

Speak Freely NY

# coping with uncomfortable feelings



# managing emotions

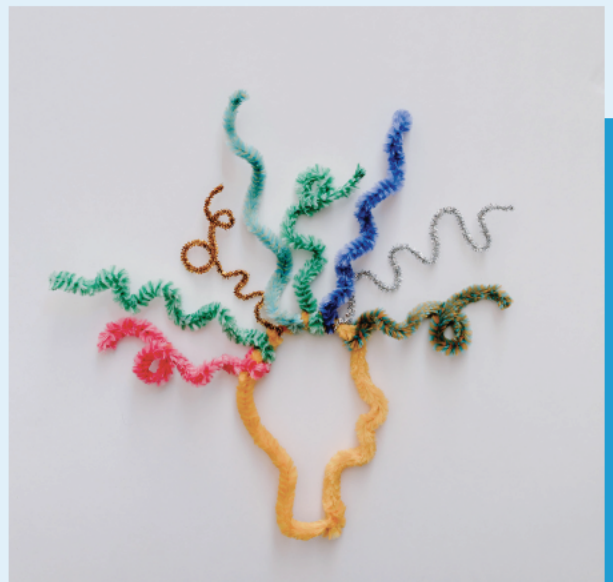


BREATHE



Everyone has feelings that are difficult or upsetting at times. It's important to remember that all emotions, even uncomfortable ones, are natural and normal. We all feel sad, overwhelmed, or anxious some of the time. Sometimes these feelings can get in the way of thinking clearly, especially in stressful situations. Learning to cope with these uneasy feelings can help you deal with stress more positively.

When feelings get overwhelming, take a moment to stop, breathe deeply, and regain focus.

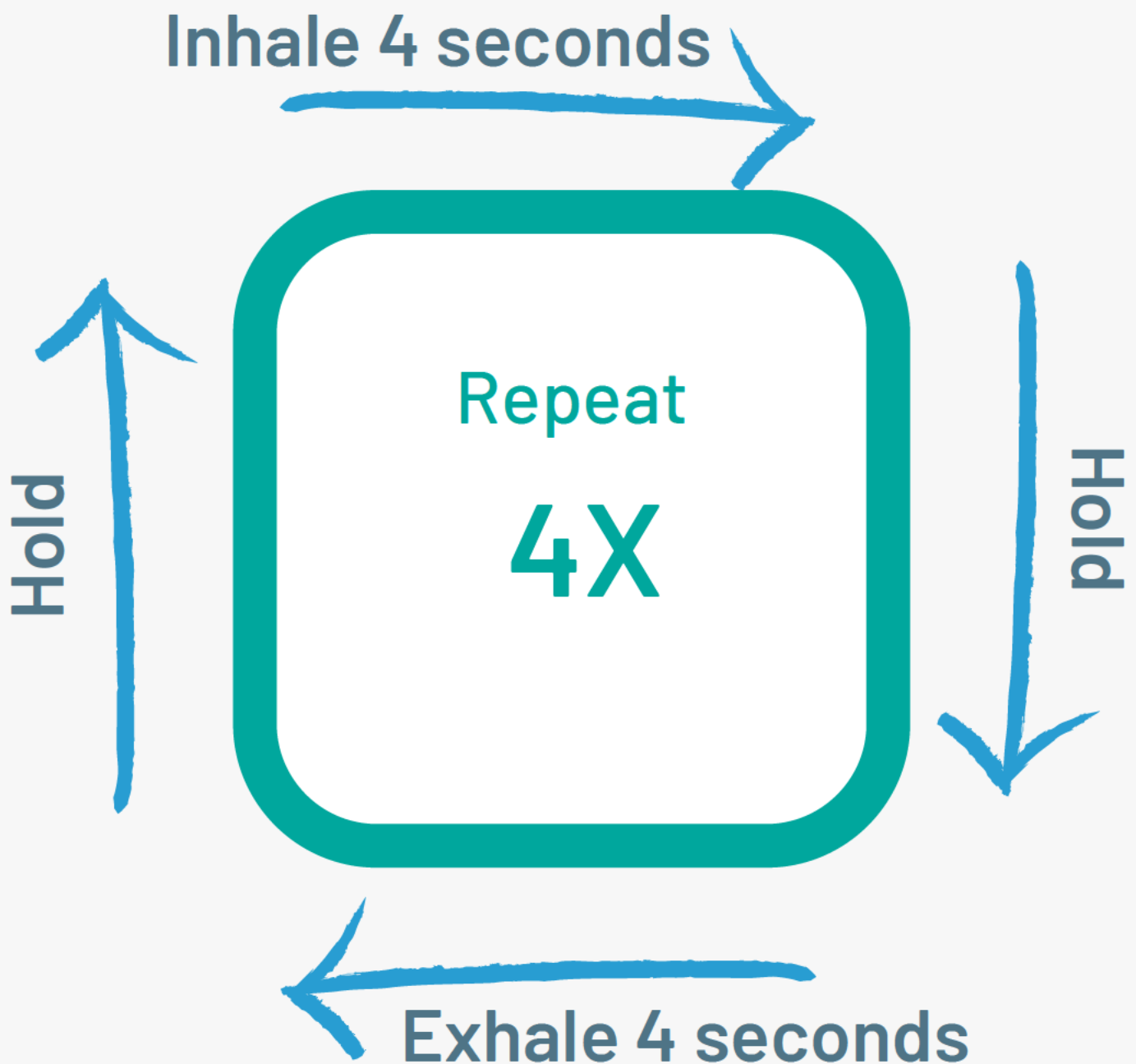


# use your breath

## regain focus

Box breathing is a quick and easy way to calm down during a stressful situation. It's often used by athletes and people with high-stress jobs to regain focus.

Start by inhaling through your nose for 4 seconds. Hold that breath in for 4 seconds. Then release and exhale for 4 seconds. Repeat this process 4 times.

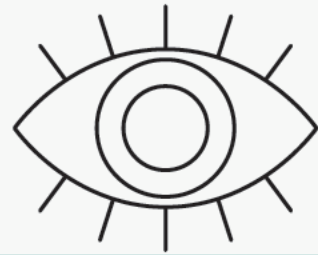


# ground yourself

When feelings become overwhelming it can be easy to get lost in your own head. Big feelings like anxiety can trigger unwanted memories and intrusive thoughts. Paying attention to your senses and your surroundings can help bring your awareness back to the present, breaking the cycle of worries and overthinking.

## see

Look around you and name 5 things you can see. Pay attention to little details such as the pattern of the wood flooring, or shadows on the walls.



## touch

What are 4 things you can touch? Notice the way your clothing feels or how your body feels sitting in your chair.



## hear

Name 3 things you can hear. Notice the sound of your own breathing, the clock ticking, or traffic outside.



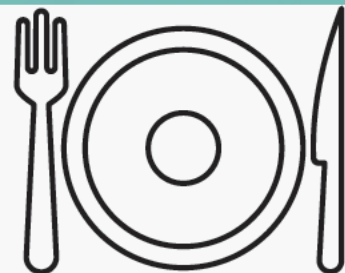
## smell

What are 2 things you can smell? Look around for something nearby if nothing jumps out at you immediately. Maybe it's a lemon on your counter, a pack of gum, or the freshly mown lawn outside.



## taste

What is 1 thing you can taste? You can keep mints or gum on you and bring your awareness to the flavor.





# take a time out

## use distraction

Do something you enjoy as a quick mental reset. Using distractions can ease strong feelings so you can return to a stressful situation with levelheadedness. Once you've put yourself in a better mindset, you can think more clearly about situations (and their solutions).

Watch a movie or show that makes you feel good

Play with pets

Exercise or play a sport

Draw, paint, or craft something

Read a book or graphic novel

Play a game

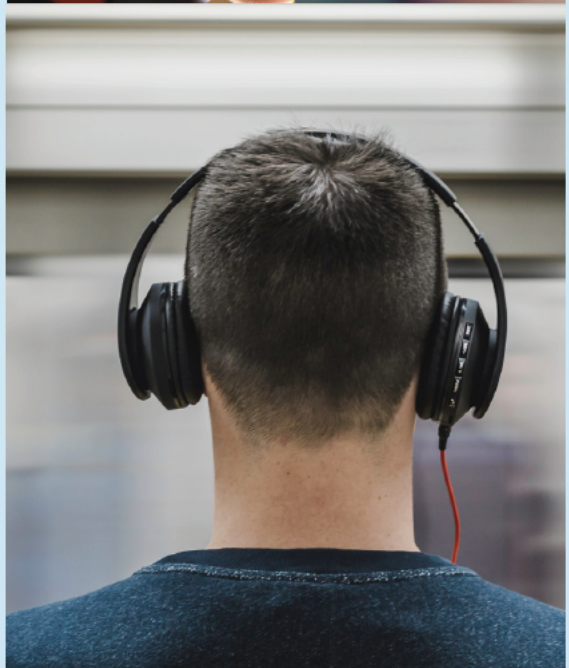
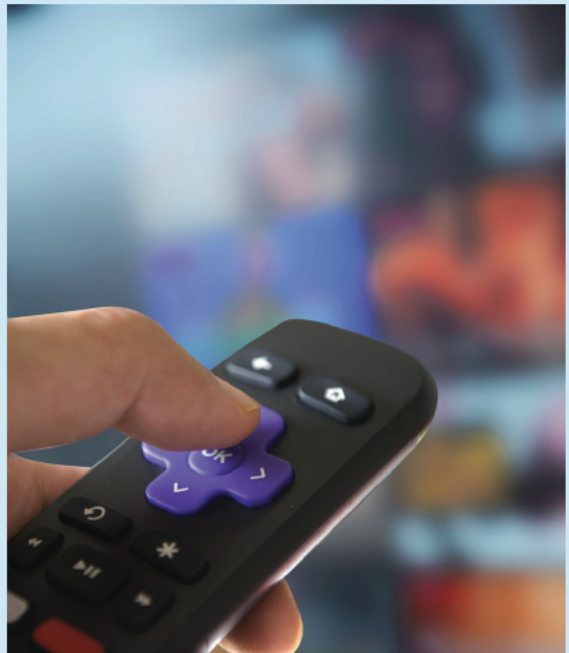
Journal or write

Listen to your favorite music

Spend time with family & friends

Go for a walk or spend time in nature

Play an instrument



# try to avoid

There are many different ways to help improve mood, but some methods are better than others. Some ways to cope can help in the short term but can make feelings of sadness, isolation, and anxiety worse in the long run.

1

Don't spend a lot of time watching videos, listening to music, or reading articles that keep you in a bad mood. Listening to sad music or reading blog posts that make you frustrated might speak to your current feelings, but it won't do anything to help you get to a better mindset.

2

Don't use confuse distraction with avoidance. Distractions are *temporary* mental resets. They help ease strong feelings so you can return to a stressful situation with levelheadedness. They aren't helpful when you use them to avoid difficulties.

3

Don't try to self-medicate. Drugs and alcohol might numb your feelings, but the impact they have on your body and mind far outweigh any temporary benefit. These substances can increase sadness, anger, and anxiety when misused.

# break the cycle



Be mindful of whom you surround yourself with, both online and in person. Having friends with similar thoughts and feelings can be helpful. They can make you feel less alone when it seems like no one else is listening. However, only relying on people who share the same beliefs can keep you in a cycle of negativity. Devoting too much attention to problems can make it difficult to refocus on finding solutions.

Limit your time with people who echo the same thoughts and beliefs. Seek out advice from others who see things differently. The solution to feeling better might come from a place you least expect.

# Speak

# freely ny

Reaching out when things feel too tough is another great coping skill. Speak Freely NY is a service for New York residents looking for a space to talk about the challenges they're facing. Whether you feel angry, ignored, or just overwhelmed, we're here to listen. Conversations are confidential. We can help connect you to someone who will listen without judgment, and work with you to make positive change.

do you need  
more help?

contact us now!

Text (646) 801-4777  
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[www.nyspeakfreely.com](http://www.nyspeakfreely.com)