**Anxiety**

Covenant Group Session Plan

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

Written by: Pam Stevenson Date: September 2019

**Welcome, Chalice Lighting:** *Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a holy place. We light the chalice of Unitarian Universalism in honor of the light that lives in each of us, the light that shines among us, and the light we bring into the world.*

**Personal Check In:** Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

**Opening Words:** Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.

~Steve Jobs, American business magnate, entrepreneur and investor

**Questions to prompt and guide discussion:**

1. When you feel uneasy or anxious about something, what do you to get through it?
2. When you see someone else who appears to be anxious or uneasy in a situation, what is your response?
3. How has your life experience been changed or informed by feelings of or the experience of anxiety?
4. When has anxiety energized you to work for, or manage, a change in yourself or the world?

**Sitting in Silence** (Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear readings)

**Readings- See below**

**Sharing -** This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Deep listening means no interrupting, no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Please share one or more responses to the session questions.

**(This is usually a good time to take a brief break)**

**Open Discussion -**This is a time to respond to something another person said about the topic or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared their thoughts on this topic. Continue to practice deep listening.

**Closing reading**:

Help us to be the always hopeful gardeners of the spirit who know that without darkness nothing comes to birth as without light nothing flowers. ~ May Sarton, American poet, novelist and memoirist. Reading #691, *Singing the Living Tradition*

**Announcements/Plans**

**Check out:** As we close today, how are you feeling now?

**Extinguish the Chalice**

**Readings**

What is anxiety? The term anxiety refers to feelings of worry, nervousness, apprehension or fear commonly experienced by people when faced with something they view as challenging – a test, speaking in public, a job interview, divorce, layoff, or any number of other stress-inducing events.

~Samantha Gluck, Journalist

Merriam-Webster: An abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physical signs (such as tension, sweating and increased pulse rate), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one’s capacity to cope with it.

Feelings don’t try to kill you, even the painful ones. Anxiety is a feeling grown too large. A feeling grown aggressive and dangerous. You’re responsible for its consequences; you’re responsible for treating it. But….you’re not responsible for causing it. You’re not morally at fault for it – no more than you would be for a tumor. ~Patrick Ness, British-American author

Worrying is carrying tomorrow’s load with today’s strength – carrying two days at once. It is moving into tomorrow ahead of time. Worrying doesn’t empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength. ~Corrie Ten Boom, Dutch watchmaker, missionary and writer

Anxiety’s like a Rocking Chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn’t get you very far.

~Jodi Picoult, American writer

Anxiety was born in the very same moment as mankind. And since we will never be able to master it, we will have to learn to live with it – just like we have learned to live with storms.

~Paulo Coelho, Brazilian lyricist and novelist

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.

~William James, American philosopher and psychologist

Our anxiety does not come from thinking about the future but from wanting to control it.

~Kahlil Gibran, Lebanese-American writer, poet and visual artist

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear. ~Mark Twain, American writer, humorist, entrepreneur, publisher, and lecturer.

I don’t think people understand how stressful it is to explain what’s going on in your head when you don’t even understand it yourself. ~Unknown

I am exhausted from trying to be stronger than I feel. ~Unknown

Just because I can’t explain the feelings causing my anxiety doesn’t make them less valid.

~Lauren Elizabeth

I know what it’s like to be afraid of your own mind. ~Spencer Reid, fictional character on the CBS crime drama *Criminal Minds*

Don’t believe everything you think. ~Unknown