**David A Russ, PhD –** **david@russ.com** **- www.turnaroundanxiety.com/documents**

# Core Elements of Anxiety Disorders

## Causes

1. Nothing wrong with anxiety response except it is a false alarm

2. Anxiety sensitivity

3. Fear learned quickly and generalizes

4. Memorized/Learned/Habit – often before you even know what it is

5. Normal Problem-solving backfires

## What makes it disorder?

Reaction significantly incongruent with circumstances

1. Intensity
2. Frequency
3. Interference
4. Persistence

## Shared Elements

1. Physiological Arousal
	1. Sympathetic and Parasympathetic
	2. Trumps everything
	3. Real Experience + Imagined Fear
	4. Loss of predictability
2. Cognitive Distortion
	1. Physiology demands focus on danger
	2. Problem is mental invention
	3. Common distortions
		* Over-estimate danger
		* Over responsibility
		* All or nothing
		* Filter out good
		* Intolerance of Uncertainty

Reinforcing Cycle

* + - Mind-Reading
1. Avoidant Coping
	1. Primary: Avoidance/Escape either literally or mentally
	2. Secondary: If escape impossible then creatively make it as safe as possible
2. Reinforcing Cycle

# Types of Anxiety

1. Panic
2. Separation
3. Generalized Anxiety
4. Social Phobia
5. Phobias
6. Trauma
7. OCD and Spectrum

# Treatment

## Approach

1. Educational
2. Directive and Structured
3. Symptom Reduction
4. More Coach, less therapist

## Organized around Core Elements

1. Physiological Calming
	1. Medication
	2. Skill Training
	3. Distress Tolerance
	4. Change in Lifestyle
2. Cognitive Accuracy/Flexibility
	1. Think about thinking
	2. Structured tracking
	3. Identify anxiety producing thoughts, beliefs, images, assumptions
	4. Challenge and restructure thoughts
3. Courageous Coping
	1. Exposure – deliberate thought or action that will evoke problem anxiety and then remaining in distress long and frequent enough to build tolerance
	2. Response Prevention – NOT doing anything to reduce anxiety before, during and after exposure. Essentially not make the exposure “safer.”

# Example

## Emetophobia Hierarchy

1. Words
2. Short sentences
3. Paragraphs
4. Simple cartoon illustrations
5. Photos of sick people (no vomit)
6. Pictures of vomit
7. Pictures of people vomiting
8. Animated videos of vomit
9. Videos of people vomiting
10. Fake vomit and smell