Identifying Triggers

You're not alone in your feelings of anxiety - I've been there too!

Anxiety can be caused by many things, like genetics, brain chemistry, past experiences, and even stress from everyday life. Things like lack of sleep, too much caffeine, or personal pressures can make it worse.

Our brains are wired to react to stress, and when we experience anxiety, areas like the amygdala can become more active, making us feel overwhelmed. The good news is, by paying attention to your feelings and recognizing your triggers, you can start to understand what sets off your anxiety. Knowing these triggers helps you take steps to feel more in control and find ways to manage it better.

By understanding the patterns behind what stresses us out, we activate the part of our brain responsible for logical thinking and planning: the prefrontal cortex. This helps us problem-solve and take meaningful steps to feel better.

The worksheet below is here to help you identify those triggers and find practical ways to regain balance.

You can create a healthier relationship with anxious thoughts and build resilience. Revisit this worksheet regularly to refine your strategies and track your growth.

You've got this!

Identifying Triggers

Think about 2-3 recent times when you felt anxious.
Use the prompts below to guide your reflections:

- What was happening when you started to feel anxious?

  Moment 1

  Moment 2

  Moment 3

- Were there specific events, people, or situations that contributed to the feeling?

  Moment 1

  Moment 2

  Moment 3

- How did your body react? (e.g., tight chest, racing heart, fatigue)

  Moment 1

  Moment 2

  Moment 3

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Take a look back at your answers on the previous page.

- Are there common themes or triggers in the situations? (e.g., deadlines, conflicts, lack of sleep)

- What emotions came up most often when you felt anxious? (e.g., anxiety, frustration, helplessness)

- Are there specific times of day or environments where anxiety tends to occur? (e.g., mornings, noisy places)

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For each trigger you identified, think about one practical step you can take to reduce its impact.

For example:

- Trigger: Tight deadlines.
- Strategy: Break tasks into smaller steps and set mini-deadlines.

- Trigger: Crowded environments.
- Strategy: Plan quiet breaks or wear noise-cancelling headphones.

Trigger

Strategy

Trigger

Strategy

Trigger

Strategy

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Things don't always go to plan and there can be times when something might not work even though it has before.

Use this space to track how you feel after using your strategies. By regularly recording, you can see where strategies are working and where they are not. Where they are not, you can make adjustments to better suit your needs.

Record the date, situation, and how effective the strategy was at reducing your feelings of anxiety:

DATE	SITUATION TRIGGERED	STRATEGY USED	EFFECTIVENESS 1-5	NOTES