

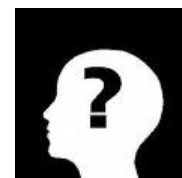
ANXIETY



Anxiety is the body's way of responding to being in danger. Adrenaline is rushed into our bloodstream to enable us to run away or fight. This happens whether the danger is real, or whether we believe the danger is there when actually there is none. It is the body's alarm and survival mechanism. Primitive man wouldn't have survived for long without this life-saving response. It works so well, that it often kicks in when it's not needed - when the danger is in our heads rather than in reality. We think we're in danger, so that's enough to trigger the system to go, go, go! People who get anxious tend to get into scanning mode - where they're constantly on the lookout for danger, hyper-alert to any of the signals, and make it more likely that the alarm system will be activated.

Thoughts that often occur relate to our overestimating or exaggerating the actual threat and underestimating or minimising our ability to cope:

- I'm in danger right now
- The worst possible scenario is going to happen
- I won't be able to cope with it



Physical Sensations - The Adrenaline Response



When there is real, or we believe there is a real, threat or danger, our bodies' automatic survival mechanism kicks in very quickly. This helps energise us to fight or run away ('fight or flight response'). We will notice lots of physical sensations, which might include:

- **Heart racing** - This helps to take the blood to where it is most needed - the legs so that we can run faster (flight); the arms so that we can hit out (FIGHT); the lungs to increase our stamina. At the same time blood is taken from the places it is not needed for example fingers, toes and skin. These changes cause tingling coldness and numbness.
- **Breathing gets faster** - This helps the bloodstream to carry oxygen to the arms, legs and lungs. This will give us more power. The side effects may include chest pain, breathlessness and a choking feeling. As there is a slight drop in the blood and oxygen being sent to the brain so that we may feel dizzy or light headed, and may experience blurred vision.
- **Muscles tense and prepare** - The large skeletal muscles tense and create power, this may cause pain, aching and shaking.
- **Sweating** - Sweating helps to cool the muscles and the body. It helps to stop them from overheating. Sweating can also make us more slippery to our enemies!
- **Pupils dilate** - This lets more light into our eyes so our overall vision improves. Side effects may include sensitivity to light or spots before the eyes.
- **Digestive system slows down** - These are not important while in danger and so are slowed down then the saved energy goes to where it is most needed. Side effects may include nausea, butterflies and a dry mouth.
- **More alert** - We will be concentrating on looking for danger, much less able to concentrate on anything else. We're waiting for something to happen.

Behaviours might include:

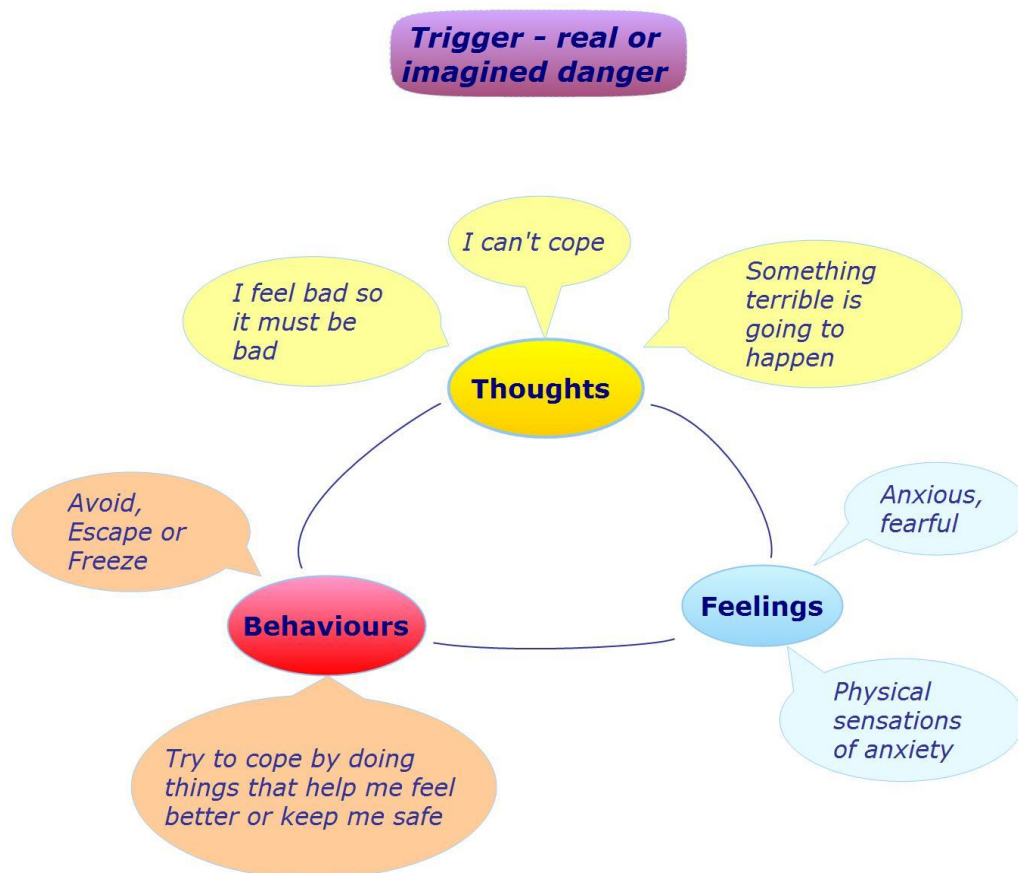
- Avoiding people or places
- Not going out
- Going to certain places at certain times, e.g. shopping at smaller shops, at less busy times
- Only going with someone else
- Escape, leave early
- Go to the feared situation, but use coping behaviours to get you through: examples include: self talk, holding a drink, smoking more, fiddling with clothes or handbag, avoiding eye contact with others, having an escape plan, medication. These are called 'safety behaviours'.



Safety behaviours can also help to keep your anxiety going. Whilst you depend on them to help you cope, you don't get to find out that without them, the anxiety would reduce and go away on it's own.

Whilst avoiding people or situations might help you feel better at that time, it doesn't make your anxiety any better over a longer period. If you're frightened that your anxiety will make you pass out or vomit in the supermarket aisle, you won't find out that won't actually happen, because you don't go. So the belief that it will happen remains, along with the anxiety.

Vicious Cycle of Anxiety



We all feel anxious some times. A certain amount of anxiety helps us to be more alert and focused. For example just prior to an exam, a few exam nerves have a positive effect - motivating us, helping us focus our thoughts on the job in hand, making us more alert. Too much anxiety, or constantly being anxious, is unhealthy and detrimental to our lives and relationships.

Identify your triggers

What or when are the times when you are more likely to get anxious? If you can see the patterns, then maybe you can do something about those situations, and do something different.



- Certain places?
- Certain people?
- Anytime, anyplace?
- See certain things?
- Hear certain things?
- Think ahead to certain situation?

Doing things differently



If avoiding situations and using safety behaviours helps to maintain our anxiety over the long-term, then it makes sense that learning to confront it might be uncomfortable in the short-term, but will help us take control and helps us feel better over time.

Make a plan to gradually do the things you normally avoid. For instance if you normally avoid going out to big social events at work, then start with a small dinner at a restaurant where you feel more comfortable, with few close colleagues - not the annual Christmas party! Whilst it will feel uncomfortable, you will learn that you can enjoy these events, and that the anxious feeling does go away.

If you have a fear of particular types of places (e.g. lifts), then you could start by listing different particular places (smaller, bigger lifts, taller, smaller buildings, glass walls or enclosed etc). You could start by standing next to a lift for a couple of minutes each day for a couple of weeks, then slowly build up to standing in the doorway with the doors open, then to getting in the lift without the doors closing, then to letting the doors close before opening them again, then to going up one floor etc. You can use breathing techniques or self-talk (challenging your unhelpful thoughts and repeating more realistic thoughts) to get you through these times.

If you normally depend on 'safety behaviours' to help you cope, then list them in order of importance, then start by dropping or not doing the least important, and gradually work your way up over time.

What to do when you feel anxious



- **STOPP!** Pause, take a breath, don't react automatically (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/stopp.htm)
- Ask yourself:
 - What am I reacting to?
 - What is it that I think is going to happen here?
 - What's the worst (and best) that could happen? What's most likely to happen?
 - Am I getting things out of proportion?
 - How important is this really? How important will it be in 6 months time?
 - Am I overestimating the danger?
 - Am I underestimating my ability to cope?
 - Am I mind-reading what others might be thinking?
 - Am I believing I can predict the future?
 - Is there another way of looking at this? Is this fact or opinion?
 - What advice would I give someone else in this situation?
 - Am I putting more pressure on myself?
 - Just because I **feel** bad, doesn't mean things really **are** bad.
 - What do I want or need from this person or situation? What do they want or need from me? Is there a compromise?
 - What would be the consequences of responding the way I usually do?
 - Is there another way of dealing with this? What would be the most helpful and effective action to take? (for me, for the situation, for others)
 - Visualise yourself coping in the situation you feel anxious about. See the situation to a successful completion.

How to deal with the physical sensations of anxiety

Counteract the body's adrenaline response - it's readiness for action, by using that energy healthily.



- Practice calming or **mindful breathing** - this one act alone will help reduce the physical sensations, emotions and intensity of thoughts. (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/mindfulness.htm)
- Visualisation: Breathe in blue (for calm), breathe out red
- Exercise - Go for a walk, run or cycle, or do some gardening or housework.

CHECKLIST OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

1.	All or nothing thinking: You look at things in absolute, black and white categories.
2.	Overgeneralization: You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3.	Mental Filter: You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.
4.	Discounting the positives: You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities “don’t count.”
5.	Jumping to conclusions: (A) Mind reading – you assume that people are reacting negatively to you when there’s no definite evidence for this; (B) Fortune Telling – you arbitrarily predict things will turn out badly.
6.	Magnification or Minimization: You blow things way out of proportion or you shrink their importance inappropriately.
7.	Emotional Reasoning: You reason from how you feel: “I feel like an idiot, so I really must be one.” Or “I don’t feel like doing this, so I’ll put it off.”
8.	“Should Statements”: You criticize yourself or other people with “Shoulds” or “Shouldn’ts.” “Musts,” “Oughts,” “Have tos” are similar offenders.
9.	Labeling: You identify with your shortcomings. Instead of saying, “I made a mistake,” you tell yourself, “I’m a jerk,” or “a fool,” or “a loser.”
10.	Personalization and Blame: You blame yourself for something you weren’t entirely responsible for, or you blame other people and overlook ways that your own attitudes and behavior might contribute to a problem.

TEN WAYS TO UNTWIST YOUR THINKING

1.	Identify the Distortion	Write down your negative thoughts so you can see which of the ten cognitive distortions you're involved in. This will make it easier to think about the problem in a more positive and realistic way.
2.	Examine the Evidence	Instead of assuming that your negative thought is true, examine the actual evidence for it. For example, if you feel that you never do anything right, you could list several things you have done successfully.
3.	The Double-Standard Method	Instead of putting yourself down in a harsh, condemning way, talk to yourself in the same compassionate way you would talk to a friend with a similar problem.
4.	The Experimental Technique	Do an experiment to test the validity of your negative thought. For example, if, during the episode of panic, you become terrified that you're about to die of a heart attack, you could jog or run up and down several flights of stairs. This will prove that your heart is healthy and strong.
5.	Thinking in Shades of Grey	Although this method might sound drab, the effects can be illuminating. Instead of thinking about your problems in all-or-nothing extremes, evaluate things on a range of 0 to 100. When things don't work out as well as you hoped, think about the experience as a partial success rather than a complete failure. See what you can learn from the situation.
6.	The Survey Method	Ask people questions to find out if your thoughts and attitudes are realistic. For example, if you believe that public speaking anxiety is abnormal and shameful, ask several friends if they ever felt nervous before they gave a talk.
7.	Define Terms	When you label yourself "inferior" or "a fool" or "a loser," ask, "What is the definition of a 'fool'?" You will feel better when you see that there is no such thing as a "fool" or a "loser."
8.	The Semantic Method	Simply substitute language that is less colorful and emotionally loaded. This method is helpful for "should statements." Instead of telling yourself "I shouldn't have made that mistake," you can say, "It would be better if I hadn't made that mistake."
9.	Re-attribution	Instead of automatically assuming that you are "bad" and blaming yourself entirely for a problem, think about the many factors that may have contributed to it. Focus on solving the problem instead of using up all your energy blaming yourself and feeling guilty.
10.	Cost-Benefit Analysis	List the advantages and disadvantages of a feeling (like getting angry when your plane is late), a negative thought (like "No matter how hard I try, I always screw up"), or a behavior pattern (like overeating and lying around in bed when you're depressed). You can also use the Cost-Benefit Analysis to modify a self-defeating belief such as, "I must always try to be perfect."

THE TEN FORMS OF TWISTED THINKING

1.	All-or-nothing thinking	You see things in black-or-white categories. If a situation falls short of perfect, you see it as a total failure. When a young woman on a diet ate a spoonful of ice cream, she told herself, "I've blown my diet completely." This thought upset her so much that she gobbled down an entire quart of ice cream!
2.	Overgeneralization	You see a single negative event, such as a romantic rejection or a career reversal, as a never-ending pattern of defeat by using words such as "always" or "never" when you think about it. A depressed salesman became terribly upset when he noticed bird dung on the windshield of his car. He told himself, "Just my luck! Birds are <i>always</i> crapping on my car!"
3.	Mental filter	You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all of reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors a beaker of water. Example: You receive many positive comments about your presentation to a group of associates at work, but one of them says something mildly critical. You obsess about his reaction for days and ignore all the positive feedback.
4.	Discounting the positive	You reject positive experiences by insisting they "don't count." If you do a good job, you may tell yourself that it wasn't good enough or that anyone could have done as well. Discounting the positive takes the joy out of life and makes you feel inadequate and unrewarded.
5.	Jumping to conclusions	You interpret things negatively when there are no facts to support your conclusion. Mind reading: Without checking it out, you arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you. Fortune-telling: You predict that things will turn out badly. Before a test you may tell yourself, "I'm really going to blow it. What if I flunk?" If you're depressed you

		may tell yourself, "I'll never get better."
6.	Magnification	You exaggerate the importance of your problems and shortcomings, or you minimize the importance of your desirable qualities. This is also called the "binocular trick."
7.	Emotional reasoning	You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel terrified about going on airplanes. It must be very dangerous to fly." Or "I feel guilty. I must be a rotten person." Or "I feel angry. This proves I'm being treated unfairly." Or "I feel so inferior. This means I'm a second-rate person." Or "I feel hopeless. I must really be hopeless."
8.	"Should statements"	<p>You tell yourself that things <i>should</i> be the way you hoped or expected them to be. After playing a difficult piece on the piano, a gifted pianist told herself, "I shouldn't have made so many mistakes." This made her feel so disgusted that she quit practicing for several days. "Musts," "oughts" and "have tos" are similar offenders.</p> <p>"Should statements" that are directed against yourself lead to guilt and frustration. Should statements that are directed against other people or the world in general lead to anger and frustration: "He shouldn't be so stubborn and argumentative."</p> <p>Many people try to motivate themselves with shoulds and shouldn'ts, as if they were delinquents who had to be punished before they could be expected to do anything. "I shouldn't eat that doughnut." This usually doesn't work because all these shoulds and musts make you feel rebellious and you get the urge to do just the opposite. Dr. Albert Ellis has called this <i>musterbation</i>." I call it the "shouldy" approach to life.</p>
9.	Labeling	Labeling is an extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking. Instead of saying "I made a mistake," you attach a negative label to

		<p>yourself: "I'm a loser." You might also label yourself "a fool" or "a failure" or "a jerk." Labeling is quite irrational because you are not the same as what you do. Human beings exist, but "fools," "losers," and "jerks" do not. These labels are just useless abstractions that lead to anger, anxiety, frustration, and low self-esteem.</p> <p>You may also label others. When someone does something that rubs you the wrong way, you may tell yourself: "He's an S.O.B." Then you feel that the problem is with that person's "character" or "essence" instead of with their thinking or behavior. You see them as totally bad. This makes you feel hostile and hopeless about improving things and leaves little room for constructive communication.</p>
10.	Personalization and blame	<p>Personalization occurs when you hold yourself personally responsible for an event that isn't entirely under your control. When a woman received a note that her child was having difficulties at school, she told herself, "This shows what a bad mother I am," instead of trying to pinpoint the cause of the problem so that she could be helpful to her child. When another woman's husband beat her, she told herself, "If only I were better in bed, he wouldn't beat me." Personalization leads to guilt, shame, and feelings of inadequacy.</p> <p>Some people do the opposite. They blame other people or their circumstances for their problems, and they overlook ways that they might be contributing to the problem: "The reason my marriage is so lousy is because my spouse is totally unreasonable." Blame usually doesn't work very well because other people will resent being scapegoated and they will just toss the blame right back in your lap. It's like the game of hot potato – no one wants to get stuck with it.</p>

WAYS TO CHALLENGE AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS

3. The Double-Standard Method	
2. Examine the Evidence	4. The Experimental Technique
1. Identify the Distortion	5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
<p style="text-align: center;">AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“I’m inferior to all these other men who have such better physiques. If I took my shirt off, everyone would stare at me and think I was abnormal.”</p>	
10. The Survey Method	6. The Feared Fantasy Technique
9. Define Terms	7. The Vertical Arrow Technique
8. Cost-Benefit Analysis	

YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

1.	Sadness or Depression	Loss, a romantic rejection, the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, or the failure to achieve an important personal goal.
2.	Guilt or Shame	You believe that you've hurt someone or that you've failed to live up to your own moral standards. Guilt results from self-condemnation, where as shame involves fear that you'll lose face when others find out about who you really are.
3.	Anger, Irritation, Annoyance, or Resentment	You feel that someone is treating you unfairly or trying to take advantage of you.
4.	Frustration	Life falls short of your expectations. You insist that things should be different. It might be your own performance ("I shouldn't have made that mistake"), what someone else does ("He should've been on time!"), or an event ("Why does the traffic always slow down when I'm in a hurry?").
5.	Anxiety, Worry, Fear, Nervousness or Panic	You believe you're in danger because you think something bad is about to happen. "What if the plane crashes? What if my mind goes blank when I give my talk in front of all those people? What if this chest pain is the start of a heart attack?"
6.	Inferiority or Inadequacy	You compare yourself to others and conclude that you're not as good as they are because you're not as talented, attractive, charming, successful, intelligent. "She's really got what it takes. She's so cute. All the men are chasing her. I'm just average. There's nothing very special about me."
7.	Loneliness	You tell yourself that you're bound to feel unhappy because you're alone and you aren't getting enough love and attention from others.
8.	Hopelessness or Discouragement	You feel convinced that your problems will go on forever and that things will never improve. "I'll never get over this depression," or "I just can't lose weight and keep it off," or "I'll never find a good job," or "I'll be alone forever."

Grounding Techniques

Most of these can be used anytime, anywhere without anyone noticing what you are doing. Use them if you feel very angry, afraid, anxious, like you want to use drugs or drink, or hurt yourself or someone else. Try grounding for a long time—20 or 30 minutes, and repeat, repeat, repeat.

Remember: Painful feelings are just emotions, they are NOT who you are and will pass. Grounding will help you gain distance from your feelings when they are too overwhelming.

1) Physical Grounding Techniques- involve using your senses (smell, sight, taste, touch, hearing)

- Hold an ice cube, or fill a bowl with cold water and put ice cubes in the bowl and immerse one or both hands in it.
- Splash cold water on your face
- Spritz on some of your favourite perfume or cologne and enjoy the smell
- Burn some incense or a scented candle and sit and focus on the scent, and picture yourself relaxing more and more as you do so.
- Peel an orange or a lemon, or smell some cloves or cinnamon.
- Get involved with your body. Take off your shoes and socks and rub your feet back and forth flat on the floor, focusing on how the floor or carpet feels under your feet. Wiggle your toes.
- To shake the tendency to want to feel 'invisible' when you're scared, get up and deliberately move around...swing your arms wide in circles, jump up and down, do jumping jacks. Pay attention to how your body feels in a physical sense.
- Start cleaning something—this gets you moving physically and also involves smells (cleaning products, etc). Focus on the physical sensations of scrubbing and wiping.
- Deliberately breathe slowly and deeply for a fixed amount of time, say, 1 minute. Focus on your breath going in and out of your lungs and nose.
- Eat something...really focus on its texture, the sound it makes as you eat it, and how it tastes.
- Pet an animal or a stuffed animal, paying attention to how its coat feels
- Take a shower or a bath. Pay attention to how the water feels on your body, the smell of the soap, shampoo or body wash.
- Go for a walk—feel the sunshine (or rain, or snow!)
- Touch things around you, slowly and deliberately – hold a stone or coin and rub it with your fingers, getting a sense of all of its angles and surfaces. Find something portable that you can carry with you at all times to ground yourself.
- Play your favourite music—sing along with it even!
- Colour some Mandalas, or colour in a colouring book.

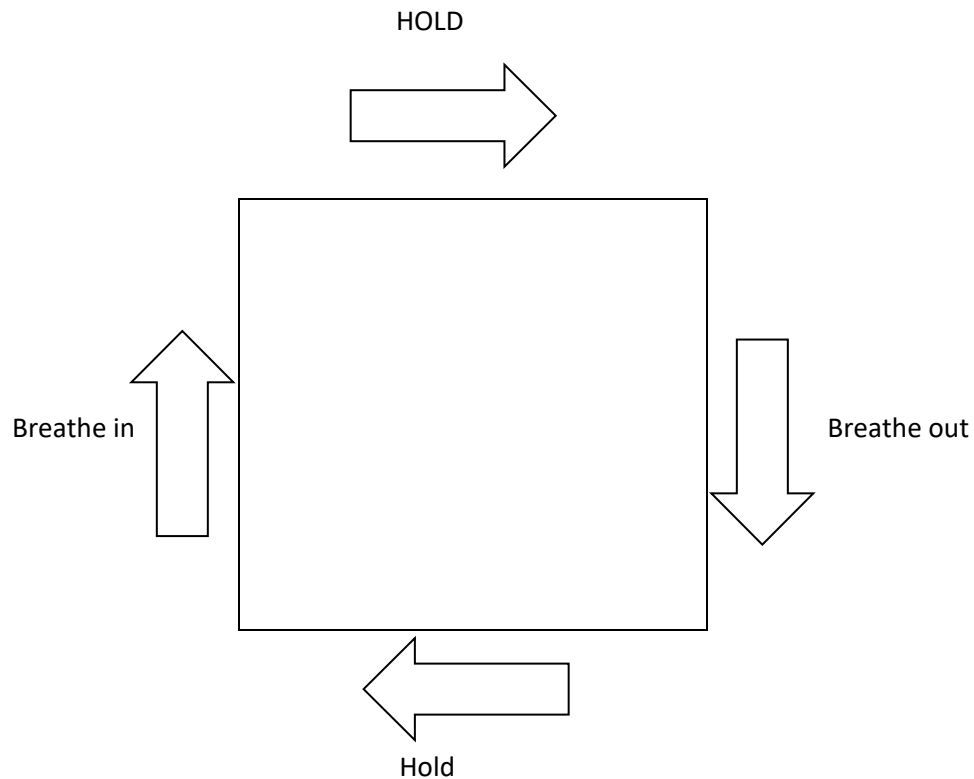
2) Mental Grounding Techniques -- get you involved in thinking about the external world so you're less focused on upsetting thoughts and feelings.

- Start by reminding yourself that you are safe by orienting yourself to the present: "It's Monday, February 6th and I'm in my own apartment. I'm a grown up now and I'm safe." Or "This is now, not then."
- Try to imagine putting some kind of shield between yourself and your negative feelings. For example, imagine that your feelings are bundled up inside a container with a lid on it. Next, imagine something you can put between you and the container, like a wall, big open field, or a forest or big shield.
- Look around the room and name every colour that you see.
- Count the number of tiles on the floor or in the ceiling, or the number of objects on your coffee table.
- Look around the room and name all the objects that you see
- Focus on a painting or a poster nearby, and describe it out loud in as much detail as you can
- Call a friend
- Pick up a nearby object, such as your keys, a pen or a book. Say everything you can about it—what it's made of, how heavy it is, whether it's warm or cold, what colours are on it.
- Engage in soothing self talk: e.g., " My body feels warm and comfortable", "I am relaxed, safe and calm", "I can handle this", "this feeling will pass".
- Imagine yourself in a favourite or safe place. It could be some place you've been to, or a place you just imagine would be soothing, like a beach, cozy bedroom with a fireplace, or swinging on a hammock on a sunny day. Imagine as much detail about the scene as you can—feel the breeze on your skin, the heat from the fireplace, the softness of the bed you are laying on, the feel of the sand under your toes. What can you see and hear or smell around you?
- Think of one of your favourite songs and try to remember the tune and the words.
- Play a 'categories' game with yourself. Try to think of as many fruits, types of dogs, heavy metal bands, spices, sports, writers, cities that you can think of.
- Count backwards from 100 by 3's.
- Describe an everyday activity in detail, such as a meal that you cook (e.g., first I thaw the chicken, then cut it up into small pieces. Then I wash three potatoes and cut them up into quarters...)
- Think of people you care about. Imagine what they look like, or look at pictures of them.

Breathing Exercise:

This exercise is a helpful grounding technique that can be used to help centre us and allow us to be present. It has other benefits that have been reported such as helping with insomnia/sleep troubles, feelings of anxiety and managing cravings. It is simple enough to be done in a public place as it involves squares that can be found in most places e.g doors, windows, walls etc.

1. Begin by picking a square on any part of the room, this can be a window, a door or the wall
2. You will breathe in and follow the length of the square on the vertical side
3. You will hold your breath as you follow the horizontal side
4. Breathe out as you follow the opposite vertical side
5. Hold as you follow the horizontal side
6. I will lead us for the first 3 cycles so we all develop a rhythm and after we can all continue to guide our own breath.



Please continue to do so for 5 minutes, continue to breathe at a pace that is comfortable to you-Thanks!