



# Election Anxiety Workbook

**1. Identifying Triggers**

**2. Setting Boundaries**

**3. Self-Care Inventory**

**4. Cognitive Restructuring**

**5. PLEASE Skill**

Understanding what triggers your election anxiety is a crucial step toward managing it effectively. An election anxiety trigger is any situation, event, or thought related to the election that initiates feelings of anxiety. These triggers can be external, such as consuming certain news reports, engaging in political discussions, or seeing social media posts about the election. They can also be internal, such as specific thoughts about the future or memories of past elections.

Identifying your election 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 election anxiety triggers and help you develop strategies to cope with them during the election season.

## PART 1: Identify Triggers

List a situation where you commonly feel anxious about the elections and describe the associated physical symptoms, thoughts, and emotions.

### 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 Elections Anxiety Triggers

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

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



## PART 2: Identify Patterns & Exploring the Impact

Look for patterns in the situations or thoughts that trigger your election 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 where you feel anxious about the elections?

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

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Are there specific thoughts or beliefs that frequently occur with your election anxiety?

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

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

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

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## 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.

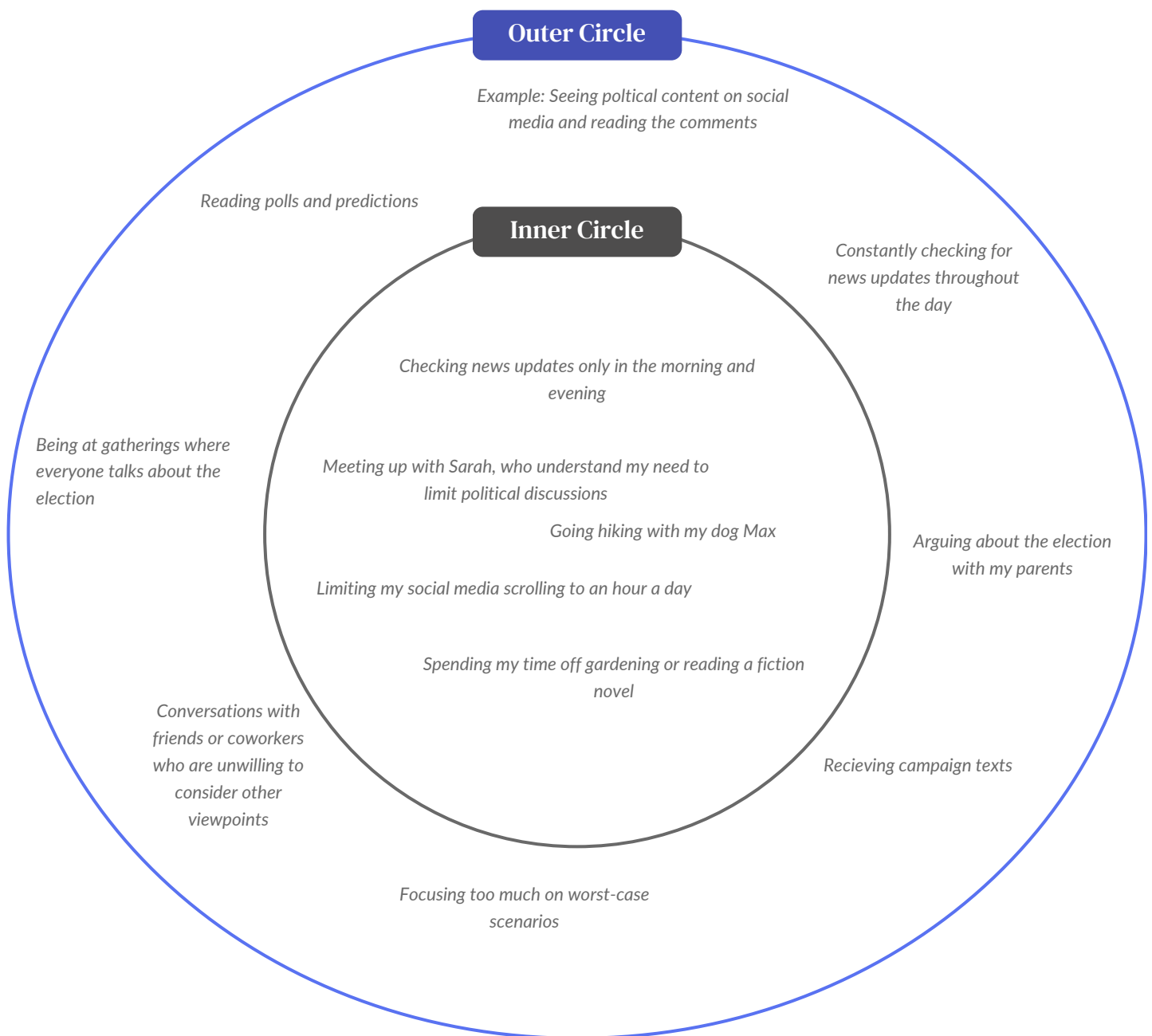


# How to Set Healthy Boundaries

This worksheet is designed to help you identify and set healthy boundaries to manage anxiety related to the election. **By setting clear boundaries around your exposure to election content and discussions, you can reduce stress, protect your mental health, and maintain a sense of balance during this time.** Use this worksheet to explore what boundaries you need, how to communicate them, and strategies for maintaining them.

## PART 1: Visualize Your Boundaries

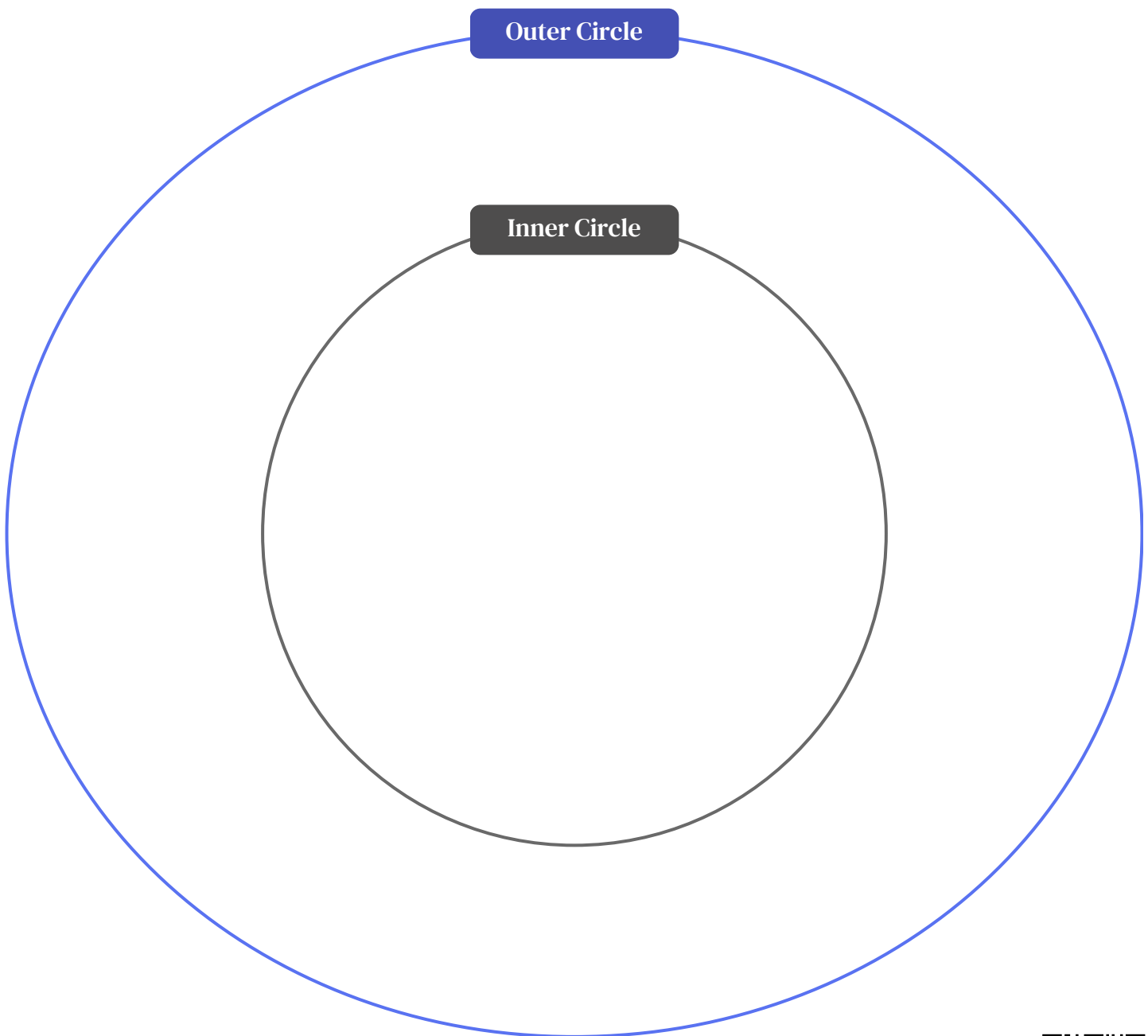
Inside the circle, write everything that makes you feel calm, informed, and in control during the election season. On the outside of the circle, Write down anything that makes you feel stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed during the election season. These are the things that push your boundaries and need further attention.



# How to Set Healthy Boundaries

When filling out your inner and outer circle, here are some questions to consider:

- Who or what makes me feel supported and understood when I'm feeling anxious about the election?
- Who or what makes me feel more anxious or misunderstood when I'm feeling anxious about the election?
- What types of election-related content or conversations tend to increase my anxiety or stress levels?
- What types of election-related content or conversations tend to decrease my anxiety or stress levels?
- What environments or settings help me maintain a balanced perspective on the election?
- What environments or settings make it harder for me to maintain a balanced perspective on the election?



# How to Set Healthy Boundaries

## PART 2: How to Communicate Your Boundaries

Here are some basic rules and examples for communicating your boundaries effectively.

### Use Confident Body Language

Stand or sit up straight, maintain eye contact, and use firm but calm gestures to convey confidence and assertiveness.

### Be Clear & Set Consequences

Be specific about what behavior you want to change and clearly state what will happen if your boundary is not respected.

### Keep Your Tone Calm and Respectful:

Speak calmly and assertively, avoiding raised voices or aggressive tones to maintain a respectful atmosphere.

### Practice Active Listening:

Listen to the other person's response without interrupting and acknowledge their perspective while staying firm on your boundary.

### Information Boundaries

- Limit news consumption to X amount of time per day
- Unfollow or mute anxiety-inducing social media accounts
- Avoid checking news or social media right before bed
- Subscribe only to news sources that provide balanced coverage
- Check election updates only 1-2 times per day

### Emotional Boundaries

- Step away from conversations that make me feel anxious
- Avoid engaging in discussions about the election when I'm already feeling stressed
- Set aside time each day to engage in activities unrelated to the election.
- Prioritize mental health over staying constantly informed.

### Interpersonal Boundaries

- Avoid discussing the election with loved ones who tend to become argumentative
- Avoid political discussions during work hours
- Limit participation in group chats or online conversations about politics
- Tell loved ones that I'm taking a break from political conversations





# How to Set Healthy Boundaries

## PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries (Example Page)

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

### Situation:

*Example: My friends frequently share alarming news articles in our group chat, and I feel obligated to read and respond to them, even when it's overwhelming.*

### Boundary I will set:

*In the group chat, I will send the following text: "I'm trying to reduce my anxiety, so I'd appreciate it if we could keep this chat light and avoid political news for now." If they continue to share, I'll mute the conversation and check in only when I feel up to it, focusing on the parts of the chat that are supportive and positive.*

### Any potential challenges:

*Stacey tends to ignore my needs, even when I state them overtly. Although I can mute her on the group chat, I cannot avoid her and her political discussions when we hang out in person.*

### How I will handle these challenges:

*I can let my other friends know how important this is to me, and if they can help me redirect Stacey to more neutral conversations. If that doesn't work, I can avoid large group hangouts, and hang out one-on-one with friends until the elections have passed.*



# How to Set Healthy Boundaries

## PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

**Situation:**

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**Boundary I will set:**

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**Any potential challenges:**

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**How I will handle these challenges:**

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# Self-Care Inventory

Election anxiety can be overwhelming, but practicing self-care is a powerful way to manage stress and maintain your well-being during this time. Self-care involves any activity that enhances your mental, emotional, or physical health. For instance, limiting exposure to election news, engaging in calming activities, and connecting with supportive people can help reduce anxiety and improve your overall well-being. A self-care routine is not one-size-fits-all, so it's important to experiment with different strategies to find what works best for you.

This worksheet is designed to help you explore various specific self-care activities that can alleviate election-related anxiety. You will be asked to rank each activity on a scale from 1-3 to determine how well you are currently engaging in these practices. After ranking, you can “star” the activities you would like to do more often. The goal of this worksheet is to help you recognize the different types of self-care available to you, identify what you are doing well, and pinpoint areas where you can improve to feel better overall during the election season.

## Ranking

- 1 I rarely engage in this, and it is not a regular part of my routine.
- 2 I occasionally engage in this, but it is not consistent.
- 3 I regularly engage in this, and it is a frequent part of my routine.
- ★ I want to do this more frequently.

## 1 2 3 ★ Physical Self-Care: Improving your physical health.

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Engaging in regular physical activity such as walking, running, yoga, or strength training.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ensuring you get enough restful sleep each night to rejuvenate your body.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eating a balanced and nutritious diet, including plenty of fruits, vegetables, and grains.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drinking enough water throughout the day to stay hydrated.                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maintaining good hygiene practices such as bathing, brushing teeth, and grooming.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attending regular check-ups and following medical advice from healthcare professionals.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Taking time to relax and unwind, through activities like taking a bath and getting a massage. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limiting or avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spending time outdoors in natural sunlight to enhance vitamin D levels and improve mood.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paying attention to your body's needs, such as stretching when tense or resting when tired.   |



# Self-Care Inventory

1 2 3



## Emotional Self-Care: Processing & expressing your emotions.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Participating in activities you enjoy to boost your mood and provide a sense of fulfillment.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Avoiding political conversations during quality time with friends and family.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Practicing mindfulness to stay present instead of focusing on the “what ifs” of election results.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Write down your thoughts and feelings about the election to process your emotions and gain clarity.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Keeping a gratitude journal or reflecting on things you are thankful for.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Using affirmations, such as "I am in control of my reactions" or "I can handle whatever comes my way."

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Reading a lighthearted book, listening to upbeat music, or watching a funnyTV show

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Setting boundaries around how much news or social media you consume.

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☐

Doing emotional check-ins where you ask yourself how you're feeling and what you need emotionally.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Regular sessions with a therapist to help manage your anxiety and develop coping strategies.

1 2 3



## Social Self-Care: Fostering & maintaining healthy relationships.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Reaching out to friends who share your concerns or who can offer a comforting conversation.

☐ ☐ ☐
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Asking for help from friends or family when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.

☐ ☐ ☐
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Setting boundaries with friends and family about discussing politics if it increases your anxiety.

☐ ☐ ☐
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Planning activities with friends or family that are completely unrelated to the election.

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Taking regular breaks from social media to avoid heated political discussions.

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Channeling your energy into a cause you care about, whether related to the election or something else.

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When engaging in conversations, focusing on listening more than speaking.

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Engaging in group activities, like a virtual book club or a fitness class, that have nothing to do with politics.

☐ ☐ ☐
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Politely asking coworkers or acquaintances to avoid discussing election news during breaks.

☐ ☐ ☐
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Scheduling intentional alone time with your romantic partner.



# Self-Care Inventory

1 2 3



**Professional Self-Care:** Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and pursuing career development opportunities.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Clearly defining work hours and sticking to them to ensure a healthy work-life balance.

☐ ☐ ☐
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Stepping away from work to recharge, through daily short breaks and using vacation time.

☐ ☐ ☐
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Talking to a supervisor or HR about mental health challenges (if it feels safe).

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Exploring available support options, such as employee assistance programs (EAP).

☐ ☐ ☐
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Organizing and prioritizing work tasks to manage workload effectively and reduce stress.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Ensuring your work environment is comfortable and conducive to productivity.

☐ ☐ ☐
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Establishing achievable work goals and celebrating small accomplishments.

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Being kind to yourself during work and avoiding excessive self-criticism.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Building positive relationships with coworkers for mutual support and camaraderie.

1 2 3



**Spiritual Self-Care:** Nurturing your spirit and providing purpose.

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Practicing meditation to connect with your inner self and find peace and clarity.

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☐

Engaging in prayer or other forms of communication with a higher power.

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☐

Spending time in nature to experience connection to the world around you.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Regularly reflecting on what you are thankful for to cultivate an appreciative mindset.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Reading inspirational books, scriptures, or quotes to uplift and inspire your spirit.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Participating in spiritual or religious community activities.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Engaging in artistic activities, such as painting, music, or writing.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Performing acts of kindness and service to others, fostering a sense of purpose.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Acting in accordance with your morals to create a sense of integrity in your life.

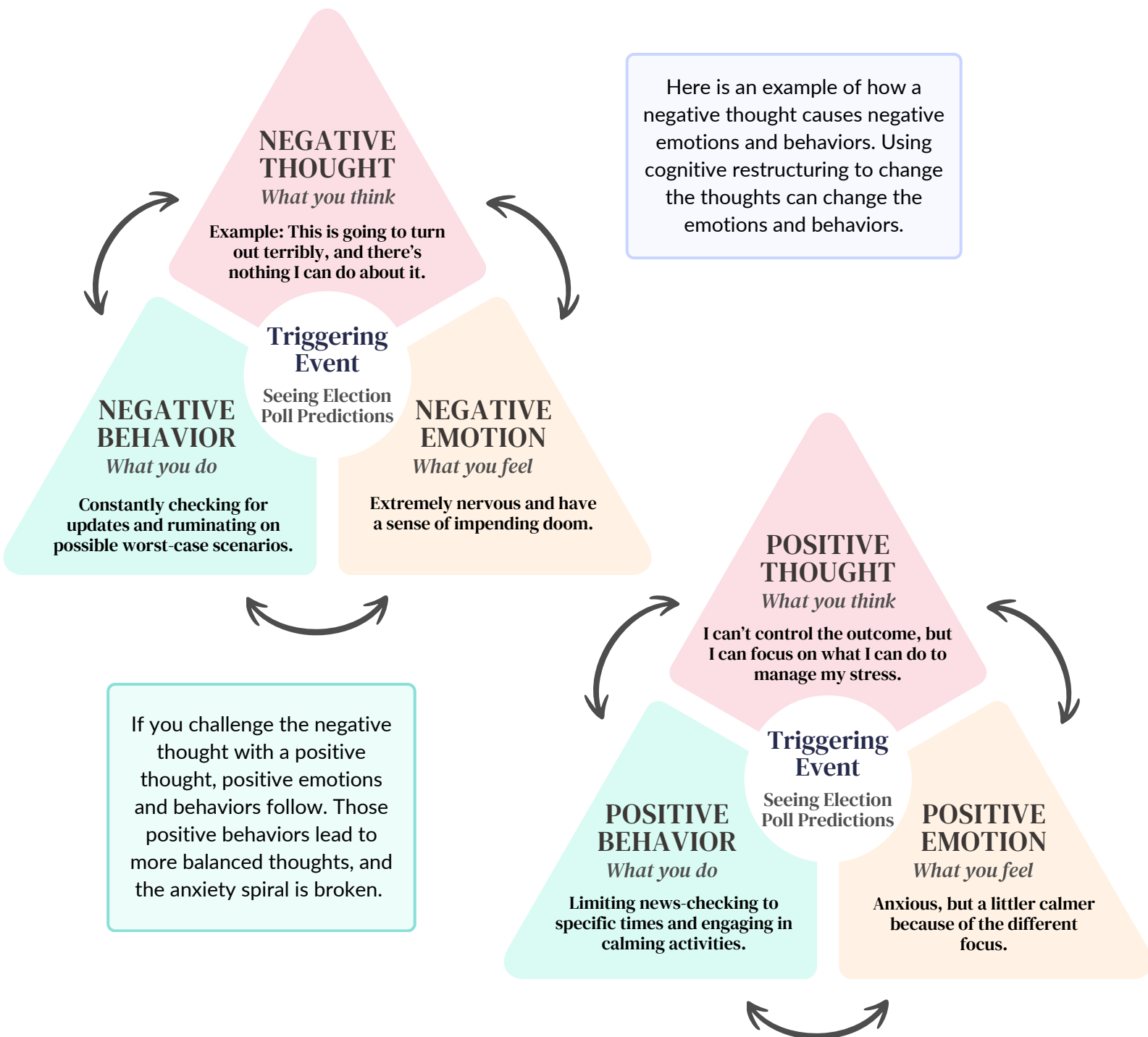
☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Spending time with the people who give your life meaning.



# Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive restructuring is a CBT technique that involves recognizing negative and unhelpful thoughts, examining the evidence for and against these thoughts, and developing more helpful alternative thoughts. **For someone experiencing election anxiety, cognitive restructuring can help challenge and change the anxious and debilitating thoughts that contribute to their feelings of fear and worry.**



# Cognitive Restructuring

## THOUGHT

What you think in a situation

*Ex: This is going to turn out terribly.*

## EMOTION

How you feel

*Ex: I feel anxious and scared.*

## BEHAVIOR

How you act in the situation

*Ex: Freeze from the fear.*

**It's important to understand that our automatic thoughts affect our feelings and influence our behavior.**

You can recognize unhealthy thought patterns that are causing you increased anxiety by practicing cognitive restructuring. Use the questions below each time you're experiencing unwanted thoughts that lead to unhealthy behaviors.

**Thoughts**

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**Is my thought factual?**

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**What evidence do I have to support my thought?**

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**What would someone else say about the situation?**

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**Is it possible to view this situation differently?**

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# DBT PLEASE Skill

The PLEASE skill in dialectal behavior therapy (DBT) is a simple acronym that helps you remember the basics of mental and physical well-being. **By taking care of your body and mind, you create a more stable foundation for managing anxious thoughts and emotions surrounding the election.** This worksheet will guide you through applying the PLEASE skill to manage intense emotions that get in the way of feeling good.

PL

## Treat Physical Illness

Make sure to look after your overall physical health by having regular check-ups, staying active, and following any medical advice. Taking care of your body helps keep your mind stable and healthy.

E

## Balanced Eating

Try to eat regular, healthy meals. Good nutrition can help keep your mood steady and give you the energy you need, making you less likely to feel upset or stressed.

A

## Avoid Mood-Altering Substances

Stay away from substances like alcohol and drugs that can affect your mood and thinking. Avoiding these helps you think clearly and manage your emotions better, which is important for your mental health.

S

## Balanced Sleep

Getting enough sleep is very important for handling your emotions well. Try to keep a regular sleep schedule. Good sleep helps your mind work properly and keeps your emotions steady.

E

## Exercise Daily

Exercise can lift your mood, reduce stress, and improve your overall emotional well-being. It also helps your body produce endorphins, which make you feel happier.





**PHYSICAL ILLNESS: Take care of your physical health.**

Track your progress daily for a week to see if you are attending to your physical health on a regular basis or if there is room for improvement.

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Scheduled and attended doctors appointments							
Took medications							
Took a shower and washed face							
Brushed my teeth							
Moved my body							
Ate nutritious food							
Went outside							
Drank enough water							
Limited time on social media							
Cleaned the house							
Spoke to another person							

What challenges did you face when taking care of your physical health and how can you overcome them?



**BALANCED EATING: What we eat contributes to our mental health.**

Keep track of the foods you consume for several days and how you feel after you eat them. The more specific you can be about how you feel after eating, the better!

Food Consumed	How I Felt After Eating it
1. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....
2. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....
3. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....
4. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....
5. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....
6. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....
7. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....
8. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....
9. ..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....

**Which foods made you feel the best & what foods do you want to avoid going forward?**

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# DBT PLEASE Skill

## **AVOID MOOD ALTERING SUBSTANCES:**

**Evaluate your use of substances that may affect your mood.**

Substances such as alcohol, non-prescription medications, drugs, and caffeine can affect your ability to regulate your emotions. One of the keys to emotional stability is to take medication as prescribed and avoid substances used for self-medicating.

**What mood altering substances do you use?**

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**What are your personal reasons for avoiding mood altering substances?**

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**What steps can you take to reduce or eliminate these substances?**

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**What challenges might you face and how can you overcome them?**

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# DBT PLEASE Skill

## BALANCED SLEEP: Getting enough sleep is important to your mental health.

You should strive for 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night and establish good sleep habits to help regulate your mood.

With a sleep diary, you can log your bedtime, night awakenings, and morning wake-up times. This helps you see your sleep patterns and overall sleep duration, as well as how often your sleep is disrupted. Additionally, a sleep diary helps you track activities affecting your sleep. You'll note when you exercise, nap, take medication, or consume caffeine or alcohol.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** (1) Write the date and type of day: Work, School, or Day Off. (2) Put the letter "C" in the box when you have coffee, cola or tea. Put "M" when you take any medicine. Put "A" when you drink alcohol. Put "E" when you exercise. (3) Put a "B" in the box to show when you go to bed. Put a "Z" in the box that shows when you think you fell asleep. (4) Put a "Z" in all the boxes that show when you are asleep at night or when you take a nap during the day. (5) Leave boxes empty to show when you wake up at night and when you are awake during the day. **SAMPLE ENTRY BELOW:**

		P.M.											A.M.												
Date	Type of Day	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
7/12	Work		C					E		A		M	B	Z	Z	Z	Z		Z	Z	Z				

		P.M.											A.M.												
Date	Type of Day	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11



**EXERCISE DAILY:** Exercise is a great way to balance your mood.

Though it can be challenging to incorporate exercise into your daily routine, completing it can make you feel better physically and mentally. Even 20-30 minutes of brisk walking can be beneficial.

DATE & TIME	TYPE OF EXERCISE	DURATION	INTENSITY

Which workouts did you enjoy the most & want to do more?

What challenges did you face and how can you overcome them?





# Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

## You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



**300+**  
Companies Reviewed



**2,350+**  
Hours of Firsthand Experience



**1,150+**  
Data Points Analyzed



### [Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

### [Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



### [Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

### [Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

