

5 ways to calm down quickly

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www.guidedgrowthcc.com



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For your toolbox



Life can be overwhelming. Between responsibilities, expectations, and the weight of daily stressors, it's easy to feel anxious, disconnected, or emotionally exhausted. In those moments, having tools you can reach for—tools that ground you and bring you back to center which can make all the difference.

This workbook was created to be just that: a calming companion. A gentle guide. A reminder that you can take control of your emotional well-being, one breath and one choice at a time. Inside, you'll find five simple but powerful techniques that are easy to use anytime, anywhere. Each one is grounded in neuroscience and mind-body practices to help you reset, feel more grounded, and reconnect with your sense of peace. You don't need to do everything perfectly. You just need to begin.

Take your time with these practices. Use what resonates. Come back to them as often as you need.

You deserve calm. You deserve care. Let this workbook be your starting point.

With care,

Crystal Williams, LCSW
Founder of Guided Growth



Stay Calm

WITH BELLY BREATHING

Instructions:

This breathing method helps activate your relaxation system.

Practice:

- Sit upright, place a hand on your belly.
- Inhale through your nose for 4 counts
- Hold your breath for 4
- Exhale through your mouth for 6
- Repeat 4 times

The Deeper Understanding

What's happening in the body:

Stress causes shallow chest breathing, which keeps the body in a sympathetic (fight-or-flight) state. Prolonged shallow breathing increases cortisol and physical tension.

Why this helps:

Belly breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, also known as the “rest and digest” state. It lowers heart rate and blood pressure, promotes oxygen flow to the brain, and physically calms the body. Regular practice also improves emotional regulation over time.



Grounding

WITH THE 5-4-3-2-1 TECHNIQUE

Instructions:

Use your five senses to notice your environment. This helps bring your focus back to the present moment.

Try it Now:

- 5 things I can see: _____
- 4 things I can feel: _____
- 3 things I can hear: _____
- 2 things I can smell: _____
- 1 thing I can taste: _____

Reflection Prompt:

What shifted in your body or mind after this exercise?

The Deeper Understanding

What's happening in the body:

When we feel anxious, the brain's amygdala (our fear center) becomes activated, leading to fight-or-flight responses. This can make us feel scattered, panicked, or dissociated from our environment.

Why this helps:

The 5-4-3-2-1 method engages your five senses, shifting attention away from anxious thoughts and back into the present moment. This calms the nervous system and helps re-establish a sense of control and safety.



Name it

TO TAME IT

Instructions:

Labeling your emotion can decrease its intensity.
Write or say aloud:

Write or say aloud:

- “Right now, I feel _____.”
- “This emotion is showing up because _____.”
- “I can care for this feeling by _____.”

Tip: You don’t need to fix the emotion—just acknowledge it.

CALM • JOYFUL • GRATEFUL • HOPEFUL • PEACEFUL • CONNECTED • PROUD
LONELY • TIRED • HURT • DISAPPOINTED • LOST • EMPTY • GRIEVING
IRRITATED • RESENTFUL • DEFENSIVE • DISRESPECTED • BETRAYED • ENRAGED •
NERVOUS • RESTLESS • OVERWHELMED • INSECURE • PANICKED • ON EDGE •
UNEASY

The Deeper Understanding

Why this helps:

By naming what we feel, we interrupt reactive patterns and create space for curiosity and self-compassion. It brings awareness to our inner experience and reduces the overwhelm that comes with unnamed emotions.



Body Scan

DEVELOP AWARENESS

Instructions:

Start at your feet and scan upward, noticing areas of tightness. Gently tense and release those areas

Try this:

- Feet: Tense for 5 seconds, release
- Legs: Tense, release
- Hands, shoulders, jaw, and forehead: Tense, release
- Breathe deeply between each area

Reflection Prompt:

Where do you notice you hold stress most often?

The Deeper Understanding

What's happening in the body:

Anxiety and trauma often live in the body as muscle tension, pain, or numbness. We may not even be aware of how much tension we're carrying until we pause and check in.

Why this helps:

The body scan teaches inner and self awareness of internal physical states. It brings gentle attention to areas of tightness and helps us release tension mindfully. This reconnects the mind and body, reducing physical and emotional stress.



Safe Place

VISUALIZATION

Begin by finding a comfortable seated or lying-down position.

Let your eyes close gently if that feels safe.

Take a slow breath in through your nose... and exhale softly through your mouth.

Now, imagine a place where you feel completely at peace. This could be a real place you've been to before, or somewhere entirely created in your imagination.

There are no rules.

Let this place begin to take shape around you.

Take your time...

What do you see?

Is it a cozy room, a quiet forest, a beach at sunrise, a garden filled with flowers?

What colors surround you?

What textures or shapes stand out?

Notice the sounds in this space.

Is it silent, or do you hear water, birds, soft music, or a breeze?

Take a deep breath.

What does the air smell like here?

What's the temperature?

You are completely safe in this place. No one needs anything from you here. You are held, supported, and calm.

Allow yourself to remain in this peaceful space for a few more breaths. When you're ready, gently bring your attention back to the room, carrying the calm with you.

The Deeper Understanding

Why this helps:

By imagining a calm, peaceful place, you train your mind to access safety during distress. This is especially helpful for trauma survivors and those who experience panic. It becomes a tool for emotional self-regulation and mental escape when physically escaping isn't possible.

Understanding Your Own Emotions

I OFTEN PUSH DOWN OR IGNORE THESE EMOTIONS:

RIGHT NOW, I'M FEELING...

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A "BAD" EMOTION.

THERE ARE ONLY EMOTIONS WE HAVEN'T LEARNED HOW TO SIT WITH YET.

THE MORE WE LEARN TO UNDERSTAND OURSELVES, THE MORE POWER WE HAVE
TO CARE FOR OURSELVES.

Your Reflection Page



Which calming method helped the most?

How will you remind yourself to use these when stressed?

What does calm feel like for you?

[illegible]

Closing Reflections



You took a step toward calm today—and that matters.

Whether you paused to take a deep breath, grounded yourself through your senses, or spent time exploring your emotions, you practiced something powerful: self-awareness.

Healing is not about perfection, it's about building tools, growing through discomfort, and learning how to care for yourself with compassion.

About Guided Growth

At Guided Growth, I offer therapy, mindfulness, and wellness services designed to support your whole self. Whether you're facing anxiety, trauma, burnout, or seeking a deeper connection to yourself, our work together will be grounded in compassion, cultural humility, and real-life tools that meet your needs.

I also offer clinical supervision, trauma-informed yoga, workshops for workplaces, and personal development experiences rooted in healing and transformation.

Let's stay connected.

Website: www.guidedgrowthcc.com

Instagram: Guidedgrowthnow

Therapy | Mindfulness | Growth

Healing doesn't happen all at once—but you don't have to walk through it alone.