



TSU  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
SERVICE

# How to cope with anxiety?

## Symptoms of anxiety

- faster, irregular or more noticeable heartbeat
- feeling lightheaded and dizzy
- headaches
- chest pains
- loss of appetite
- feeling tense or nervous
- being unable to relax
- worrying about the past or future
- feeling tearful
- not being able to sleep



 Things you can try  
to manage anxiety



What not to do

# Things you can try to manage anxiety

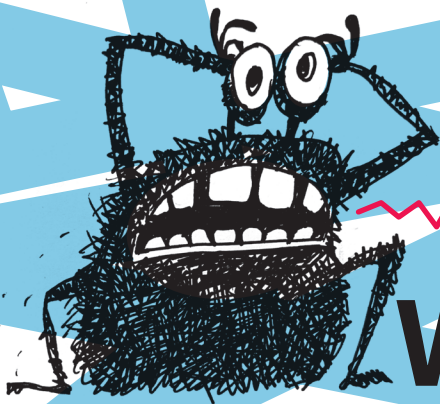


- 🕒 Talk to someone. Try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor
- 🕒 Exercise daily to help you feel good and maintain your health.
- 🕒 Try mindfulness. Search and download relaxation and mindfulness apps
- 🕒 Take a time-out. Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, get a massage, or learn relaxation techniques. Stepping back from the problem helps clear your head.
- 🕒 Eat well-balanced meals. Do not skip any meals. Do keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
- 🕒 Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks.
- 🕒 Get enough sleep. When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest.
- 🕒 Learn what triggers your anxiety. Is it work, family, school, or something else you can identify? Write in a journal when you're feeling stressed or anxious, and look for a pattern.
- 🕒 Practice focused, deep breathing. Try breathing in for 4 counts and breathing out for 4 counts for 5 minutes total. By this, you'll slow your heart rate which should help calm you down.



## What not to do

- 🕒 Do not try to do everything at once – set small targets that you can easily achieve.
- 🕒 Do not focus on the things you cannot change – focus your time and energy into helping yourself feel better.
- 🕒 Do not avoid situations that make you anxious but accept – try increasing time spent in worrying situations to gradually reduce anxiety.
- 🕒 Try not to tell yourself that you're alone; most people experience anxiety or fear at some point in their life.
- 🕒 Try not to use alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or drugs to relieve anxiety as these can all contribute to poor mental health.



# What to do with a panic attack?

A **panic attack** is an intense wave of fear characterized by its unexpectedness and debilitating, immobilizing intensity. Your heart pounds, you can't breathe, and you may feel like you're dying or going crazy. Panic attacks often strike out of the blue, without any warning, and sometimes with no clear trigger. They may even occur when you're relaxed or asleep.

A panic attack may be a one-time occurrence, although many people experience repeat episodes. Recurrent panic attacks are often triggered by a specific situation, such as crossing a bridge or speaking in public—especially if that situation has caused a panic attack before.

Panic attack signs and **symptoms**

- Shortness of breath or hyperventilation.
- Heart palpitations or racing heart.
- Chest pain or discomfort.
- Trembling or shaking.
- Choking feeling.
- Feeling unreal or detached from your surroundings.
- Sweating.
- Nausea or upset stomach.
- Feeling dizzy, light-headed, or faint.
- Numbness or tingling sensations.
- Hot or cold flashes.
- Fear of dying, losing control, or going crazy.



# Ways to Stop a Panic Attack



## Know the Signs.

You don't have to be in a scary situation to have a panic attack. You could be on a hike, at a restaurant, or asleep in bed. All of a sudden you get a strong surge of fear. This triggers physical symptoms like a pounding heart, sweating, shortness of breath, nausea, chest pain, or trembling. It can last 5 to 20 minutes. Once you learn to recognize when attacks are coming on, you can find ways to stop them.



## Don't avoid panic attacks.

It's understandable that you'd want to avoid a panic attack at all costs. But it's important not to let fear control your life. For example, don't avoid places where you've had panic attacks in the past. If you have one, stay where you are, if it's safe. When the attack is over, you'll realize that nothing terrible has happened.

## Talk to Yourself.

When you feel a panic attack coming on, remind yourself that you're feeling anxiety, and not real danger. You can even try directly addressing the fear. Practice a go-to response like, "I am not afraid" or "This will pass".



## Don't Distract Yourself.

As tempting as it may be to try to focus your mind elsewhere, the healthiest way to deal with a panic attack is to acknowledge it. Try not to fight your symptoms. But keep reminding yourself that they will pass.

## Breathe Through It.

An attack may make you take quick, shallow breaths, so get your breathing under control. Close your eyes. Put your hand between your bellybutton and the bottom of your ribs. Inhale through your nose slowly and deeply.

Then let all that air out gently through your mouth. You'll feel the hand on your belly rise and fall. If it helps, you can count from 1 to 5 on each inhale and exhale.

After a few minutes, you should start to feel better.



## Keep Your Mind in the Present.

Notice five things you can see around you. Then, four things you can touch. Three things you can hear. Two things you smell. One thing you taste. When you stay grounded in what's going on around you, it gives your mind something better to do than focus on fear or bounce from one worry to the next.



## Stop the “What Ifs”.

Panic attacks feed on thoughts of “what if.” What if I can't do it? What if I run into my ex? What if everyone laughs at me? Acknowledge that fear, then shift from “what if” to “so what?” Sometimes the worst-case scenario isn't as bad as it seems.

## HALT: Your Attack.

H.A.L.T. stands for hungry, angry, lonely, tired — four feelings that bring out the worst in everyone. If you're prone to panic attacks, they can turn into triggers. When symptoms pop up, check in with yourself: Am I hungry? Am I angry? Once you pinpoint what's going on, you can take steps to fix it.



## Rate Your Fear.

When fear scrambles your mind, rate it on a scale of one to 10 every few minutes. This keeps you in the present moment. It's also a good reminder that you're not on a 10 the whole time.

Careful with Coffee, Booze, Smoking. Caffeine can make you feel nervous and shaky. It can also keep you awake, which can trigger tiredness later. Nicotine and alcohol can make you feel calm at first, then make you jittery as your body processes it. All three can trigger panic attacks or make them worse. It's best to avoid them.

# How to deal with stress?



**S**tress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels threatened or anxious. Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the right care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms. After a traumatic event, people may have strong and lingering reactions. These events may include personal or environmental disasters, or threats with an assault. The **symptoms** may be physical or emotional. Common reactions to a stressful event can include:

- disbelief, shock, and numbness;
- feeling sad, frustrated, and helpless;
- difficulty concentrating and making decisions;
- headaches, back pains, and stomach problems;
- smoking or use of alcohol or drugs.



## Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

Feeling emotional and nervous or having trouble sleeping and eating can all be normal reactions to stress. Here are some healthy ways you can deal with stress:

### Take care of yourself.



Eat healthy, exercise, get plenty of sleep, and give yourself a break if you feel stressed out.



### Talk to others.

Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a parent, friend, counselor, doctor, or pastor.



### Avoid drugs and alcohol.

These may seem to help, but they can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.

### Take a break.



If news events are causing your stress, take a break from listening to or watching the news.



### Identify the sources of stress in your life.

A stress journal can help you identify the regular stressors in your life and the way you deal with them. Each time you feel stressed, keep track of it in your journal or use a stress tracker on your phone. Keeping a daily log will enable you to see patterns and common themes. Write down:

- ④ What caused your stress (make a guess if you're unsure).
- ④ How you felt, both physically and emotionally.
- ④ How you acted in response.
- ④ What you did to make yourself feel better.



## Manage your time better.

Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused.

- 🕒 Don't over-commit yourself.
- 🕒 Prioritize tasks.
- 🕒 Break projects into small steps.
- 🕒 Delegate responsibility.

## Learn to relieve stress in the moment.



When you're frazzled by your morning commute, stuck in a stressful meeting at work, or fried from another argument with your spouse, you need a way to manage your stress levels right now. That's where quick stress relief comes in.

The fastest way to reduce stress is by taking a deep breath and using your senses—what you see, hear, taste, and touch—or through a soothing movement. By viewing a favorite photo, smelling a specific scent, listening to a favorite piece of music, tasting a piece of gum, or hugging a pet, for example, you can quickly relax and focus yourself.



## Make time for fun and relaxation.

Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by carving out “me” time. Don't get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that you forget to take care of your own needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity, not a luxury. If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors.

- 🕒 Set aside leisure time.
- 🕒 Do something you enjoy every day.
- 🕒 Keep your sense of humor.
- 🕒 Take up a relaxation practice. Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing activate the body's relaxation response, a state of restfulness that is the opposite of the fight or flight or mobilization stress response.



## Recognize when you need more help.

If problems continue or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.





# 7 Quick Ways to **Stop** Being Irritable

Irritability is something we all experience, but what sets it apart from other emotional states is the extent to which it pollutes the emotional atmosphere around us. Indeed, irritability is the carbon monoxide of emotional pollutants. One person's irritable mood can release negativity and stress-inducing vibes that negatively impact the entire office, household, or classroom.

When we feel irritable, we feel on edge, grumpy, cranky, and sour. Our reactions to irritants are also likely to be much more aggressive than usual, leading us to snap, bark, and chastise those around us.

There are 7 key things you can do to bring yourself down when you're feeling irritable or on edge.



## Figure out the source.

The best way to reduce irritability is to figure out what's making you irritable—and then address it. Identify when you first became irritable and consider what might have set you off. It's important to remember that while your reactions might feel complex at the moment, the issue that triggered them might be simple.



## Reduce caffeine and alcohol.

Too much caffeine during the day and too much alcohol at night are frequent sources of irritability for many people. So, consider cutting back.



## It's often the little things.

We often dismiss considering things that shouldn't make us irritable even if they actually do. For example, a competitive person might become irritable when they lose at Words with Friends, but since they know that's silly, they ignore the fact that their mother's triple word score vaulted her into the lead and triggered their internal sourness. Be honest with yourself about what's bothering you: Simply acknowledging that something is making you irritable is often enough to take the edge off.



## Get in touch with your compassion.

Being compassionate—with yourself—can be a powerful way to calm your churning emotions. Acknowledge (in your head) that you feel really irritable—and how unpleasant it is. Then imagine getting a hug from someone who cares about you. Once you feel a little better, use your compassion to consider how it has made those around you feel, and how important it is to not take it out on them.





## Gain perspective.

We usually feel irritable about small-to-medium size annoyances—the kind we probably won't remember in a few days or weeks.

Take a few minutes to remind yourself of the larger picture—the things that are going well in your life and the things for which you can be grateful, such as health and employment. But if you feel too unsettled to do this kind of thinking, give the following a try.



## Rid yourself of nervous energy.



Since irritability activates our fight-or-flight response sets, it might be a good idea to take a quick walk or run, or, if that's not possible, do some quick push-ups or crunches to rid yourself of excess energy that might be fueling your irritability. Fresh air on a leisurely walk could do wonders as well. For those who cannot use exercise, the entirely opposite approach works as well.



## Get quiet or alone time.

Find a quiet place to think things through, or to disengage from the commotion and activity around you. Irritability can be your mind's way of alerting you that you need a break, so take one. Listen to music, do some stretching or yoga, meditate, or take a bubble bath. When you're done, take a deep breath and prepare yourself to re-engage so your system isn't shocked back into irritability once you re-enter the fray.



**7 Quick  
Ways to  
Stop Being  
Irritable**





# How To Feel Motivated When You Have **Apathy**

**Apathy** is when you lack motivation to do anything or just don't care about what's going on around you.

**B**ut it isn't the same thing as depression, though it can be hard to tell the two conditions apart. Feeling "blah" about life is common in both conditions. It isn't sadness or anger, either. Rather than feeling these emotions, you don't feel much of anything. Things that used to make you happy don't excite you anymore. You no longer feel motivated to achieve your goals.

Everyone loses interest in things at one time or another, but when it happens a lot, it can affect your relationships, your job, and your ability to enjoy life.

Apathy signs and **symptoms:**

You may be able to see the signs of apathy in yourself. Or a friend or family member might point out that you don't seem as interested or engaged as you used to be.

- Lack the effort or energy to do everyday things.
- Depend on other people to plan your activities.
- Have no desire to learn new things, meet new people, or have new experiences.
- Don't care about your own problems.
- Feel no emotions when good or bad things happen.

# How to Find Motivation



## Get Out of Bed.

When you have apathy, you may feel like staying in bed all day, but the key to getting your motivation back starts with simply putting your feet on the ground in the morning and getting out of bed. Also make sure to get dressed for the day. Getting dressed helps to shift your perspective and lets you know that it's time to start the day. If you stay in your pajamas all day, it's easy for your brain to let the rest of you off the hook, too. Routines can help to reduce the symptoms of apathy.



## Make Your Bed Every Morning.

Even if you aren't motivated to do any other housework or cleaning, make sure you make your bed every morning. It's a simple task that only takes a couple of minutes. Your room will look cleaner. You'll also know you succeeded at something, and you'll have a nice place to lie down at the end of the day. Get Outside. Simply getting outside and going for a walk can do a lot for your motivation levels. Getting sunshine and exercise is a great way to give yourself a little mood boost. Exercise increases the endorphins levels in your brain, which helps you feel happier.



## Track Your Successes.

Success and confidence can initiate a positive cycle. At the end of each day, find a journal and write down at least three ways that you were successful that day. If you are feeling extremely depressed, these don't need to be big things. They could be as simple as getting dressed, making your bed, and cooking dinner.

## Create a Routine.

It can be easier to stick to routines once they've become habits. Habits are things that you do almost without thinking about it at all. Try to create habits for your morning and evening to help you maintain a high level of self-care.



## Don't Withdraw from Friends and Family.

When you're feeling depressed, it's easy to withdraw from the people you love. It can feel like you have to make a big effort to see others when you feel down, but it's worth it, even if you have to force yourself. Spend time with people that are positive and make you laugh. You should also let the people close to you know what you're going through. This will help you to create a support network of people who can check on you and encourage you along the way.

## Eat Something.

If you are depressed and unmotivated, then you might not care about eating. Even so, depriving your body of the nutrients you need is not going to help you get better. If you can't bring yourself to eat a full meal, at least make sure you don't skip eating altogether. Focus on making good food choices, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Eating a breakfast loaded with protein can give you the energy you need to make it through your morning.



## Get Enough Sleep Each Night.

Going to sleep can be difficult when you just don't care. It's easy to camp out in front of Netflix for hours and stay up until the wee hours of the morning. However, doing this is not going to help you get out of bed in the morning. If you have problems going to sleep, talk to your doctor about sleep aids that can help you get the rest that you need.

# How to deal with negative emotions



## About negative emotions

Emotions that can become negative are hate, anger, jealousy and sadness. Yet, in the right context, these feelings are completely natural. Negative emotions can dampen our enthusiasm for life, depending on how long we let them affect us and the way we choose to express them.

**N**egative emotions stop us from thinking and behaving rationally and seeing situations in their true perspective. When this occurs, we tend to see only what we want to see and remember only what we want to remember. This only prolongs the anger or grief and prevents us from enjoying life.

The longer this goes on, the more set the problem becomes. Dealing with negative emotions inappropriately can also be harmful – for example, expressing anger with violence.

# PATH

One way to deal with uncomfortable or unpleasant emotions is to remember the word PATH:

**Pause – Acknowledge – Think – Help**

## Step 1: **Pause.**

This step is important because instead of acting on feelings right away, you stop yourself and think things through. Count to 100 or say the alphabet backwards.

## Step 2: **Acknowledge What You're Feeling.**

For example, are you mad at someone, or are you sad because your feelings were hurt by what they did? Whatever it is that you are feeling, it is ok to feel that way.

## Step 3: **Think.**

Now that you have taken a few moments to figure out what exactly it is that you are feeling, think about how you can make yourself feel better.

## Step 4: **Help.**

Take an action to help yourself based upon what you came up with in the “Think” step.

## Problem Solving

Make a list of solutions to problems – it can help to brainstorm with a friend or family member.

Make a list of your strengths. There are plenty of things about you that are awesome, no matter how down you are feeling at the moment. If a person has upset you, talk with them directly.



Fill in the blanks to this sentence:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when (this happens) because \_\_\_\_\_.

Next time, could you please \_\_\_\_\_.

**Example:** “I feel left out when there is no room at the lunch table, because then I don’t have friends to talk to. Next time can you please save me a seat?”

## Progressive muscle relaxation

Try progressive muscle relaxation – clench your toes for a count of 5, then relax them for a count of 5, then move to your calves, then your thighs, then your abs, then your arms, then your neck.



# What **not** to do

**Denial** is when a person refuses to accept that anything is wrong or that help may be needed. When people deny that they are having problematic feelings, those feelings can bottle-up to a point that a person ends up “exploding” or acting out in a harmful way.



**Withdrawal** is when a person doesn't want to be around, or participate in activities with other people. This is different than wanting to be alone from time to time, and can be a warning sign of depression. Some people may withdraw because being around others takes too much energy, or they feel overwhelmed. Others may withdraw because they don't think other people like them or want them to be around. In some cases, people who have behaviors that they are ashamed of may withdraw so other people don't find out about what they are doing. But withdrawal brings its own problems: extreme loneliness, misunderstanding, anger, and distorted thinking. We need to interact with other people to keep us balanced.



**Bullying** is when a person uses force, threats, or ridicule to show power over others. People typically take part in bullying behavior because they don't feel good about themselves and making someone else feel bad makes them feel better about themselves or feel less alone. It is harmful to both the bully and the person being bullied and does not address underlying issues.



**Self-harm** can take many forms including: cutting, starving one's self, bingeing and purging, or participating in dangerous behavior. Many people self-harm because they feel like it gives them control over emotional pain. While self-harming may bring temporary relief, these behaviors can become addictive and can lead people to be more out of control and in greater pain than ever.



**Substance use** is the use of alcohol and other drugs to make a person feel better or numb about painful situations. Alcohol and drug use can damage the brain, making it need higher amounts of substances to get the same effect. This can make difficult feelings even worse and in some cases, leads to suicidal thoughts or addiction. If you are concerned about your own or someone else's use of drugs or alcohol, talk to a responsible and reliable person right away to get help.



# How to study when you've lost

Sometimes having to do all that studying and catching up with reading from previous weeks feels like a drag.



## Motivation

It can be overwhelming because together with the studying can come a wave of questions where you doubt yourself on a personal level with thoughts such as: “Do I even understand these readings?”... “Am I going to be able to write something interesting and relevant?”... “Am I going to do the right thing?”... “Am I good enough to do this?”... “Others seem to be more on top of things than I am”... “What if I do badly?”

These thoughts are subtle but can lead to difficult feelings that interfere with motivation. So to generate that motivation you could try some of the following.



### Acknowledge your resistance and difficult feelings with motivation

It may be helpful to write these feelings or thoughts down and then leave these on the side so you can then study.



### Do not run away

Avoiding work can make you feel deflated. This is emotionally more draining than having to go through the frustration of reading for your paper.



### **Do not blame yourself for procrastinating now and then**

Try to become aware of the habit and gently make yourself to go back to the task sooner rather than later.



### **Try to understand your studying style better**

What will make it easier for you to work? We are all prone to pleasant experiences and it is natural that we tend to avoid uncomfortable, dry chores and duties. So try to make your study experience as interesting as possible.



### **Don't question your abilities**

Don't put yourself down by comparing yourself to others.



### **Visualise yourself starting**

Make yourself sit down and work even if this is for just 20 minutes. See starting as a parallel process like a plane on a runway. You may start slow but you will still take off!



### **Focus on the task at hand**

Prioritise the most important tasks and avoid multi-tasking.



### **Communicate to others any difficulties and/or what you intend to do**

This can help you engage with the process and identify the important tasks. Communication / externalisation can help you to commit with immediate goals and you could also find out others points of view and tips.



### **Take a time limited approach in which you schedule your tasks**

Ask yourself 'How much can I achieve in the next 2 hours?' instead of 'Can I complete all tasks?' In this way you do not get as easily overwhelmed by the volume of study you need to do.



### **Remember that studying can be challenging and take you out of your comfort zone**

Think about the hiking of Mountain Kilimanjaro; it is not easy and can even be uncomfortable but the pleasure comes when you begin to see the view from height, feel the fresh air and when you reach the destination you get a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Focus on the outcome and not the struggle to get there!



# Ways to help avoid self-harm

**Self-harm** can be a way of dealing with deep distress and emotional pain. It may help you express feelings you can't put into words, distract you from your life, or release emotional pain. Afterwards, you probably feel better—at least for a little while. But then the painful feelings return, and you feel the urge to hurt yourself again.

Self-harm includes anything you do to intentionally injure yourself. Some of the more common ways include:

- ❖ Cutting or severely scratching your skin.
- ❖ Burning or scalding yourself.
- ❖ Hitting yourself or banging your head.
- ❖ Punching things or throwing your body against walls and hard objects.
- ❖ Sticking objects into your skin.
- ❖ Intentionally preventing wounds from healing.
- ❖ Swallowing poisonous substances or inappropriate objects.
- ❖ Self-harm can also include less obvious ways of hurting yourself or putting yourself in danger, such as driving recklessly, binge drinking, taking too many drugs, or having unsafe sex.

## Why people self-harm. They do so in an attempt to:

- ❖ Cope with feelings like sadness, self-loathing, emptiness, guilt, and rage.
- ❖ Express feelings they can't put into words or release the pain and tension they feel inside.
- ❖ Feel in control, relieve guilt, or punish themselves.
- ❖ Get distracted from overwhelming emotions or difficult life circumstances.
- ❖ Make them feel alive, or simply feel something, instead of feeling numb.

Whatever the reasons for self-harming, it's important to know that there is help available if you want to stop. You can learn other ways to cope with everything that's going on inside without having to hurt yourself.

# How to **stop** cutting and self-harm



## Distract yourself

Research suggests that young people who self-harm often do so impulsively. For this reason, cutting prevention methods focus on finding alternative ways to manage distress.

Distraction tactics may help resist the urge to cut. A person can try to distract themselves by:

- ❖ calling a friend;
- ❖ counting to 1,000;
- ❖ watching a film or favorite TV series;
- ❖ making a cup of tea or a snack;
- ❖ doing some housework;
- ❖ going for a walk.

Distracting themselves may help a person delay cutting until the urge has passed.

# Practice self-care

Cutting may be a response to deep emotional pain and sadness. A way to manage these emotions without cutting is through self-care.

Self-care is any activity that promotes well-being by making a person feel soothed or comforted.



**Recommended** self-care activities :

- 🌀 having a long bath or shower;
- 🌀 listening to relaxing music;
- 🌀 curling up in a soft blanket;
- 🌀 cooking a healthful meal from scratch;
- 🌀 drawing, painting, or coloring;
- 🌀 using essential oils or a scented candle;
- 🌀 self-massage;
- 🌀 reading in bed.



## Relieve stress

Some people cut themselves in response to feeling stress. One study found that 45 percent of adolescents who self-harm do so to relieve tension or stress.

To manage the body's response to stress without cutting, the following activities may help:

- 🌀 practicing yoga at home;
- 🌀 doing deep breathing exercises;
- 🌀 practicing mindfulness.

There are many free yoga videos online, including some for beginners.

Deep breathing exercises can be as simple as taking long, deep breaths in and feeling the belly expand each time before exhaling.

A simple way to practice mindfulness is to go for a slow walk and notice everything you see, smell, hear, and touch.



## Release anger

Some people cut to relieve unprocessed anger. For people who experience this, releasing anger in a different way may help.

If a person feels angry and gets the urge to cut, alternative ways to release anger include:

- 🌀 dancing to aggressive music;
- 🌀 popping balloons or bubble wrap;
- 🌀 going for a run;
- 🌀 going to the gym for a workout
- 🌀 hitting a cushion;
- 🌀 ripping up paper;
- 🌀 scribbling on paper.





## Replace the sensation

When trying to avoid cutting, a person may fixate on how it would feel to cut themselves. This can make it hard to resist the urge to cut.

A way around this is to find sensations that are similar to cutting, but less harmful. Some ways to replace the sensation of cutting include:

- 🌀 rubbing an ice cube across the skin;
- 🌀 taking a cold shower;
- 🌀 drawing on the skin with a red felt-tipped pen;
- 🌀 gently snapping a rubber band against the skin;
- 🌀 clapping the hands hard;
- 🌀 stomping the feet loudly.

## Express feelings

Sometimes the urge to cut can arise when a person needs emotional release. They may feel numb or overwhelmed by many different emotions that they have trouble expressing.



Instead of cutting, a person seeking emotional release could try:

- 🌀 writing about how they feel in a journal;
- 🌀 speaking to a trusted friend, family member, or therapist;
- 🌀 watching a sad film and allowing themselves to cry;
- 🌀 listening to music that they can identify with.



## Connect with others

Some people who cut do so because they feel isolated, misunderstood, or socially rejected.

Instead of cutting, a person could try:

- 🌀 messaging or calling a friend or family member;
- 🌀 playing with a pet or offering to pet-sit for a neighbor;
- 🌀 making social plans to look forward to throughout the week;
- 🌀 joining local community meet-up groups;
- 🌀 finding support groups for people who self-harm.

# Conflict Resolution Skills



A **conflict** is more than just a disagreement. It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real).

**C**onflicts continue to fester when ignored. Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them.

We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.

Conflicts trigger strong emotions. If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully. Conflicts are an opportunity for growth. When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.

## Unhealthy responses to conflict:

- ❖ An inability to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person.
- ❖ Explosive, angry, hurtful, and resentful reactions.
- ❖ The withdrawal of relationships, resulting in rejection, isolation, shaming, and fear of abandonment.
- ❖ Feeling fearful or avoiding conflict; expecting a bad outcome.

## Healthy responses to conflict:

- ❖ The capacity to empathize with the other person's viewpoint.
- ❖ Calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions.
- ❖ A readiness to forgive and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger.
- ❖ The ability to seek compromise and avoid punishing.
- ❖ A belief that facing conflict head on is the best thing for both sides.



You can ensure that the process of managing and resolving conflict is as positive as possible by sticking to the following guidelines.



## Listen for what is felt as well as said.

When you really listen, you connect more deeply to your own needs and emotions, and to those of other people. Listening also strengthens, informs, and makes it easier for others to hear you when it's your turn to speak.

## Make conflict resolution the priority rather than winning or "being right."



Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than "winning" the argument, should always be your first priority. Be respectful of the other person and their viewpoint.



## Focus on the present.

If you're holding on to grudges based on past conflicts, your ability to see the reality of the current situation will be impaired. Rather than looking to the past and assigning blame, focus on what you can do in the here-and-now to solve the problem.



## Pick your battles.

Conflicts can be draining, so it's important to consider whether the issue is really worth your time and energy. Maybe you don't want to surrender a parking space if you've been circling for 15 minutes, but if there are dozens of empty spots, arguing over a single space isn't worth it.

## Be willing to forgive.



Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to forgive others. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can serve only to deplete and drain your life.



## Know when to let something go.

If you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree. It takes two people to keep an argument going. If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move on.

# Are you thinking about suicide?

# How to stay safe



**W**hen life doesn't seem worth living anymore, it may seem that the only way to find relief is through suicide. When you're feeling this way, it may be hard to believe, but you do have other options.

Take a step back and separate your emotions from your actions for the moment.

- ◆ Recognize that depression and hopelessness can distort your perceptions and reduce your ability to make good decisions.
- ◆ Realize that suicidal feelings are the result of treatable problems.
- ◆ Act as if there are other options instead of suicide, even if you may not see them right now.

It may not be easy, and you might not feel better overnight. Eventually, though, the sense of hopelessness — and thoughts of suicide — will lift.

## Get immediate help

If you think you may hurt yourself or attempt suicide, get help right away by taking one of these actions

Call your mental health specialist.

Call a suicide hotline number:

**in Tomsk call +7 (382) 241-19-99,  
in the Russia call +7 (495) 989-50-50**

Reach out to a close friend or loved one.

# Learn coping strategies

Don't try to manage suicidal thoughts or behavior on your own. You need professional help and support to overcome the problems linked to suicidal thinking.

Your doctor or mental health provider can help you identify coping strategies tailored to your specific situation. Consider discussing these coping strategies with people who know you well, such as family members or trusted friends.

You may be advised to do things you don't feel like doing, such as talking with friends when you'd rather stay in your bedroom all day. It will get easier to do such things as they become habits.



## Make a plan for life

Create a written plan of action or a “safety plan” with your mental health provider that you can refer to when you're considering suicide or in a crisis. Learn to spot your warning signs early, so you can put your plan into action.

Your plan is a checklist of activities and actions you promise to do, so you can stay safe when you have thoughts of suicide, such as:

- 📞 Contact your doctor, therapist or crisis center to help you cope with suicidal thoughts.
- 📞 Call a supportive family member or friend who can help you cope with your suicidal thoughts.
- 📞 Try specific healthy and enjoyable activities when negative thoughts start to intrude.
- 📞 Review why your life is valuable and the reasons to live.
- 📞 Even if the immediate crisis passes with your self-care strategies, see a doctor or mental health provider. This will help you get appropriate treatment for suicidal thoughts and feelings so that you don't have to continually operate in a crisis mode.

As a foundation for your plan, take these steps:  
**Stick with your treatment plan.** Commit to taking your medication as prescribed and attending all treatment sessions and appointments.

**Keep a list of contact names and numbers readily available.** Include your doctors, therapists and crisis centers that can help you cope with suicidal thoughts. Include friends or loved ones who agree to be available as part of your safety plan.

**Remove potential means of killing yourself.** This may include ridding your home of guns, razors or other objects you may consider using to hurt or kill yourself. If possible, give your medications to someone who can safeguard them for you and help you take them as prescribed.

**Schedule daily activities.** Activities that brought you small pleasure in the past can make a difference — such as listening to music, watching a funny movie or visiting a museum. Or try something different. Because physical activity and exercise may reduce depression symptoms.

**Get together with others.** Establish your support network by reaching out to friends, family and people who care about you and are there when you need them. Make an effort to be social, even if you don't feel like it, to prevent isolation.

**Join a support group.** Joining a support group can help you cope with suicidal thinking and recognize that there are many options in your life other than suicide.

**Avoid drug and alcohol use.** Rather than numb painful feelings, alcohol and drugs can increase suicidal thoughts and the likelihood of harming yourself by making you more impulsive and more likely to act on your self-destructive feelings.

**Avoid risky websites on the Internet.** Stay away from websites that may encourage suicide as a way to solve your problems.

**Write about your thoughts and feelings.** Consider writing about the things in your life that you value and appreciate, no matter how small they may seem at the time.

## Look beyond thoughts of suicide



The hopelessness you feel as you consider suicide may be the side effect of a difficult situation or an illness that can be treated. This emotion can be so overpowering that it clouds your judgment and leads you to believe that taking your own life is the best, or only, option.

🔗 Recognize that these feelings are temporary and that with appropriate treatment you can learn how to help yourself feel better about life again. Asking others for support can help you see that you have other options and give you hope about the future.

🔗 Create a list of the reasons you have to live. This list can include being alive for your pet, your children, a favorite niece, or something that you enjoy doing at work or at home. It doesn't matter what the list includes, but finding a sense of purpose in your life can make a difference.

By getting proper treatment and using effective coping strategies, you can learn to manage or eliminate suicidal thoughts and develop a more satisfying life.