

The background is a dark blue gradient with faint, light blue circular patterns. On the left side, there is a large circular scale with tick marks and numbers ranging from 140 to 260. Several smaller circles with arrows are scattered across the background, some appearing to be part of a larger diagram or flowchart.

# ANXIETY, STRESS, AND ADDICTIONS

# ANXIETY AND STRESS

What does it mean?

- Anxiety and stress are **NORMAL** feelings
- Anxiety and stress is a message, usually saying that coping skills need to be tweaked
- Anxiety and stress are usually protective in nature

Most importantly,

- Is an opportunity for healing

# PATTERNS OF ANXIETY AND STRESS IN ADDICTION

- Addiction is the most extreme form of patterning
- Addiction can be a response to stressors and anxiety
- Look at the patterns related to how stressors/anxiety is handled, for example do you get anxious over small things , or over big things
- What is driving this endless repetition, example, hamster wheel thoughts and behaviours?
- How do these anxieties set in.....what triggers these states of stress? For example is it physical pain, emotional or psychological discord, mental thoughts?

# STRESS

- What is the difference between good stress and bad stress?
- Positive stress -eustress is beneficial, creates drive and motivation, etc.
- Negative stress - distress -can create physical, emotional and mental disharmony
  
- What creates positive or negative stress
- It is the meaning we attach to it
- Can be based on our thoughts, past experiences, emotional state, etc.
- It can also be related to the context in which we experience it (being alone, verses with supportive family and/or friends)

# COGNITIVE (THOUGHT) DISTORTIONS

**Black and white thinking** - all is good, or all is bad

**Catastrophizing** - seeing the absolute worst of the situation

**Negative thinking** - coming up with reasons positives won't work

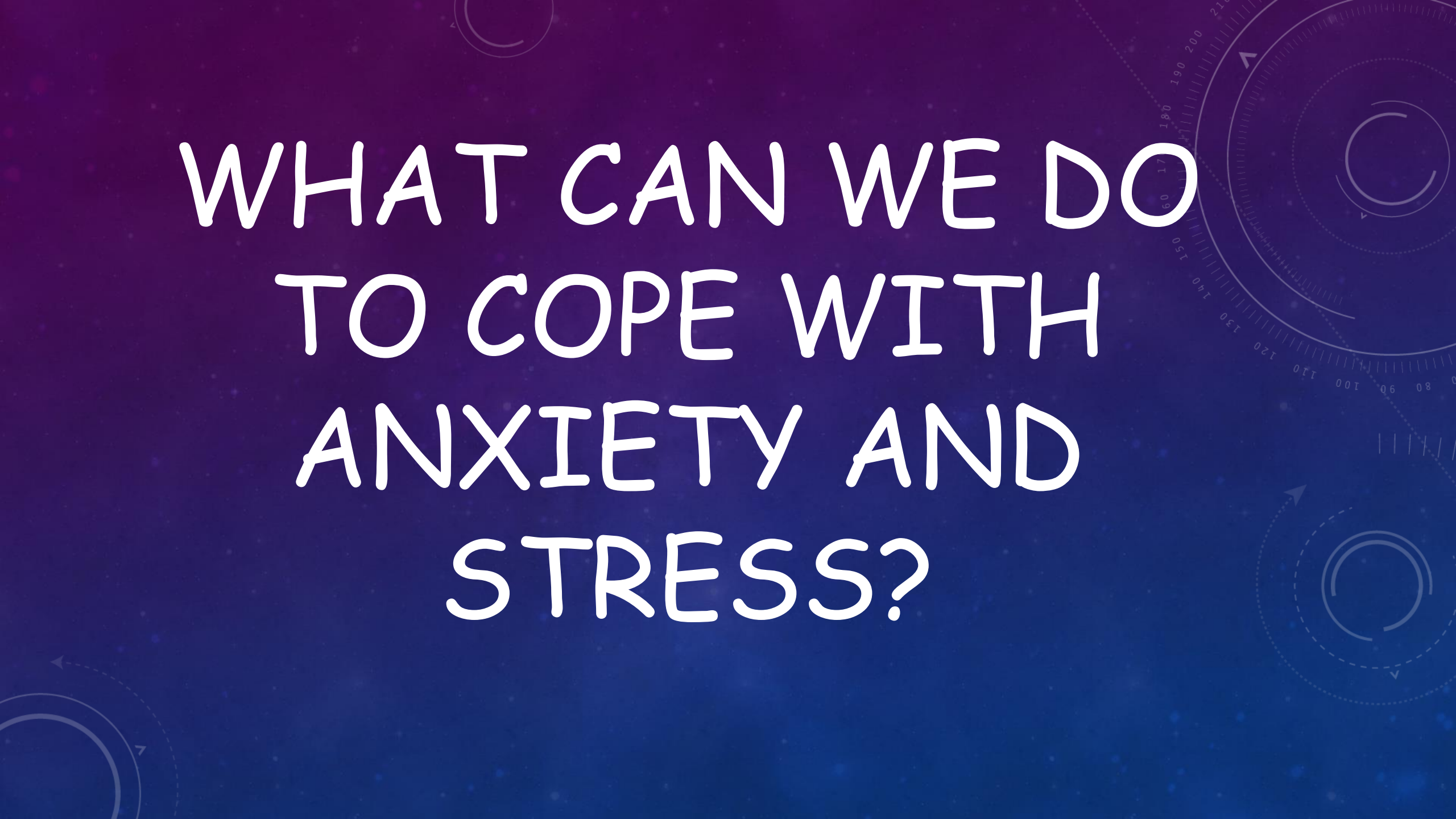
**Over generalization** - "I didn't get the job, therefore, I will never get a job"

**I should have/I shouldn't have** - beating self up for breaking the rules

**Personalization** - assuming responsibility for things that are not under your control

**Emotional reasoning** - viewing the world through your own feelings (example, I am stressed out, so the whole world is seen as chaotic and stressful)

**Self labeling** - "I am a failure" "I am stupid" based on past mistakes

The background features a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of white stars. Overlaid on this are several faint, light blue technical diagrams. On the right side, there is a large circular gauge with a scale from 0 to 210 and a needle pointing towards 180. Below it is another circular diagram with concentric circles and arrows. On the left, there are partial circular diagrams with arrows. The text is centered in a white, hand-drawn font.

WHAT CAN WE DO  
TO COPE WITH  
ANXIETY AND  
STRESS?

# FOOD INTAKE AND SELF CARE

- Eliminate processed foods and limit complex carbohydrates (sugar foods)
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Increase magnesium in foods and/or supplements
- Eat berries, nuts and seeds (high in antioxidants, and Omega 3 for brain function)
- Eat fish
- Eat raw vegetables, green leafy vegetables, spinach, kale, chard, etc.
- Eat citrus fruits
- Exercise daily (to increase endorphins, and blood flow and expel excess energy and stress)
- Sleep – get 8 hours of sleep her night
- Have a daily practice (could be exercise, meditation, walking, reflections, etc.)
- Journal- get your thoughts out on paper
- Laugh – aim for 1 belly laugh per day

# EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Learn to down-regulate high anxiety

**Reframe** - identifying the stressor as something other than normally done, example, anxiety feelings can be seen as excitement, or increased energy needing to be expelled

**Reappraisal** - thinking of the emotional information in a way that reduces negative meaning, example

**Distraction** - disengagement from the negative emotion by producing distracting thoughts, example envisioning a vacation scene or going to your happy place

These will allow for emotional processing which helps integrate new neuro-pathways being built



# ADDITIONAL METHODS

- Talk to someone (do not isolate) HOWEVER, make sure it is someone you can trust and help gain new perspective; some people will only feed fears and worries
- Take a time out to time in – get some space and reflect inward to your emotional state, breathe, meditate, practice relaxation techniques
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Learn to self sooth, be kind to yourself, pay attention to your needs, do not try to run and hide from them (drugs and alcohol)
- Practice positive self talk and affirmations
- Aim for your best (in the moment) and not perfection
- Set small attainable goals
- Examine your triggers

# AND REMEMBER.....

- somethings cannot be controlled
- All things must pass....