





Techniques to help with anxious patients



▶ I hate power point

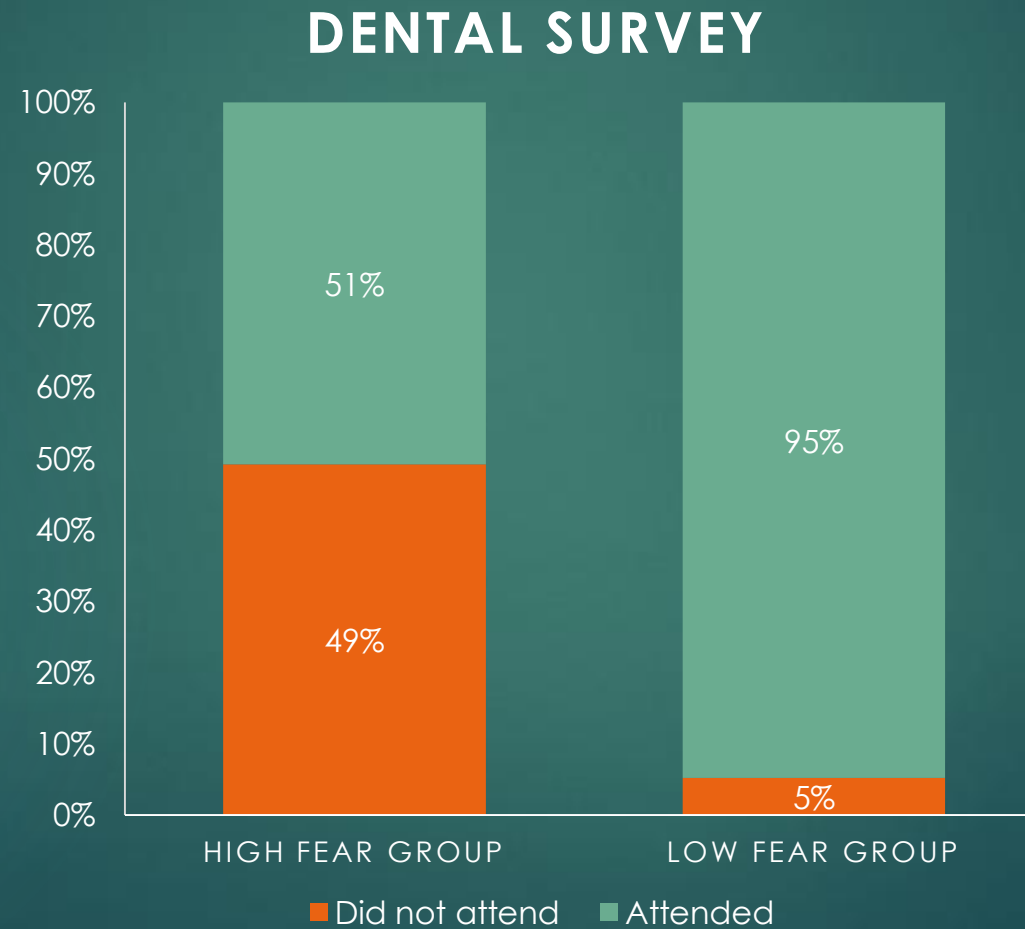


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- ▶ I hate power point
 - ▶ And power point hates me

Why this subject?

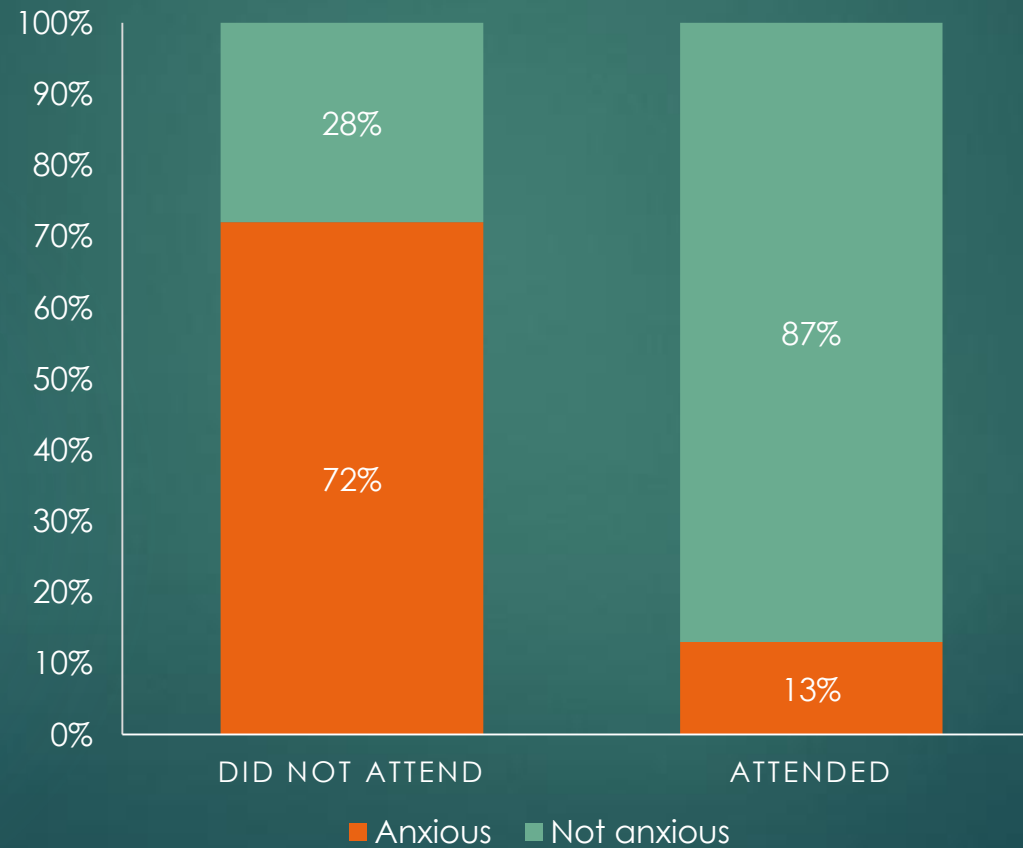
- ▶ This isn't OCT A!
- ▶ My manager thought I was joking when I chose this subject
- ▶ My PDR has been “be less blunt” for the last 4 years
- ▶ Does the NHS do enough to address this?
- ▶ “Use only that which works and take it from any place you can find it.” – Bruce Lee

Why does it matter?



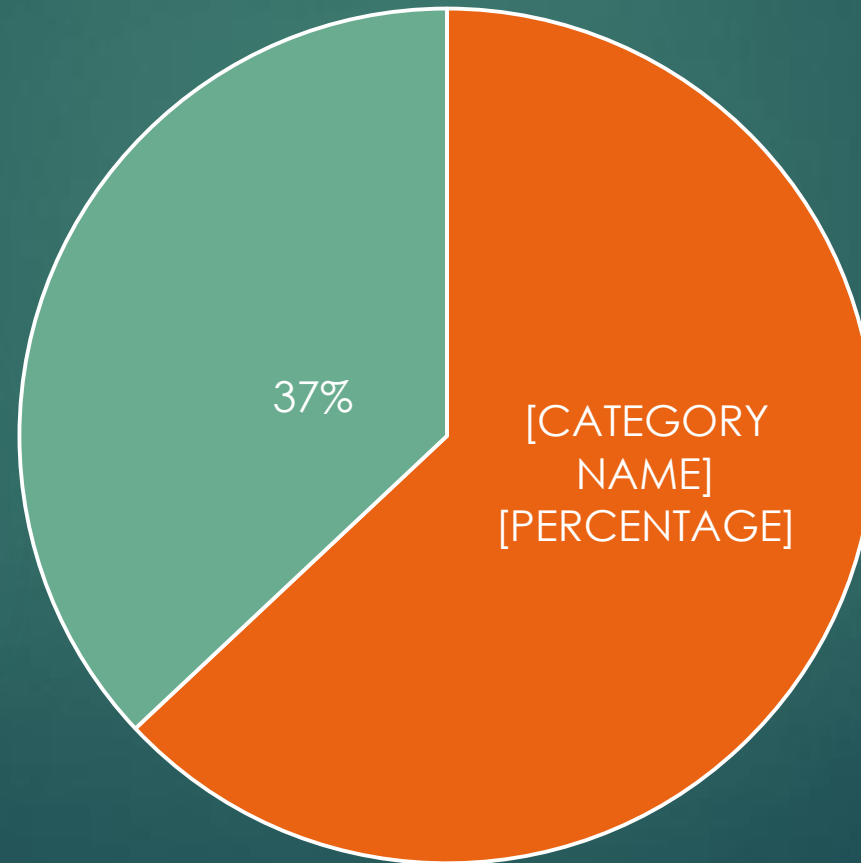
Why does it matter?

BREAST SCREENING STUDY



Why does it matter?

Siemens MRI Study



Why does it matter?

- ▶ Did not attend
 - ▶ What would you do in an anxious situation?
- ▶ Ignorance is bliss
 - ▶ Dentist, GP, optician
 - ▶ How often?
- ▶ Harder to take high quality images

What is anxiety?

- ▶ Response to danger
 - ▶ Real or not
- ▶ Irrational thought patterns
 - ▶ Can see everything as a threat
- ▶ Fear of an uncertain outcome
 - ▶ Undertaking tests

Anxious about getting anxious

- ▶ No physical danger
- ▶ Nothing to escape from
- ▶ Create a danger
 - ▶ “some untreatable illness”
- ▶ We want to be right

Fight or Flight

- ▶ Fear
- ▶ Patient Behaviour
 - ▶ Lack of sound
 - ▶ Nervous twitching
 - ▶ Asking to move on
 - ▶ Avoidance

What happens to the body?

Increased activity in the body

- ▶ Circulation increase
- ▶ Heartbeat quicker and harder
- ▶ Blood pressure rises
- ▶ Lungs work harder
- ▶ Liver releases sugar
- ▶ Muscles tense
- ▶ Sweating
- ▶ Adrenaline

Decreased activity in the body

- ▶ Digestion
- ▶ Mouth goes dry
- ▶ Kidney slows down
- ▶ Large intestines slow down
- ▶ Bladder slows down
- ▶ Concentration

Why do patients get anxious?

- ▶ Confusion
- ▶ What if the test finds something?
- ▶ Bad information
- ▶ Lack of control
- ▶ Long wait

Why do patients get anxious?

- ▶ Confusion
- ▶ What if the test finds something?
- ▶ Bad information
- ▶ Lack of control
- ▶ Long wait (or is it?)

Why do DR screening patients get anxious?

- ▶ Think of diabetic eye screening patient pathway
- ▶ Explain it to yourself horrendously
- ▶ Explain it to yourself positively

Phobia

- ▶ Needle
- ▶ Blood
- ▶ Ommetaphobia

Patients may experience mild to severe needle/blood phobias due to past experiences (Dougherty and Lister, 2011).

It is advisable to establish if the patient is known to have any concerns or anxieties before commencing cannulation as this may adversely affect the practitioner's success and further compound the patient's fears (Weinstein, 2007).



Anxious patients can present as irritable
and uncooperative.

This can fulfil the patients' negative
expectation.



“It may seem irrational to you, but what I’m anxious about is very real for me.”

— Paige Johnson

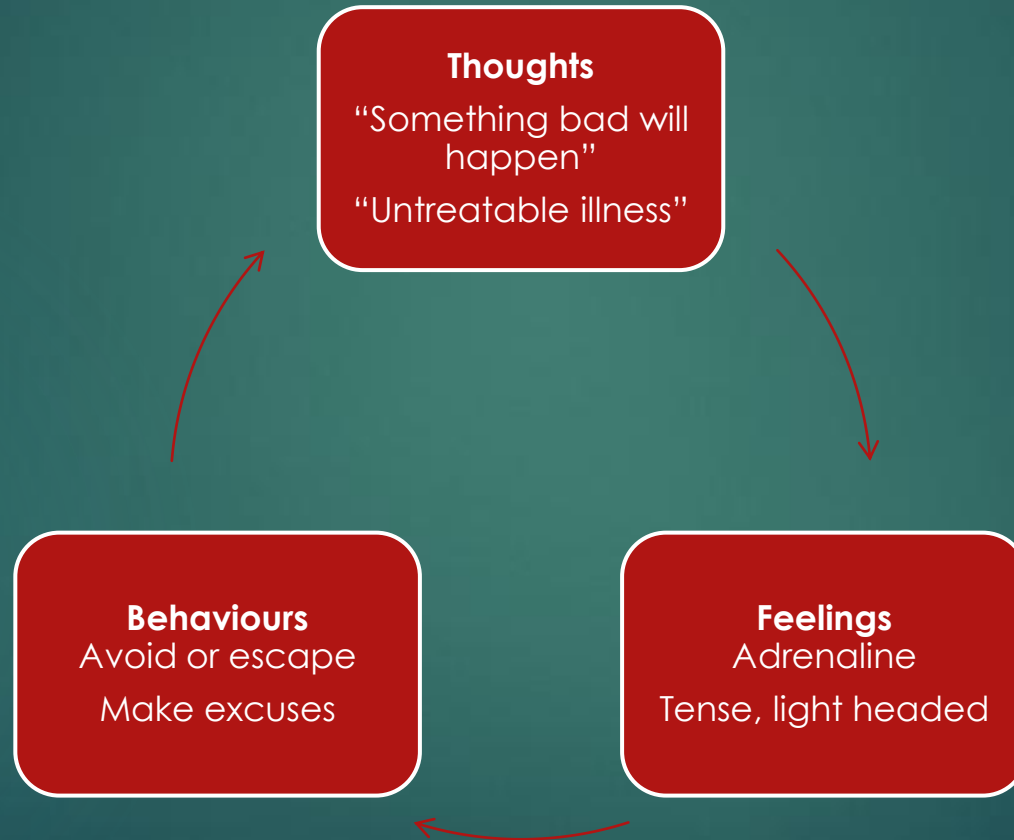
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

- ▶ Thoughts and feelings
- ▶ Control
- ▶ Notice you are reading this slide. Then notice you are noticing yourself. How do you do this?

People are disturbed not by events, but by the view they take of them
(Epictetus, stoic philosopher, AD 55-135)

Our life is what our thoughts make it
(Marcus Aurelius, emperor AD 161-180)

Vicious Cycle of Anxiety



NICE Guidelines

- ▶ Respect the patient
- ▶ Patient concerns
- ▶ Patient's independence

Before patient arrives

- ▶ Help reduce confusion (location – may not be their regular surgery)
- ▶ Review what is sent to new patients
- ▶ Appointment reminders
- ▶ Easy access to staff
- ▶ Avoid HICs (hospital induced cancellations)

Google

- ▶ Patients will find/write reviews
- ▶ This is a great way for you to see your strength and weaknesses for free

Leeds Marriott Hotel

4, Trevelyan Square, Boar Ln, Leeds

 Write a review

4.3  528 reviews

Sort by: Most helpful ▾



Emily Smith

2 reviews

 a month ago

We stayed their last night, the queen deluxe room we booked was described as a 'luxury' deal. Only to find out it's their most basic room. The air con was very loud and didn't work properly so sweated in our boiling hot room all night, the room was dingy and out dated. They need the bedroom doors replacing, they had just been patched up from being kicked in. The gym was ridiculously small, couldn't even work out without having to move over so someone could walk past. The equipment was very basic and some of it needed updating. Can't believe that anyone would pay monthly to go there, it was a room the same size as our kitchen at home! Wasn't asked if we enjoyed our stay as we left otherwise we would of told them our thoughts, they were definitely not interested... Stay in the Hilton if you want a nice stay!

The difference good customer service can make

- ▶ Think of a time when you had a good customer experience.
- ▶ What made it stand out?

Once the patient is in the hospital

- ▶ Introduce yourself and job role
- ▶ Reduce confusion
 - ▶ Explain what will happen and why
 - ▶ Relevant information available
 - ▶ Prompt for questions
 - ▶ Say how long they will be waiting

Bad advice

- ▶ “...”
- ▶ “You have nothing to worry about”
- ▶ “Try to take your mind off it”
- ▶ “Just try to relax”
- ▶ Use abbreviations

Become the patient

- ▶ What information do you gather?
- ▶ How does the hospital/surgery make you feel?
- ▶ Can you find where you need to go without asking anyone?
- ▶ Distinguish between solvable and unsolvable worries

New and Anxious Patients

- ▶ Let your patient be heard
- ▶ Explain the What and the Why
- ▶ Don't tell your patient to relax, show them how
- ▶ Use humour
- ▶ Prepare yourself for stressful situations
- ▶ Be empathetic

Breathing strategy

- ▶ Sit with your back straight, against a wall, in a chair or in a meditative posture.
- ▶ Soften your gaze and turn your eyes inward. Focus on your count and your breath. The more you focus on your breathing, the more your mind will clear as its only focus is the task at hand.
- ▶ Inhale through your nose for a count of 4 or 5 and hold for same count.
- ▶ Exhale for the same 4 to 5 seconds, count and hold again for the same count. Make sure to exhale all of the air out of your lungs.
- ▶ Repeat at least 3 times.

How to communicate

- ▶ Language
- ▶ Body language
- ▶ Tone
- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Confidence





Humour

- ▶ If you are comfortable to use it then use it, if not then avoid it

Top complaints from patients

- ▶ Lack of activity in the waiting room
- ▶ Not being informed how long the wait will be
- ▶ Facilities in waiting room

New Patients

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Putting it into practice

- ▶ Making sure the patient:
 - ▶ Understands what the test is for
 - ▶ What will happen during the test
 - ▶ Why they need to have it
 - ▶ What would be gained from it
- ▶ Reminder 4 days before
- ▶ Chance for patient to talk to the photographer prior to the test

Putting it into practice

DNA RATE




NHS vs Disneyland ?

- ▶ Why are am I comparing the health care system to a theme park?
- ▶ Spend about the same amount of time waiting
- ▶ One makes good use of that time and one rarely does
- ▶ Overestimate / over deliver

The future

- ▶ What can you take to your service?
- ▶ Think of one change that you can make to improve patient experience

I'm all in favour of progress; its change I don't like
(Mark Twain)

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- ▶ “Don’t reinforce stress by talking badly about the patient, ever. It’s normal to want to vent or release the stress of working with a fearful patient to your team. DON’T! The more you talk about how awkward it is to work with that patient, or how much they squirm and jump, or even when they don’t say two words to you the more you reinforce to you and others that it was a negative experience. Find another way to release your stress like breathing, positive self-talk, or take a 5 minute break. What you tell yourself you believe, so be careful of what you think.” - *anonymous dentist*

Tips

- ▶ Try and speak with your patient before their appointment on the phone
- ▶ When you call your patient in the waiting room, wait for them
- ▶ Be prepared for a stressful situation
- ▶ Show you care