

Overwhelm First Aid Kit

Overwhelm can be crushing, scary, and exhausting. Here's what to do when you're feeling anxious or panicked, so you can be your own emotional first responder.

1. Pause. Slow everything down. Before you do anything, pause and take a moment.



2. Breathe. In through your nose, hold a moment, and exhale slowly and evenly. Repeat.

3. Do what calms you. Repeat a gentle, relaxing mantra to yourself. Something like, "This is okay. Things will work out." Self-soothing can be different for everyone. Help yourself relax.

4. Movement is an excellent way to release excess energy, especially frustration, anger, or surprise. Shake it off, walk it off, punch a pillow, move your body!

5. Talk yourself through what has happened and identify what you are feeling. Saying "I am overwhelmed right now" can do a lot to get you out of your overwhelming experience and back into your body. Be mindful of how you are speaking to yourself, and use kind and gentle words.

6. Allow yourself to cry. When this instinct comes up, don't push it away. Let it flow.



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7. Get outside if possible. Nature and sunlight are grounding and will immediately assist you in getting back to the present moment, where everything is okay. If you can't get outside, identify specific objects in your environment. Focus on as many different items as you need to get yourself grounded.

8. Smell something comforting. It's good to have some of your favorite calming scents around or accessible to you. Essential oils, candles, lotions, and sachets are easy ways to keep aromatherapy an option for yourself daily.

9. Visualize your safe or happy place. Immerse yourself as fully as you can in this visual. If you have trouble imagining a place, have photos of places or things that evoke a comforting or happy sense of safety and relaxation nearby that you can look at to pull you into a positive headspace.

10. EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) - Identify the problem area and establish a benchmark of initial pain intensity from 0-10. Fill in the phrase: "Even though _____, I deeply, love and accept myself". Proceed to tap on the meridian points of your body in a fairly rhythmic and quick speed in this order, repeating the phrase three times in each area:

- Side of each hand (left, right)
- Eyebrow
- Side of eyes
- Bone under each eye
- Under the nose
- Chin
- Collarbone (each side of body)
- Under each arm
- Top of head

Repeat the whole sequence two or three times or until you feel a shift and can measure your pain intensity as less than when you started.