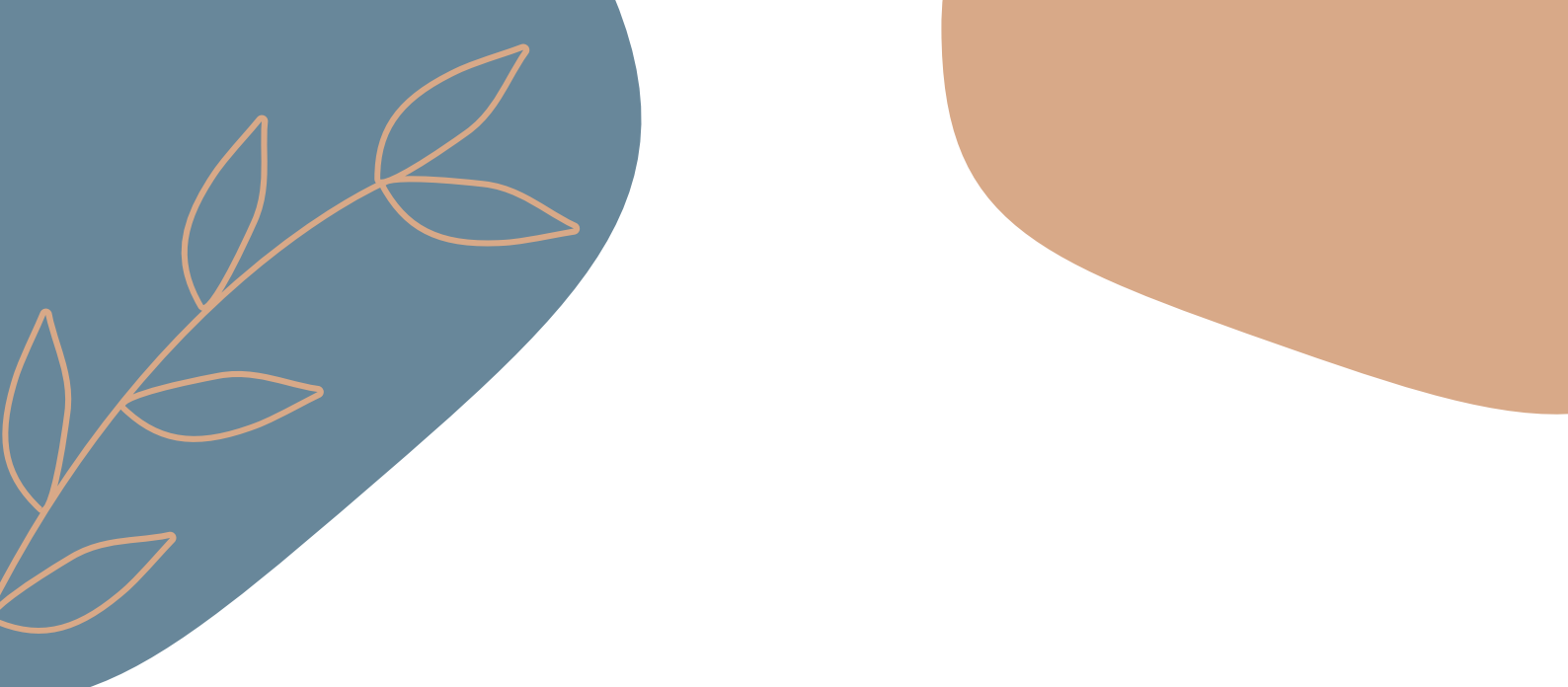




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Therapy Booster
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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) can affect focus, organization, time management, and emotional regulation. This cheat sheet offers practical tips and strategies to help manage ADHD symptoms and enhance daily functioning.

Time Management & Focus Strategies

Break Tasks Into Small Steps:

Large tasks can be overwhelming. Break them down into manageable parts and focus on completing one small step at a time.

Use a Timer: Set a timer (e.g., 25 minutes of work, followed by a 5-minute break) using the Pomodoro technique to maintain focus and avoid burnout.

Prioritise Tasks: Make a daily to-do list and prioritise the most important tasks first. Use a numbering system or colour-coding to identify highpriority tasks

Visual Reminders: Keep sticky notes, planners, or a whiteboard with visible reminders for important tasks and deadlines.

Organization & Structure

Create a Routine: Establish a daily schedule or routine to create structure in your day. Consistent routines help reduce forgetfulness and increase productivity

Use Digital Tools: Use apps like Google Calendar, Trello, or Todoist to organise tasks, set reminders, and track deadlines.

Declutter Your Space: Keep your workspace clean and organized. A clutter-free environment can reduce distractions and help you focus better.

Emotional Regulation & Impulse Control

Mindfulness Techniques: Practice deep breathing or grounding exercises to stay calm and present during overwhelming moments. Taking a few minutes to breathe can help regulate emotions.

Pause Before Reacting: If you feel an emotional reaction building, pause for a moment before reacting. This helps prevent impulsive behaviour.

Use Positive Self-Talk:

When experiencing frustration, remind yourself that challenges are part of the process. Use affirmations like, "I can handle this" to shift negative thought patterns.

Motivation & Procrastination

Use Rewards: Set up a reward system for completing tasks. For example, after completing a task, allow yourself a small treat or break.

Work in Bursts: Work in short, focused bursts followed by a break. This helps maintain energy and prevents burnout.

Accountability Partner: Share your goals with a friend or colleague to help stay motivated. Sometimes having someone check in can make a difference.

Self-Care & Well-Being

Get Enough Sleep: ADHD can be made worse by lack of sleep. Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night to improve focus and energy levels.

Exercise Regularly: Physical activity can help improve focus, reduce hyperactivity, and enhance mood. Try activities like walking, yoga, or dancing to keep your body moving.

Eat Nutrient-Rich Foods: Maintain a balanced diet, rich in omega-3s (found in fish, flaxseeds), proteins, and complex carbs to help stabilise energy and mood.

Working with ADHD at Home & at Work

Set Clear Boundaries: Limit distractions by setting boundaries with people around you. For example, set times for focused work and let others know when you need uninterrupted time.

Use Noise-Cancelling Headphones:

Reduce auditory distractions by using noise-cancelling headphones, especially in busy environments

Task Switching: When stuck on one task, try switching to another to reset your brain. This can sometimes help re-engage focus.

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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Quick Tips



- Use visual timers for tasks.
- Set up “do not disturb” times to minimise distractions.
- Make use of reminders and alarms to stay on top of deadlines.
- Simplify decision-making by limiting options and sticking to routines.
- Practice self-compassion - ADHD is not your fault, and managing symptoms takes time and patience.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Stress

Stress is a natural part of life, but how we respond to it can make all the difference.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) offers powerful tools to help you manage stress in a more mindful, values-driven way.

Here are four key strategies from ACT to help you navigate stress:

Cognitive Defusion

What it is: Cognitive defusion is about separating yourself from your thoughts. Instead of believing every thought that arises when stressed, notice your thoughts as “just thoughts” and not the truth.

How to Use It:

Observe the Thought: When you're stressed, notice the thought that's causing the stress. For example, “I'm not good enough” or “This situation is impossible.”

Label it as a Thought: Say to yourself, “This is just a thought” or “I'm having the thought that I'm not good enough.”

Create Distance: Remind yourself that thoughts are not facts. They are temporary and don't define you.

Example:

When you think, “I can't handle this, remind yourself, “That's just a thought. It's not the truth.”

Acceptance

What it is: Acceptance is about allowing the stress to be there without judgment or resistance. Instead of trying to push the stress away, you sit with it and let it come and go.

How to Use It:

Notice the Stress: Acknowledge the stress in your body or mind. Feel the physical sensations and emotions without trying to change them.

Allow the Sensations: Let the stress exist, recognising that it's temporary. Let the feelings come and go, rather than fighting against them.

Shift Focus: Don't judge yourself for feeling stressed. Instead, accept that stress is part of being human.

Example:

Instead of thinking, “I shouldn't be stressed,” allow yourself to say, “I feel stressed right now, and that's okay.”

Mindfulness

What it is: Mindfulness involves staying grounded in the present moment. When stressed, mindfulness helps you focus on your breathing or physical sensations, bringing you back to the present and reducing stress.

How to Use It:

Focus on Your Breath: Take deep, slow breaths. Focus on the sensation of air entering and leaving your body.

Ground Yourself in the Present: Focus on your senses - what you see, hear, feel, or smell. This helps pull you away from stressful thoughts.

Non-Judgmental Awareness: Notice your stress, but don't label it as “good” or “bad.” Just observe it.

Example:

If you're feeling overwhelmed, close your eyes and focus on your breath for a few minutes. Notice how your body feels and allow yourself to be fully present.

Values Clarification

What it is: Values clarification helps you recognise what's truly important to you. When stress arises, ask yourself how the stress relates to your core values and how you can act in a way that aligns with them.

How to Use It:

Identify the Stressor: What is causing you stress? Identify how it connects to your values.

Reflect on Your Values: What do you care most about? Integrity, family, creativity, etc.

Take Action in Alignment with Your Values: Instead of reacting to stress in unhelpful ways, take action that aligns with your values. This gives you a sense of control and purpose.

Example:

If you're stressed about work, remind yourself that your values might include growth or helping others. Ask, “I approach this situation in a way that reflects these values?”

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Anger Management

Anger is a natural emotion, but if not managed, it can cause harm to ourselves and others. This cheat sheet offers strategies for recognizing, understanding, and managing anger in a healthy way.

Recognizing Anger Triggers

Identify Situations: Notice situations, people, or environments that consistently trigger your anger.

Physical Cues: Pay attention to your body when you're starting to feel angry (e.g., clenched fists, rapid breathing, racing thoughts).

Underlying Emotions: Often, anger is a secondary emotion triggered by frustration, hurt, fear, or insecurity.

The Early Warning Signs

The earlier you can notice the signs of anger, the better control you'll have over your emotional response.

Physical Signs: Increased heart rate or breathing rate Tension in the jaw, fists, or shoulders Sweating or flushed face

Emotional Signs: Feeling misunderstood or ignored A sense of injustice or unfairness

Cognitive Reframing

Reframe your thoughts to reduce anger intensity and challenge unhelpful thinking patterns.

Ask Yourself: What evidence do I have that supports or contradicts my angry thoughts? Will this situation matter in a year? In five years? How can I look at this situation in a way that doesn't increase my anger?

Practice Thought-Stopping: If you find yourself ruminating or escalating in anger, say "STOP!" mentally and redirect your focus.

Healthy Expression of Anger

Instead of bottling up or exploding with anger, express it constructively.

Use "I" Statements: Express your feelings without blaming others. For example: "I feel frustrated when the plan changes suddenly because it's hard for me to adapt."

Assertive Communication: Share your needs, wants, and feelings without being aggressive or passive. Practice clear, calm, and respectful communication.

Understanding the Roots of Anger

Anger often masks other emotions, such as hurt, fear, disappointment, or frustration.

Identify the Root Emotion: Ask yourself, "What's the real reason behind my anger? Is it fear, rejection, guilt, or something else?"

Empathy: Try to understand the situation from the other person's perspective. Sometimes, anger arises from misunderstandings or unmet needs.

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Anger Management

Immediate Anger Management Strategies

When you feel anger rising, use these techniques to calm down before it escalates.

Deep Breathing: Try the 4-7-8 Breathing Technique: Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and exhale slowly for 8 seconds. Deep breathing helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing stress.

Count to 10: Slowly counting to 10 gives your mind time to cool down, interrupting the cycle of reactive thoughts.

Use Grounding Techniques: Focus on the present moment to disengage from the anger-triggering thoughts. Try: Feeling the texture of an object in your hand. Paying attention to physical sensations, like your feet on the floor.

Time-Out: Physically remove yourself from the triggering situation. Take a break to cool down and think clearly. fault

Long-Term Anger Management Strategies

Work on addressing the root causes of anger and building healthier coping mechanisms

Regular Physical Activity: Exercise helps release pent-up energy and reduces stress hormones.

Mindfulness and Meditation: Regular mindfulness practice helps you become aware of emotional triggers and build emotional resilience.

Journaling: Write down your feelings, including your anger triggers and what you could do differently next time. This helps to release built-up emotions and allows for self-reflection.

Therapy: If anger is frequent or uncontrollable, therapy (e.g., Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or DBT) can help address underlying issues and teach additional coping skills.

Key Takeaways

Recognize early signs of anger and apply immediate strategies to calm down (e.g., breathing, time-out, grounding).

Reframe your thoughts to challenge anger-inducing patterns and engage in **healthy expression**.

Use physical activity, mindfulness, and communication to manage anger over the long term.

Seek therapy if anger becomes overwhelming or frequent.

Remember that anger is an emotion, but how you express and deal with it determines its impact on your life.

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Boundaries

Boundaries are personal limits you set to protect yourself from being overwhelmed, disrespected, or drained. They define what is acceptable and what is not in your interactions with others.

Types of Boundaries

Physical Boundaries:

Personal space and physical touch.

Example:

"I need my own space right now."

Emotional Boundaries:

Protect your feelings and emotional health.

Example:

"It's not okay for you to yell at me."

Mental Boundaries:

Respecting thoughts, beliefs, and opinions.

Example:

"I respect your opinion, but I don't agree with it."

Time Boundaries: Managing your time and energy.

Example: "I need to leave by 6 PM today."

How to Set Boundaries

Know Your Limits:

Understand what makes you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed. What are your needs, and what are you unwilling to compromise on?

Be Clear and Direct:

Communicate your boundaries assertively but kindly.

Example: "I need time to myself after work" or "I can't attend this event."

Use "I" Statements:

Focus on expressing your own needs and feelings. Example: "I feel drained when I don't have enough downtime."

Stay Consistent: Once you set a boundary, stick to it.

Inconsistency can make it harder for others to respect your limits.

Practice Saying No: Saying no is a form of self-care. You don't have to say yes to everything or everyone.

Why Are Boundaries Important?

Protects Your Well-Being:

Healthy boundaries allow you to prioritize your own needs and avoid burnout.

Promotes Healthy Relationships:

Boundaries help people understand how to treat you respectfully, leading to healthier interactions.

Reduces Stress:

By setting limits, you reduce overwhelm and make sure you don't take on more than you can handle

Examples of Healthy Boundaries

With Family: "I need to leave by 8 PM tonight to get some rest."

With Friends: "I can't commit to plans this weekend, but let's set up something for next week."

At Work: "I'm happy to help with this project, but I can't take on more right now."

Romantic Relationships: "I need alone time to recharge before we hang out again."

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Boundaries

Boundaries are personal limits you set to protect yourself from being overwhelmed, disrespected, or drained. They define what is acceptable and what is not in your interactions with others.

Common Boundaries Challenges

Guilt:

It's normal to feel guilty when setting boundaries, but remember that your needs matter too.

Fear of Rejection:

You might worry that people will be upset with you, but true relationships are built on mutual respect and understanding.

People-Pleasing:

You don't have to make everyone happy. Prioritize your well-being over others' expectations.

Pushback from Others:

Some people may resist your boundaries. Be firm and gentle when enforcing them.

How to Set Boundaries

Be Assertive:

Clearly state your limits without being aggressive.

Example: "I'm unable to do that right now."

Be Firm, but Kind: Be respectful while standing firm on your needs.

Example: "I understand that you're upset, but I can't discuss this right now."

Offer Alternatives: If you can't meet someone's request, suggest a different option.

Example: "I can't meet today, but let's plan for another time."

Tips for Maintaining Boundaries

Reassess Regularly:

Life and relationships change. Revisit and update your boundaries as needed.

Practice Self-Compassion:

Setting boundaries is a process. Be kind to yourself if you struggle.

Seek Support:

If you're unsure or facing challenges with boundary setting, consider reaching out to a therapist or coach.

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Burnout

What is Burnout?

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress, particularly in response to work, caregiving, or life demands. It can lead to feelings of helplessness, detachment, and an inability to meet constant demands.

Signs & Symptoms of Burnout

Burnout can manifest in various ways, and its symptoms may affect physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural areas of life.

1. Physical Symptoms

Chronic fatigue or feeling drained, even after rest
Sleep disturbances: insomnia or excessive sleeping
Headaches, digestive issues, and muscle tension
Frequent illness due to weakened immunity

2. Emotional Symptoms

Feelings of overwhelm or hopelessness
Irritability and increased frustration
Emotional numbness or detachment from tasks or people
Low self-esteem and lack of satisfaction in personal or professional achievements

3. Cognitive Symptoms

Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or focusing
Memory problems or forgetfulness
Negative thinking patterns: pessimism, lack of motivation, feeling “stuck”

4. Behavioural Symptoms

Procrastination or reduced productivity
Withdrawing from social interactions or work responsibilities
Increased use of unhealthy coping mechanisms (e.g., overeating, alcohol, or avoiding tasks)

Causes of Burnout

Burnout often stems from external pressures but can also be influenced by internal factors like personality traits or perfectionism.

1. Work-Related Causes

Workload imbalance (too much work, too little control)

Unclear expectations or lack of feedback

Lack of recognition or rewards for hard work

Poor work-life balance or an inability to detach from work

Toxic work environment (conflict, poor management, unrealistic demands)

2. Personal Life Causes

Caregiving demands (children, elderly parents, or family members)

Financial stress or instability
Isolation or lack of supportive relationships

Low self-care and neglecting personal needs

Unresolved personal trauma

3. Internal Causes

Perfectionism: Unrealistic standards and fear of failure

People-pleasing tendencies: Saying yes to everything to avoid conflict

Over-responsibility: Taking on too much, believing everything is your fault

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Burnout

How Burnout Affects Your Life

Burnout can impact multiple areas of your life, including:

1. **Work:** Reduced job performance, lack of engagement, and decreased productivity.
2. **Relationships:** Withdrawal, irritability, and reduced emotional availability.
3. **Physical Health:** Chronic fatigue, stress-related illnesses, and decreased immunity.
4. **Mental Health:** Increased anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness.

How to Prevent & Manage Burnout

1. Prioritise Self-Care

Get enough sleep, eat well, exercise, and engage in relaxation techniques like deep breathing and meditation. Enjoy activities that restore your energy.

2. Set Boundaries & Delegate

Say no to tasks that don't align with your priorities. Delegate when possible and create clear work-life boundaries to avoid overworking.

3. Mindfulness & Stress Reduction

Stay present with mindfulness techniques like grounding exercises and deep breathing to reduce anxiety and stress.

4. Shift Your Mindset

Challenge perfectionism and focus on progress, not perfection. Reframe negative thoughts into empowering ones, like "I can handle this with support."

5. Social Support

Reach out to friends, family, or colleagues when overwhelmed. Consider joining a support group or seeking professional help to cope with burnout.

6. Take Breaks

Schedule regular breaks and take mental health days when needed. Use vacation time to reset and recharge when burnout hits.

When to Seek Help for Burnout

When self-care efforts (rest, boundaries, etc.) don't relieve the symptoms.

If physical or emotional symptoms (e.g., sleep problems, sadness, or physical pain) persist.

If burnout leads to mental health issues like anxiety, depression, or loss of hope.

When burnout affects daily life, relationships, and work performance.

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Challenge Negative Thoughts

Negative thoughts can feel overwhelming, but they don't have to control your mind. Use this cheat sheet to help identify, challenge, and reframe negative thinking patterns.

Identify the Negative Thought

Become aware of the negative thought and its impact on your emotions and behaviour.

How to do it:

- Pay attention to moments when you feel upset, anxious, or frustrated. Ask yourself: "What was I just thinking?"
- Ask yourself: "What was I just thinking?"
- Write down the negative thought to better understand it.

Recognize Cognitive Distortions

Common Cognitive Distortions:

All-or-Nothing Thinking: Seeing situations as all good or all bad (e.g., "If I make one mistake, I'm a failure").
Overgeneralisation: Making broad conclusions based on a single event (e.g., "I always mess things up").

Catastrophising: Expecting the worst-case scenario (e.g., "If I fail this test, my life is over").

Personalisation: Blaming yourself for things beyond your control (e.g., "It's my fault that my friend is upset").

Mind Reading: Assuming you know what others are thinking (e.g., "They think I'm stupid").

Filtering: Focusing only on the negative aspects of a situation and ignoring the positive (e.g., "I only got one compliment, but I got five criticisms").

Challenge the Negative Thought

Question the validity of the negative thought to gain a more realistic perspective.

Questions to ask:

- Is this thought based on facts or assumptions?
- What evidence do I have that this thought is true?
- What evidence do I have that this thought is false?
- Am I making an assumption or jumping to conclusions?
- How would I view this situation if I were someone else?
- What's the worst, best, and most realistic outcome?

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Challenge Negative Thoughts

Reframe the Negative Thought

Replace negative thinking with a more balanced or positive perspective

How to do it:

Counter the thought: Turn your negative thought into a more balanced one.

Negative thought: "I'm terrible at this."

Reframed thought: "I may not be great at this yet, but I can improve with practice."

Challenge self-criticism with self-compassion: Replace "I'm not good enough" with "I'm doing my best, and it's okay to make mistakes."

Practice Positive Affirmations

Use positive statements to reinforce self-belief and counter negative thoughts.

Create affirmations that resonate with you, such as:

- "I am capable and strong."
- "I am worthy of love and success."
- "I trust myself to handle challenges."

Say these affirmations aloud or silently whenever negative thoughts arise.

Focus on Solutions

Shift from a problem-focused mindset to a solution-oriented approach.

Instead of ruminating on what's going wrong, ask yourself:

"What's one small thing I can do to

improve this situation?"

"How can I approach this problem differently?"

"What is within my control?"

Use the "5-4-3-2-1" Grounding Technique

Distract your mind and bring yourself back to the present moment.

How to do it:

When overwhelmed by negative thoughts, engage your senses:

5 things you can see. **4** things you can touch. **3** things you can hear. **2** things you can smell.

1 thing you can taste.

- This practice helps you detach from negative thoughts and return to the present.

Practice Self-Compassion

When you notice a negative thought about yourself, ask:

- "How can I speak to myself with more kindness?"

Remember that everyone makes mistakes and experiences difficult emotions— this doesn't define your worth.

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Cognitive Distortion



All-or-Nothing Thinking (Black-and-White Thinking)

Definition: Seeing things in extremes—either all good or all bad.

Example: “If I don’t succeed completely, I’m a total failure.”

Reframe: “Progress is still progress, and mistakes are part of learning.”

Mental Filtering (Negative Filtering) Definition:

Focusing only on the negatives and ignoring the positives.

Example: “Everyone hated my presentation” (ignoring the positive feedback).

Reframe: “Some parts were challenging, but I also received good feedback.”

Mind Reading Definition: Assuming you know what others are thinking.

Example: “They didn’t text back—they must be mad at me.”

Reframe: “I don’t know what they’re thinking. Maybe they’re just busy.”

Catastrophising Definition: Expecting the worst-case scenario to happen.

Example: “If I mess up this interview, my career is over.”

Reframe: “Even if I struggle in the interview, I can learn from it.”

Emotional Reasoning

Definition: Believing that if you feel something, it must be true.

Example: “I feel worthless, so I must be worthless.”

Reframe: “Feelings are not facts. I can feel this way and still be valuable.”

Labeling & Mislabeled Definition:

Defining yourself or others based on one event or trait.

Example: “I made a mistake, so I’m a failure.”

Reframe: “I made a mistake, but that doesn’t define me.”

Cognitive Distortion



Overgeneralisation

Definition: Drawing broad conclusions based on one negative experience.

Example: “I failed once, so I’ll always fail.”

Reframe: “One experience doesn’t define my future. I can try again.”

Discounting the Positive

Definition: Dismissing achievements or compliments as unimportant.

Example: “They only said I did well because they were being nice.”

Reframe: “I worked hard, and I deserve to acknowledge my success.”

Fortune-Telling

Definition: Predicting the future negatively without evidence.

Example: “I’ll never be able to find a good relationship.”

Reframe: “I don’t know what the future holds, but I can stay open to possibilities.”

Personalisation & Blame

Definition: Taking responsibility for things outside your control or blaming others for everything.

Example: “My friend is upset—it must be because of something I did.”

Reframe: “There could be many reasons for their mood that have nothing to do with me.”

Should Statements

Definition: Using rigid rules that create guilt and frustration.

Example: “I should always be productive.”

Reframe: “It’s okay to rest. Productivity isn’t the only measure of success.”

Magnification & Minimisation

Definition: Blowing things out of proportion or downplaying strengths.

Example: “One small mistake ruined everything.”

Reframe: “Mistakes happen, but they don’t define the whole situation.”

Depression

Recognizing the Signs

Emotional Symptoms:

Persistent feelings of sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness
Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
Irritability, frustration, or mood swings
Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

Physical Symptoms:

Fatigue or lack of energy, even after rest
Sleep disturbances (insomnia or excessive sleeping)
Changes in appetite (overeating or loss of appetite)
Unexplained aches or pains
Slowed movements or speech

Behavioural Symptoms:

Withdrawing from social activities or relationships
Neglecting responsibilities or personal care
Increased use of substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) as a coping mechanism

Strategies for Managing Depression

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):

CBT is an evidence-based approach that helps you identify negative thought patterns and replace them with healthier, more realistic thoughts. It helps change the way you think and behave to improve your mood.

Mindfulness & Meditation:

Practicing mindfulness can help you stay in the present moment, reducing the tendency to ruminate on negative thoughts. Meditation can calm the mind and reduce stress

Exercise & Physical Activity:

Regular exercise can help boost mood by releasing endorphins (the “feel-good” chemicals in your brain) and improving overall health. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week.

Nutrition:

Eating a balanced diet with foods rich in omega-3s, folate, and vitamins D and B can support brain health and help manage depression

Sleep Hygiene:

Poor sleep patterns can worsen depression. Focus on good sleep hygiene: maintain a consistent sleep schedule, create a relaxing bedtime routine, and avoid caffeine or screens close to bedtime.

Depression

Causes and Risk Factors

Depression doesn't have one specific cause; it can result from a combination of factors, such as:

- Genetic predisposition (family history of depression)
- Biological changes (imbalances in brain chemicals, hormones)
- Traumatic events (loss of a loved one, relationship issues, abuse)
- Chronic stress (work, finances, personal struggles)
- Medical conditions (chronic illness, neurological disorders)
- Substance abuse or medication side effects

Coping Techniques for When You Feel Overwhelmed

Grounding Exercises: Try the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique: Name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.

Challenge Negative Thoughts: When you catch yourself thinking negatively, challenge the thoughts by asking, "Is this thought based on facts?" or "Would I say this to a friend?"

Self-Compassion: Be kind to yourself. Talk to yourself the way you would talk to a friend who is struggling. Remind yourself that it's okay to feel down, and you don't have to be perfect.

Create a Routine: Depression often disrupts your daily routine. Try to establish small, manageable routines, including personal hygiene, eating, and getting outside for some fresh air.

Key Takeaways

Recognize the Signs:

Notice emotional, physical, and behavioural symptoms.

Use Effective Strategies:

Try CBT, mindfulness, exercise, and good sleep hygiene.

Seek Help When Needed:

Don't hesitate to reach out to a professional if needed.

Be Kind to Yourself:

Practice self-compassion and patience in your healing process.

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Effective Communication

The 4 Key Elements of Effective Communication

Clarity – Be direct, concise, and specific. Say what you mean without overcomplicating.

Active Listening – Give full attention, reflect back, and validate the other person's words.

Tone & Body Language – Your voice, facial expressions, and posture impact your message.

Emotional Regulation – Stay calm and grounded, especially in tough conversations.

Active Listening

Give Full Attention – Put away distractions, make eye contact, nod to show engagement.

Reflect & Validate – Repeat or summarise what the other person said: • “It sounds like you’re feeling frustrated because...”

Ask Open-Ended Questions – Encourage deeper conversation: • “Can you tell me more about that?”

Assertive vs. Passive vs. Aggressive Communication

Passive

What It Looks Like:

Avoiding conflict, apologizing excessively, not expressing needs.

Example:

“It’s fine, don’t worry about it.”

Aggressive

What It Looks Like:

Demanding, interrupting, disregarding others’ feelings.

Example:

“You never listen to me!”

Assertive

What It Looks Like:

Respectful, clear, and confident while considering others.

Example:

“I feel unheard when I’m interrupted. Can we take turns speaking?”

“I” Statements: Expressing Feelings Without Blame

Instead of “You always...” → Use “I feel...” ✓

Formula: “I feel [emotion] when [situation] because [reason]. I would appreciate [request].” ✗ “You never help me around the house!”
✓ “I feel overwhelmed when I do all the chores alone. I’d appreciate if we shared the responsibilities.”

Handling Difficult Conversations

Pause & Breathe – Don’t react impulsively. Take a deep breath before responding.

Stay Curious, Not Defensive – Ask questions instead of making assumptions.

Acknowledge & Validate – “I see why that was upsetting for you.”

Find Common Ground – Look for a solution that works for both parties.

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Effective Communication

Common Communication Blocks & How to Fix Them

Interrupting → Pause and let the other person finish. Mind-

Reading → Ask for clarification instead of assuming intentions.

Bringing Up the Past → Stay focused on the present issue.

Stonewalling/Shutting Down → Express when you need a break but commit to revisiting the conversation

The Power of Nonverbal Communication

Tone of Voice – A calm tone can prevent conflicts from escalating.

Body Language – Open posture = approachable, crossed arms = defensive.

Eye Contact – Shows confidence and engagement.

Facial Expressions – Align your expressions with your words.

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Emotional Regulations

Emotional regulation is the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a healthy way. It helps you maintain balance respond to challenges, and process your feelings without being overwhelmed by them. This cheat sheet provides key concepts and strategies for emotional regulation.

Understanding Emotions

Emotions are natural responses:

Emotions are neither good nor bad - they are signals that provide information about your internal state an environment.

Emotional awareness:

Recognizing and naming your emotions is the first step toward regulation. The more you can identify how you feel, the easier it is to understand and manage those feelings

Emotional Expression Techniques

A. Journaling

Journaling Prompts: Writing can be a powerful tool for processing emotions. Try prompts like, "What am I feeling right now?", "Why might I be feeling this way?", and "What do I need to hear to feel better?"

Free Writing: Let your emotions flow onto the page without judgment. Allow yourself to express raw feelings, which can help release built-up tension

B. Creative Expression

Art: Drawing, painting, or other forms of art can be an outlet for emotions you may not have the words for.

Music: Listening to or playing music can help you connect with your emotions, shift your mood, or provide catharsis.

Key Emotional Regulation Strategies

A. Self-Awareness & Acceptance

Name It to Tame It: Label you emotions to engage your rational mind. For example, saying "I am feeling anxious" allows you to separate from the intensity of the feeling and gain control.

Validate Your Emotions: Accept that emotions are valid, even if they feel uncomfortable. Avoid judgment or self-criticism for feeling what you feel.

B. Grounding Techniques

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: Focus on the present by engaging your senses. Name 5 things you can see, 4 you can feel, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, and 1 you can taste. This can help reduce emotional overwhelm.

Sensory Grounding: Use your senses to bring yourself back to the present. Hold an object, listen to soothing sounds, or touch a textured item to refocus your attention.

C. Breathing Techniques

Deep Breathing: Slow, deep breaths help activate the parasympathetic nervous system, calming your body. Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4.

Box Breathing: Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, and pause for 4. This rhythmic breathing is particularly helpful during moments of anxiety or stress

D. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive Reframing: Challenge negative or unhelpful thoughts by replacing them with more balanced, positive ones. For example, replace "I can't handle this" with "This is challenging, but I have the skills to manage it."

Reality Testing: Question the evidence of your thoughts. Are you assuming the worst without facts? Ground yourself by looking for evidence that supports or contradicts your thoughts.

Body-Based Regulation Techniques

A. Movement

Gentle Movement: Walking, stretching, or dancing can help release pent-up emotions and shift your body from a state of tension or distress into calm.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR): Tense and relax each muscle group from head to toe. This helps you recognize where you are holding tension and release it.

B. Self-Soothing

Self-Touch: Gently placing your hands on your body can activate the calming parasympathetic nervous system. Try rubbing your hands together or giving yourself a hug.

Warmth: Using warm water (a bath or a heated blanket) can signal to your body that it is safe to relax.

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Emotional Regulations

Emotional Regulation in Relationships

Co-Regulation: Spending time with people who make you feel safe and supported helps your nervous system regulate itself. Positive relationships provide emotional stability and comfort.

Set Healthy Boundaries: To maintain emotional regulation, establish boundaries that protect you from overstimulation or emotional drain. Don't be afraid to say "no" when needed.

Building Your Personal Regulation Plan

Not all triggers are obvious. Begin to notice patterns in situations, people, environments, or internal cues (like hunger, lack of sleep) that lead to dysregulation.

Try journaling prompts like:

- What situations tend to dysregulate me?
- What happens in my body when I feel overwhelmed?

Know Your Early Warning Signs

Emotions often build gradually. Tune into your early cues (tight chest, jaw clenching, zoning out, rapid thoughts). Recognizing these early can help you respond before overwhelm takes over.

Create a "Signs I'm Getting Dysregulated" list, such as: I stop making eye contact I feel rushed or panicked I get snappy or quiet

Create a Regulation Toolkit

Choose 5–7 tools that you know work for you. Include simple practices for different settings (home, public, work). Keep your list somewhere visible or save it to your phone.

Example Toolkit

- Listen to calming playlist
- Deep breathing (Box breath)
- Grounding object in pocket
- Step outside for fresh air
- Listen to calming playlist
- Repeat: "This will pass. I am safe."

Create a Calm-Down Plan

This is a step-by-step routine for when you're overwhelmed. Keep it simple.

Example:

- Pause and name the emotion
- Do a grounding technique
- Use breathwork for 1–2 minutes
- Drink water or eat something nourishing
- Choose connection or rest

Regulation Rituals for Daily Life

Build proactive habits - not just emergency ones. These rituals help you stay emotionally resourced over time.

Morning: Breathwork + intention setting

Midday: Body scan or mindful check-in

Evening: Journaling or emotional release (movement, writing)

Weekly: Time in nature or time alone

Long-Term Emotional Regulation Tips

Practice Mindfulness:

Regular mindfulness practice, such as meditation, can help you stay aware of your emotions without being consumed by them. This allows you to respond more calmly in stressful situations.

Develop a Routine: Creating a daily self-care routine with grounding practices, movement, and relaxation techniques can strengthen your emotional resilience over time.

Self-Compassion: Be kind to yourself. Everyone has challenging emotions, and it's okay to struggle. Practice self-compassion by treating yourself with care, just as you would a loved one.

Red Flags of Emotional Dysregulation

- Feeling overwhelmed by emotions frequently
- Difficulty returning to a calm state after a stressor
- Outbursts of anger or intense emotions
- Feeling "stuck" or "numb" emotionally

If you find that your emotional responses are consistently overwhelming or interfering with daily life, seeking support from a mental health professional can help.

Key Takeaways

Awareness & Acceptance:

Recognize and label your emotions to gain control.

Cognitive Tools:

Challenge unhelpful thoughts and reframe negative patterns.

Body Awareness:

Use movement, breath, and self-soothing techniques to calm your nervous system.

Healthy Relationships:

Surround yourself with supportive, regulated individuals.

Routine & Practice:

Build emotional regulation into your daily life to improve resilience and well-being.

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Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn

When faced with a perceived threat or stressor, the human body activates one of four main responses, known as the Fight, Flight, Freeze, and Fawn reactions. These responses are a natural, automatic part of the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) and are designed to protect us in times of danger. Understanding these responses can help you recognise how your body reacts to stress and how to manage these reactions for better emotional regulation.

Fight – Confront the Threat

The Fight Response is activated when you perceive a threat and feel the need to defend yourself or “battle” the situation. This response is driven by feelings of anger, frustration, or aggression and is most common in situations where you feel threatened and need to protect yourself.

What Happens:

- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and adrenaline.
- Tension in muscles, preparing for physical action.
- Feelings of anger, irritability, or rage.
- A desire to confront or overpower the threat.

Physical Signs:

- Clenched fists, tight jaw, tense muscles.
- Elevated breathing or rapid heartbeat
- Strong urge to act aggressively or assertively.

How to Manage:

- Recognize when you are reacting out of anger or frustration.
- Practice calming techniques like deep breathing or grounding.
- Channel that energy into productive action like physical exercise or creative outlets.

Flight – Escape the Threat

The Flight Response is triggered when the body perceives a threat and you feel the need to flee or escape to safety. It's associated with feelings of fear and anxiety and occurs when you feel that running away is the best option for survival.

What Happens:

- Rapid heartbeat, shallow breathing, and dry mouth.
- Urge to escape or avoid the situation.
- Heightened sense of fear or urgency to get away.

Physical Signs:

- Restlessness or feeling “on edge.”
- Increased pace of movement, like wanting to run away.
- Tension in the body, as if ready to spring into action

How to Manage:

- Recognize when avoidance tendencies are taking over.
- Use grounding exercises to calm your nervous system and reduce the impulse to flee.
- Break things down into smaller, manageable steps if avoidance feels overwhelming.

Boundaries

Boundaries are personal limits you set to protect yourself from being overwhelmed, disrespected, or drained. They define what is acceptable and what is not in your interactions with others.

Freeze – Inaction and Immobilisation

The Freeze Response occurs when the body feels it cannot escape the situation, leading to a state of paralysis or immobilisation. This response may be triggered by fear, overwhelm, or the feeling that there is no way to fight or flee from the situation.

What Happens:

- A sense of being “stuck” or unable to act.
- Numbness or emotional shutdown.
- Detachment from the body or dissociation

Physical Signs:

- Feeling physically frozen or numb.
- Lack of energy or motivation to move.
- Shallow, slow breathing or holding breath.

How to Manage:

- Practice grounding techniques to reconnect with the body (e.g., feeling your feet on the ground, breathing deeply).
- Focus on small actions that break the state of paralysis.
- Seek support if dissociation or numbing persists

Fawn – People-Pleasing or Submitting

The Fawn Response is triggered when the body seeks to please or appease others in order to avoid conflict or harm. It often stems from a deep desire to avoid rejection or punishment, and is often linked with people-pleasing behaviours.

What Happens:

- Extreme focus on the needs and desires of others.
- Difficulty saying “no” or setting boundaries.
- Over accommodating others to avoid confrontation.

Physical Signs:

- Overthinking how others perceive you.
- Tendency to put others’ needs above your own, even to your own detriment.
- A sense of anxiety when conflict arises.

How to Manage:

- Recognise when you’re sacrificing your own needs to please others.
- Practice calming techniques like deep breathing or grounding
- Engage in self-care and remind yourself that it’s okay to prioritise your own wellbeing.

Key Takeaways

Fight, Flight, Freeze, and Fawn are natural, automatic responses to stress or danger.

- These reactions are protective mechanisms, but can also become maladaptive if triggered too frequently or intensely.
- Learning to recognize when these responses are activated helps you manage your stress and emotional reactions.
- Grounding techniques, mindfulness, and setting boundaries are essential for managing these responses and restoring balance

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Inner Critic

The inner critic is that internal voice that judges, criticizes, and often undermines your confidence. It can hold you back from achieving your goals, feeling at peace with yourself, and living authentically. Understanding the inner critic and learning how to challenge it is essential for building self-compassion and confidence.

The inner critic is a mental construct - often rooted in past experiences, societal conditioning, or childhood messages - that judges, criticizes, or belittles you. It may manifest as thoughts like:

"You're not good enough.", "You'll never succeed.", "You always mess things up.", "Who do you think you are?"

While the inner critic may have originated to protect you (e.g., motivating you to do well), its constant negativity can become detrimental to your mental health, self-esteem, and happiness.

What is the Inner Critic?

Identifying the Inner Critic

Recognise the Voice: Pay attention to your self-talk. Notice when you feel defeated, anxious, or self-conscious. Your inner critic might be at play if you're:

- **Feeling overly self-critical or perfectionistic.**
- **Comparing yourself unfavourably to others.**
- **Dismissing your accomplishments or qualities.**

Notice the Language: The inner critic often uses phrases like "always," "never," and "should." These can be signals that it's not your true self speaking, but rather a harmful internalised voice.

Why The Inner Critic Exists

Early Conditioning: Messages from caregivers, teachers, or peers during childhood may have shaped the voice of your inner critic.

Fear of Rejection: The inner critic may try to "protect" you from failure or rejection by keeping you small or pushing you to be perfect.

Societal Expectations: Media, culture, and societal pressures often reinforce unattainable standards, which can fuel the inner critic's judgment.

Self-Protection Mechanism: In some cases, the inner critic can stem from a desire to avoid hurt by making you hyperaware of your weaknesses.

How To Challenge The Inner Critic

A. Recognize & Separate

Label the Critic: Give the inner critic a name (e.g., "Perfectionist Polly," "Judging John"). When you hear negative thoughts, you'll be able to recognize them as not your true voice but a separate, critical force

Mindful Awareness: Notice when these thoughts appear, but don't engage with them. Let them float by like clouds in the sky. This separates you from the criticism

B. Question Its Validity

Reality Check: Is this criticism based on facts, or is it an exaggerated or distorted perception? Ask yourself, "Is this thought true? What evidence do I have to support it?"

Challenge All-or-Nothing Thinking: The inner critic often uses extreme language (e.g., "You always fail" or "You're a total failure"). Recognize that this isn't true and look for exceptions or alternative viewpoints.

C. Replace the Critic with Compassionate Self-Talk

Positive Reframing: Instead of focusing on what you did wrong, shift to what you learned or what you're proud of. For example, change "I messed up" to "I made a mistake, but I can learn and improve."

Self-Compassion: Speak to yourself as you would to a close friend. Replace harsh judgments with kind, understanding, and encouraging words

D. Practice Gratitude & Affirmations

Gratitude Journal: Every day, write down at least 3 things you appreciate about yourself or your day. This counteracts the negativity of the inner critic by fostering a mindset of gratitude and positivity.

Affirmations: Use powerful affirmations like "I am enough," "I am worthy," or "I embrace growth and progress"

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Inner Critic

Tools to Quiet the Inner Critic

Mindfulness & Meditation

Mindful Awareness: Bring attention to your present experience without judgment. This helps create space between your thoughts and your reactions, allowing you to observe the inner critic without getting caught up in it.

Body Scanning: Tune into your body to ground yourself in the present moment, which can help reduce the emotional charge of negative thoughts.

Cognitive Behavioural Tools (CBT)

Thought Records: Write down negative thoughts and evaluate their accuracy. Challenge these thoughts with evidence and replace them with more balanced perspectives.

Cognitive Restructuring: Identify cognitive distortions like catastrophising, black-and-white thinking, or overgeneralising, and reframe them into more rational, balanced thoughts.

Practice Self-Compassion

Self-Compassion Break: When you notice the inner critic, take a break. Place a hand over your heart, breathe deeply, and say, "This is a tough moment, but I am doing my best, and I deserve kindness and care."

Loving-Kindness Meditation: Send compassionate thoughts to yourself and others by silently repeating phrases like, "May I be happy. May I be safe. May I be healthy. May I live with ease."

Rebuilding Confidence and Self- Worth

Celebrate Small Wins!

Acknowledge and celebrate your successes, no matter how small. This trains your mind to focus on progress, not just perfection.

Set Boundaries with the Inner Critic

Create Space: When you notice the inner critic being too loud, pause and redirect your focus. Engage in activities that bring you joy, help you relax, or challenge the critic's voice.

Give Yourself Permission to Be Imperfect: No one is perfect. Accepting your imperfections allows you to move forward without constant self-judgment.

Strengthening Your Inner Voice

To truly quiet the inner critic, it's important not just to challenge it - but to replace it with a stronger, more compassionate inner voice. Think of this as cultivating your inner encourager - a part of you that uplifts, supports, and believes in your worth.

Key Takeaways

Awareness: Identify when your inner critic is speaking and separate it from your authentic self.

Challenge & Replace: Question the validity of critical thoughts and replace them with kinder, more balanced perspectives

Practice Self-Compassion: Speak to yourself kindly, as you would to a friend, and prioritise self-love and acceptance.

Build Confidence: Celebrate your achievements, focus on your strengths, and allow yourself room to grow.

REMEMBER!

The inner critic doesn't have to control you. By understanding its origins, challenging its validity, and practicing self-compassion, you can take back your inner power and embrace the fullness of who you truly are.

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Nervous System Regulation

Your nervous system is the communication center of your body, constantly regulating everything from basic survival functions to your emotional responses.

Understanding how it works can help you manage stress, emotions, and reactions.

This cheat sheet breaks down the essential components of your nervous system and offers practical tools for regulation.

The Nervous System Overview

The nervous system is responsible for sending, receiving, and processing information throughout the body. It's divided into two main parts:

Central Nervous System (CNS):

Brain: Controls all bodily functions, thoughts, and emotions.

Spinal Cord: Transmits information from the brain to the rest of the body and vice versa.

Peripheral Nervous System (PNS):

Somatic Nervous System:

Controls voluntary movements and sensory information.

Autonomic Nervous System

(ANS): Regulates involuntary functions like heartbeat, digestion, and breathing.

Autonomic Nervous System (ANS)

The ANS manages the body's response to stress and relaxation. It has two main branches:

Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) – The Stress Response

Activates the fight or flight response when danger or stress is perceived.

Increases heart rate, quickens breathing, and prepares muscles for action. Designed for short bursts of energy in response to immediate threats.

Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) – The Relaxation Response

Rest and Digest mode. Slows heart rate, regulates digestion, and promotes calmness and relaxation. Counteracts the SNS to help bring the body back to a calm state after stress.

The vagus nerve is a key part of the parasympathetic system and plays a significant role in calming the body. Activates relaxation responses, helps regulate heart rate, and supports digestion.

Ways to Regulate the Nervous System

A. Breathing Techniques:

Box Breathing: Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat.

Diaphragmatic Breathing: Breathe deeply into your belly, not your chest. It signals the parasympathetic system to activate. **Alternate Nostril Breathing:** Inhale through one nostril, hold, exhale through the other nostril. This helps balance the nervous system

B. Grounding Techniques:

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: Name 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste to bring you back to the present moment.

Sensory Grounding: Focus on your five senses to reconnect with your body and environment.

C. Movement & Body Awareness:

Gentle Movement: Stretching, walking, or yoga can help reset the nervous system. **Body Scanning:** Check in with each part of your body, noticing any tension or discomfort and consciously releasing it

D. Self-Soothing:

Self-Touch: Gently rubbing your hands together, placing your hands over your heart, or giving yourself a hug to activate a calming response. **Warmth:** Use a warm bath, hot water bottle, or blanket to activate the parasympathetic system.

E. Vagus Nerve Activation:

Humming/Chanting: Vibrations from humming activate the vagus nerve, which helps reduce stress. **Cold Exposure:** Splashing cold water on your face or taking a cold shower stimulates the vagus nerve.

Deep Sighing: Taking a deep breath and releasing it slowly activates the parasympathetic response, helping to calm your body.

Values Clarification

When your body perceives a threat, it can react in one of four ways:

Fight: You become aggressive or confrontational to protect yourself.

Flight: You escape or avoid the threat, physically or emotionally.

Freeze: You become paralysed or numb, unable to take action.

Fawn: You try to please others or appease a threat, often at the cost of your own needs.

These responses are automatic, but understanding them helps you identify how you react to stress and regulate your body accordingly.

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Radical Acceptance

Steps to Practice Radical Acceptance

What is Radical Acceptance?

Radical acceptance means letting go of the need to control, deny, or fight against difficult emotions, situations, or realities. It's about acknowledging the truth of the moment, without judgment, and without attempting to change or resist what is happening. It's not passive resignation, but rather a compassionate embracing of reality.

Show Yourself Compassion
Speak to yourself with kindness.

Example: "I'm doing my best, and that's enough."

Acknowledge What Is
Accept reality as it is, even if it's painful.

Example: "This is hard, but this is where I am right now."

Observe Without Judgment
Notice your thoughts and emotions without labelling them as good or bad.

Example: "I feel sad. That's okay."

Embrace Imperfection
Life is unpredictable; acceptance brings peace.

Example: "I am enough, even when things don't go perfectly."

Let Go of Control
Recognize what's in your control and release what isn't.

Example: "I can't change the past, but I can choose how I respond."

Drop the "Shoulds"
Let go of expectations of how things should be.

Example: Instead of "This shouldn't have happened," try "This is what happened, and I can cope."

Focus on What You Can Control
Shift energy toward self-care and problem-solving.

Example: "I can take a break and care for myself."

Why Radical Acceptance Works ?

Radical acceptance works because it frees you from unnecessary suffering. Resistance to reality often causes us to get stuck in endless cycles of frustration, anger, and sadness. By fully accepting what is, you can move from a place of peace and empowerment rather than constant struggle

Common Myths About Radical Acceptance

Myth: Radical acceptance means I have to like or approve of the situation.

Truth: Radical acceptance doesn't mean you like or agree with what's happening, but that you're choosing to accept it as part of your reality.

Myth: Radical acceptance means giving up or resigning to a bad situation.

Truth: Radical acceptance frees you from the struggle against reality. By accepting it, you are empowered to make changes where possible, or to heal and grow from the situation

Myth: Radical acceptance means I'm weak or passive.

Truth: Radical acceptance requires strength and courage. It's not about passive resignation; it's about facing what's real with open eyes and a willing heart.

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Radical Acceptance

Tips for Embracing Radical Acceptance

Write a Letter to Yourself

Write a letter from the perspective of someone who deeply understands your situation. This letter should be full of compassion, acceptance, and understanding, acknowledging the challenges but affirming that you are strong and capable

Radical Acceptance Meditation

Sit quietly and focus on your breath. As you inhale and exhale, bring to mind a situation or emotion that's been difficult to accept. Instead of resisting, visualize yourself embracing it fully. Tell yourself, "This is what is. I accept it."

Journaling for Acceptance

Use prompts to deepen your acceptance practice. "What am I trying to resist right now?" "How does resisting this affect me emotionally and physically?" "What would it feel like to stop fighting this reality?"

REMEMBER!

Radical acceptance is not about liking what's happening, but about accepting that it is happening. The moment you let go of trying to change or control reality, you make space for healing, growth, and peace

Practical Exercises

Practice mindfulness: The more mindful you are, the more you'll notice when you're resisting reality. Stay present and allow yourself to simply be with what is.

Develop patience: Radical acceptance is a process. It may take time to accept things as they are, especially when dealing with pain, trauma, or loss.

Challenge your inner critic: When you're tempted to criticise yourself for feeling or thinking a certain way, remember that all emotions are valid and part of being human.

Use affirmations: Repeating affirmations such as "I accept things as they are" or "This moment is as it is, and I am okay with it" can be helpful reminders during tough moments.

Use affirmations: Repeating affirmations such as "I accept things as they are" or "This moment is as it is, and I am okay with it" can be helpful reminders during tough moments.

Seek support: Radical acceptance isn't always easy. Don't hesitate to reach out for support from loved ones, or a therapist, when you need it.

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SELF - SABOTAGE

Self-sabotage can feel like you're working against yourself, knowingly or unknowingly, holding yourself back from reaching your goals and living your best life. It's when your behaviours, beliefs, or habits get in the way of your success and well-being. This cheat sheet is here to help you identify the patterns of self-sabotage and guide you toward creating a healthier, more supportive relationship with yourself.

What is Self-Sabotage ?

Self-sabotage is when your actions or thoughts prevent you from achieving what you want, even when you consciously desire success or happiness. It can show up in various areas of life, from relationships to career to personal growth. Self-sabotage often happens because of fear, low self-esteem, or limiting beliefs. It's like your inner critic or fear-driven thoughts push you away from what's best for you.

Signs of Self-Sabotage

Procrastination

Putting things off, even when you know they're important. It's often driven by perfectionism, fear of failure, or a belief that you're not capable.

Negative Self-Talk

Constantly telling yourself you're not good enough or that you'll fail, which stops you from trying or continuing forward.

Self-Destructive Behaviours

Engaging in actions that undermine your well-being, such as sabotaging relationships, making poor financial decisions, or avoiding health-related responsibilities.

Avoiding Opportunities

Turning down chances for growth, whether it's a job promotion, a new relationship, or a personal challenge, because deep down you feel undeserving or afraid to fail.

Self-Criticism and Guilt

Being overly hard on yourself, even for small mistakes, leading to feelings of unworthiness or inadequacy.

Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms

Using distractions, such as excessive screen time, drinking, or overeating, to avoid dealing with deeper emotions or facing tasks that make you uncomfortable.

Choosing Comfort Over Growth

Staying in situations or habits that keep you stuck or in a cycle of mediocrity, because they feel safe or familiar, even if they aren't serving your long-term growth.

Setting Unrealistic Goals

Setting goals that are too big or too numerous, which ultimately leads to overwhelm and burnout.

Why Do We Self-Sabotage

Fear of Success: Sometimes we fear the responsibility or attention that comes with success, so we subconsciously hold ourselves back.

Low Self-Worth: If you don't believe you're worthy of success or happiness, you may unconsciously block your own path to avoid feeling unworthy or exposed.

Comfort in Familiarity: The unknown can be scary, even if it means improvement. Staying stuck in old habits feels safer than venturing into new territory.

Fear of Failure: We may avoid pursuing our goals altogether because we're afraid of not being perfect or failing.

Common Forms of Self-Sabotage

Perfectionism: Trying to make everything perfect as a way to avoid making mistakes or facing the fear of not being enough.

Avoidance: Avoiding responsibilities, uncomfortable feelings, or challenges in order to prevent perceived failure.

People-Pleasing: Saying yes to others' requests, even at your own expense, often driven by the fear of rejection or not being liked.

Self-Doubt: Constantly questioning your worth, abilities, or decisions, and letting doubt hold you back from taking action.

Burnout: Overworking yourself to the point of exhaustion as a way to avoid facing other feelings or responsibilities.

Self-Neglect: Ignoring your physical, emotional, or mental health in favour of distractions or unhealthy coping mechanisms.

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SELF - SABOTAGE

How To Over Self-Sabotage?

Recognise the Pattern

Awareness: The first step is noticing when you're engaging in self-sabotaging behaviour. Keep a journal to track when you procrastinate, avoid tasks, or engage in self-critical thoughts

Identify Triggers: Pay attention to the situations, people, or emotions that spark self-sabotage. Is it fear of failure? A lack of confidence? Understanding your triggers will help you break the cycle.

Challenge Negative Beliefs

Reframe Your Thoughts: Counter self-sabotaging thoughts with more realistic and empowering ones. Instead of "I'll never be good enough," try "I am capable of learning and growing."

Affirmations: Use positive affirmations to reinforce your worth and ability to succeed. Remind yourself that failure is part of the learning process, not a sign of inadequacy.

Set Realistic Goals

Break Goals Into Manageable Steps: Instead of setting a huge, daunting goal, break it down into small, achievable steps. Celebrate each small success along the way

Track Progress: Keep a record of your accomplishments, no matter how small. Reflect on how far you've come rather than focusing on what's left to do.

Practice Self-Compassion

Treat Yourself Like a Friend: When you make a mistake or fall short, don't beat yourself up. Speak to yourself with the same kindness and understanding that you would offer a friend.

Forgive Yourself: Release guilt and shame. Everyone makes mistakes—what matters is learning from them and moving forward

Face Your Fears

Take Small Risks: Start by taking small steps outside of your comfort zone. Each small risk will help you build confidence and reduce the fear of failure.

Visualise Success: Picture yourself succeeding, even if it feels uncomfortable. Visualisation helps reprogram your mind to believe in your potential.

Cultivate a Growth Mindset

See Failure as Feedback: Understand that failure is not an end but a learning opportunity. Use setbacks as a chance to grow, improve, and try again.

Focus on Effort, Not Outcome: Shift your focus from perfect results to consistent effort. Embrace the journey of learning and evolving.

Key Takeaways

Self-Sabotage Comes from Fear and Low Self-Worth: It's not a reflection of your abilities, but rather a defense mechanism rooted in fear, doubt, and past experiences.

You Are Worthy of Success: You are deserving of the happiness, success, and growth you seek. Don't let fear or limiting beliefs hold you back.

Small Changes Lead to Big Results: Start with small, manageable actions to break free from self-sabotage. Celebrate your progress and keep building from there.

Self-Compassion is Essential: Be kind to yourself, especially when you slip into old patterns. Change takes time, but with consistency and care, you can break free from the cycle of self-sabotage.

Develop Healthy Coping Mechanisms:

Practice Mindfulness: Mindfulness helps you stay present and aware of your thoughts and feelings, allowing you to break free from automatic patterns of self-sabotage.

Create a Support System: Surround yourself with people who encourage your growth and hold you accountable for your goals.

REMEMBER!

Self-sabotage doesn't define you. It's simply a pattern you can unlearn. By recognizing it, challenging it, and practicing new, healthier habits, you can create a life that aligns with your true potential.

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Somatic Exercises

The inner critic is that internal voice that judges, criticizes, and often undermines your confidence. It can hold you back from achieving your goals, feeling at peace with yourself, and living authentically. Understanding the inner critic and learning how to challenge it is essential for building self-compassion and confidence.

Grounding Exercise: “Feet to the Floor”

Purpose: Ground yourself in the present moment and reconnect with your body.

- Sit or stand comfortably.
- Place your feet flat on the floor, feeling the contact between your feet and the ground.
- Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths.
- Imagine roots extending from your feet into the earth, anchoring you.
- Focus on the sensation of stability and support.
- Stay for 1-3 minutes, feeling the weight of your body as you breathe deeply.

Body Scan

- Lie down or sit in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax.
- Slowly move your attention through different parts of your body, starting from your toes and moving up to your head.
- Notice any sensations, tightness, or discomfort. Allow yourself to breathe into these areas and release the tension as you exhale.
- Take 5-10 minutes to complete the scan.

Gentle Stretching

- Stretch your body gently by moving into positions that feel comfortable.
- Focus on areas where you tend to hold tension, such as the shoulders, neck, and lower back.
- Breathe deeply as you hold each stretch, allowing your body to soften into the stretch without forcing it.
- Repeat stretches 3-5 times on each side.

Trauma-Releasing Breathwork

- Find a quiet space where you can sit or lie down.
- Take slow, deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth.
- On the inhale, focus on filling your belly with air, and on the exhale, release any tension or stress.
- Gradually increase the length of your inhaleds and exhaleds as you relax deeper into the breath.
- After 5-10 minutes, stop and observe how you feel. You may notice sensations or emotions moving through your body.

Shaking Exercise (Vibrational Release)

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and bend your knees slightly.
- Begin to shake your body gently, letting your hands, arms, legs, and torso move freely.
- Allow your body to shake in any direction, focusing on releasing any tension or emotional blockages.
- You can increase the intensity or speed as you feel comfortable.
- After a few minutes, slow down and stand still for a moment, noticing any shifts in your body.

Heart-Centred Breathing

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position.
- Place one hand on your heart and the other on your abdomen.
- Take slow, deep breaths, breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth.
- As you breathe, focus on the sensation of warmth and energy in your heart centre.
- Imagine your breath moving in and out through your heart, calming your mind and emotions.
- Continue for 5-10 minutes, observing any emotional shifts.

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Somatic Exercises

Somatic Experiencing Movement

- Find a quiet space where you can move freely.
- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.
- Start by gently moving your body in ways that feel natural - this might include swaying, tapping your feet, stretching your arms, or rotating your neck
- Tune into what feels right for your body, without forcing any movements.
- Allow your body to naturally express and release any pent-up energy or emotions.
- Continue moving for 5-15 minutes, observing the sensations in your body

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- Starting with your toes, tense the muscles for about 5-10 seconds, then release completely.
- Move up through your body, working on each muscle group: feet, calves, thighs, abdomen, hands, arms, shoulders, neck, and face.
- As you release each muscle group, breathe out slowly and deeply, letting go of any tension.
- Complete the process in about 10-15 minutes.

“Soft Belly” Breathing

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- Place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest
- Breathe deeply into your belly, allowing it to expand outward as you inhale and contract as you exhale.
- Make sure your chest remains mostly still while your belly rises and falls.
- Continue this breathing technique for 5-10 minutes, focusing on the soft expansion of your belly with each breath.

Voo Sound (Vocal Vibration Release)

- Sit or lie comfortably, with your body relaxed.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose.
- As you exhale, make a long, low “voo” sound (like a deep hum), letting the vibration resonate in your chest and belly.
- Repeat 5–10 times, taking a breath between each sound.
- Notice any shifts in your body - such as relaxation, tingling, or a sense of calm.

Orienting Practice

- Sit or stand in a safe, quiet space.
- Slowly look around the room or environment. Let your eyes gently scan from left to right.
- Notice colors, textures, light, and shapes - allow your gaze to land on anything that feels neutral or pleasant.
- Allow your body to relax as your nervous system registers safety.
- Take a few deep breaths as you complete this practice.

Self-Soothing Touch

- Place one hand on your heart and the other on your stomach or any area of your body that feels tense.
- Apply gentle pressure, rubbing in small circles or tapping lightly
- Focus on the sensation of warmth and comfort that your touch provides.
- Continue for a few minutes, noticing how your body responds and softens.

Remember:

Somatic exercises are designed to help you become more aware of your body’s sensations and release tension. Practice regularly to improve your emotional regulation, stress management, and overall wellbeing.

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