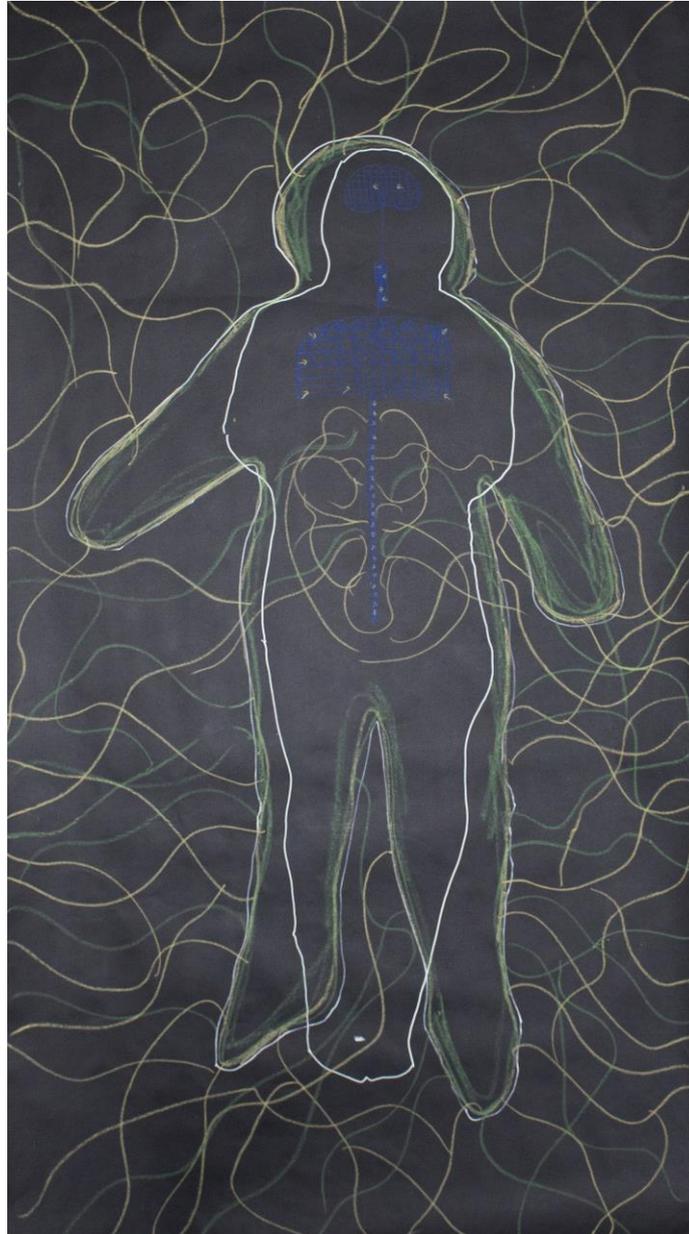


# Body Mapping Anxiety

## A Guide for High School Students



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Putting health in mind



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Body mapping is an arts-based research tool which, due to its focus on embodied experience, lends itself to exploration of bodily and psychological feelings and experience. Body mapping involves ‘...tracing around a person's body to create a life-sized outline, which is filled in during a creative and reflective process, producing an image representing multiple aspects of their embodied experience...’ (De Jager et al. 2016)

This guide has been created in order to explore the experience of anxiety with High School students. Body mapping is a wonderful way to explore feelings and experiences that are difficult to communicate. Please feel free to adapt this guide to suit the needs of the participants you’re making maps with.

This guide has been inspired by, and adapted from: *Gastaldo, D., Magalhaes, L., Carrasco, C., Davy, C. (2012). Body-Map Storytelling as Research: Methodological considerations for telling the stories of undocumented workers through body mapping. Retrieved from <http://www.migrationhealth.ca/undocumented-workers-ontario/body-mapping>.*

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## Workshop 1: Mindfulness Exercises & Body Tracing (1.5 hours total)

### Introduction to Body Mapping (5 minutes)

**Purpose**

To introduce the relationship of body mapping to the goals of the research project  
To address and reduce any reluctance related to drawing  
To introduce the art materials and demonstrate how each material can be used  
To establish expectations of the process as well as group rules (respect, safety, not interrupting or judging others' work)  
Ask for ongoing feedback about participants' well being, ongoing process of consent (able to leave at any time) and encourage self-care.

**Instructions**

- 1) Before beginning the mindfulness activities, take a few minutes to remind the participant what body mapping is about and how it will be used in this study.
- 2) Ask the participants if they have any questions about the process before beginning.

**Potential questions/ comments to guide the exercise**

*As part of this research project, we are going to use the body as a starting point to explore your experience of anxiety. We are going to use a process called body mapping. A body map is a life sized artwork created by tracing around your body. You will fill your map with symbols, images, and colours to depict your experiences of anxiety, and the ways that you deal with your anxiety (provide examples if necessary).*

*For this first workshop, we are going to go through some mindfulness exercises to ease you into thinking creatively, and assist you to begin to think of symbols and/or images to represent your experiences of anxiety and how you deal with anxiety.*

*We're using mindfulness as a way to explore being in the present moment. Mindfulness is about being conscious of what's going on around you, what you're doing, seeing and feeling in the present moment. Mindfulness is an important part of engagement with yourself and the world surrounding you. These exercises will also assist you in deciding what posture you want your body to be in on the body map. Feeling and listening to your body in the present moment may assist you to reflect on how you experience anxiety, and what it is you would like your body map to communicate.*

*Remember, if you feel tired and need to take a break, let me know. It is also important to let me know if you feel uncomfortable at any point. You can stop at any time without having to explain why.*

**Reminders or special considerations**

If undertaking research: ensure consent forms read, understood and signed, remind participant session will be recorded etc.  
Keep a check on the general health and energy level of the participant.

## Exercise 1: Mindfulness and Drawing Exercises (1 hour)

<b>Purpose</b>	To explore participants' embodied experiences of dealing with anxiety through a series of mindfulness and drawing exercises.
<b>Instructions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Start with a body scan, with an emphasis on embodied experience.</li><li>2) Reflect on how the body felt in this exercise, and how this can be described in relation to anxiety. Where is anxiety experienced within the body? How does the body experience anxiety? Drawing exercise to explore symbols to represent these embodied experiences (20 minutes).</li><li>3) Mindful walking exercise (both as a means to energise participants, and assist them in thinking in the present).</li><li>4) This time, we will ask participants to focus on how their anxiety is managed. What do they do to assist in managing their anxiety? Do they try anything to assist their body in managing their anxiety? Who/what helps in managing their anxiety? Drawing exercise to explore symbols to represent their 'anxiety management' experiences (20 minutes)</li><li>5) Refer to Starting with Art day (potential drawing/ writing/ collage exercise?) (10 -15 minutes)</li><li>6) Mini body map exercise – pre drawn body maps on A4 paper. Can the symbols they've drawn in the previous exercises be used to highlight different parts of the body, both where anxiety, and 'anxiety management' is felt? (Using this exercise may depend on whether we have time. We could use it in the next workshop).</li></ol>

<b>Potential questions to guide the exercise</b>	<p><i>We would like to begin with a body scan. This is a mindfulness exercise aimed at relaxing your body, and assisting you to think about how you experience anxiety, both where in your body you feel anxiety, and the feelings that are associated with your anxiety. (Depending on time you may wish to incorporate into this exercise reflections on anxiety and how this feels within the body).</i></p>
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*You can stay sitting, or if you were lying down for the body scan, bring yourself into a seated position. I'd like for you to take a moment to think about how your body felt during this exercise, and how your body feels now. Did thinking of your experiences of anxiety during this time bring up any feelings/sensations within the body? Or assist you in reflecting on your experiences of anxiety?*

*We are now going to begin to think of how we can visually represent these experiences/feelings of anxiety within the body. If everyone could move when they're ready to the paper that's spread throughout the room, we can begin this drawing exercise. Think back to the last time you felt anxious or stressed. How did it make you feel? Did you feel it in a particular part of the body? How is it felt? You can depict these experiences any way you like... for example you could use a shape that you think represents your feelings of anxiety in a particular part of your body? Or you could try drawing yourself in this anxious moment if that's easier? How do you see yourself when you're anxious? What does your body look like? Is there any way you can depict this visually? They can be as literal or complex as you like. If thinking back to these experiences makes you feel anxious in any way, let these feelings go, and come back to how your body felt after the scan. If you can't think of anything to draw, or you're not sure how to draw something, there*

*are some magazines and cut out images that may help you to think of ways to draw your experiences. (Adapted from 'Body Scan' (Smiling Mind, 2016))*

(Consider before doing walking mindfulness whether students were engaged in the body scan? Is the 'Exploring Movement' (Smiling Mind 2016) activity appropriate at this moment?)

*We would now like to move through a walking mindfulness exercise. This is mainly so you can get rid of any energy you may have from sitting down through this period, and to encourage thinking about your body in relation to your experiences. (Refer to Exploring Movement Exercise on separate sheet – incorporated into this exercise may be reflections on what helps with their anxiety... as a way to prompt the next drawing exercise).*

*We would now like to think of ways to visually represent the ways that help with your anxiety. What are your coping strategies? What helps you when you're feeling anxious? What makes you happy in life? Where in the body do these feelings arise?*

*We're going to run through a quick drawing exercise that may help to act on instinct when considering what helps you to manage your anxiety. I want you to write down 3 things that help you to cope with anxiety. This may be things like family, friends, pets, exercise, nature, music, hobbies etc. (Once students have written them down)... Take your first piece of paper... you've now got 2 minutes to represent that first example you wrote down. You can draw as many or as few images or symbols as you like.*

*To explore what kind of body posture you would like to draw onto your body map, we're going to do a collage exercise to explore movement in the body. (Hand out paper, glue etc). Firstly, we want to start by ripping up the paper, and using this paper to create a posture shape that you feel represents you as a person. It can be in any shape, and remember this is just a practice to assist you to think about the ways you want to present your body on your map, so don't worry if you're not happy with what you come up with. (ACTIVITY) Now that you've created a general shape for your body posture, we want you to draw an outline that gives the body more character. You can focus on emotions that you'd like to portray through your body posture. Do you want it to be a strong, playful, elegant, joyous, majestic posture for example? It's up to you how you would like to present your body in this drawing.*

**Reminders or special considerations**

It is important to prompt people to describe what the process was like for them, prompting them with questions to further explore the meaning of images / symbols that they draw.

To address and reduce any reluctance/hesitancy related to drawing

## Exercise 2: Body Tracing (20 – 30 mins)

<b>Purpose</b>	To trace an outline of the participant's body in a posture that is most characteristic of who they are and what their experience of anxiety has been like.
<b>Instructions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Ask participants to get into pairs so they can trace around each other.</li><li>2) Ask the participants to take off their shoes and any extra clothing (if it is likely to interfere with drawing the outline (i.e. bulky jumper, handbag, etc.)</li><li>3) Ask them to think of a posture that represents who they are, their body in the context of their experience of dealing with anxiety, and the ways in which they manage their anxiety.</li><li>4) Ask them to lie down on the sheet of large paper in that posture, while you trace their body with a pencil or grey charcoal.</li><li>5) While tracing, maintain flow of conversation through research relevant questions.</li><li>6) After helping them to get up, ask him/her to pick a colour for their body outline that best represents who they are.</li></ol>
<b>Potential questions to guide the exercise</b>	<p><i>The first step in creating your body map is to trace your body shape on this large sheet of paper. Please remove your shoes or any excessive clothing/accessories you may have on (e.g. bulky jacket, etc.).</i></p> <p><i>I would like you to think about a position or a posture that best represents who you are and your experience of dealing with anxiety, and the ways in which you manage your anxiety. What body position best represents you? (e.g. sleeping, standing, dancing, stretched out, curled up, etc.). You can decide whether you want the body posture to represent who you are generally, or you when you're feeling anxious, or you when you're managing your anxiety, or even a neutral posture.</i></p> <p><i>(Possible questions while tracing: How would you describe yourself as a person? What has your experience of dealing with anxiety been like? What do you think has been the biggest change? How do you describe yourself right now?)</i></p>
<b>Reminders or special considerations</b>	<p>Participants may have a hard time thinking about a position that characterizes them. If this is the case, it might be useful to jot down some examples / brainstorm it together before they get into place.</p> <p>Some positions are difficult to draw, especially if the person decides to lie down on their side, which means only one arm and only one leg will appear in the tracing. In this case, take some time to think about where the arm/leg would appear in the inside of the body and help the participant draw in these missing pieces.</p> <p>Tracing may make both you and the participant uncomfortable. One way to get around this is to trace a couple of inches away from their body, or skip parts that make you feel uncomfortable and fill them in later once they have stood up.</p>

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## Homework Activity (5 minutes)

**Purpose** To deepen and broaden participants' reflections on the mindfulness and drawing exercises they completed, and to think more deeply about what symbols they would like to include in their body map.

**Task to do at home** Reflection: 1) Think about some of the symbols you drew in the exercises today, and which ones and where you would like to place them on the body map 2) Think about a personal slogan (e.g. a statement, a saying, a poem, a song, a prayer, something you say for yourself) that describes your philosophy of life or your current thinking about your life. Think about where to place it on the sheet.

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## Workshop 2: The Experience of the Body while anxious and/or when non-anxious (1.5 hours)

### Reflections on previous meeting and introduction to today's activities (5 minutes)

**Purpose** To provide a space to reflect on what the last meeting was like.  
To introduce activities planned for the day.

**Instructions** Ask for feedback.  
Introduce topics.

**Potential script / questions to guide the exercise** *Before we start today, could you take a moment to reflect on what the last meeting was like for you... are there any comments / suggestions / queries arising from that? Is there anything that we need to change today to make things work better or more smoothly? What do you need to feel supported today? If you think of something later on, you can let us know.*

*Today we will begin to fill in your body maps. Firstly, we will focus on using the symbols and/or images that you created in last week's workshop, and decide where you would like to use these symbols/images within the body map. Secondly, we will focus on creating a slogan to represent your experiences. We will discuss this later in the workshop.*

**Reminders or special considerations** Leave enough time for people to make suggestions about what they need.

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## Exercise 1: Filling in the body map with symbols/images & completing the slogan (1 hour)

**Purpose** To represent participants' diverse experiences of anxiety through using symbols/images which are meaningful to them.  
To understand what motivates participants or what perspective participants have on life through the use of a slogan.

**Instructions**

1. Ask the participant to show you their symbol and slogan and explain its meaning.
2. If the participant wishes to cut and paste their symbol and slogan directly on their body map, help him/her and make sure to ask about the meaning of where they place it on their body map.

**Potential script / questions to guide the exercise**

*Today we're going to begin to fill in your body maps with some of the symbols and/or images that you created in last week's workshop. We have magazines and cut out images, so you can experiment with collage if that is something you would prefer. You may also begin to think about the internal and external in relation to your body. Where can anxiety be felt within the body? Are there external stressors that trigger your anxiety? Again, if thinking about these experiences makes you feel anxious, let these feelings go, and instead you may like to focus on the ways that you manage your anxiety. Does your management of anxiety come from within? Or are there external forces that help you to manage your anxiety? This can assist in deciding what will be drawn within the body, and what will be drawn in the space surrounding the body. Of course, if anyone has any questions throughout today's workshop, don't hesitate to call on us to talk through ideas as we're here to help you. If anyone is uncomfortable at any point, or if you feel anxious thinking about your experiences, you can stop and take a break at any point.*

(After maybe 20 minutes or more depending on everyone's energy levels, we could guide participants through another walking meditation).

*We would now like to move through another walking mindfulness exercise, as we did in the last workshop. Again, this is mainly so you can be re-energised and ready to continue with drawing onto the body maps. (Adapted from 'Exploring Movement' (Smiling Mind 2016))*

*Some guiding questions: What symbols/images have you chosen to describe your experience of anxiety? Who are you as a person? What is your life philosophy? What keeps you going? Can you explain the meaning of your symbol and slogan? Where on your body map would you like to place these symbols and why?*

*We'd now like to focus on creating a personal slogan that will be drawn onto your body map. Some of you may have already thought of or decided on a slogan that reflects you as a person and your experiences, but we would also like to guide you through a writing exercise that may assist you if you haven't figured out what you want as your slogan. (Hand out paper to write on)*

*We'd now like for you to write down the first 3 words that come to your head to describe your experiences of anxiety. Now, we'd like you to write another 3 words that come to your head when you think of the ways that*

*help you to deal with your anxiety. Now, it may be helpful to use these words to form a sentence of some kind. This can be in any format you wish; a poem, the words merely strung together, or using words/phrases that you've already thought of in conjunction with the words you wrote down today. If you're happy with what you've created, you may like to think about where you'd like to write these words onto your body map. There's no pressure to copy it onto the body map today, but you may like to think about where this personal slogan could be placed on your map. For those of you who aren't happy with what you've created, you may like to consider particular song lyrics that you like, or quotes from novels that you like, or even just a phrase that comes to mind when you think of who you are as a person, and how your experiences have shaped you. Keep in mind that we have one more session, so if you would prefer to continue with filling in your body map, you can work on creating a personal slogan at home and add it to your body map next week.*

(Allow participants to continue working on filling in their body map, or they can continue working on their personal slogan if they'd prefer).

**Reminders or special considerations**

It is common for participants to choose a slogan in a language other than English, if English is not their first language. They may wish to keep it like this. Keep in mind that for the purposes of dissemination, these segments of the body map will need to be translated.

If participants ask you to reproduce their slogan in larger font, make sure to keep a note of where they would like the slogan to appear on their body map.

It is also common for participants to come with a symbol to use in mind. You can suggest finding it on the Internet and adding it to their body map at a later time. Again, keep a note for yourself about where they would like the symbol/image to appear.

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## Body Mapping

Workshop 3: Completion of body maps (1.5 hours)

### Exercise

**Purpose** To revisit the use of a personal slogan within the body maps & fill in the entire body map. To conduct interviews with participants about their maps.

**Instructions**

1. Check in with participants to see if they have any questions about the previous workshops.
2. Continue to fill in the body maps until completion.
3. Finish with a mindfulness walking exercise.

### Potential script / questions to guide the exercise

**Reminders or special considerations** Make sure to check in with participants throughout the workshop to ensure they are supported, and if they need any additional resources or advice for their body mapping creation.

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## References:

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