



Screening and Action Planning Toolkit

A toolkit for those who are concerned about their use of Xanax or other benzodiazepines (and related drugs) and those who support them.

About this tool:

The use of Xanax (alprazolam) has grown significantly over the past few years as the benzodiazepine, widely used in the US to treat anxiety, becomes more widely available in the UK.

As with other benzodiazepines, Xanax can cause physical and psychological dependency.

The exercises in the pack are intended to be used (for example) over successive weeks of face-to-face sessions. They could also be completed by person using Xanax on their own, but it is likely that the person will benefit from discussion and interpretation of results.

The programme follows the stages of The Cycle of Change, and is intended to support the process to the point of action.

Who should use the tool?

Some young people using Xanax will be recreational or experimental users and will have little or no dependency. In such situations, where no complicating factors are identified, the cessation programme can be followed in generic, non-drug specific settings. As such workers in numerous settings including Youth Workers, School Nurses and housing settings are well placed to work with cessation. It is of course also suitable for those primarily working in drug settings.

Where there is a significant level of dependency, poly-drug use or a history of drug dependency, or mental illness, referral to or joint working with a drugs agency and/or mental health services is strongly advised.

Acute withdrawal from benzodiazepines can be dangerous and has the potential to be life-threatening. Where there physical dependency is suspected a full medical assessment is required before stopping use.

Which drugs are covered by this tool?

The tool refers primarily to Xanax but is also relevant to other benzodiazepines, Z-drugs (zopiclone, zimovane and related drugs) and Pregabalin or Gabapentin (although withdrawal symptoms will tend to be less significant with the last two drugs.)

These drugs are prescribed for serious anxiety, and insomnia, muscle spasm and several other medical conditions. They are also used outside of medical settings.

The context of the tool is young people's use of Xanax in recreational or self-medicating settings rather than longer term use of benzos as an aspect of dependent, prescribed or polydrug use.

The tool isn't designed to explore GHB/GBL as the patterns of use and context are significantly different.

Further information about Benzodiazepines:

The KFx briefing on Benzodiazepines can be downloaded here:

http://www.kfx.org.uk/drug_facts/drug_facts_images_and_pdfs/benzos2017.pdf

Sample Eight Session Programme:

An example of how this toolkit could be used over eight or more sessions is as follows.

Session 1: “You Down with the Downer?” Knowledge/awareness (precontemplation)

The ten question multiple choice quiz is intended to explore level of awareness of Xanax, identify gaps in knowledge and use as a chance to do harm reduction and awareness raising about key legal and health risks. This tool can be used on its own, as an educational resource, and doesn't have to be tied to the wider action plan.

Session 2: “Close to the Edge” Risk Taking/Harm Reduction (precontemplation)

This short exercise is intended to assess key risks related to Xanax use. The idea is to ensure harm reduction/OD awareness interventions are incorporated early on so that, even if the client doesn't engage with the rest of the programme, they leave with some information to help keep themselves safer and reduce risks.

Session 3: XANAX Dependency Questionnaire (Precontemplative/Contemplative):

Client presents with Xanax use but doesn't consider themselves to have any problems with benzos or to be dependent.

-Worker introduces **Xanax Dependency Questionnaire**. This could either be filled in now or taken by the client for later completion. Feedback suggests that when people complete it on their own, at their leisure, answers are more honest and insightful so it may be worth leaving the person with a copy to complete at their leisure.

Session 4: MY XAN DIARY (Contemplation): It may well be that the results of the Xanax Dependency Questionnaire do not indicate significant benzo dependency. Xanax use may presently be under control but with some areas of concern. If this is the case, some Solution Focussed interventions to address where Xanax is causing problems may be appropriate.

-If the results of the Dependency Questionnaire indicate a higher level of dependency, discuss this with the client, exploring how Xanax use is currently having an impact.

-Introduce **My Xanax Diary**. This is intended to look at patterns and associations of use, along with impact it may be having. Ideally the person completes it looking back at a couple of weeks and looking at the present and coming weeks.

Session 5: Weighing Up Xanax (Contemplation/Decision):

- Review the Xanax diary with the client. Explore frequency, scale, costs, associations and impact.

- Note that if use is happening more than once every three days on a regular basis prompt to see if this is an ongoing pattern. This will increase likelihood of tolerance/physical dependency being an issue.

-Introduce the **Weighing Up Xanax** sheet. This is a classic motivational tool, exploring pros and cons of carrying on use and stopping. Ask the client to complete this and bring it back next week.

Session 6: (contemplation/decision):

- Review Diary sheet; provide fresh one if needed
- Review and discuss Weighing Up sheet. Identify key benefits and functions of Xanax use. Use motivational interviewing approach to explore tension between pros and cons.
- Introduce **Dependency Profile Assessment**. The client can either complete this now or take it for self completion. As the scoring and plotting of results is a little more complicated this may be better done with worker help, though it should be straightforward for most people to interpret the results.

Session 7: (decision/action):

- If this hasn't already been done, score and interpret the Dependency Profile Assessment with the client.
- Use the results of this to identify significant areas which will need to be addressed for change to happen
- identify if there are any referrals that may need to be made in light of these results (see physical withdrawal screen)
- review Diary (if relevant).

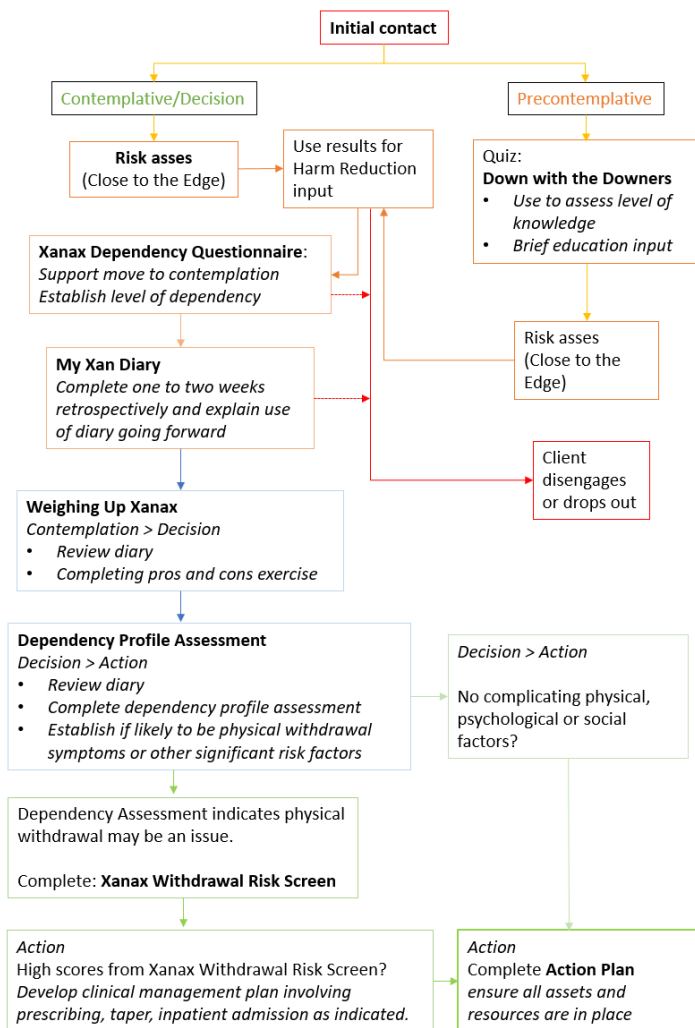
Session 8: (action) Physical Withdrawal Screen

If the Dependency Profile Assessment, Diary Sheet and initial Xanax Dependency Questionnaire indicate a significant level of physical dependency then work should work with the client to assess pattern and level of use to shape a withdrawal plan. This isn't required where little or no physical dependency is evident.

Session 9: (action) Where decision is being made to stop Introduce **Action Plan Sheet**. This is best completed at the client's leisure. It is important that the client reaches the decision about stopping themselves. The sheet links together key points identified in the Weighing Up and Dependency sheets, so it will be useful to have all these sheets together for completing the action plan.

Follow up: session 10 onwards:

(action): Review the Action Plan sheet, identify other interventions that may have been missed. Reinforce positive reasons for change. Identify and promote alternatives to perceived benefits of benzos, Discuss withdrawal symptoms and coping strategies. Identify support interventions during cessation period.



YOU DOWN WITH THE DOWNERS?

This little quiz is to look at what you know (and what you don't know) about Xanax and other similar drugs.

1: Xanax is a member of which family of drugs?

- a) Opiates
- b) Benzodiazepines
- c) Legal highs

2: Xanax pills in the UK mostly:

- a) Have come from Doctors or Hospitals in the UK
- b) Have come from Doctors or Hospitals overseas
- c) Have been made in illegal labs in different countries

3: All white bars printed with XANAX in the UK:

- a) Are the same strength
- b) contain the same drug
- c) Could contain unknown drugs and unknown doses

4: Xanax is:

- a) Not physically addictive
- b) Physically addictive, but only if you use it for years
- c) Physically addictive and tolerance occurs within a few weeks of regular frequent use

5: In the UK it is:

- a) Legal to possess and supply Xanax without prescription
- b) Legal to possess and illegal to supply Xanax without prescription
- c) Illegal to possess and supply Xanax without prescription

6: Stopping using Xanax suddenly for people who are dependent:

- a) Is safe but unpleasant
- b) Is safe and no worse than stopping smoking
- c) Is dangerous and can be fatal if not done properly

7: In the UK drugs in the same family as Xanax were a feature in:

- a) The same number of deaths as the heroin-substitute methadone in 2017
- b) Fewer deaths than methadone in 2017
- c) More deaths than methadone in 2017

8: Drugs like Xanax can kill you by:

- a) Making you overheat
- b) Making your heart go too fast
- c) Shutting down your brain and body

9: XANAX is:

- a) A made up/slang name for a new drug
- b) A brand name of the drug Alprazolam
- c) Another name for the drug Valium

10: Drugs like Xanax are at their most dangerous:

- a) If used with stimulant drugs like MDMA/Molly
- b) If used with cannabis
- c) If used with alcohol

YOU DOWN WITH THE DOWNERS?

Answers: how much did you know about Xanax and this family of drugs?

1: Xanax is a member of which family of drugs?

b) Benzodiazepines

this family of drugs is also known as Tranquillizers, downers, or sleeping pills. Other drugs in this family include Valium and Temazepam. They are used medically to treat some problems.

2: Xanax pills in the UK:

c) Have been made in illegal labs overseas:

most Doctors in the UK aren't allowed to prescribe Xanax. Nearly all the 'Xanax' sold in the UK was made in illegal laboratories as raw powder then turned in to pills. Lots of them are fake.

3: All white bars printed with XANAX in the UK:

c) Could contain unknown drugs and unknown doses

Because the pills are made in illegal labs there's no guarantee that the strength is what it should be – or even that it has got the drug in it that you think it is. Like all illegal drugs, it's "pot-luck."

4: Xanax is:

c) Physically addictive

Physical dependence can build up after a few weeks of regular use.

5: In the UK it is:

c) Illegal to possess and supply Xanax without prescription

Xanax and similar drugs are controlled by the same laws that affect heroin and cocaine. It is a Class C drug. The maximum penalty for supplying Xanax is 14 years.

6: Stopping using Xanax suddenly for people who are dependent:

c) Is dangerous and can be fatal if not done properly

Xanax can cause convulsions and hallucinations if you are dependent and stop suddenly. Sometimes these can cause death. Safe withdrawal is done by reducing drugs slowly, sometimes prescribing another drug, or in hospital.

7: In the UK drugs in the same family as Xanax were a feature in:

c) More deaths than methadone in 2017

Benzodiazepine-type drugs were a feature in 397 deaths in 2017 – more than methadone!

8: Drugs like Xanax can kill you by:

c) Shutting down your brain and body

Depressant drugs like Xanax reduce activity in the brain. This can make you drowsy, but too much could put you in a coma or completely shut down the brain.

9: XANAX is:

b) A brand name of the drug Alprazolam

10: Drugs like Xanax are at their most dangerous:

c) If used with alcohol

Drugs like Xanax are most dangerous when used with other "downer" or "depressant" drugs like alcohol or pain-killers like codeine.

CLOSE to the EDGE?

Use of any substance can have risks but how risky is your Xanax use? This exercise will help you spot key risks – and how to avoid them. Answer all questions that apply to you, as honestly as possible.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1: I tend to use Xanax | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) With some close friendsb) With a mix of people I know and some I don't knowc) On my ownd) Anywhere, anytime, with anyone |
| 2: When I'm getting Xanax | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) I'm buying online from a reliable sourceb) I get them from someone I know, usually the same personc) I get whatever's going around from anyone who has got pills |
| 3: In order to find out about Xanax | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) I did some reading online from several websitesb) I asked some friends who know a bitc) I haven't really done any research |
| 4: When I get a pill | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) I take a small part of it first to see how I get onb) I take the whole pill in one goc) I've taken several pills at once |
| 5: I have taken Xanax | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) But not with other drugsb) While I've been drinkingc) While I've been using codeine or other painkillers |
| 6: When I have used Xanax I have had | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Complete control over what I was doingb) Times when I did things that were riskyc) Periods when I was unconsciousd) Times when I couldn't remember what I had done |
| 7: After using Xanax I have | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Always woken up somewhere I should be safe and fineb) Woken up and not known where I was or how I got therec) Woken up with wounds or bruises, or have been sickd) Woken up in hospital |
| 8: I'm using Xanax and | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) As far as I know I have no health issuesb) I have ups and downs like most peoplec) I am on medication for some health problemsd) I think I am pregnant |
| 9: If I took too much Xanax my friends would | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Stay calm, put me in the recovery position and dial 999b) Panic, call an ambulance and run awayc) Panic and run away |
| 10: Friends share! | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) I have never given a pill to a friendb) I have shared a pill with friendsc) I've got pills for friends at cost priced) I've sold pills to friends |

CLOSE to the EDGE?

MOSTLY A's: well, fair enough. If you have been honest with your answers you have reduced the chances of serious harm, and are thinking about what you do and where and when you do Xanax.

MOSTLY B's: There's a fair bit of risk taking going on and at some point there's a good chance it will go wrong

Some C's: That's getting worrying as this means there's some major risk of serious harm here. It would be a VERY good idea to have a chat with a drugs worker before something goes badly wrong.

Any D's: We need to have a serious chat, soon. There's a lot of risk and not a lot of control. Your OK so far but that's luck not judgment and it will run out at some point

1: I tend to use Xanax

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) With some close friends | a) Hopefully they will look after you |
| b) With a mix of people I know and some I don't know | b) Hopefully the ones you know will keep you safe from the ones you don't know |
| c) On my own | c) If anything goes wrong there's no one to help you |
| d) Anywhere, anytime, with anyone | d) This isn't safe. There's a good chance at some point of getting assaulted, physically or sexually. |

2: When I'm getting Xanax

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) I'm buying online from a reliable source | a) There's still a chance you aren't getting what you think you are |
| b) I get them from someone I know, usually the same person | b) As above |
| c) I get whatever's going around from anyone who has got pills | c) Much bigger risk of getting something which is a different drug or different dose to what you wanted |

3: In order to find out about Xanax

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) I did some reading online from several websites | a) Kudos for doing research and double-checking stuff |
| b) I asked some friends who know a bit | b) At least your asking but how much do your friends really know? |
| c) I haven't really done any research | c) You don't really know the risks of what you are doing and if you want to carry on doing it, it's time to get smart, fast. |

4: When I get a pill

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) I take a small part of it first to see how I get on | a) Sensible. Give it a good 2-3 hours to start working though as some pills are slow acting |
| b) I take the whole pill in one go | b) This increase the chance of taking too much |
| c) I've taken several pills at once | c) And this really increases the chance of a life-threatening overdose |

5: I have taken Xanax

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) But not with other drugs | a) Sensible; mixing Xanax with other drugs increases the chances of a dangerous combination |
| b) While I've been drinking | b) DANGER! Alcohol + Xanax = higher risk of overdose |
| c) While I've been using codeine or other painkillers | c) DANGER! Alcohol + opiates = higher risk of overdose |
| d) While drinking and using pain killers | d) And extra danger with these three together. |

6: When I have used Xanax I have had

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) Complete control over what I was doing | a) Good for you...if this is 100% true |
| b) Times when I did things that were risky | b) OK, you've been lucky to date but sooner or later... |
| c) Periods when I was unconscious | c) Unconscious = not in control/not safe. You could have choked on vomit, gone in to a coma, been assaulted. |
| d) Times when I couldn't remember what I had done | d) If you can't remember what you are doing you are vulnerable and vulnerable isn't safe |

CLOSE to the EDGE?

If you have scored:

MOSTLY A's: well, fair enough. If you have been honest with your answers you have reduced the chances of serious harm, and are thinking about what you do and where and when you do Xanax.

MOSTLY B's: There's a fair bit of risk taking going on and at some point there's a good chance it will go wrong

Some C's: That's getting worrying as this means there's some major risk of serious harm here. It would be a VERY good idea to have a chat with a drugs worker before something goes badly wrong.

Any D's: We need to have a serious chat, soon. There's a lot of risk and not a lot of control. Your OK so far but that's luck not judgment and it will run out at some point

7: After using Xanax I have

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) Always woken up somewhere safe and fine | a) impressive |
| b) Woken up and not known where I was or how I got there | b) Lucky it wasn't a police station or in a doorway... |
| c) Woken up with wounds or bruises, or have been sick | c) At least you woke up and it was only bruises |
| d) Woken up in hospital | d) At least you woke up. But that was a close one... |

8: I'm using Xanax and

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) As far as I know I have no health issues | a) Xanax use is always risky but at least your health is OK at the moment |
| b) I have ups and downs like most people | b) Xanax will tend to make the downs to feel better in the short term but in the long term will make any problems worse |
| c) I am on medication for some health problems | c) If you have physical or mental health issues and are taking medication there's a good chance that Xanax will cause some complications and could be dangerous |
| d) I think I am pregnant | d) Xanax can be risky in pregnancy. Please seek help as soon as possible |

9: If I took too much Xanax my friends would

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) Stay calm, put me in the recovery position and dial 999 | a) Impressive, well trained friends |
| b) Panic, call an ambulance and run away | b) Let's hope they remember to give the ambulance the right address |
| c) Panic and run away | c) You and your friends need to have a chat and a pledge about what to do in an emergency – however scared they are |

10: Friends share!

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) I have never given a pill to a friend | a) It may be tight but at least you won't get a criminal record for supplying drugs |
| b) I have shared a pill with friends | b) This is supply even though you weren't paid for it |
| c) I've got pills for friends at cost price | c) And this is supply even though you weren't making a profit: it could result in a jail sentence |
| d) I've sold pills to friends | d) The maximum sentence for supply of Xanax is 14 years, which is what you are doing here. |

Xanax Dependency Questionnaire

Worried your use of Xanax or another similar drug is getting out of control? Use this self-assessment tool to find out if you may be dependent on these drugs. Answer the questions as honestly as possible.

Group 1	Are any of the following statements true for you?	YES	NO
(a)	I take pills on more days per <u>month</u> than I used to		
(b)	I take pills more days per <u>week</u> than I used to		
(c)	I take pills more time each day than I used to		
(d)	I take more pills each time than I took a few months ago		
(e)	I've switched up to stronger dose pills when I can find them		
Group 2	If you stop using these pills or can't get hold of any do you experience any of the following?		
(a)	I find myself feeling anxious or stressed.		
(b)	I have had panic attacks, scary thoughts, or thought people were after me when I hadn't had a pill for a while.		
(c)	I think about these pills a lot of the time and crave it		
(d)	I get muscle pains, shakes or tremors when I haven't had a pill for a while		
(e)	I find it hard to get to sleep when I haven't been using these pills.		
(f)	I have used another drug to avoid bad symptoms from stopping using these pills		
Group 3	I carry on using Xanax or a similar pill but:		
(a)	It is having a bad impact on my mental well-being		
(b)	It is affecting my performance at work/school/college/university.		
(c)	It is having a negative impact on family/friends/partner.		
(d)	It is costing me more than I can afford.		
(e)	I have done things and have no memory of it after using pills.		
(f)	I have got in to trouble or put myself at risk as a result of using these pills		
(g)	I've needed First Aid or help from emergency services after using pills.		
Group 4	In the past year I have made any of the following choices?		
(a)	Spending money on Xanax or similar pills instead of buying food, or paying bills.		
(b)	Borrowed or stolen to pay for these pills, or sold possessions to get some		
(c)	Not done something I was meant to do or planned to do because I was out of it		
Group 5	Are any of the following statements true for you?		
(a)	I think about Xanax (or similar pills) several times a day.		
(b)	I plan ahead when I am going to be able to use.		
(c)	I have tried to cut down on my use but often break my own rules.		
(d)	I put in effort to get the pills or to get money for pills		
(e)	I start to get anxious when I am running low of pills or when I've got none left		
(f)	I think Xanax (or similar) is not good for me but I get defensive if people say this to me		
(g)	Deep down inside I think I may have an issue with Xanax or a similar drug		

Xanax/Benzo Risk/Dependency Questionnaire

Scoring

Look at the answers from the questionnaire and use the table below to score yourself. Add up your score for each group and your total score.

Group 1:		Group 2:		Group 3:		Group 4:		Group 5:	
(a)	1	(a)	1	(a)	2	(a)	2	(a)	2
(b)	2	(b)	3	(b)	1	(b)	3	(b)	1
(c)	2	(c)	2	(c)	1	(c)	1	(c)	2
(d)	1	(d)	3	(d)	2			(d)	2
(e)	2	(e)	2	(e)	3			(e)	2
		(f)	3	(f)	3			(f)	2
				(g)	3			(g)	1
Total Group 1:		Total Group 2:		Total Group 3:		Total Group 4:		Total: Group 5	
Total Score									

Understanding the results:

If you have scored **two or more** in any **three groups** then this suggests that you may be having a problem with your use of Xanax or a similar drug, and there may be a level of dependency.

The higher the score in each group, and the more groups you have a score in, the more it suggests that you have significant level of dependency.

Group 1: A high score in this group suggests that you have become more tolerant to the effects of benzo-type drugs and that your use is escalating. The more frequent use suggests that you may be craving the drug more and the higher doses indicate you are building up tolerance to the effects of the drug. It also means that more of your time is being spent on drug taking than before.

Group 2: A score in this box suggests that you struggle a bit to cope without Xanax or a similar drug and that you experience some withdrawal symptoms when you stop. When you decide it's time to quit you might need to find ways of coping with these negative symptoms if you are going to be able to stop successfully., especially if you score more than 4 in this box. **If you said <yes> to question (b) (c) or (e) you should get medical advice to help you stop safely.**

Group 3: The higher the score here, the greater the negative impact Xanax or a similar drug is having on you. A score of more than 5? Xanax seems to be having a negative impact on most aspects of your well-being – your physical and mental health, you social and financial wellbeing and your education or employment. The fact that you can see it's having a negative impact but carry on doing it strongly suggests a level of dependency. Id you said yes to **(e) (f) or (g)** you are also putting yourself at very serious risk of harm while affected by these drugs.

Group 4: A score here suggests Xanax is becoming your priority, even at the expense of other important aspects of your life. You don't feel able to be without it, even if you can't afford it.

Group 5: The higher the score here, the more it suggests that you are preoccupied about Xanax. If you answered "yes" to question 5(c) it suggests that you are trying to control your use by setting yourself some rules and goals – but you are struggling to stick to them. By answering all these questions honestly it also suggests you are concerned about your use and maybe are thinking about what you could do to make things a bit better.

My Xan Diary

Instructions: To get an idea of the scale and pattern of your use, try to keep a diary of a typical month of use. Do this for last month (if you can remember your use) or do it for this month...

Used? (yes/no) Quantity/times Notes: who with, where, how you were feeling, what you were doing?	Date: 1 Day:	2 Day:	3 Day:	4 Day:	5 Day:	6 Day:	7 Day:
Used? (yes/no) Quantity/times Notes: who with, where, how you were feeling, what you were doing?	8 Day:	9 Day:	10 Day:	11 Day:	12 Day:	13 Day:	14 Day:
Used? (yes/no) Quantity/times Notes: who with, where, how you were feeling, what you were doing?	15 Day:	16 Day:	17 Day:	18 Day:	19 Day:	20 Day:	21 Day:
Used? (yes/no) Quantity/times Notes: who with, where, how you were feeling, what you were doing?	22 Day:	23 Day:	24 Day:	25 Day:	26 Day:	27 Day:	28 Day:
Used? (yes/no) Quantity/times Notes: who with, where, how you were feeling, what you were doing?	29 Day:	30 Day:	31 Day:				

What do I like about using Xanax (or similar pills)?

What do I dislike about using Xanax?

What would I gain by stopping my use of Xanax?

What would I miss or lose by stopping my use of Xanax?

What scares me about stopping Xanax?

Dependency Profile Assessment

Answer the following questions as honestly as possible. If the answers are not currently relevant to you, or you don't know the answer, leave them blank. Add to your answers later on if you want to.

Field 1: Physical Markers		YES	NO
(a)	I have been using pills at least twice a week for more than two months		
(b)	I haven't gone more than 48 hours without a pill in the last month		
(c)	When I go without pills or stop using them I get tingling or sharp pains in my nerves, or I get a lot of aches.		
(d)	I would consider my physical pain: mild/moderate/severe (mark as appropriate)		
(e)	I have experienced mild shakes or tremors but can still hold things		
(f)	I get shakes or tremors that are enough to make me drop or spill things		
(g)	I have epilepsy or have had other fits or seizures in the past		
(h)	I have used alcohol, cannabis or something else to make myself feel better when I can't get pills		

Field 2: Social Markers

(a)	A lot of the people I know use Xanax or similar pills		
(b)	My partner (girlfriend/boyfriend/husband/wife) uses Xanax or similar		
(c)	Other family members or close friends this type of pill		
(d)	I find I can cope socially better if I've been using my pills		
(e)	I would find it hard to cope with social situations unless I've had a pill		

Field 3: Ritual Markers

(a)	I tend to use pills at regularly times of the day (e.g. before bed)		
(b)	I like to know I've got my pills around in case I feel like I need one		
(c)	I can feel myself building up to taking a pill and feel good as soon as I do		
(d)	I look forward to days when I know I'll take a pill		

Field 4: Psychological Markers

(a)	Using pills helps me sleep; when I haven't had one my sleep is bad		
(b)	Sometimes I have bad/scary dreams if I haven't had a pill		
(c)	My head sometimes does me in. The pills help me cope with this		
(d)	The pills help me forget stuff I don't want to think about		
(e)	Stuff that happens isn't really happening to me when I've had pills		
(f)	I feel anxious and irritable when I haven't had pills for a while		
(g)	If I haven't had a pill for a while I sometimes feel paranoid, or have panic attacks		
(h)	I've felt like I've heard voices, seen things moving even though there was nothing there or felt like my skin was crawling when I haven't had a pill for a while.		

Dependency Profile Assessment

Interpreting Results

Using the answers from the Dependency Profile assessment questions, use the scoring below to work out your total for each field. Then plot these figures on to the chart. This will help to explore what things could get in the way of changing your use of Xanax.

Field 1: Physical: Score as follows:

- (a) 1 (b) 2 (c) 2
(d) mild: 1 moderate: 2 severe: 3
(e) 2
(f) 3
(g) 3
(h) 3

Total: _____ score

Physical Field:

If you have answered <yes> to question (a) or (b) then there is a chance that you will start to experience symptoms when you stop. You should speak to a health worker before you start to stop to make sure you do so safely.

If you score three or more in any of the questions (c) through to (h) there is a level of physical dependency that could be dangerous if you stop suddenly. **You should speak to a doctor or drugs worker to help you come off safely.**

Field 2: Social

Score one point for each question you answered "yes" to

Total: _____

Social Field: A score of two or more here suggests that Xanax is important in terms of your social relationship.

Answering yes to (a), (b) or (c) indicates people close to you also use Xanax and you will need to think about how to talk to these important people if you want to stop using.

A <yes> to question (d) or (e) means you will need to think how to get on people socially without these drugs.

Help from a drugs worker will make it easier to deal with the social aspect of your dependency.

Field 3: Ritual

Score one point for questions

Total: _____

Ritual Field: The higher the score here, the more strongly you have developed a pattern of use with rituals and habits. These patterns will need to be spotted and changed.

You can use your diary to help understand your patterns. Then change your daily routines and make sure you are occupied during times you associate with use.

If you have a score of three in this field it may be helpful to discuss this with a drugs counsellor who can help you change your patterns.

Field 4: Psychological

Score one point for questions (a) (b) (c) and (d)
Score two points for questions (e) (f) (g) and (h)

Total: _____

Psychological field: With a score of two or more here, in questions (a) (b) or (c) indicates some level of psychological dependency, and you may need some professional help to stop.

If you have answered yes to (d) (e) (f) (g) or (h) it is important, for your safety and wellbeing, that you get professional help or guidance as the withdrawal symptoms and/or underlying issues may make stopping risky for you.

Xanax Withdrawal Risk Screen

How many consecutive weeks have been using Xanax for?	1-2 weeks 2-4 weeks 4 weeks +	0 1 2	Minimal risk of withdrawal symptoms Possibly mild symptoms; consider taper Increased risk of symptoms		
Based on your diary or other assessment what was the longest time you went without a pill each week for the past few weeks	when	score	Duration	score	<i>If a person has a total score for the last two weeks of four or less, there is a low risk of withdrawal symptoms even with longer acting benzos.</i>
	This week		1 day or less	3	
	Last week		2-4 days	2	
	2 weeks ago		5-6 days	1	
	3 weeks ago		7+ days	0	
How did you feel after these periods without using?	Fine			0	<i>A score of three here combined with higher scores in previous questions suggests withdrawal symptoms will need some clinical management and abrupt cessation is not indicated.</i>
	mild withdrawal symptoms			1	
	Moderate withdrawal symptoms			2	
	REFER BACK TO THE DEPENDENCY PROFILE ASSESSMENT TO LOOK AT SYMPTOMS			3	
When did you last use a pill?	Today yesterday 2 days ago 3 days ago			4 3 2 1	Combined score of 1: low risk of symptoms getting much worse
How are you feeling now?	Fine Mild withdrawal symptoms Moderate withdrawal symptoms Significant withdrawal symptoms			0 1 2 3	Combined score of 2 or more and high scores in questions 1-3: risk symptoms will get worse.
Do you have any more of these pills left? How much?	No Yes: Approximate Amount:				<i>Where the person has a HIGH risk of withdrawal symptoms and no drugs left, replacement prescribing will be urgent. If the person has a stockpile of drugs discuss tapering with their own drugs or discarding these for a prescribed regime.</i>
What is the name of the pill/drug you think you are taking?			Strength relative to diazepam =	<i>note name of drug; Use dose-equivalence charts to estimate dose as compared to diazepam. Use duration of effect to estimate if withdrawal symptoms should be apparent at this point.</i>	
What strength Pill do you think you are taking?			Pill strength relative to diazepam =		
How much do you take each time?			Dose equivalence to diazepam =		

<p>Do you have any pills left that we could send for testing?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p><i>If available consider getting a pill analysed/sent to WEDINOS to confirm nature/dose of pill.</i></p>						
<p>Are you willing to have a urine test?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Result:</p>	<p><i>Some drugs e.g. etizolam won't show up on a benzo screen and so a negative result doesn't mean no benzos have been used. But could indicate it's not alprazolam.</i></p>						
<p>Do you have somewhere secure to live?</p>		<p><i>Note living current arrangements. Is this suitable for someone undertaking a community detox?</i></p>						
<p>Do you have any support at home?</p>		<p><i>Is there appropriate support with the skills and capacity to supervise withdrawal?</i></p>						
<p>Do you have any personally history of: Fits, convulsions or epilepsy Poor mental health including panic, paranoia, phobias or anxiety</p>		<p><i>Positive answers here may make community withdrawal more complicated and mean that higher levels of supervision, in-patient treatment or slower reduction may be needed.</i></p>						
<p>Do you think you could be pregnant?</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Am pregnant</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Possibly pregnant</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not pregnant/not relevant</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	Am pregnant	3	Possibly pregnant	1	Not pregnant/not relevant	0	<p><i>If client is known to be pregnant, then abrupt withdrawal for clients experiencing withdrawal symptoms may be risky.</i></p> <p><i>Consider pregnancy testing if client thinks they may be pregnant.</i></p>
Am pregnant	3							
Possibly pregnant	1							
Not pregnant/not relevant	0							
<p>Are you currently taking or meant to be taking any medication?</p>		<p><i>Assess for possible drug interactions, especially OD risk with concurrent use of opiates, gabapentin, pregabalin.</i></p>						
<p>How often do you drink alcohol, if at all?</p>		<p><i>The presence of problematic, dependent or uncontrolled drinking increases risk of OD. There is a risk of increased alcohol use during benzo withdrawal.</i></p>						

Action Plan

I have decided to stop using Xanax or a similar drug because:

The things I like or find helpful about Xanax are:

My non-using alternatives to these are:

In order to deal with the physical side of my use I will:

In order to deal with the ritual sides of my use I will:

In order to deal with the social sides of my use I will:

In order to deal with the psychological sides of my use I will:

My Xanax Action Plan will start on:

(insert date when you plan to start cutting down or will stop if it is safe to do so)

Signed:

Date: