

A

Ask: "Is this 100% true?"
Some thoughts feel true, but that does not mean they are true.
Ask, "Is it really true?"

"Everyone thinks I am annoying." → "Really everyone?"



B

Breathe slowly and deeply
Anxious feelings often come on suddenly. Slowing your breathing can help.

"I feel panicky." → "Let me breathe in for 4 seconds and out for 4 seconds."



C

Check the evidence
Feelings are not always based on facts. Look at what proves or disproves the thought.

"I am going to get sacked." → "My boss praised me last week — this is just worry."



A-Z CBT COPING SKILLS FOR ADULTS POSTER

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A-Z COPING SKILLS

A

Ask: “Is this 100% true?”

Some thoughts feel true, but that does not mean they are facts.

Ask, “Do I know this for sure, or am I assuming the worst?”

“Everyone thinks I am annoying.” → “Really everyone? Or did one person just act off today?”



B

Breathe slowly and deeply

Anxious feelings often come with fast breathing. Slowing it down helps calm your body and mind.



“I feel panicky.” → “Let me breathe in for 4 seconds and out for 6 to settle down.”

C

Check the evidence

Feelings are not always based on facts.

Look at what proves or disproves the thought.

“I am going to get sacked.” → “My boss praised me last week — this is just worry.”

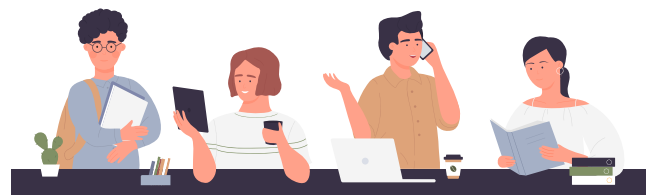


D

Do the opposite

If your feeling pushes you to do something unhelpful, try the opposite.

“I want to cancel everything.” → “Let me show up and see how it goes.”





Explore what triggered me

Strong feelings often have a cause.
Think back — what happened just before this?



“Why did I snap?” →
“I felt left out in the meeting.”



Focus on one thing at a time

When you feel overwhelmed, doing one small task with full attention can calm your brain.
It helps you feel more in control and reduces stress.



“I can’t cope.” →
“I will start by tidying the table.”



Ground yourself with your senses

Use your five senses to bring your mind back to the present.



“I feel spaced out.” → “What can I see, hear and touch right now?”



Hold space for your feelings

You don’t have to fix every feeling straight away.
Let it be there for a moment without judgement.



“I feel low.” →
“That’s okay — I can sit with it.”



Identify the thinking trap

Are you mind reading, catastrophising or thinking in extremes?
Naming the trap helps reduce its power.



“They all hate me.”
→ “I am jumping to conclusions.”



Join the moment

Instead of getting stuck in your head, bring your attention to what you are doing right now.
Being present helps reduce overthinking.

“I keep worrying.” →
“Let me focus fully on this cup of tea in my hands.”



Keep a thought diary

Write down your thoughts and what was happening at the time.
It helps spot patterns and triggers.



“I keep overthinking.” →
“Let me see what brings this on.”



Label the emotion

Naming what you feel can make it less intense and help you understand it better.
Say to yourself,
“This is anxiety,” or
“This is sadness.”

“I feel awful.” →
“Actually, I feel anxious and a bit embarrassed.”





Make a wise choice

Wise mind is the balance between emotion and logic. Pause and ask, “What would be a calm and balanced choice right now?”

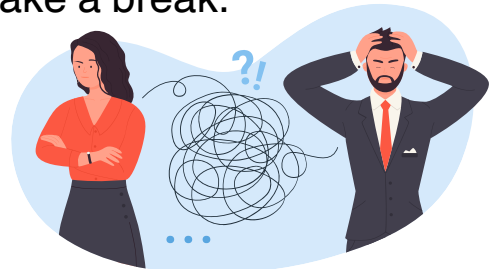
“I want to quit.” → “Maybe I need a break first.”



Notice your needs

Feelings often show something is missing. Ask, “What do I need right now?”

“I feel angry.” → “Maybe I need to feel heard or take a break.”



Observe without judgement

Notice your thoughts and feelings without calling them good or bad.



“I should not feel like this.” →
“I feel anxious — that’s okay.”



Pause before reacting

Taking a short pause can stop you from reacting in a way you regret later. Give your brain time to catch up before you speak or act.

“I want to snap back.” → “Let me take a breath before I reply.”





Question your expectations

Sometimes we expect too much from ourselves or others. Check if what you expect is realistic.

“I failed.” → “Or was I expecting too much from myself?”



Reflect on past coping

You have got through hard times before. Think about what helped and use it again.

“I can’t do this.” → “Talking to someone helped before.”



Soothe yourself kindly

When you feel upset, comfort yourself in gentle, healthy ways. Use sounds, smells, touch or calming activities.



“I feel on edge.” → “I will make tea and wrap myself in a blanket.”



Talk to yourself like a friend

Speak to yourself with the same kindness you would give others.

“I messed up.” → “Everyone makes mistakes — you are learning.”





Understand the bigger picture

Zoom out. One bad moment does not mean everything is bad.

“I ruined it.” →
“This was one mistake in a long journey.”



Visualise a safe place

Picture a calm and peaceful place in your mind.

“I feel overwhelmed.”
→ “Let me imagine a quiet beach.”



Write it out

When thoughts feel stuck in your head, writing them down can bring relief and clarity. It can also help you make sense of your feelings.

“I can’t think straight.” → “I will write everything out for 10 minutes.”



X-ray your thoughts

Look closely at what you are thinking — is it based on fact or fear?
Give your thoughts a scan to see what is really underneath.



“No one likes me.” → “Is that really true or just how I feel?”



You are not your thoughts

Your thoughts do not define you. You can notice them, question them, and let them go without letting them take over.

“I’m broken.” → “That’s a thought — I don’t have to believe it.”



Zero in on what matters

When you feel stuck or lost, bring your focus back to your values. Ask yourself, “What is really important to me right now?”

“Nothing helps.” → “Helping others matters — I will start there.”



BE KIND to yourself

