

When Feelings Feel Big: A Practical Toolkit for Grounding and Calm

For young people, parents, and educators

When the news feels scary, it can be hard to know what to do. This toolkit has some simple activities to help you feel more calm. You can do them at home, at school, or anywhere feelings start to feel too big.

Circles of Control

When the world feels scary, it helps to think about what you can and cannot control. Draw three circles, one inside the other. Then sort your worries into them.

Things I can control:

- How I spend my time today
- How often I look at the news
- Who I talk to when I am worried
- How I look after myself through rest, food and movement

Things I can help with:

- How kind I am to the people around me
- The conversations I choose to have
- What I share on social media

Things I can't control:

- What happens in the world
- How other people behave
- Worrying about "what if"

Once you have sorted your worries, focus on the inner circle. The rest can wait for now.



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Things I can help with

Things I can control

Things I can't control

Grounding Activities Grounding helps bring you back to the present moment when you start to feel anxious.

Try these and see what works for you:

5

4

3

2

1

5-4-3-2-1: Name five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

Take your time with each one.



Feet on the floor: Press your feet flat on the ground. Feel the floor holding your weight. Take three slow breaths.

3-Minute Body Scan

A quick way to slow down when thoughts feel too fast.

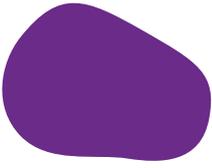
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Close your eyes or look softly at the floor. Spend about one minute on each:

- Notice your feet and legs
- Notice your chest, stomach and back
- Notice your face, jaw and the top of your head



Cold water: Splash cold water on your face or hold an ice cube. It gives your body a quick jolt that can stop anxious thoughts in their tracks.

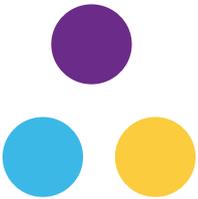


Grounding Object

Choose a small object you can keep with you. It could be a smooth stone, a coin, a piece of fabric or a keyring.

Hold it. Notice how it feels. Is it warm or cool? Smooth or rough? Heavy or light?

Let it remind you: "I am here and I am safe."



Colour Spotting

Pick a colour. Spend 60 seconds finding everything around you that is that colour. Keep looking until the time is up. It gives your mind something simple to focus on and helps you feel calmer.



10-Step Walk

If feelings get too big, try this:

Walk 10 slow steps. With each step, say quietly or in your head: "left, right" or "in, out." Then do another 10 steps. Keep going until you feel steadier.



Name the Category

Pick a category. It could be animals, foods, sports, TV shows or anything you like. Then name as many things from that category as you can until the big feeling starts to settle.



5-Finger Phrases

Touch each finger with your thumb, one at a time.
Say a short phrase with each one:

"I am here."

"I am safe."

"I can breathe."

"I can pause."

"This will pass."



Say It Out Loud

Say these out loud or in your head:

"Today is Tuesday."

"I am sitting in the kitchen."

"The chair is holding me."

"I am safe right now."

This is especially helpful if you feel far away from yourself or shut down.

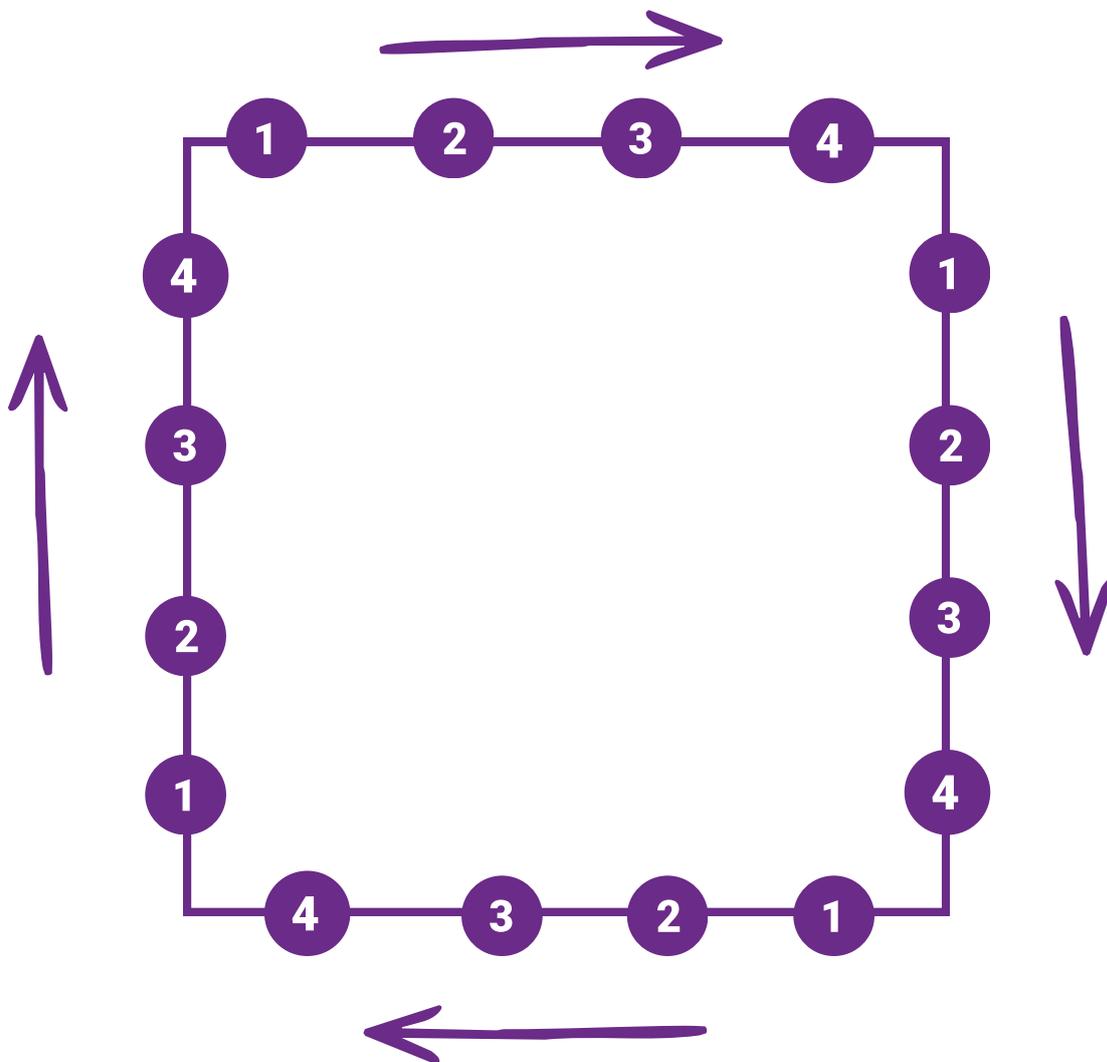


Squeeze and Release

Squeeze your fists and shoulders as tight as you can.
Hold for five seconds. Then let go and breathe out slowly. Do this three times. It helps your body release the tension it has been holding.

Breathing Activities. Slow, steady breathing helps you feel calmer and less overwhelmed.

Box breathing: Breathe in for four counts, hold for four, breathe out for four, hold for four. Keep going until you feel steadier.



Hand breathing: Hold one hand up. Use a finger from your other hand to slowly trace up and down each finger. Breathe in as you go up, and out as you go down.

Longer breathing out: Breathe in for four counts and out for six. Breathing out for longer tells your body it is safe to relax.

Self-soothe Activities Sometimes your body needs comfort before your mind can settle.



Hand massage: Use slow, gentle circles across your palms and fingers. You can do this anywhere, any time.



Self-hug: Cross your arms over your chest and squeeze gently. Rock slowly if that feels good.



Warmth: Hold a warm mug, use a heat pad, or wrap yourself in a blanket. Warmth helps your body feel calm and safe.

A note for parents and educators

You do not need to have all the answers. Sitting with a young person while they try one of these activities is enough. Your presence helps them feel safe.

If you are worried about a young person's mental health beyond everyday anxiety, please do not wait. Speak to your school's SENCO or pastoral lead, or contact your GP.

This resource was created by Inclusion Education. For more support, **visit inclusioneducation.org.uk**