

Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Understanding what triggers your anxiety is a crucial step toward managing it effectively. An anxiety trigger is any situation, event, or thought that initiates feelings of anxiety. These triggers can be external, such as specific places or social situations, or internal, such as particular thoughts or memories.

Identifying your anxiety triggers involves paying close attention to the situations that make you feel anxious, as well as the physical symptoms, thoughts, and emotions that accompany these situations. **By becoming aware of your triggers, you can anticipate and prepare for them, reducing their impact on your life.** This worksheet will guide you through the process of identifying and analyzing your anxiety triggers, and help you develop strategies to cope with them.

PART 1: Identify Triggers

List a situation where you commonly feel anxious and describe the associated physical symptoms, thoughts, and emotions. (Example page.)

Situation Description

Giving a presentation at work.

Location

Conference room at the office.

People Involved

Team members, direct manager, senior executives, and a few clients.

Before

1 What were you feeling physically?

Heart racing and feeling like it's pounding out of my chest. Sweating more than usual, particularly on the forehead and palms

2 What were you thinking about?

- "What if they ask questions I can't answer?"
- "Everyone is expecting a flawless presentation; any mistake will make me look incompetent."

3 How did you feel emotionally?

Extremely nervous, almost panicky. Self-conscious and doubting my abilities.

After

1 What were you feeling physically?

Heart rate slowly returning to normal, but feeling drained and fatigued. A lingering headache.

2 What thoughts did you have?

- "I should have prepared better; I wasn't as confident as I wanted to be."
- "Maybe I'm just not cut out for this kind of responsibility."

3 How did you feel emotionally?

Embarrassed about a few moments where I stumbled. Extremely anxious about what my manager thought of my performance.



Scan to learn more about identifying and managing anxiety triggers.

Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Situation Description	Location	People Involved
Before		After
1 What were you feeling physically?	1 What were you feeling physically?	
2 What were you thinking about?	2 What thoughts did you have?	
3 How did you feel emotionally?	3 How did you feel emotionally?	

Situation Description	Location	People Involved
Before		After
1 What were you feeling physically?	1 What were you feeling physically?	
2 What were you thinking about?	2 What thoughts did you have?	
3 How did you feel emotionally?	3 How did you feel emotionally?	



Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

PART 2: Identify Patterns & Exploring the Impact

Look for patterns in the situations or thoughts that trigger your anxiety. Recognizing these patterns will help you anticipate when anxiety might arise and prepare yourself to manage it more effectively.

Are there common themes, people or situations that often trigger anxiety?

Are there any early warning signs or cues that help you recognize when you're being triggered?

What does your inner dialogue sound like when you feel triggered?

How do your anxiety triggers affect your behavior or decision-making?



Scan to learn more about coping strategies you can use for anxiety.

Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

What changes or adjustments could you make in your daily routine to reduce exposure to common triggers?

How can you reframe or challenge negative thoughts associated with your anxiety triggers?

PART 3: Develop Coping Strategies

Learn coping strategies that can help you manage anxiety in challenging situations.
To learn more about coping skills you can use, scan the QR code below.

- Take some deep breaths. Try to inhale through your nose for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 7, and then exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of 8. Repeat 5 times.
- Ground yourself with the 5-4-3-2-1 method. Identify 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.
- Ask yourself if your fears are based on facts or assumptions. Look for evidence that supports or contradicts these thoughts, and consider more balanced, realistic perspectives.
- Treat yourself with the same kindness and understanding you would offer a friend.

- Keep a journal to document your anxious thoughts. Writing them down can help you analyze and understand their patterns and triggers, making it easier to manage them over time.
- Gradually tense and then relax different muscle groups in your body, from head to toe, to release physical tension and promote relaxation.
- Use positive affirmations to counter anxious thoughts and affirm your ability to handle challenges.
- Create a list of your strengths, skills, and past achievements. Review this list whenever anxiety arises to remind yourself of your abilities and successes.



Scan to learn more about coping strategies you can use for anxiety.