

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: Mapping Your Triggers and Responses

Use this section to explore specific situations where you've encountered triggers, how you responded, and how it affected your thoughts, emotions, and physical state. The outcome of the situation could be positive or negative.

Situation & Response to Trigger

Giving a presentation at work. As the presentation approached, I became consumed by self-doubt and kept replaying worst-case scenarios in my head. Instead of practicing or seeking support, I procrastinated and avoided preparing, which made me even more anxious and unprepared when it was time to present.

Before

1 What were you feeling physically?

Heart racing, hands feel clammy, and experiencing dry mouth

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.



Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Instructions: Fill in the following section to explore a specific situation where you've encountered a trigger and responded **NEGATIVELY**. Record how it affected your thoughts, emotions, and physical state.

Situation & Response to Trigger

Before

1 What were you feeling physically?

2 What were you thinking about?

3 How did you feel emotionally?

After

1 What were you feeling physically?

2 What thoughts did you have?

3 How did you feel emotionally?



Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Instructions: Fill in the following section to explore a specific situation where you've encountered a trigger and responded **POSITIVELY**. Record how it affected your thoughts, emotions, and physical state.

Situation & Response to Trigger

Before

1 What were you feeling physically?

2 What were you thinking about?

3 How did you feel emotionally?

After

1 What were you feeling physically?

2 What thoughts did you have?

3 How did you feel emotionally?



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?



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

How can you reframe or challenge negative thoughts associated with your 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 or [click here](#) to learn more about managing anxiety triggers.



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.

