

# Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Anxiety triggers are specific people, places, situations, or stimuli that can provoke feelings of anxiety, sometimes reminding you of past stressful or overwhelming experiences. Some triggers may be obvious, while others are subtle and harder to pinpoint. Becoming familiar with your triggers can help you build effective coping strategies to manage anxiety in healthy ways.

You might already recognize some of your triggers. List them below:

## Sounds

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## Sights

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## Smells

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## Emotions

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## Locations

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## Situations

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*\*This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



# Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Tracking a specific trigger allows you to become more aware of the patterns surrounding it, giving you insight into what sets off the reaction, why it feels overwhelming, and how it affects you. With this information, you can start to practice coping strategies that directly address the specific elements of the trigger. To get started, think of a recent experience where you felt triggered, and map out the details of that situation to gain more clarity on its impact and meaning.

1

**What was the situation?**

*Describe the setting, including where you were, who was there, and what was happening.*

2

**What emotions came up when you felt triggered?**

*Identify specific feelings, such as fear, anger, sadness, or shame.*

3

**What thoughts ran through your mind when the trigger occurred?**

*Note any specific thoughts, beliefs, or memories that surfaced in that moment.*

4

**How did your body respond physically?**

*Describe any physical reactions, such as a racing heart, muscle tension, sweating, or feeling cold or hot.*

5

**Were there people, sounds, smells, or sights involved that seemed to make the reaction stronger?**

*Look for specific sensory details that may have amplified the trigger.*

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# Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

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?

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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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What thoughts go through your mind when you feel triggered?

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

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# Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

To work through a trigger, it's essential to remind our body that we're not in danger, helping it to return to a state of calm. By grounding ourselves in the present and assuring our body of safety, we can start to rewire our response to triggers, gradually reducing their intensity and reclaiming control over how we feel and react.

**How can you remind yourself that you are safe when you're experiencing a trigger?**

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## Examples of Coping Strategies

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.

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# 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



**325+**  
Companies Reviewed



**3,625+**  
Hours of Firsthand Experience



**1,545+**  
Data Points Analyzed



### [Best Online Therapy for Anxiety](#)

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.

