers... up to your forearms and your upper arms. Notice how relaxed your shoulders feel, your neck, your face. Bring your attention to the feeling of relaxation in your stomach... your thighs... lower calves... and your feet.
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Discuss your current level of distress, using their SUDS to the right and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the score that you chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Take a few moments to choose where you are currently at on the SUDS. When you are ready, share your answer with the group and give a brief explanation of your answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for you and describe what you liked and/or disliked about the experience.

Homework (5 minutes)

Discuss your homework assignment.

**What?** Homework to be completed, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercise and the SUDS handout.

**Why?** This will increase your familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide you with a greater understanding of your own distress levels in certain situations. This may also give you a better idea of how this specific skill works for you and how effective it is for you in certain situations.

**How?**

- Listen to the facilitator’s description of the homework assignment carefully.
- Use the SUDS handout that you received from the facilitator and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session.
- This means identifying two occasions during which you feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the deep breathing technique and progressive muscle relaxation technique.
- To use these techniques follow along with the instructions used in the second session of this manual.
- As shown on the handout, you are asked to rate your level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique you used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate your level of distress again.
Session 3: Progressive Muscle Relaxation & Cognitive Imagery

Preparation (20 minutes)

Before beginning the first session:
- If you wish, read through the third session section of the manual.
- Reflect on how using relaxation techniques could change your life.
- Ensure that your homework is completed and reflect on how engaging in the relaxation technique went.

Session 3 Overview (1.5 hours)

Introductions - 5 minutes

Homework Review - 15 minutes

Topic Discussion - 15 minutes

Psycho-education - 15 minutes

SUDS - 5 minutes

Progressive muscle relaxation - 10 minutes

Cognitive Imagery - 15 minutes

SUDS - 5 minutes

Homework - 5 minutes
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the third session, each group member should take some time to say hello to one another.

**What?** Engage in greeting other group members, and listen to and share any news or experiences from the past week, and any feelings anyone wishes to discuss.

**Why?** The purpose of engaging in conversation with other group members is to make you and the others more comfortable working together.

**How?** Listen to the instructions and introductions given by the group facilitators. Afterwards, listen to the others and take your turn to say hello and share something personal from the past week.

**Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)**

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when you found yourself feeling anxious or stressed. Following, you were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation technique taught during the second session and rate your stress level again afterwards. You were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment from the previous week gives you an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using progressive muscle relaxation had helped you. The SUDS gives the exercise a number to refer to when discussing changes in your stress level, from before to after using progressive muscle relaxation.

**How?** When it is your turn, describe your experience in regards to the homework assignment. Talk specifically about how the relaxation technique worked for you. Speak when it is your turn, and listen carefully to others when they are speaking. You may learn something!
**Topic Discussion (15 minutes)**

Engage in a discussion with the group based on the information presented below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give you some information about how stress can affect your mental health.

**How?** Discuss some of the information below, as well as any additional information presented by the facilitators.

- *How can stress affect your mental health?*
  - You may often feel anxious or nervous.
  - You may find that your memory is not working so well.
  - Your ability to keep in control of your emotions may be compromised.
  - Your ability to solve problems may be compromised.
  - You might feel overly tired, sad, or angry.
  - You may be overly worried about things in your life that you cannot change.

- Stress can negatively affect your relationships with others, employment, physical health, mental health, and overall wellbeing.
- It is important to be aware of your own triggers and to develop coping strategies that work for you, such as relaxation techniques. Everyone is different.
- Discuss with group!

**Psycho-education of relaxation skills (15 minutes)**

Learn about using cognitive imagery as a relaxation technique.

**What?** Review the following information about cognitive imagery with the group.

**Why?** Cognitive imagery is one of the most effective relaxation techniques. Cognitive imagery is easy to use and is flexible in the amount of time needed to complete.

**How?** Explain how cognitive imagery works by presenting some of the points below.

- Research has shown a more significant link between emotions and imagery than emotions and verbal thoughts; therefore, imagery-based thinking is able to regulate our emotions more effectively than our verbal thoughts.
- Invoking an image of a certain scene or experience and being present in the actual scene or experience produces similar psycho-physiological responses in the body (e.g. relaxation).
In other words, engaging in an imagery-based relaxation technique produces relaxed thoughts, emotions, and bodily responses. Another advantage to cognitive imagery, unlike the progressive muscle relaxation, is that the content can be tailored to each individual (e.g. some people might find having a hot cup of tea while curled up on the couch more relaxing than being at the beach with the waves crashing along the shoreline).

Cognitive imagery also possesses reciprocally enhancing effects, in that the technique produces a relaxation response, which allows the participant to produce a more vivid relaxing scene.

Discuss with the group!

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Rate your level of distress by using the scale shown to the right.

**Why?** This will give you an idea of where you’re at before doing the relaxation exercises. That way, when you use the scale again after using the technique, you can see how much of a difference using the skill made in your distress level.

**How?** Take a look at the scale to the right. Take a few moments to decide on your current stress level. Afterwards, share with the group and explain why you chose that rating.

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Progressive Muscle Relaxation (10 minutes)

Practice the 7 muscle group PMR skill with the group.

**What?** Practice 7 muscle progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

**Why?** This gives you another opportunity to correctly use progressive muscle relaxation, with 7 muscle groups. The purpose of learning this skill is to be able to use the skill in a wider variety of environments, since it takes less time and effort to complete.

**How?** Listen to the instructions being given by the facilitator in order to engage in the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Help create and maintain a relaxing environment both for yourself and those around you.
• Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body and begin using the deep breathing practice. Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible.

• We will begin with your right arm (or left, if you are left handed). Tense the muscles in your right hand, lower arm, upper arm, and shoulder by making a tight fist and bring it up to your shoulder. Squeeze your hand, tricep, and bicep. Feel the tension in your hand and arm as you do this, and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Now let go and feel how the muscles are now relaxed. (Pause.)

• Now, we will move on to the left arm (or right, if you are left handed). Make a fist with your left hand and bring it up to your left shoulder. Squeeze all of the muscles in your hand and arm. Hold this for 3... 2... 1... Let go of the tension and relax. Check in with your deep breathing pattern now. Ensure that it is slow, steady, and deep.

• Next, we will move on to the face and head. Squeeze your forehead muscles by furrowing your brows as if you were angry, close your eyes tight, wrinkle your nose, clench your teeth, and smile with your mouth closed. Feel the tension in your forehead, your scalp, the center of your face, and around your mouth, before releasing it in 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation in your forehead now, compared to when your forehead felt tense. (Pause.)

• Next we will work on relaxing the muscles in the neck. Bend your neck forward so your chin is almost, but not quite, touching your chest. Feel the tension in the back and front of your neck and hold for 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be aware of the difference between how your neck felt when it was tense, and now as it is relaxed. (Pause.)

• We will focus on the muscles in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Take a deep breath in and hold it as you pull your shoulder blades together behind you. As you do this, engage your stomach muscles by hardening them. Feel the tension in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Let go in 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be conscious of the feeling of relaxation in your muscles now. (Pause.)
Cognitive Imagery (15 minutes)

Practice the cognitive imagery skill with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 15-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to use progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery together as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of learning this skill is to give you another avenue through which to achieve relaxation. Some skills will work better for some people than for others.

**How?** Continue to maintain a relaxing environment for yourself and others.

7. To tense the muscle in the right leg straighten your leg out in front and tighten your thigh and calf muscles by pointing your feet for 3... 2... 1... and pulling your toes towards you for 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your leg and think of the difference between the tension you just experienced and the relaxation you are feeling now.

8. To tense the muscle in your left leg by straightening your leg out in front and tighten your thigh and calf muscles by pointing your feet for 3... 2... 1... and pulling your toes towards you for 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your left leg and be aware of the feeling of relaxation versus tension.

9. Scan your body now from the tips of your fingers... up to your forearms and your upper arms. Notice how relaxed your shoulders feel, your neck, your face. Bring your attention to the feeling of relaxation in your stomach... your thighs... lower calves... and your feet.
1. Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

2. Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

3. You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you.... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

4. Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. - 20 seconds)

5. What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

6. Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 20 seconds)
Take a few moments to gather your bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before returning to the present moment and beginning the following component of the session.
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Discuss your current level of distress, using their SUDS to the right and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the score that you chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Take a few moments to choose where you are currently at on the SUDS. When you are ready, share your answer with the group and give a brief explanation of your answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for you and describe what you liked and/or disliked about the experience.

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<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Very anxious/distressed, can't concentrate</td>
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<td>Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Alert and awake, concentrating well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

Homework (5 minutes)

Discuss your homework assignment.

**What?** Homework to be completed, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercise and the SUDS handout.

**Why?** This will increase your familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide you with a greater understanding of your own distress levels in certain situations. This may also give you a better idea of how this specific skill works for you and how effective it is for you in certain situations.

**How?** Listen to the facilitator’s description of the homework assignment carefully.

- Use the SUDS handout that you received from the facilitator and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session.
- This means identifying two occasions during which you feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the deep breathing technique and progressive muscle relaxation technique.
- To use these techniques follow along with the instructions used in the third session of this manual.
- As shown on the handout, you are asked to rate your level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique you used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate your level of distress again.
Preparation (20 minutes)

Before beginning the fourth session:
- If you wish, read through the fourth session section of the manual.
- Reflect on how using relaxation techniques could change your life.
- Ensure that your homework is completed and reflect on how engaging in the relaxation technique went.

Session 4 Overview (1.5 hours)

- Introductions - 5 minutes
- Homework Review - 15 minutes
- Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
- Psycho-education - 10 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation - 10 minutes
- Cognitive Imagery - 20 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Homework - 5 minutes
Introductions (5 minutes)

To start off the fourth session, each group member should take some time to say hello to one another.

**What?** Continue on the regular routine. Engage in greeting other group members, and listen to and share any news or experiences from the past week, and any feelings anyone wishes to discuss.

**Why?** The purpose of engaging in conversation with other group members is to make you and the others more comfortable working together.

**How?** Listen to the instructions and introductions given by the group facilitators. Afterwards, listen to the others and take your turn to say hello and share something personal from the past week.

Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when you found yourself feeling anxious or stressed. Following, you were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery techniques taught during the third session and rate your stress level again afterwards. You were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment from the previous week gives you an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using progressive muscle relaxation had helped you. The SUDS gives the exercise a number to refer to when discussing changes in your stress level, from before to after using progressive muscle relaxation.

**How?** When it is your turn, describe your experience in regards to the homework assignment. Talk specifically about how the relaxation technique worked for you. Speak when it is your turn, and listen carefully to others when they are speaking. You may learn something!
**Topic Discussion (15 minutes)**

Discuss a topic related to anxiety and relaxation, based on the information below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give you and the other participants some information about how relaxation affects your physical health, mental health, and life in general.

**How?** Discuss some of the information below.

- **How can relaxation affect your physical health?**
  - You may have a regular eating schedule and healthier diet.
  - You may find that you enjoy the things that you have always enjoyed (e.g., going for a walk).
  - You may find you have more energy and feel refreshed when you wake up.
  - Your immune system may be stronger and therefore, you may live longer.
  - You may find that you get sick less often.

- **How can relaxation affect your mental health?**
  - Your memory may improve.
  - Your ability to keep in control of your emotions may improve.
  - Your ability to solve problems may improve.
  - You may feel, satisfied, as ease, and calm.
  - You may be able to think through situations by thinking of the best solution, rather than acting on your first instinct.

- Relaxation can positively affect your relationships with others, employment, physical health, mental health, and overall wellbeing.

**Psycho-education of relaxation skills (10 minutes)**

Further discuss cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Have a discussion about cognitive imagery and how it works with the group.

**Why?** Cognitive imagery has been identified as an effective relaxation technique. Cognitive imagery can be used in a variety of settings, since it only requires the use of one’s mind.
**How?** Discuss the information presented from last week regarding the cognitive imagery.

- Using imagery produces an emotional response.
- The more relaxed you feel, the easier it will be to produce a vivid image, and this in turn creates deeper relaxation.
- When you enter a relaxing scene, the body and mind’s response to the scene is similar to if you were actually there.
- Overall, engaging in the relaxation technique (behaviour), you initiate calming thoughts and emotions.
- Discuss with the group!

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Rate your level of distress by using the scale shown to the right.

**Why?** This will give you an idea of where you’re at before doing the relaxation exercises. That way, when you use the scale again after using the technique, you can see how much of a difference using the skill made in your distress level.

**How?** Take a look at the scale to the right. Take a few moments to decide on your current stress level. Afterwards, share with the group and explain why you chose that rating.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation (10 minutes)

Practice the 4 muscle group PMR skill with the group.

**What?** Practice 4 muscle progressive muscle relaxation with the group.

**Why?** This gives you another opportunity to correctly use progressive muscle relaxation, but with 4 muscle groups. The purpose of learning this skill is to facilitate to be able to use the skill in a wider variety of environments, since it takes less time and effort to complete.

**How?** Listen to the facilitator’s instructions, shown below, in order to engage in the relaxation exercise. Help to maintain a relaxing environment for yourself and others.
1. Notice your current level of stress. Become aware of the stress you are feeling in your mind and in your body and begin using deep breathing. Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible.

2. We will begin with your arms. Tense the muscles in your hands, lower arms, and upper arms by making tight fists and bring your fists up to your shoulders. Squeeze your hands, triceps, and biceps. Feel the tension in your hands and arms as you do this, and hold it for 3... 2... 1... Now let go and feel how the muscles are now relaxed. (Pause.)

3. Next, we will move on to your face, head, and neck. Squeeze your forehead muscles by furrowing your brows as if you were angry, close your eyes tight, wrinkle your nose, clench your teeth, and smile with your mouth closed. As you do this, bend your neck forward so your chin is almost, but not quite, touching your chest. Feel the tension in your forehead, your scalp, the center of your face, around your mouth, and in the front and back of your neck. Release in 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation in your face, head, and neck in comparison to the tension you felt before. (Pause.)

4. We will focus on the muscles in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Take a deep breath in and hold it as you pull your shoulder blades together. As you do this, engage your stomach muscles by hardening them. Feel the tension in your chest, shoulders, back, and stomach. Let go in 3... 2... 1... And relax. Be conscious of the feeling of relaxation in your muscles now. (Pause).

5. To tense the muscle in both legs straighten your legs out in front and tighten your thigh and calf muscles by pointing your feet for 3... 2... 1... and pulling your toes towards you for 3... 2... 1... Notice the feeling of relaxation spread to your legs and think of the difference between the tension you just experienced and the relaxation you are feeling now.

6. Scan your body now from the tips of your fingers... up to your forearms and your upper arms. Notice how relaxed your shoulders feel, your neck, your face. Bring your attention to the feeling of relaxation in your stomach... your thighs... lower calves... and your feet.
Cognitive imagery (20 minutes)

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to use progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery together as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of learning this skill is to give you another avenue through which to achieve relaxation. Some skills will work better for certain people than for others.

**How?** Continue to help maintain a relaxing environment.
• Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

• Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

• You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you.... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

• Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 30 seconds)

• What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 30 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

• Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 30 seconds)
Take a few moments to gather your bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before returning to the present moment and beginning the following component of the session.

7. Slink even deeper into relaxation as you focus on what you can hear. Do you hear the wind blowing through the leaves or can you hear the waves lapping against the sand? Are there birds chirping in the distance? What can you hear? (Pause. - 30 seconds) Now your world gets a little quieter.

8. Deeper still. You are starting to feel more and more relaxed. Feel the comfort and warmth surrounding you. Think of what you can smell. Maybe there is a scent of the fresh grass or trees around you or a hint of saltiness from the ocean. Breathe in the clean, fresh air. In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... (Pause. - 30 seconds)

9. Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this place. Lay down in the tall grass, in the warm sound, lay down in your canoe, become still. Use all of your senses to enjoy this place and every beautiful quality it has to offer. Enjoy the quiet, enjoy the freedom of having nowhere more important to be and nothing more important to do. Enjoy this warmth, and the relaxing comfort coming over you. (3-minute pause.)

10. Now notice something that you didn't see before. It's a path. You know this path will guide you to the present moment. You feel at ease as you start to move toward this path. But first, choose something from your relaxing scene to bring with you. Choose a rock, a fallen leaf... a shell that has washed up along the shore. What will this item represent for you? What will you take with you into your present setting or situation? Will it be patience, contentment, confidence, appreciation, or perhaps calmness? (Pause. 10 seconds)

11. Bring your symbolic object with you as you make your way through your peaceful, quiet, and relaxing setting by using the path, leading to the present moment. Think of how this place has made you feel... think of how this place is always inside of you, awaiting you should you wish to travel there again. (Pause. - 10 seconds)

12. Slowly become more and more aware of the present moment as you travel further up the path. Come back to this room. Pay attention to the sounds and the feel of the present moment. Take a couple of moments to readjust your state of consciousness to focus on your current setting and to reflect on the journey you have just taken. (Pause. - 2 minutes) When you are ready, open your eyes. Sit up straight and look around.
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Discuss your current level of distress, using their SUDS to the right and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the score that you chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Take a few moments to choose where you are currently at on the SUDS. When you are ready, share your answer with the group and give a brief explanation of your answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for you and describe what you liked and/or disliked about the experience.

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100 Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt
90 Extremely anxious/distressed
80 Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate
70 Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance
60
50 Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform
40
30 Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance
20 Minimal anxiety/distress
10 Alert and awake, concentrating well
0 Totally relaxed

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Homework (5 minutes)

Discuss your homework assignment.

**What?** Homework to be completed, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercise and the SUDS handout.

**Why?** This will increase your familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide you with a greater understanding of your own distress levels in certain situations. This may also give you a better idea of how this specific skill works for you and how effective it is for you in certain situations.

**How?** Listen to the facilitator’s description of the homework assignment carefully.

- Use the SUDS handout that you received from the facilitator and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session.
- This means identifying two occasions during which you feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the deep breathing technique and progressive muscle relaxation technique.
- To use these techniques follow along with the instructions used in the fourth session of this manual.
- As shown on the handout, you are asked to rate your level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique you used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate your level of distress again.
Session 5: Cognitive Imagery

Preparation (20 minutes)

Before beginning the fifth session:
- If you wish, read through the fifth session section of the manual.
- Reflect on how using relaxation techniques has been helpful to you so far.
- Ensure that your homework is completed and reflect on how engaging in the relaxation technique went.

Session 5 Overview (1.25 hours)

Introductions - 5 minutes

Homework Review - 15 minutes

Topic Discussion - 20 minutes

SUDS - 5 minutes

Cognitive Imagery - 20 minutes

SUDS - 5 minutes

Homework - 5 minutes
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the fifth session, each group member should take some time to say hello to one another, as usual.

**What?** Continue on the regular routine. Engage in greeting other group members, and listen to and share any news or experiences from the past week, and any feelings anyone wishes to discuss.

**Why?** The purpose of engaging in conversation with other group members is to set the stage for a comfortable and open environment.

**How?** Listen to the instructions and introductions given by the group facilitators. Afterwards, listen to the others and take your turn to say hello and share something personal from the past week.

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**Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)**

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when you found yourself feeling anxious or stressed. Following, you were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery techniques taught during the fourth session and rate your stress level again afterwards. You were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment from the previous week gives you an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery together had helped you. The SUDS gives the exercise a number to refer to when discussing changes in your stress level, from before to after using the techniques.

**How?** When it is your turn, describe your experience in regards to the homework assignment. Talk specifically about how the relaxation technique worked for you. Speak when it is your turn, and listen carefully to others when they are speaking.
**Topic Discussion (20 minutes)**

Facilitate a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training. Find some information to present below.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give the participants some information about how cognitive behaviour therapy works.

**How?** Discuss some of the information below.

- **What is cognitive behaviour therapy?**
  - CBT is a type of therapy, which is comprised of two central tenets.
  - Firstly, thoughts influence one’s emotions and behaviours.
  - Secondly, behaviours influence one’s thoughts and emotions.

- **For example**
  - You fail a test (behaviour). As a result, you start to have thoughts such as “I am worthless” or “I am stupid” (cognitions/thoughts). After having these thoughts, you feel sad (emotion).
  - You think you will never be able to make friends and have thoughts such as “they won’t like me anyway, there’s no point in trying” (cognition/thoughts). The behaviours that follow include isolating yourself from others (behaviour). This makes you feel lonely (emotion).

- **Discuss examples of how relaxation training could affect your thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Use examples from the psycho-education portion of the previous sessions.**
**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Rate your level of distress by using the scale shown to the right.

**Why?** This will give you an idea of where you're at before doing the relaxation exercises. That way, when you use the scale again after using the technique, you can see how much of a difference using the skill made in your distress level.

**How?** Take a look at the scale to the right. Take a few moments to decide on your current stress level. Afterwards, share with the group and explain why you chose that rating.

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</table>

**Cognitive imagery (20 minutes)**

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to use cognitive imagery alone as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of learning this skill on its own is to allow you to see if they prefer using this skill on its own, or with progressive muscle relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Listen to the facilitator's instructions, which follow. Also, help create a relaxing environment for yourself and for others.
• Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

• Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

• You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

• Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 30 seconds)

• What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 30 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

• Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 30 seconds)
Take a few moments to gather your bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before returning to the present moment and beginning the following component of the session.

**7**
• SInk even deeper into relaxation as you focus on what you can hear. Do you hear the wind blowing through the leaves or can you hear the waves lapping against the sand? Are there birds chirping in the distance? What can you hear? (Pause. - 30 seconds) Now your world gets a little quieter.

**8**
• Deeper still. You are starting to feel more and more relaxed. Feel the comfort and warmth surrounding you. Think of what you can smell. Maybe there is a scent of the fresh grass or trees around you or a hint of saltiness from the ocean. Breath in the clean, fresh air. In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... (Pause. - 30 seconds)

**9**
• Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this place. Lay down in the tall grass, in the warm sound, lay down in your canoe, become still. Use all of your senses to enjoy this place and ever ybeautiful quality it has to offer. Enjoy the quiet, enjoy the freedom of having nowhere more important to be and nothing more important to do. Enjoy this warmth, and the relaxing comfort coming over you. (3-minute pause.)

**10**
• Now notice something that you didn't see before. It's a path. You know this path will guide you to the present moment. You feel at ease as you start to move toward this path. But first, choose something from your relaxing scene to bring with you. Choose a rock... a fallen leaf... a shell that has washed up along the shore. What will this item represent for you? What will you take with you into your present setting or situation? Will it be patience, contentment, confidence, appreciation, or perhaps calmness? (Pause. 10 seconds)

**11**
• Bring your symbolic obect with you as you make your way through your peaceful, quiet, and relaxing setting by using the path, leading to the present moment. Think of how this place has made you feel... think of how this place is always inside of you, awaiting you should you wish to travel there again. (Pause. - 10 seconds)

**12**
• Slowly become more and more aware of the present moment as you travel further up the path. Come back to this room. Pay attention to the sounds and the feel of the present moment. Take a couple of moments to readjust your state of consciousness to focus on your current setting and to reflect on the journey you have just taken. (Pause. - 2 minutes) When you are ready, open your eyes. Sit up straight and look around.
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Discuss your current level of distress, using their SUDS to the right and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the score that you chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Take a few moments to choose where you are currently at on the SUDS. When you are ready, share your answer with the group and give a brief explanation of your answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for you and describe what you liked and/or disliked about the experience.

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Very anxious/distressed, can't concentrate</td>
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<td>Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Alert and awake, concentrating well</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Homework (5 minutes)

Discuss your homework assignment.

**What?** Homework to be completed, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercise and the SUDS handout.

**Why?** This will increase your familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide you with a greater understanding of your own distress levels in certain situations. This may also give you a better idea of how this specific skill works for you and how effective it is for you in certain situations.

**How?** Listen to the facilitator’s description of the homework assignment carefully.

- Use the SUDS handout that you received from the facilitator and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session.
- This means identifying two occasions during which you feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the cognitive imagery relaxation technique.
- To use the technique, follow along with the instructions used in the fifth session of this manual.
- As shown on the handout, you are asked to rate your level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique you used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate your level of distress again.
Session 6: Cognitive Imagery & Mindfulness Meditation

Preparation (20 minutes)

Before beginning the sixth session:
- If you wish, read through the sixth session section of the manual.
- Reflect on how using relaxation techniques has been helpful to you so far.
- Ensure that your homework is completed and reflect on how engaging in the relaxation technique went.

Session 6 Overview (1.5 hours)

- Introductions - 5 minutes
- Homework Review - 15 minutes
- Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
- Psycho-education - 15 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Cognitive Imagery - 15 minutes
- Mindfulness Meditation - 10 minutes
- SUDS - 5 minutes
- Homework - 5 minutes
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the sixth session, each group member should take some time to say hello to one another, as usual.

**What?** Continue on the regular routine. Engage in greeting other group members, and listen to and share any news or experiences from the past week, and any feelings anyone wishes to discuss.

**Why?** The purpose of engaging in conversation with other group members is to set the stage for a comfortable and open environment throughout the rest of the session.

**How?** Listen to the instructions and introductions given by the group facilitators. Afterwards, listen to the others and take your turn to say hello and share something personal from the past week.

**Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)**

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when you found yourself feeling anxious or stressed. Following, you were asked to use the progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery techniques taught during the fourth session and rate your stress level again afterwards. You were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment from the previous week gives you an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive imagery together had helped you. The SUDS gives the exercise a number to refer to when discussing changes in your stress level, from before to after using the techniques.

**How?** When it is your turn, describe your experience in regards to the homework assignment. Talk specifically about how the relaxation technique worked for you. Speak when it is your turn, and listen carefully to others when they are speaking.
**Topic Discussion (15 minutes)**

Have the weekly discussion related to anxiety and relaxation.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give you an opportunity to have a general discussion about the information about CBT discussed in session 5. This will ensure that you have gained a basic understanding of the concepts and allow you to give examples of how you can use this information in your own life.

**How?** Discuss some of the questions shown below.

- What are the two central tenets of CBT?
- Give an example of these basic ideas from your own life.
- How does relaxation training affect your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours?
- Have you noticed this in your own life, since starting relaxation training?

**Psycho-education of relaxation skills (15 minutes)**

Learn about mindfulness meditation with the group.

**What?** Have a discussion about mindfulness meditation and how it works with the group.

**Why?** Mindfulness meditation has been identified as an effective relaxation technique. Meditation can be used in a variety of settings, since it only requires the use of one’s mind.

**How?** Discuss how meditation works by reviewing some of the information below, as well as any additional information.

- When engaging in mindfulness meditation, one is expected to clear their mind of any anxieties, worries, or thoughts.
- When one is relaxed, typically these same thoughts are absent.
- Therefore, mindfulness meditation imitates and initiates a relaxed state of mind.
- This, in turn, affects the rest of the mind and body, initiating a relaxation response.
- Notice the similarity between this mechanism of action and that of the other two skills taught in the group. Discuss how they are similar and/or different.
- Also, relate this back to what you have learned about CBT.
Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Rate your level of distress by using the scale shown to the right.

**Why?** This will give you an idea of where you’re at before doing the relaxation exercises. That way, when you use the scale again after using the technique, you can see how much of a difference using the skill made in your distress level.

**How?** Take a look at the scale to the right. Take a few moments to decide on your current stress level. Afterwards, share with the group and explain why you chose that rating.

Cognitive imagery (15 minutes)

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to use cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation together, for the first time, as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of learning this skill is to allow you to see if you prefer using this skill these skills together. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Follow the facilitator’s instructions and help create a relaxing environment for everyone in the room.
• Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

• Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

• You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

• Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 20 seconds)

• What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

• Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 20 seconds)
7. Slink even deeper into relaxation as you focus on what you can hear. Do you hear the wind blowing through the leaves or can you hear the waves lapping against the sand? Are there birds chirping in the distance? What can you hear? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now your world gets a little quieter.

8. Deeper still. You are starting to feel more and more relaxed. Feel the comfort and warmth surrounding you. Think of what you can smell. Maybe there is a scent of the fresh grass or trees around you or a hint of saltiness from the ocean. Breath in the clean, fresh air. In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3...

9. Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this place. Lay down in the tall grass, in the warm sound, lay down in your canoe, become still. Use all of your senses to enjoy this place and every beautiful quality it has to offer. Enjoy the quiet, enjoy the freedom of having nowhere more important to be and nothing more important to do. Enjoy this warmth, and the relaxing comfort coming over you. (1-2 minute pause.)

10. Now notice something that you didn't see before. It's a path. You know this path will guide you to the present moment. You feel at ease as you start to move toward this path. But first, choose something from your relaxing scene to bring with you. Choose a rock... a fallen leaf... a shell that has washed up along the shore. What will this item represent for you? What will you take with you into your present setting or situation? Will it be patience, contentment, confidence, appreciation, or perhaps calmness?

11. Bring your symbolic object with you as you make your way through your peaceful, quiet, and relaxing setting by using the path, leading to the present moment. Think of how this place has made you feel... think of how this place is always inside of you, awaiting you should you wish to travel there again.

12. Slowly become more and more aware of the present moment as you travel further up the path. Come back to this room. Pay attention to the sounds and the feel of the present moment. Take a couple of moments to readjust your state of consciousness to focus on your current setting and to reflect on the journey you have just taken. (Pause. - 1 minute) When you are ready, open your eyes. Sit up straight and look around.
Mindfulness Meditation (10 minutes)

Practice mindfulness meditation with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 10-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to correctly engage in mindfulness meditation practice, as well as cognitive imagery, as a relaxation strategy. The purpose of learning this skill is to provide you with an additional skill with which to achieve relaxation. This skill may work better for certain individuals, than others.

**How?** Continue to maintain a relaxing environment.
1. Close your eyes gently and do a body scan from your head to your toes... (Pause.) Readjust yourself if needed, and relax into a comfortable position. Take three deep breaths... In your nose.... and out your mouth...

2. Bring your awareness back to your breathing. Breath deeply, naturally, and through your nose. Don't think of anything else but the flow of air into your lungs... and out your lungs. Throughout this exercise you should continue to pay attention to the sensation of breathing.

3. Pay close attention to each component in the process of breathing and be aware of the bodily sensations that go along with it. This includes noticing the rhythm of your breaths, the air flowing in and out of your nose, your stomach rising and falling, the way the air moving in and out of your throat and lungs...

4. Try not to form any thoughts or opinions on the act of breathing, simply be in the present moment. Do not try to stop the thoughts that come into your mind, simply acknowledge them, and refocus on your breathing.

5. If you do notice that you have become distracted by your thoughts, sounds around you, or other bodily sensations, first become aware that you are distracted and next return your attention to your breathing. Treat each distraction in a gentle and passive manner. Continue on like this in silence for the remainder of the exercise...

6. (9 minutes later) Slowly open your eyes and pay attention to how this exercise has made you feel. Allow yourself to feel the relaxation and contentment and bring it with you for the rest of today.
Take a few moments to gather your bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before returning to the present moment and beginning the following component of the session.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Discuss your current level of distress, using their SUDS to the right and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the score that you chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Take a few moments to choose where you are currently at on the SUDS. When you are ready, share your answer with the group and give a brief explanation of your answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for you and describe what you liked and/or disliked about the experience.

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### Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

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</table>

**Homework (5 minutes)**

Discuss your homework assignment.

**What?** Homework to be completed, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercise and the SUDS handout.

**Why?** This will increase your familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide you with a greater understanding of your own distress levels in certain situations. This may also give you a better idea of how this specific skill works for you and how effective it is for you in certain situations.
**How?** Listen to the facilitator’s description of the homework assignment carefully.

- Use the SUDS handout that you received from the facilitator and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session.
- This means identifying two occasions during which you feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the cognitive imagery relaxation technique.
- To use the technique, follow along with the instructions used in the fifth session of this manual.
- As shown on the handout, you are asked to rate your level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique you used (i.e. deep breathing), and rate your level of distress again.
Session 7: Cognitive Imagery & Mindfulness Meditation Continued

Preparation (20 minutes)

Before beginning the seventh session:
- If you wish, read through the seventh session section of the manual.
- Reflect on how using relaxation techniques has been helpful to you so far and what you wish to accomplish in the last two sessions.
- Ensure that your homework is completed and reflect on how engaging in the relaxation technique went.

Session 7 Overview (1.25 hours)

1. Introductions - 5 minutes
2. Homework Review - 15 minutes
3. Topic Discussion - 10 minutes
4. SUDS - 5 minutes
5. Cognitive Imagery - 15 minutes
6. Mindfulness Meditation - 15 minutes
7. SUDS - 5 minutes
8. Homework - 5 minutes
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the seventh session, each group member should take some time to say hello to one another, as usual.

**What?** Continue on the regular routine. Engage in greeting other group members, and listen to and share any news or experiences from the past week, and any feelings anyone wishes to discuss.

**Why?** The purpose of engaging in conversation with other group members is to set the stage for a comfortable and open environment throughout the rest of the session.

**How?** Listen to the instructions and introductions given by the group facilitators. Afterwards, listen to the others and take your turn to say hello and share something personal from the past week.

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**Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)**

Review last week’s homework.

**What?** The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when you found yourself feeling anxious or stressed. Following, you were asked to use the cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation techniques taught during the sixth session and rate your stress level again afterwards. You were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

**Why?** Reviewing the homework assignment from the previous week gives you an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation together had helped you. The SUDS gives the exercise a number to refer to when discussing changes in your stress level, from before to after using the techniques.

**How?** When it is your turn, describe your experience in regards to the homework assignment. Talk specifically about how the relaxation technique worked for you. Speak when it is your turn, and listen carefully to others when they are speaking.
**Topic Discussion (10 minutes)**

Engage in a discussion about anxiety and relaxation.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give you an opportunity to review how the three relaxation techniques work to relax the mind and body. In addition, it will give an opportunity to share ideas as to when and where the techniques can be use in their daily lives. This will ensure that everyone learned throughout the psycho-education components of the sessions and that you will be able to use the techniques in different situations, outside of sessions.

**How?** Ask some of the questions shown below.
- How does progressive muscle relaxation work?
- How does cognitive imagery work?
- How does mindfulness meditation work?
- In what situations have you used these relaxation techniques throughout the past 6 weeks?
- What other situations could you use these techniques in?
- What other settings could you use the techniques in?

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**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Rate your level of distress by using the scale shown to the right.

**Why?** This will give you an idea of where you’re at before doing the relaxation exercises. That way, when you use the scale again after using the technique, you can see how much of a difference using the skill made in your distress level.

**How?** Take a look at the scale to the right. Take a few moments to decide on your current stress level. Afterwards, share with the group and explain why you chose that rating.

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</tbody>
</table>
**Cognitive imagery (15 minutes)**

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 20-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to use cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation together as a relaxation strategy.

**How?** Listen to the facilitator’s instructions and help create and maintain a relaxing environment for everyone.
1. Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

2. Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

3. You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the tress, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you.... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

4. Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 20 seconds)

5. What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

6. Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 20 seconds)
Sink even deeper into relaxation as you focus on what you can hear. Do you hear the wind blowing through the leaves or can you hear the waves lapping against the sand? Are there birds chirping in the distance? What can you hear? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now your world gets a little quieter.

Deeper still. You are starting to feel more and more relaxed. Feel the comfort and warmth surrounding you. Think of what you can smell. Maybe there is a scent of the fresh grass or trees around you or a hint of saltiness from the ocean. Breath in the clean, fresh air. In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3...

Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this place. Lay down in the tall grass, in the warm sound, lay down in your canoe, become still. Use all of your senses to enjoy this place and every beautiful quality it has to offer. Enjoy the quiet, enjoy the freedom of having nowhere more important to be and nothing more important to do. Enjoy this warmth, and the relaxing comfort coming over you. (1-2 minute pause.)

Now notice something that you didn't see before. It's a path. You know this path will guide you to the present moment. You feel at ease as you start to move toward this path. But first, choose something from your relaxing scene to bring with you. Choose a rock, a fallen leaf, a shell that has washed up along the shore. What will this item represent for you? What will you take with you into your present setting or situation? Will it be patience, contentment, confidence, appreciation, or perhaps calmness?

Bring your symbolic object with you as you make your way through your peaceful, quiet, and relaxing setting by using the path, leading to the present moment. Think of how this place has made you feel... think of how this place is always inside of you, awaiting you should you wish to travel there again.

Slowly become more and more aware of the present moment as you travel further up the path. Come back to this room. Pay attention to the sounds and the feel of the present moment. Take a couple of moments to readjust your state of consciousness to focus on your current setting and to reflect on the journey you have just taken. (Pause. - 1 minute) When you are ready, open your eyes. Sit up straight and look around.
Mindfulness Meditation (15 minutes)

Practice mindfulness meditation with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 15-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to correctly engage in mindfulness meditation practice, as well as cognitive imagery, as a relaxation strategy.

**How?** Continue on as usual – in a relaxing and calm manner.
1. Close your eyes gently and do a body scan from your head to your toes... (Pause.) Readjust yourself if needed, and relax into a comfortable position. Take three deep breaths. In your nose... and out your mouth...

2. Bring your awareness back to your breathing. Breath deeply, naturally, and through your nose. Don’t think of anything else but the flow of air into your lungs... and out your lungs. Throughout this exercise you should continue to pay attention to the sensation of breathing.

3. Pay close attention to each component in the process of breathing and be aware of the bodily sensations that go along with it. This includes noticing the rhythm of your breaths, the air flowing in and out of your nose, your stomach rising and falling, the way the air moving in and out of your throat and lungs...

4. Try not to form any thoughts or opinions on the act of breathing, simply be in the present moment. Do not try to stop the thoughts that come into your mind, simply acknowledge them, and refocus on your breathing.

5. If you do notice that you have become distracted by your thoughts, sounds around you, or other bodily sensations, first become aware that you are distracted and next return your attention to your breathing. Treat each distraction in a gentle and passive manner. Continue on like this in silence for the remainder of the exercise...

6. (14 minutes later) Slowly open your eyes and pay attention to how this exercise has made you feel. Allow yourself to feel the relaxation and contentment and bring it with you for the rest of today.
Take a few moments to gather your bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before returning to the present moment and beginning the following component of the session.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Discuss your current level of distress, using their SUDS to the right and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the score that you chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Take a few moments to choose where you are currently at on the SUDS. When you are ready, share your answer with the group and give a brief explanation of your answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for you and describe what you liked and/or disliked about the experience.

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<td>Highest distress/fear/anxiety/discomfort that you have ever felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Extremely anxious/distressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Very anxious/distressed, can’t concentrate</td>
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<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Quite anxious/distressed, interfering with performance</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Moderate anxiety/distress, uncomfortable but can continue to perform</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Mild anxiety/distress, no interference with performance</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Alert and awake, concentrating well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Totally relaxed</td>
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</tbody>
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**Homework (5 minutes)**

Discuss your homework assignment.

**What?** Homework to be completed, for the next session, involving the relaxation exercise and the SUDS handout.

**Why?** This will increase your familiarity with the SUDS scale and provide you with a greater understanding of your own distress levels in certain situations. This may also give you a better idea of how this specific skill works for you and how effective it is for you in certain situations.
How? Listen to the facilitator’s description of the homework assignment carefully.

- Use the SUDS handout that you received from the facilitator and asking them to use the scale on two different occasions, before the next session.
- This means identifying two occasions during which you feel anxiety or distress (e.g. not being able to fall sleep), followed by using the cognitive imagery relaxation technique.
- To use the technique, follow along with the instructions used in the seventh session of this manual.
- As shown on the handout, you are asked to rate your level of distress, describe the situation, describe the technique you used (i.e. cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation), and rate your level of distress again.
Session 8: Cognitive Imagery & Mindfulness Meditation Continued

Preparation (20 minutes)

Before beginning the eighth, and final, session:
- If you wish, read through the eighth session section of the manual.
- Reflect on how the sessions have gone and prepare to talk about what you liked about the sessions and what could be improved to better meet your needs.
- Ensure that your homework is completed and reflect on how engaging in the relaxation technique went.

Session 8 Overview (1.5 hours)

1. Introductions - 5 minutes
2. Homework Review - 15 minutes
3. Topic Discussion - 15 minutes
4. SUDS - 5 minutes
5. Cognitive Imagery - 10 minutes
6. Mindfulness Meditation - 20 minutes
7. SUDS - 5 minutes
8. End-of-Session Discussion - 15 minutes
9. Survey - 10 minutes
**Introductions (5 minutes)**

To start off the eighth session, each group member should take some time to say hello to one another, as usual.

*What?* Continue on the regular routine. Engage in greeting other group members, and listen to and share any news or experiences from the past week, and any feelings anyone wishes to discuss.

*Why?* The purpose of engaging in conversation with other group members is to set the stage for a comfortable and open environment throughout the rest of the session.

*How?* Listen to the instructions and introductions given by the group facilitators. Afterwards, listen to the others and take your turn to say hello and share something personal from the past week.

**Homework Assignment Review (15 minutes)**

Review last week’s homework.

*What?* The homework assignment from the previous week was to use the SUDS when you found yourself feeling anxious or stressed. Following, you were asked to use the cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation techniques taught during the sixth session and rate your stress level again afterwards. You were asked to complete this exercise twice during the week. Take this time to discuss the homework.

*Why?* Reviewing the homework assignment from the previous week gives you an opportunity to share with the group members and the administrators, how using cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation together had helped you. The SUDS gives the exercise a number to refer to when discussing changes in your stress level, from before to after using the techniques.

*How?* When it is your turn, describe your experience in regards to the homework assignment. Talk specifically about how the relaxation technique worked for you. Speak when it is your turn, and listen carefully to others when they are speaking.
**Topic Discussion (15 minutes)**

Have a discussion with the group in regards to anxiety and relaxation training.

**What?** Talk about anxiety and relaxation.

**Why?** This part of the session should give you another opportunity to discuss the how the three relaxation techniques work to relax the mind and body. In addition, it will give an opportunity to share ideas as to when and where the techniques can be use in daily life. This will ensure that everyone has learned throughout the psycho-education components of the sessions and that they will be able to use the techniques in different situations, outside of sessions.

**How?** Discuss some of the questions shown below.

- How does progressive muscle relaxation work?
- How does cognitive imagery work?
- How does mindfulness meditation work?
- In what situations have you used these relaxation techniques throughout the past 6 weeks?
- What other situations could you use these techniques in?
- What other settings could you use the techniques in?

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Rate your level of distress by using the scale shown to the right.

**Why?** This will give you an idea of where you’re at before doing the relaxation exercises. That way, when you use the scale again after using the technique, you can see how much of a difference using the skill made in your distress level.

**How?** Take a look at the scale to the right. Take a few moments to decide on your current stress level. Afterwards, share with the group and explain why you chose that rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
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Cognitive imagery (10 minutes)

Practice cognitive imagery with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 10-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives you an opportunity to use cognitive imagery and mindfulness meditation together as a relaxation strategy.

**How?** Listen to the facilitator’s instructions and help create and maintain a relaxing environment for everyone.
1. Notice your current level of relaxation, after completing the progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position, before we begin the next exercise. Take a few moments to readjust yourself. (Pause.) Ensure that you are using deep breathing. In... and out... In... and out... Close your eyes gently.

2. Today we will travel to a relaxing outdoor scene. This should be a place far from your everyday life. Far away from any worries, concerns, or distractions. You need this time to relax, you deserve this time to yourself. You have nothing to do and nowhere to be. If a thought comes to your mind, do not try to stop it. Simply acknowledge it and allow it to float on by... Thoughts are natural and will arise, but try not to hold on to anything. These thoughts can wait until later. This is your time to take care of your inner self, your true self.

3. You can travel to the relaxing scene of your choosing. Whether it be a beautiful garden with the sun shining down on you, warming your skin, with colourful flowers all around you... the smell of the plants and the earth surrounding you and calming you. Or a quiet forest with a warm breeze gently blowing through the trees, you can hear the birds singing, the birds are content, they are free. It could be laying in the bottom of a canoe while allowing the gentle breeze to carry you along the shoreline on a warm day, you can see the clear blue sky above you.... You may want to travel to a relaxing beach, where you can feel the warm sand between your fingers and hear the waves lapping against the shoreline, coming in up over the sand... almost touching your feet, before going back down... washing away any worries you’ve had today.

4. Once you’ve chosen your destination, notice the energy and life all around you. Notice the breeze, the sun, tall trees, grass, the water, everything around you. Take a few moments to breathe in the pure energy, to feel it, let it comfort you and relax you. (Pause. 20 seconds)

5. What do you see? The clear blue sky with fluffy white clouds? Do you see the grass or the leaves waving in the wind or water flowing by? What do you see? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now notice everything become a little slower...

6. Sink deeper into relaxation as you start to focus on what you can feel. Do you feel the gentle breeze tickling you skin? Or the sun warming your face? Take a few moments to think about what you can feel. (Pause. - 20 seconds)
• Sink even deeper into relaxation as you focus on what you can hear. Do you hear the wind blowing through the leaves or can you hear the waves lapping against the sand? Are there birds chirping in the distance? What can you hear? (Pause. - 20 seconds) Now your world gets a little quieter.

• Deeper still. You are starting to feel more and more relaxed. Feel the comfort and warmth surrounding you. Think of what you can smell. Maybe there is a scent of the fresh grass or trees around you or a hint of saltiness from the ocean. Breath in the clean, fresh air. In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3... In 1... 2... 3... and out 1... 2... 3...

• Take a couple of minutes to enjoy this place. Lay down in the tall grass, in the warm sound, lay down in your canoe, become still. Use all of your senses to enjoy this place and every beautiful quality it has to offer. Enjoy the quiet, enjoy the freedom of having nowhere more important to be and nothing more important to do. Enjoy this warmth, and the relaxing comfort coming over you. (1-2 minute pause.)

• Now notice something that you didn't see before. It’s a path. You know this path will guide you to the present moment. You feel at ease as you start to move toward this path. But first, choose something from your relaxing scene to bring with you. Choose a rock... a fallen leaf... a shell that has washed up along the shore. What will this item represent for you? What will you take with you into your present setting or situation? Will it be patience, contentment, confidence, appreciation, or perhaps calmness?

• Bring your symbolic object with you as you make your way through your peaceful, quiet, and relaxing setting by using the path, leading to the present moment. Think of how this place has made you feel... think of how this place is always inside of you, awaiting you should you wish to travel there again.

• Slowly become more and more aware of the present moment as you travel further up the path. Come back to this room. Pay attention to the sounds and the feel of the present moment. Take a couple of moments to readjust your state of consciousness to focus on your current setting and to reflect on the journey you have just taken. (Pause. - 1 minute) When you are ready, open your eyes. Sit up straight and look around.
Mindfulness Meditation (20 minutes)

Practice mindfulness meditation with the group.

**What?** Practice cognitive imagery with the group by completing a 15-minute exercise.

**Why?** This gives the group an opportunity to correctly engage in mindfulness meditation practice, as well as cognitive imagery, as a relaxation strategy.

**How?** Continue on as usual – in a relaxing and calm manner.
1. Close your eyes gently and do a body scan from your head to your toes... (Pause.) Readjust yourself if needed, and relax into a comfortable position. Take three deep breaths... In your nose... and out your mouth...

2. Bring your awareness back to your breathing. Breath deeply, naturally, and through your nose. Don’t think of anything else but the flow of air into your lungs... and out your lungs. Throughout this exercise you should continue to pay attention to the sensation of breathing.

3. Pay close attention to each component in the process of breathing and be aware of the bodily sensations that go along with it. This includes noticing the rhythm of your breaths, the air flowing in and out of your nose, your stomach rising and falling, the way the air moving in and out of your throat and lungs...

4. Try not to form any thoughts or opinions on the act of breathing, simply be in the present moment. Do not try to stop the thoughts that come into your mind, simply acknowledge them, and refocus on your breathing.

5. If you do notice that you have become distracted by your thoughts, sounds around you, or other bodily sensations, first become aware that you are distracted and next return your attention to your breathing. Treat each distraction in a gentle and passive manner. Continue on like this in silence for the remainder of the exercise...

6. (19 minutes later) Slowly open your eyes and pay attention to how this exercise has made you feel. Allow yourself to feel the relaxation and contentment and bring it with you for the rest of today.
Take a few moments to gather your bearings and enjoy being in a state of relaxation, before returning to the present moment and beginning the following component of the session.

**Subjective Units of Distress Scale (5 minutes)**

Rate your level of distress.

**What?** Discuss your current level of distress, using their SUDS to the right and share with the group.

**Why?** This will serve as a reference against the score that you chose before engaging in the relaxation training.

**How?** Take a few moments to choose where you are currently at on the SUDS. When you are ready, share your answer with the group and give a brief explanation of your answer. Also engage in a brief discussion about how the relaxation technique felt for you and describe what you liked and/or disliked about the experience.

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**End-of-group discussion (15 minutes)**

Have a discussion with the group pertaining to how the group went and what everyone’s biggest take-aways were.

**What?** Wrap up the group with a discussion among the participants and facilitators.

**Why?** This will give you and the other participants a sense of closure and a sense of what you have taken away from the group, in the end. The administrators, will also gain an idea of how the sessions went, and how things might be done differently the next time.

**How?** Listen to the instructions given by the facilitators and prepare to share something that you enjoyed about the relaxation sessions and something that you think could improve. Have an informal discussion about the group as a whole!
**Fill out the surveys (10 minutes)**

Fill out a feedback survey.

**What?** Fill out the surveys that you receive from the program facilitator.

**Why?** This will allow the facilitators to gain information about how the group went and how the group could be better in the future.

**How?** Fill out the surveys and hand them in to your facilitator before leaving.