

# Emotional Self-Support Techniques

*Each technique includes the reason it works and how to use it*

## 1 Grounding 5-4-3-2-1

### WHY IT WORKS

When stressed, the brain gets stuck in anxiety. Engaging the senses brings attention back to the present moment and interrupts the loop of anxious thoughts.

### HOW TO PRACTICE

Name: 5 things you see → 4 you hear → 3 you can touch → 2 smells → 1 taste. Go slowly and mindfully.

## 2 4-7-8 Breathing

### WHY IT WORKS

A prolonged exhale activates the parasympathetic nervous system – responsible for relaxation. It literally slows your heart rate within minutes.

### HOW TO PRACTICE

Inhale through the nose for 4 counts → hold for 5–7 → slow exhale through the mouth for 8. Repeat 3–4 cycles.

## 3 Feelings Journal

### WHY IT WORKS

Putting emotions into words activates the prefrontal cortex – the rational part of the brain – which literally cools down the emotional response.

### HOW TO PRACTICE

5–10 minutes: write without editing. 'Right now I feel...', 'This is like...', 'I want...'. Just let it all out onto the page.

## 4 Physical Movement

### WHY IT WORKS

Movement lowers cortisol (the stress hormone) and raises endorphins. Even 10 minutes of walking changes the brain's chemistry.

### HOW TO PRACTICE

A walk, squats, dancing, stretching – choose what feels right. Cross-body movements are especially effective. Effect in 5–7 minutes.

## 5 Self-Compassion

### WHY IT WORKS

Self-criticism amplifies stress and shame. Self-compassion activates the brain's safety system and reduces anxiety.

### HOW TO PRACTICE

Place your hand on your heart. Say: 'This is hard. I have the right to feel this. I support myself right now.'

## 6 The Pause Technique

### WHY IT WORKS

Between a stimulus and a reaction, there is a space. Deliberately pausing reclaims your right to choose and stops automatic reactions.

### HOW TO PRACTICE

Before reacting, take 3 slow breaths with a long exhale. Ask: 'What am I feeling? What do I actually want in this situation?'

## 7 One Small Joy

### WHY IT WORKS

A stressed brain ignores the positive. Deliberately seeking small pleasures trains attention toward what gives energy rather than drains it.

### HOW TO PRACTICE

'What small and pleasant thing can I do for myself today?' A cup of tea, a call to a friend, 10 minutes of a book, a favourite song.

*These techniques are first aid for the soul. Regular practice of any of them noticeably improves your emotional quality of life. They complement therapy — but do not replace it.*