

A large, artistic watercolor splash in shades of blue and green, with thin black outlines, framing the central text. The splash is composed of several overlapping, flowing shapes that create a sense of movement and depth. The colors transition from light blues and greens to deeper, more saturated tones.

ANXIETY & GROUNDING — TOOLKIT

**Simple, trauma-informed tools to
soothe your mind & body**

StillsickStillhere

Quick Breathing Techniques

When anxiety rises, your breath is the bridge back to your body. These simple techniques can help shift your nervous system from “alert” to “at ease.

Techniques:

1. Box Breathing – Inhale 4 • Hold 4 • Exhale 4 • Hold 4. Repeat x4.
2. 4-7-8 Breath – Inhale for 4 • Hold for 7 • Exhale slowly for 8. Repeat x4.
3. Extended Exhale – Inhale for 4 • Exhale for 6–8. Let each out-breath soften your shoulders.

• How it helps:

Slows the heart rate, signals safety to your nervous system, and helps shift you out of fight-or-flight so your mind can think more clearly.

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

When thoughts race, anchor yourself in what's real, right now. This grounding technique uses your senses to pull you back into the present.

- 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:

- How it helps:

Brings your focus back to the present moment using your senses, which interrupts spirals of anxious thinking and anchors you in your body.

Self-Talk Scripts

The way we speak to ourselves in hard moments matters. Try these short scripts as you would a mantra – slow, steady, and with kindness.

For High Anxiety:

“It’s okay to feel this way. You’re not in danger – your body is just trying to protect you. You’ve felt this before, and it passed. Let’s take one slow breath together. You are safe in this moment.”

For Overwhelm:

“You’re not lazy. You’re not broken. You’re just tired. Your nervous system is asking for rest, not punishment. Even small steps count. Even stillness is sacred.”

For Self-Reassurance:

“You’re doing better than you think. You’ve survived every hard day so far. You don’t need to be perfect – you just need to be present.”

• How it helps:

Replaces fearful or critical inner dialogue with calm, reassuring words, helping you self-soothe and reframe your experience with kindness.

My Calm-Down Plan

When anxiety spikes, having a plan means you don't have to think – just follow the steps you've prepared for yourself.

Sections to fill in:

- My common triggers: _____
- My calming activities (pick 3–5 from this list or add your own):
 - Step outside for fresh air
 - Play a favourite song
 - Gentle stretching or shaking out tension
 - Make a warm drink
 - Pet an animal
 - Splash cool water on face/hands
 - Write a 3-line journal entry
 - Light a candle
 - Name 3 things I'm grateful for
 - Read a page from a comforting book
- People I can call/text: _____

• How it helps:

Reduces decision fatigue in high-stress moments
and reminds you of your tools and safe
contacts.

Affirmations & Intentions

Affirmations invite the mind into a gentler state, while intentions give the day a guiding light. Choose one each morning or evening.

- I am safe in this moment.
- Calm grows with every exhale.
- Slow is still progress.
- My needs matter.
- Healing is not linear.
- I am guided, even when I feel lost.

Today's intention: _____

- How this helps:

Shifts your focus to empowering truths and encourages conscious, grounded action.