

Finding Your Calm:

Practical Strategies for Managing Anxiety



Anxiety can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to face it alone.

At JSSA, we believe that everyone deserves compassionate support and the tools to navigate life's challenges. For more than a century, we've been dedicated to strengthening the well-being of our community, providing programs and services to help individuals and families thrive.

If you're experiencing anxious thoughts or emotions, know that what you're feeling is valid—and that there are ways to find relief.

This toolkit has practical tools and tips to support you in managing anxiety, whether you're looking for quick ways to calm your mind or in need of longer-term strategies.

And if you ever need additional support, JSSA is here to help.



Understanding Anxiety

Anxiety is a natural response to stress, but when it becomes overwhelming, it can interfere with daily life. Recognizing and managing anxiety is crucial for maintaining mental well-being. Anxiety can manifest through various symptoms, including:

- Excessive worry that's difficult to control
- Racing or intrusive thoughts
- Fatigue
- Muscle tension or soreness
- Restlessness or feeling on edge
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Difficulty sleeping

Anxiety becomes a problem when it regularly impacts daily life, and that is the time to seek out a trusted mental health or medical professional.

Practical Tools for Anxiety Management

When anxiety starts to take over, simple techniques can help you feel more present and in control. Grounding techniques, for example, are strategies that help bring your focus back to the present moment instead of getting lost in anxious thoughts. **Here are a few ways to manage anxiety when you need relief:**

The Five Senses Exercise:

Use your senses to reconnect with the present moment and calm your mind. Identify & name:

- Five things you can see
- Four things you can touch
- Three things you can hear
- Two things you can smell
- One thing you can taste

Write It Out:

Putting anxious thoughts on paper can help you process them and reduce their intensity. Try keeping a journal, jotting notes in your phone, or even writing a letter you never send.

Engage Your Mind:

Anxiety can make your thoughts race, but shifting your focus to an activity can interrupt that cycle. Consider:

- Listening to music or a calming podcast.
- Doing a puzzle, knitting, or coloring.
- Watching a lighthearted show or reading a book.

These strategies can help you navigate anxious moments, but if you find that anxiety is interfering with your daily life, know that support is available. JSSA's mental health professionals are here to provide guidance, therapy, and resources to help you feel more in control. **You are not alone.**

Intentional Breathing:

Slow, deep breaths can help regulate your body's response to anxiety. Try:

- *Birthday Candle Breaths*: Imagine each finger is a birthday candle. Slowly blow out each candle, focusing on your exhale.
- *Alternate Nostril Breathing*: Inhale through one nostril while closing the other, then switch sides. This technique promotes balance and calm.
- *Lion's Breath*: Take a deep breath in, then exhale forcefully through your mouth with your tongue out, releasing tension.

Reframe Your Thoughts:

Anxiety often makes things seem worse than they are. When a worry arises, ask yourself:

- What evidence supports this thought?
- What's the worst that could happen—and what's most likely to happen?
- How would I respond if a friend had this thought?

Move Your Body:

Physical activity can release built-up tension and help shift your focus away from anxious thoughts. You don't need an intense workout—even gentle movement can help. Try:

- Stretching your arms and legs.
- Taking a short walk outside.
- Shaking out your hands and rolling your shoulders.

Visit us online at: jssa.org/anxiety
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