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## 5 Steps to Calm





## 1. Recognize Triggers

- □ Identify what sparks your anxiety or stress it could be specific thoughts, people, situations or sounds.
- □ Note the way your body feels when you are around these triggers and have strategies to support yourself in a healthy way.
- ☐ Keep a journal or notes to track your feelings and patterns this can help identify potential patterns.

### 2. Build an Emotional First Aid Kit

- ☐ Learn which mindfulness exercises help you stay present and centered.
- ☐ Have sensory items on hand, like soothing music, scented candles or essential oils.
- ☐ Make a list of people you trust to reach out to when you need support.

## 3. Develop a Coping Plan

- □ Create a coping plan with healthy strategies for managing anxiety. A plan can give you a sense of preparedness and control during these times.
- □ Identify activities you enjoy, such as reading, exercising, socializing or spending time in nature.
- □ Practice deep breathing, meditation and other grounding techniques regular practice can improve your ability to respond calmly.

## 4. Develop a Personal Support Network

- ☐ Identify at least three people you trust and can confide in during distress.
- ☐ Reach out to trusted friends, loved ones or a support group when you need to talk.
- □ Schedule regular check-ins with loved ones to nurture emotional bonds.

## 5. Practice Self-Compassion

- ☐ Treat yourself as you would with friends with patience, comfort and understanding.
- □ Embrace imperfections without judgment: cultivate self-compassion by acknowledging yourself without criticism, recognizing that everyone is human and experiences ups and downs.
- □ Every life is unique. Celebrate your journey with gratitude and kindness.

**Mental health is total health:** Knowing how to support your mental health will help you in any crisis: It's an important part of selfcare. Americares brings mental health programs to communities after disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. Our mental health specialists created these 5 Steps to Calm to give you the same selfcare tips they provide to communities in crisis all over the world. Learn more about our mental health and other global health programs at <a href="mailto:americares.org">americares.org</a>.

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# Tips for Putting Your Plan Into Action



## **Learn More**

- ☐ Learn more about anxiety and its triggers.
- ☐ Understand the science behind your emotions to help gain better control over them. Remember, mental health is key to good overall health.
- □ Practice grounding yourself by identifying the control you have in your situation: What can you change? What are aspects you cannot? Knowing what is in your power and being able to act is another form of calming and empowering oneself.

## **Build a Support Network**

- ☐ Surround yourself with friends and family who understand and support your journey towards calmness.
- □ Connect with support groups within your community, especially if they have had similar stressful or triggering experiences.

#### **Set Realistic Goals**

- □ Progress takes time. Set achievable goals for managing your anxiety and celebrate your successes along the way.
- ☐ Aim to practice self-care practices each month and try to add new techniques to build a robust toolkit.

## **Stay Active**

- □ Regular physical activity is a powerful aid to mental health.
- ☐ Build movement into your daily routine to reduce stress and improve your overall well-being.

#### Be Flexible

- ☐ Be open to adjusting your coping strategies as you discover what works best for you.
- □ Accept that some days may be more challenging than others, and that it is perfectly okay to adapt your approach.

**Disclaimer:** This information sheet provides general guidance and is not a substitute for professional mental health advice. If you or someone you know is in crisis, please seek help from a qualified mental health professional or a crisis hotline. Even if you are not experiencing an active crisis, seeking professional help is always an option.