

STEPPING STONES TO HEALING AND THRIVING

STEP 4

## The Mind

# Nurturing Calm Within:

Managing Anxiety for Adult Survivors of  
Childhood Trauma



LISA@HILTONCOACHINGCONSULTING.COM



2025 LISA HILTON, CCP-A  
TRAUMA & RESILIENCE SPECIALIST





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# WELCOME

Welcome to the transformative journey of "Nurturing Calm Within," a compassionate course designed for adult survivors of childhood trauma.

This workbook is designed to support you, where you will explore empowering strategies to understand anxiety and learn how to manage it. You will learn the strategies needed to befriend your emotions and will create an Action Plan that will allow you to reclaim control over your emotions and embrace a life of strength and healing.

Follow the workbook at your own pace, taking breaks as needed.

**DISCLAIMER:** It's important to note that not everyone who experiences childhood trauma will develop anxiety disorders. Other factors, such as genetic predispositions, environmental support systems, and access to mental health resources, also play significant roles. Therapy and other interventions can be effective in helping individuals address and manage the impact of childhood trauma on their mental health. This program does not replace 1:1 therapy or coaching.

# About The Process

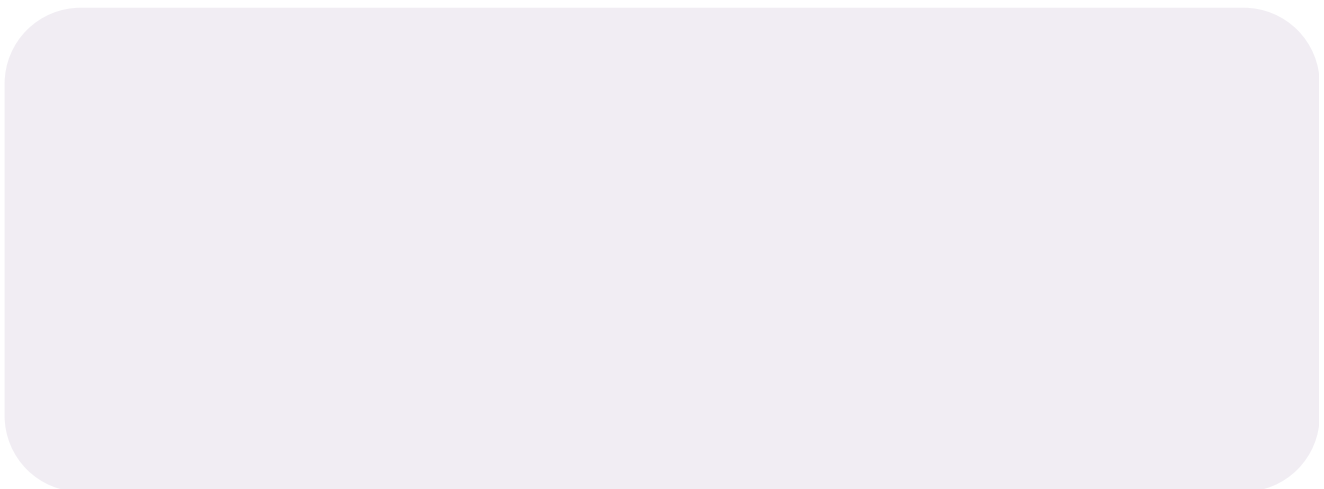
If you happen to be one who grew up in a home that was unpredictable, emotionally vacant or emotionally constipated, unstable, in poverty, where there were addictions, the adult(s) weren't there for you enough, etc., chances are you did not grow up feeling loved or safe.

And it's possible that even today, because you've lived in a chronic state of unsafety, you may not even notice it because these feelings are "normal" for you ... until.....

....in adulthood, noticeable anxiety challenges start to emerge like heart palpitations, angina, racing thoughts, difficulty breathing - having moments where there is such fear and overwhelm that you're shaking inside and out. You wonder if you're crazy, and so on.... where anxiety goes from being mild to severe and debilitating.

Being like this isn't fun, so we are going to unpack anxiety and what could be behind yours, how to befriend it (even though you may hate your anxiety right now), and gather some healthy coping strategies for your anxiety-coping toolbox.

Are you feeling ready and committed to learning more about yourself and your anxiety? Take a few moments and jot down your thoughts about getting started.





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# What's Ahead

## MODULE 1 UNDERSTAND

### **Anxiety and its Connection to Childhood**

1. Understanding anxiety in childhood and adulthood.
2. Exploring what's underneath the anxiety.
3. Trauma's impact on brain and what works, what doesn't.

## MODULE 2 REBUILD

### **Making Friends With Your Emotions with Self-Compassion**

1. Building Emotional Literacy
2. Building Emotional Intelligence
3. Building Self-Awareness
4. Building Emotional Resilience.

## MODULE 3 INTEGRATE

### **Practices for Anxiety Management**

1. Mindfulness
2. Grounding Exercises
3. Guided Imagery
4. Practices for Healthy Self-Talk
5. Gratitude Journal
6. Creating an Action Plan



*Module 1*

# Understand

Anxiety and its possible  
relationship to childhood  
experiences

# Understanding Your Anxiety

Do you recall what your childhood was like?

What did you wish you got emotionally but didn't?

What do you wish your parents/caregivers could have done to help you feel safe, loved, accepted, or that you mattered?

What messages did you pick up about yourself in childhood that caused anxious sensations in your body that impacted how you saw yourself and the world around you?

What thoughts or feelings kept coming back, over and over?

Write about any recurring anxious feelings and their potential links to childhood experiences.

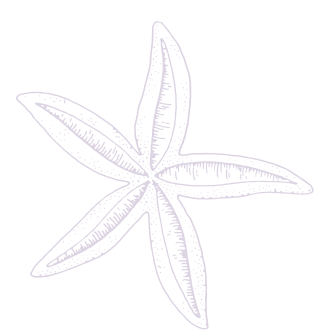
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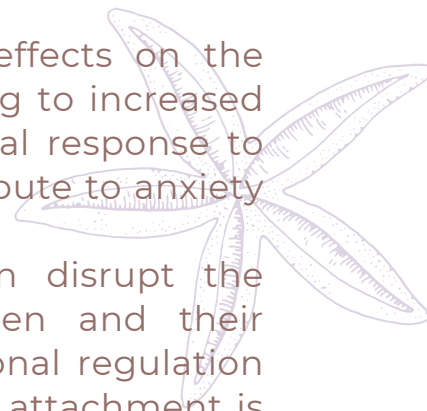
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# Understanding Anxiety

The connection between childhood trauma and adult anxiety is a complex and well-established area of study in psychology. Research has consistently shown that individuals who experience traumatic events during childhood may be at a higher risk of developing anxiety disorders later in life. Here are **some** key points that help explain this connection:

1. **Impact on Brain Development:** Childhood trauma, such as abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence, can have a profound impact on the developing brain. It can affect the structure and function of areas related to emotional regulation and stress response, such as the amygdala and prefrontal cortex. These alterations may contribute to heightened anxiety responses in adulthood.
2. **Learned Responses:** Children who experience trauma may develop maladaptive coping mechanisms as a way to deal with stress. These coping strategies, such as hypervigilance, avoidance, or dissociation, can become ingrained and persist into adulthood, contributing to anxiety disorders.
3. **Cognitive Patterns:** Childhood trauma can influence the development of negative thought patterns and beliefs about oneself, others, and the world. These cognitive distortions can contribute to the development and maintenance of anxiety disorders in adulthood.
4. **Biological Factors:** Trauma can also have lasting effects on the body's stress response system and gut health, leading to increased sensitivity to stressors and a heightened physiological response to perceived threats. This heightened arousal can contribute to anxiety symptoms.
5. **Disrupted Attachment:** Traumatic experiences can disrupt the formation of secure attachments between children and their caregivers. A secure attachment is crucial for emotional regulation and the development of a sense of safety. When this attachment is disrupted due to caregivers not meeting their child's needs, individuals may struggle with trust, intimacy, and regulating emotions, contributing to anxiety later in life.







# Understanding Anxiety

With the slide presentation in mind mixed with the five possible connections listed above, which ones resonate with you?

Use this space to reflect on your childhood, developing understanding for your anxiety.

Write about any recurring anxious feelings and their potential links to childhood experiences.

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# Activities



## Visual Expression:

- Create a timeline or collage that represents significant events or emotions from your childhood to the present.
- Use colors and symbols to express different emotions associated with various life stages.

## Mindful Colouring:

- Use adult coloring books or free-form drawings to express emotions like fear, anxiety, anger, etc., without the pressure of creating a specific image.
- Choose colors that resonate with different feelings that are mixed in with anxiety and explore the connection between color choices and emotional states.



## Creative Writing:

- Write a short story or poem that captures the essence of a pivotal childhood moment and its influence on your life.
- Share your writing with a trusted friend, therapist, or keep it as a personal reflection.

# Overthinking

Overthinking gives the illusion of problem-solving, that we have some power after all, that we can fix whatever is wrong. We want things to be predictable and safe.

Often, a sense of powerlessness or uncertainty or helplessness is underneath the anxiety. Looping or ruminating happens based on the belief that we'll find the solution if only we think long and hard enough. This can lead to overthinking and an inability to move forward.

Then, feeling stuck can exacerbate the anxiety, causing a looping effect.

What do you notice about your thoughts? Are they there at the beginning of your anxiety attacks? Do they help or hinder your calming down? Do your anxious thoughts show up in an inner critic's voice, possibly berating and criticizing you?

Write what thoughts you have that you keep hearing or ruminating on.

Use this space and the next page to journal

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# Activities to Reduce Overthinking



## Reflective Writing:

- Keep a journal to regularly document your emotions, experiences, and reactions to various situations.
- Reflect on specific incidents and explore the emotions you felt, the triggers, and how you responded.
- Consider the impact of your emotions on your decision-making and relationships.

## Mindful Meditation:

- Find a quiet space, sit comfortably, and focus your attention on your breath or a specific anchor point.
- When thoughts arise, acknowledge them without judgment, gently redirecting your focus to the present moment.
- Start with short sessions and gradually increase the duration as you become more comfortable with the practice

Listen to *Guided Meditation for Feeling Anchored, Present, and Safe* under Resources tab



## Structured Problem Solving:

- Define the problem, generate potential solutions, evaluate each option, and choose the most practical course of action.
- Set a specific time limit for this process to prevent overanalyzing and revisit the problem only if new information becomes available.

# Gentle Mindfulness Practices



## Walking:

- Notice the sound of your shoes hitting the ground, notice how your feet feel with the movement.
- Notice the sounds around you. Do you hear any birds, the sound of the wind or water, or people talking?
- Notice the sensations of your clothes on your body as it moves with the walking. Is there comfort? Do you feel warm, cold, tired, happy, etc?

## Enjoying a hot beverage:

- If you like coffee, take the time to enjoy the aroma as you make the coffee
- Slow down and notice the process of making coffee
- When the coffee is ready, notice the sound as it pours into the cup. What happens when milk or cream is added?
- Taking the mug into your hand, what does it feel like? Taking your first sip, notice the warmth moving down your throat and the taste lingering.



## Washing dishes:

- Notice the suds that come from the dish soap. What do they smell like? Feel like?
- Take your time with each item you wash. Notice the shape, colour, texture, how the suds cover the item, how the suds wash off when rinsed.
- Notice where you decide to place the washed item, notice the thoughts behind that decision.



*Module 2*

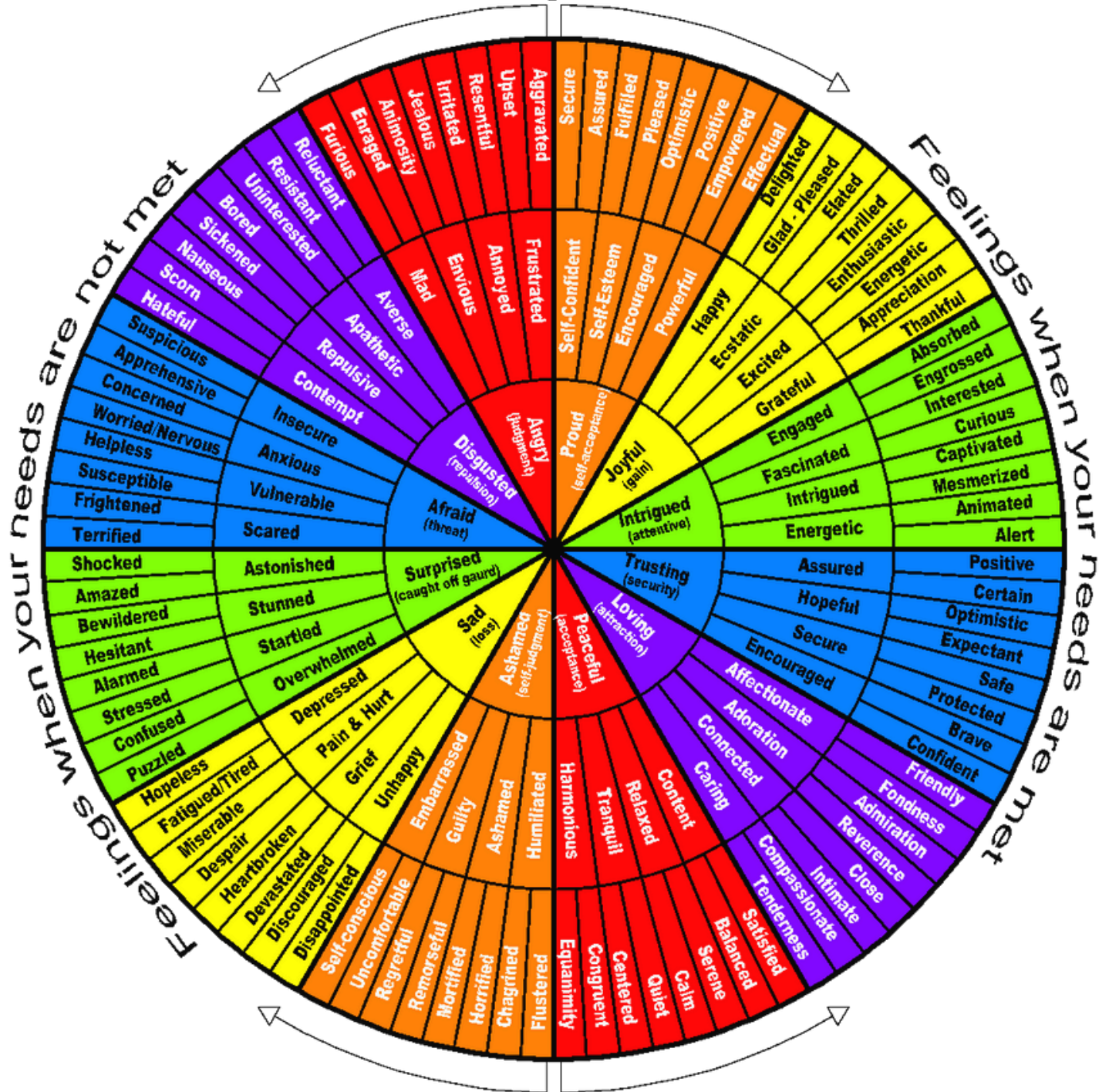
# Rebuild

Making Friends with Your  
Emotions with  
Self-Compassion



# Emotional Literacy

## Feelings Wheel



Based on Nonviolent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D. May be duplicated for personal use and for teaching Nonviolent Communication. Graphics and organization of feelings, needs, and communications wheels by Bret Stein. Submit suggested changes and recommendations to [artisan11@hotmail.com](mailto:artisan11@hotmail.com) Revised 1/109

Print off for quick referral

# Emotional Literacy

If you're like me, seeing a large number of emotions or feelings like this for the first time may be a bit overwhelming. I was realizing how emotionally illiterate I was. Perhaps you noticed something similar in the previous Step.

You can use this wheel as a starting point to name the sensations you're experiencing, what these feelings are trying to tell you, and what to do about it.

Choose a feeling and sit with it for a while. See if you can allow that feeling to settle in. Notice where it is in your body. Notice any physical sensations that come with the emotion. Stay curious. Observe. Think about seeing this feeling in others. What is your response?

Then, notice what feelings come forth in certain situations and the emotions or sensations behind them. What do you think your feelings are trying to tell you?

Use this space and the next page to journal



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# Emotional Intelligence

Befriending your emotions may sound ridiculous. I get that. I have had this thought too.



Yet, to develop emotional regulation skills, learning to see their value in your life is important. Seeing emotions and feelings as messages that need acknowledging will go a long way in reaching your goal of managing them, including anxiety.

Developing this skill will also help you in your relationships with others. Being attuned to your feelings will help you set healthy boundaries, know when to step back, and not agree to do something when your plate is full.

Emotional regulation allows you to build self-trust, which is part of feeling empowered.

It will also guide you to reach out for support or do something that brings you joy, or compel you to go do something like hiking, dancing, exercising, cooking, doing a craft, socializing, etc.

Emotional intelligence is really important for connecting with other human beings. These relationships are meaningful and emotionally satisfying, helping us feel “full.”

Think of times when you have listened and not listened to your body? What decisions were made? What were the results? How did these impact your self-worth and self-trust?

You can use the following pages to document what you noticed.

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# Surplus Self Awareness Questions

What negative thought patterns about your sense of agency (feeling empowered or helpless) became rooted in your belief system?

What about your emotions and feelings?  
Is there a part of you that feels fearful or powerless?

Do you have an urge to run and hide away under blankets or stay in your home and not engage with anyone?

Do you struggle with social anxiety?

Is there some underlying fear in your body that hasn't been supported yet? Have you spoken with this fear? If so, what is it telling you it needs?

What memories surface? What are you noticing?

Use this space and the next page to journal



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# Surplus Self Awareness Questions

If the following questions are too much, take one question at a time. Do your best to stay attuned to your feelings and nervous system and do not do anything that makes them feel taxed and overwhelmed.

What thoughts swirl in your head when you start to feel anxious?

Are there triggers?

Or does an anxiety attack come on so quickly that you aren't able to make the distinction? Or do you wake up feeling anxious?

Perhaps a low-grade or chronic sense of unsafety is always with you?

What have you noticed is a precursor or linked to your anxiety?

Could you spend some time holding space for your curious mind?

Notice what's happening inside, reflect upon it and journal about it.

Use this space and the next page to journal

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# Emotional Resilience

There are practices for developing emotional resilience that, when adopted and become part of one's living routine, help reduce anxiety and increase one's sense of agency, self-awareness, and, of course, self-compassion.

Neuroscience is showing that practicing self-compassion builds new neural pathways, which helps with childhood trauma recovery.

By developing and augmenting your coping strategies tool kit, you'll feel more empowered as you have more to draw from during the moments of fear, anxiety, and overwhelm.

Remembering that anxiety attacks are your nervous system hijacking your brain and body will lessen the inner critic's voice. This makes room for more self-compassion.

And by approaching your anxiety with curiosity as if it is an anxious scared inner child and offering kind compassion and support will go a long way.

The following are various activities that help strengthen your emotional resilience.

Make sure you join the group sessions for peer support

# Building Emotional Resilience

Approach these 6 strategies with a sense of curiosity, experimenting with different techniques to discover what works best for you in different situations. Do so gently.



## Self-Care:

- Engage in gentle self-care activities that nourish your body, mind, and spirit, such as mindfulness meditation, gentle body stretches, spending time in nature, creative expression, or relaxation techniques.

## Self Protection:

- Set boundaries to protect your emotional and physical well-being, including limiting exposure to triggers, saying no to overwhelming situations, and prioritizing activities that replenish your energy.



## Build Supportive Relationships & Community:

- Surround yourself with people who respect your boundaries, validate your feelings, and offer practical assistance and emotional support when needed.
- Could you offer this same support to your inner child-like wounds?



# Building Emotional Resilience



## Emotional Regulation Strategies:

*Notice your breathing* and focus on that. If your mind wanders, gently return focus to your breathing.

*Progressive muscle relaxation exercises.* Start with focusing on your feet, tense them up for 5 counts then relax. Follow this as you move up your legs, hips, torso, shoulders, head, etc

## Mindful Awareness:

Notice when your emotions arise without judgment or suppression. Instead of reacting immediately, take a moment to pause and acknowledge what you're feeling.

Approach your emotions with curiosity, exploring their nuances and origins.



## Kindness:

Treat yourself with kindness and understanding, especially during difficult emotional experiences. Instead of criticizing yourself for feeling a certain way, offer yourself the same compassion you would to a friend in distress.

Do something that you've been putting off: mani/pedi, go for that hike, book time off for fun, make and enjoy your favourite meal, buy yourself flowers, etc

# What Did You Notice?

What emotional resilience practices did you find helpful?  
Which ones would you like to incorporate into your lifestyle?

# Emotional Resilience Strategies Tracker

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## Module 3

# Integrate

Creating Action Plans  
for  
Anxiety Management

If you're feeling overwhelmed and would like extra support, please remember you're not alone.  
You're always welcome to book a 1:1 session with me—I'm here for you."





# Practicing Mindfulness

This section offers several techniques that you are welcome to practice and integrate into your life, adding them to your coping skills toolbox. Take your time with gentle intent.



# Practicing Mindfulness

Practicing Mindfulness is a way for your body to learn how to be fully present so it does not loop/ruminate about the past or anxiously worry or plan ahead.

There are many mindfulness exercises or guided meditations or imagery that can help the mind stop looping and overthinking so you can feel more in control of what's going on inside your head.

The following are some mindfulness / grounding practices that help build Mindfulness muscles

## The Five Senses:

- Name 5 things you can see
- Name 4 things you can hear
- Name 3 things you can feel
- Name 2 things you can smell
- Name 1 think you can taste



## Observe smells:

- Breathing in, notice any smells around you.
- Bring something close to your nose and notice the aroma. Take it away and then notice the smell again. Do they linger?
- When eating, notice the aroma of the food; when cooking, notice the aroma of the spices of other ingredients
- When near flowers, bend down and take a good whiff.

# Grounding Practices BEFORE an Anxiety/Panic Attack

When you feel your anxiety level is increasing, here are some suggestions that may help prevent a full panic attack. Feel free to listen to the Step 4 Guided Meditation Nurture Calmness and Safety

## Compassionate Visualization:

Picture yourself in a safe and peaceful place. It could be a beach, a forest, or any location where you feel calm and secure. Imagine yourself surrounded by a warm, comforting light that radiates love and compassion. Allow yourself to immerse in this visualization, absorbing its soothing effects. If possible put on some calming relaxation music.



## Use your Voice:

- Repeat compassionate affirmations to yourself. For example, "I am safe", "This feeling will pass", "I am strong", "I am worthy of love and care". Focus on gentle, reassuring statements that help counteract the negative thoughts and sensations of panic.
- Remind yourself out loud what is happening right now. For example, you can say:

*My name is..... I am ..... years old.  
Today is.....(name the complete date).  
Right now, I am..... (name what you're doing.)*

*I can see ..... I can hear .....*



# Grounding Practices DURING an Anxiety/Panic Attack

As a reminder, the three grounding exercises mentioned in the presentation that can be done during an anxiety/panic attack are: cold water face plunge (this reduces heart rate quickly), sucking on a lemon wedge, and pushing feet into the ground or floor.

Here are a couple more suggestions:

## **Deep Belly Breathing:**

Inhale through your nose for 5 counts. Exhale slowly through your mouth as if through a straw for 10 counts. You can place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly if that helps you focus. The slow exhale stimulates the PSNS (parasympathetic nervous system) and it will slow your heart rate. Repeat this until you are feeling calm. Don't over do it. Counting your breaths can also help to focus your mind.



**If you've noticed that your breathing is shallow or you're holding your breath, establishing a daily breathwork practice will help keep your oxygen level well within the normal range.**



## **Use your Hands**

- Try clapping
- Push your hands together, palm to palm, and notice the pressure. There is no need to cause pain. You can also push against a wall so you feel like you're back in your body.
- Grab an ice cube or two and hold onto them in your hands. Pay attention to the feeling of the cold and notice the ice melting and water dripping. Clean up the drips when you're done.

# Supporting Yourself AFTER an Anxiety/Panic Attack

Part of healing from childhood trauma is taking care of yourself when things have gone a bit sideways or things didn't turn out the way you hoped or planned. Sometimes anger comes up that is beneath the anxiety attack. Here are some ways to sooth yourself after a panic attack:



## **Acknowledge Your Experience:**

Start by acknowledging what you've just been through. Recognize that panic attacks can be frightening and overwhelming, and it's okay to feel shaken by the experience. Remind yourself that experiencing a panic attack doesn't define your worth or strength as a person. Take the time you need to rest.

## **Comforting Physical Touch:**

Offer yourself physical comfort by gently placing your hand over your heart or wrapping yourself in a warm blanket. Physical touch can be incredibly soothing and can help ground you in the present moment. You might also gently massage your hands, neck, or shoulders to release tension.





# Guided Imagery

## Safe Haven Visualizations

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Imagine yourself in a peaceful and serene place, surrounded by warmth and comfort. Visualize this place as vividly as you can, using all your senses to bring it to life.



Picture yourself in a cozy room, filled with soft light and gentle colors. Feel the warmth of the sunlight streaming through the windows, enveloping you in a comforting embrace. Hear the soothing sounds of nature outside, such as birds singing or leaves rustling in the breeze.

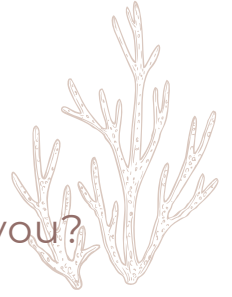


Imagine wrapping yourself in a soft blanket and sinking into a plush armchair. Feel the support of the chair beneath you, grounding you in the present moment. Take a moment to breathe deeply and relax, allowing any tension or anxiety to melt away.



Remind yourself that this safe haven is always available to you whenever you need it. Whenever you're feeling overwhelmed or anxious, you can return to this peaceful place in your mind, finding solace and comfort in its embrace.

# Integrate



Which of the previous practices work or would work for you?

Create an **Action Plan** that you can have accessible to support you in your decision to manage your anxiety.

What I will do **before** the anxiety gets too much.

What I will do to regulate myself **during** an anxiety/panic attack.

What I will do to self-soothe **after** an anxiety/panic attack.



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# REFLECTIVE EXERCISE



What have you noticed about yourself when practicing  
mindfulness and grounding exercises?

How is your nervous system feeling?

Use the following page to ink your thoughts.

*Be Curious*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# What About Self-Talk

Feel free to share what it is like to talk to the memories you have when your feelings were disregarded and, using compassionate, encouraging and validating language towards these, what happens when you do?

Are you able to talk to your anxiety when it is at a low level?  
At a moderate or high level?  
What happens when you do?

Use this space and the next page to journal

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# More on Self-Talk

## When you are feeling calm...

Here are some things you can try saying to yourself. Take note of how your body responds to gentle self-compassion, encouragement, and understanding.



### Encouraging Affirmations:

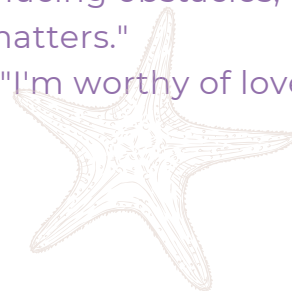
- "I am capable and resilient. I can handle whatever comes my way."
- "I am worthy of love and compassion, especially from myself."
- "Every challenge I face is an opportunity for growth and learning."
- "I am enough, just as I am, and I deserve kindness and understanding."

### Understanding and Compassionate Responses:

- "It's okay to feel scared or anxious. These feelings are valid, and I'm here to support myself through them."
- "I know this is difficult, but I'm doing the best I can in this moment."
- "It's normal to have setbacks or moments of struggle. I'll be patient with myself as I work through them."
- "I understand that my worth isn't defined by my accomplishments or by how others perceive me."

### Reframing Negative Thoughts with Compassion:

- Instead of "I can't do this," say, "This feels challenging right now, and I can take it one step at a time."
- Instead of "I'm such a failure," say, "I'm facing obstacles, and I'm still moving forward, and that's what matters."
- Instead of "I'm not good enough," say, "I'm worthy of love and acceptance, just as I am."



# More Self-Talk

## Encouraging Problem-Solving and Self-Care:

"What can I do right now to take care of myself and make this situation a little easier?"

"I'll break this task into smaller, more manageable steps and celebrate each accomplishment along the way."

"I'll reach out for support if I need it, whether from loved ones or from a professional."



## Reminders of Strength and Resilience:

"I've faced challenges before, and I've always come out stronger on the other side."

"I have inner strength and courage to guide me through even the toughest times."

"I'm not alone in this. I have a support system of caring people who are there for me. The people I can count on are, \_\_\_\_\_"

## Gratitude and Positive Reframing:

"Even in difficult times, there are still things to be grateful for. I take time to focus on the positives in my life."

"I can find meaning and purpose in even the smallest moments of joy and connection."

"Every experience, whether positive or negative, contributes to my growth and resilience."

Using this kind of self-talk regularly can foster a more compassionate and supportive inner dialogue, which can, in turn, improve overall well-being and resilience.

Remind yourself that you are making new neuro pathways, and it takes lots of repetition before these strategies become your go-to.



Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Note Space

Feel free to write down what self-talk practices you would like to implement or are implementing.

[illegible]

# Anxiety Management Strategies tracker

Strategy	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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# GRATITUDE



## journal

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

S M T W T F S

TODAY I'M GRATEFUL FOR

1	
2	
3	

SCHEDULE

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

DAILY AFFIRMATION


SOMETHING I'M PROUD OF

<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	

NOTES:



Print off as many as you like



# Weekly Planner



Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Week: \_\_\_\_\_

Things I will nurture in  
my need for Calm

Sunday



Monday

Tuesday



Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

NOTE



Print off as many as you like



Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note Space

[illegible]



# Action Steps

Use this page to write down what things you want to implement to soothe your anxiety.

1

2

3

# Evidence of Integration

## THEN

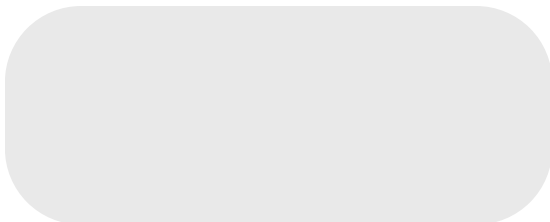
Couldn't stop an anxiety or panic attack

Criticize or get angry with myself about my anxiety

I didn't know how to reduce my stress consistently

I focused too much on what was going wrong.

Name what else you struggled with below



## NOW

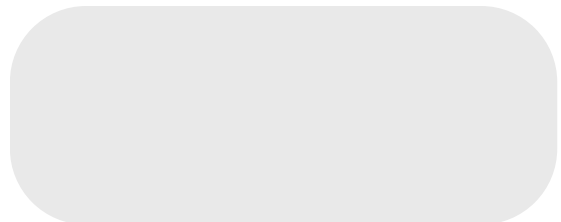
Developing a routine of mindfulness and grounding practices

Offer myself kindness and understanding during moments of difficulty or distress.

I am incorporating self-care strategies and relaxation techniques

I notice the things that I'm grateful for and am making note of them.

Write down improvements you've noticed



VS

What are you noticing about yourself?

You have completed the  
section that coincides with  
the slide presentation–  
Nurturing Calm Within,  
Managing Anxiety for Adult  
Survivors of Childhood  
Trauma



Feel free to keep going.  
Here are more tools and strategies  
to help augment your Coping  
Strategies Toolbox.



# Nurturing Calm Within Checklist

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Mindfulness Practices

- ☐ Engage in daily mindfulness meditation, even if it's just for a few minutes.
- ☐ Practice mindful breathing exercises
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....

## Self-Compassion

- ☐ Offer yourself kindness and understanding
- ☐ Practice self-compassionate self-talk
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....

## Stress Reduction Techniques

- ☐ Identify sources of stress in your life and develop strategies for managing them effectively.
- ☐ Incorporate relaxation techniques
- ☐ Prioritize Self-Care
- ☐ .....

## Healthy Lifestyle Habits

- ☐ Maintain healthy diet
- ☐ Regular exercise to reduce stress
- ☐ Prioritize regular sleep patterns
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....

## Other

- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....
- ☐ .....

## Cultivating Gratitude

- ☐ Regularly reflect on what you're thankful for
- ☐ Notice small moments of joy & beauty
- ☐ Keep a Gratitude Journal
- ☐ .....

# Self-Care CHECKLIST

Emotional Regulation is an ongoing practice..

How are you going to Nurture the Calm this week?

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Mindfulness practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grounding exercises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compassionate self-talk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice mindful meditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journal about your feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reaching out for connection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend time with a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend a workshop or class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take regular breaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set boundaries that support your nervous system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go for a long walk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read for pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notice what brings you Joy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take a long bath or shower	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to your favorite music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No screen time before bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to sleep before 10pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Guided Imagery

## Safe Haven Visualizations



"Imagine yourself sitting on a tranquil beach. Feel the warmth of the sun on your skin and the gentle breeze blowing through your hair. Picture the waves rolling in and out, carrying away any tension or stress with them. As you breathe deeply, allow yourself to sink deeper into a state of relaxation, knowing that you are safe and supported by the peaceful surroundings."



"Visualize yourself walking through a serene forest. Notice the tall trees towering above you, their leaves rustling in the gentle breeze. As you walk along the winding path, feel the soft earth beneath your feet and the cool air filling your lungs. Take a moment to appreciate the beauty of nature surrounding you, and let it fill you with a sense of peace and tranquility."



"Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a lush, vibrant garden filled with blooming flowers and lush greenery. Take a deep breath and inhale the sweet scent of the flowers, letting it fill your senses with calmness and serenity. As you explore the garden, feel a sense of renewal washing over you, as if the beauty of nature is nourishing your mind, body, and soul."

Remind yourself that this safe haven is always available to you whenever you need it. Whenever you're feeling overwhelmed or anxious, you can return to this peaceful place in your mind, finding solace and comfort in its embrace.





Only When You  
Feel Ready...

Challenge Yourself



# As Your Nervous System Heals

**Disclaimer RE #4: Please seek the advice of your mental health professional to ensure you have the needed support and they feel you are ready before you attempt to do this exercise. If it's too much, stop immediately and reach out for help.**

It is really important to listen to your body when it comes to anxiety and be curious to what is underneath it. As you do, your nervous system will learn to trust you. It will start to trust you to make wise decisions when it comes to supporting your nervous system.

This section contains gentle suggestions to try once you consistently feel you've been in a calm state of homeostasis for at least six months. FYI, I have been deep into trauma recovery and I have not yet been able to follow this through. So please be careful and listen to your nervous system.

**I caution you not to try this too soon in your trauma recovery journey, for doing this may bring you back to where you're feeling raw and scared all over again.**

**Please read both pages through before you think about trying this.**

1. *Identify Trigger Situations:* Start by identifying specific situations or triggers that tend to provoke anxiety or panic attacks. These could be social situations, certain environments, thoughts, or physical sensations. Make a list ranking them from least to most anxiety-provoking.
2. *Set Realistic Goals:* To start with, choose one of the less anxiety-provoking situations on your list. Set a realistic goal related to that situation. The goal should be challenging enough to evoke some anxiety but manageable enough not to overwhelm you.
3. *Practice Relaxation Techniques:* Before exposing yourself to the chosen situation, practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or guided imagery. This can help calm your nervous system and prepare you for the upcoming challenge.



# As Your Nervous System Heals

4. *Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP)*: Gradually expose yourself to the chosen situation while refraining from engaging in safety behaviors or avoidance strategies. Start with a version of the situation that feels mildly anxiety-provoking and gradually work your way up to more challenging scenarios.

5. *Use Coping Statements*: Develop coping statements or affirmations to use when facing anxiety-provoking situations. These statements should be compassionate and reassuring, reminding yourself that you are safe and capable of managing your anxiety.

6. *Practice Self-Compassion*: Throughout the process, practice self-compassion and self-care. Be patient and kind to yourself, acknowledging *the courage it takes to confront your fears. If you experience setbacks or difficulties, remind yourself that it's a natural part of the learning process and an opportunity for growth.*

7. *Reflect and Adjust*: After each exposure, take some time to reflect on your experience. Notice any changes in your anxiety level, as well as any helpful strategies or insights you gained. Use this information to adjust your approach as needed for future challenges. And commend yourself.

8. *Seek Support*: Don't hesitate to reach out for support from friends, family, or a therapist who can offer encouragement and guidance along the way. Having someone to share your progress with can make the journey feel less daunting.

Remember that progress is gradual, and it is important to be patient and gentle with yourself throughout the process. It may take months or years to get to this stage of readiness.

Celebrate your successes, no matter how small, and acknowledge the courage it takes to confront your fears. With time and persistence, you can build confidence in your ability to manage anxiety and panic attacks.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note Space

[illegible]

# Routine Tracker

Routines becoming Habits

M T W T F S S

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Resources

Be sure to join in the group sessions.

If more support is needed, please book a 1:1 coaching session with me.

If you purchased the highest membership tier, 1 session/month is included.

I recommend taking advantage of this extra support as you work through the program.



## Neurographic Art

Watch the link or seek ideas online and have fun with this art modality. Take note of how you feel before, during and after doing this art form.

## Neurographic Art

Here is another tutorial

Please note: it may be best to do these with a mental health professional in case anything heavy arises and you need support.



## 9 Emotional Regulation Tips

This article goes into the process of getting acquainted with and developing a relationship with your feelings.



## Vagus Nerve Exercises To Rewire Your Brain From Anxiety

Suki Baxter has easy to follow exercises to strengthen your vagus nerve for anxiety



## Suggested Reading

Polyvagal Exercises for Safety and Connection by Deb Dana

Introduction to Internal Family Systems by Richard Schwartz, PhD

Vagus Nerve: Daily Exercises to Rewire Your Brain, Audiobook, by Tiegan Williams

# You did It!!!

It's an honour to work with you; please reach out for extra support along your healing journey.

Remember that YOU matter.



## Contact:

[hiltoncoachingconsulting.com](http://hiltoncoachingconsulting.com)

[Lisa@hiltoncoachingconsulting.com](mailto:Lisa@hiltoncoachingconsulting.com)