

Overthinking Reset Resource Library

A gentle way to use this resource

Begin anywhere. Read one section at a time, choose only what fits, and skip, adapt, pause, or stop as needed. Try one practice before adding another. Reflection is an invitation, not a requirement.

Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | My Reflective Collective

Educational wellness material. Not therapy, diagnosis, medical advice, crisis care, or a substitute for individualized professional support.

Before you begin

Take a moment to notice where you are starting. There is no correct answer and no requirement to complete every prompt.

What is most present?	What would feel supportive?
[ ] Tension or restlessness [ ] Heavy emotion [ ] Numbness or shutdown [ ] Racing thoughts [ ] Low energy [ ] Something else: _____	[ ] More steadiness [ ] More clarity [ ] Comfort or rest [ ] A practical next step [ ] Connection or support [ ] Something else: _____

A simple rhythm

1. Notice	Name what is happening without judging it.
2. Choose	Select one prompt or practice that fits your energy and circumstances.
3. Try	Use it gently for a clear amount of time. Smaller still counts.
4. Check	Notice whether you feel even slightly steadier, clearer, safer, or less alone.

Low-energy option

Read only the headings. Circle or note one sentence that feels useful. Then choose one action that takes five minutes or less. You can return later; stopping is allowed.

A practical reflection worksheet for grounding, slowing thoughts, and choosing one doable next step.

Use this at your own pace. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop. You are allowed to choose what fits your body, culture, privacy, energy, safety, access needs, and real-life limits today.

A printable reflection and practice resource Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC. This worksheet is a free educational wellness resource from My Reflective Collective.

Use what supports you. Skip, pause, adapt, or connect with a licensed therapist, healthcare provider, advocate, or trusted support if reflection brings something up.

Important information before you begin

Anxiety Spiral & Overthinking Reset Resource Library

Choose what is appropriate for you

_____
_____ Participation is voluntary. You may skip a prompt, keep your eyes open, change an exercise, pause, or stop. Some material may bring up discomfort, strong emotions, memories, dizziness, or physical sensations. The resource may use clinical or wellness terms to explain general concepts; those terms are not a personalized assessment or recommendation.

No promised outcome

No particular physical, emotional, legal, relationship, or other result is promised. Information can become outdated, and experiences differ. Consult an appropriately qualified professional about your individual needs, medications, health conditions, safety, legal matter, or treatment decisions.

Emergency and crisis needs call or text 988 for suicide or crisis support. Call 911 for an immediate emergency when that is safe and appropriate. Outside the United States, use your local emergency or crisis resources.

By continuing, you acknowledge that you have read this page and understand the resource's educational scope.

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immediate danger or medical emergency. Call or text 988 in the U.S. or Canada for suicide or mental health

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Anxiety Spiral & Overthinking Reset

Resource

Library

A Guide for Calming the Nervous System, Stopping Thought Loops, and

Regaining

Clarity

About This Resource

Anxiety and overthinking are not signs that something is wrong with you.

They are signs that your nervous system is trying to protect you-sometimes too aggressively, or without all the current information.

For many people (especially those with ADHD, trauma histories, PTSD/CPTSD, or chronic stress), the brain can get stuck in "loop

mode":

l Replaying conversations l Predicting worst-case scenarios l Overanalyzing decisions l Searching for certainty that never fully arrives This is not a thinking problem alone-it is also a nervous system activation pattern.

The goal of this guide is not to eliminate anxiety completely, but to help you:

l Interrupt spirals early l Regulate your body l Separate facts from fear l Return to the present moment l Re-engage with your life instead of your thoughts

Step 1: Name What Is Happening

When I am spiraling, it usually looks like:

- Replaying past conversations

- Worrying

about future outcomes

- Assuming the worst

- Feeling

physically tense or restless

- Feeling

mentally "stuck"

- Needing

reassurance repeatedly

- Avoiding

tasks

- Over-researching

or overthinking

Right now, I am experiencing:

Step 2: Separate Facts vs. Fear

Write it out:

FACTS (what I KNOW):

FEARS (what my mind is predicting):

Reminder:

Fear

feels like truth when the nervous system is activated.

Step 3: Nervous System Reset First (Not

Thinking

First)

Before trying to "figure it out," regulate your body.

Choose one:

- Cold water on face or hands
- 10 slow breaths (longer

exhale than inhale)

- Walk

for 5-10 minutes

- Shake

out your arms/legs

- Name 5 things you can see
- Hold

something cold or textured

- Sit

with feet on the floor and press down

- Listen

to grounding music

Ask yourself:

What does my body need right now?

_____

_____

Step 4: Break the Thought Loop

Instead of arguing with the thought, label it:

"This is a worry loop." "This is a trauma response." "This is my brain trying to protect me." "This is uncertainty discomfort."

Then gently redirect:

What is one thing I can do in the next 5 minutes?

_____

_____

Step 5: ADHD-Friendly Reset (If I Am

Stuck

or

Avoiding)

If I cannot start a task:

- Open the document only
- Set

a 5-minute timer

- Do

the first micro-step only

- Make

a messy draft on purpose

- Reduce

the task to "ugly first

version"

- Start

without finishing

Important reminder:

Starting is the hardest part-not doing.

Step 6: Reality Check Questions

Ask yourself:

Is this happening right now, or am I predicting it?

_____

_____ What would I tell a friend in this exact situation? _____

_____ What is most likely, not worst case? _____

_____ What is actually in my control today? _____

Step 7: Disengage from the Spiral

Choose one redirect:

- Text someone supportive
- Watch

something light

- Do

a small

physical task

- Step

outside for fresh air

- Take

a shower

- Write

everything in your head onto paper

- Switch

environments You are not "avoiding"-you are interrupting a loop.

Step 8: Calming Statements (Not

Affirmations-Grounded

Statements)

Use what feels believable:

l "I can handle this moment." l "I don't need to solve everything right now." l "Uncertainty is uncomfortable, not dangerous." l "This feeling will pass." l "I can slow down before I decide anything." l "My thoughts are not facts." l "I have gotten through this before."

Podcasts for Anxiety, ADHD, and

Overthinking

The Mel Robbins Podcast

The

ADHD

Experts

Podcast

(ADDitude

Magazine)

The

Huberman

Lab

Podcast

The

Anxious

Truth

Podcast

Therapy

Chat

Podcast

Ten

Percent

Happier

Podcast

The

Mindset

Mentor

Books for Anxiety, ADHD, and Emotional

Regulation

The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook - Edmund Bourne

Taking

Charge

of

Adult

ADHD

- Russell

Barkley

The

Happiness

Trap

- Russ

Harris

Self-Compassion

- Kristin

Neff

How

to

Keep

House

While

Drowning

- KC

Davis

Burnout

- Emily

&

Amelia

Nagoski

Music for Grounding

Instrumental / lo-fi beats

Ambient

nature sounds

Calming

piano playlists

Guided

meditation soundscapes

Brown

noise / white noise (Search: "anxiety relief music", "ADHD focus music", "grounding playlist")

If You Are in a Spiral Right Now

You do not need to solve your entire life in this moment.

You do not need certainty to be okay.

You do not need perfect answers before you can rest.

Right now, your job is not clarity.

Your job is regulation.

One breath. One step. One moment at a time. danger or medical emergency. Call or text 988 in the U.S. or Canada for suicide or mental health crisis

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More free My Reflective Collective tools

Printable links below. The worksheet wording itself is unchanged.

Scan the QR code or use the first link to open this worksheet online.

The online reader can support read-aloud tools and browser translation.

Read/listen to this worksheet online https://myreflectivecollective.com/worksheet-reader.html?file=overthinking-reset-resource-library.pdf Positive affirmations and short mantras

Scan to read/listen

https://myreflectivecollective.com/affirmations.html Soundscapes and grounding audio tools https://myreflectivecollective.com/soundscapes.html

More free worksheets and PDFs

https://myreflectivecollective.com/resource-center.html Crisis and safety resources https://myreflectivecollective.com/crisis-resources.html

Website disclaimer

https://myreflectivecollective.com/disclaimer.html

Educational wellness notice

This worksheet and website offer educational wellness and self-reflection tools only.

They are not therapy, diagnosis, medical care, legal advice, crisis care, or individualized safety planning.

Pause or stop any activity that feels wrong, unsafe, inaccessible, or too much.

For immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support.

SAFETY, PRIVACY & EDUCATIONAL USE

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE - MICHELLE D. ELDER, MSW, LMHC

If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency: Call 911 in the United States or use your local emergency number. For U.S. suicide or mental-health crisis support, call or text 988. For relationship-safety support, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233, text START to 88788, or visit TheHotline.org from a safer device when possible. _____ _____ Privacy and safer searching If someone may monitor your device, accounts, internet connection, location, downloads, or browser activity, consider using a safer device and a trusted network. Private browsing may reduce locally saved history but does not make activity invisible. Clearing history can also be noticed. A website Quick Exit button changes the page; it cannot erase browser, download, router, account, employer, school, carrier, or device records. Choose only steps that feel safer in your situation.

Do not store identifying or safety-sensitive answers where another person may find them.

Educational scope and professional limits This resource provides general psychoeducation, reflection, and wellness support. It is not therapy, counseling, diagnosis, assessment, treatment, medical advice, legal advice, crisis response, forensic evaluation, or an individualized safety plan.

It does not replace care from a licensed clinician, healthcare professional, attorney, trained advocate, emergency service, or other qualified professional. Laws, court procedures, services, and risks vary by location and circumstance.

Choice, pacing, and inclusion You may skip, change, discuss, dictate, draw, pause, or stop any activity. No exercise can determine what you experienced, diagnose a condition, prove a legal claim, guarantee safety, or tell you whether to stay, leave, report, reconcile, forgive, or pursue court action. Adapt language and activities for culture, identity, disability, neurotype, age, literacy, sensory needs, and personal preference. Automatic translation can make mistakes; confirm legal, medical, emergency, and safety-critical wording with a qualified person.

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MyReflectiveCollective.com - Pause - Reflect - Learn - Practice

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE - NOT THERAPY OR INDIVIDUALIZED CARE

Immediate danger or medical emergency: call 911 | U.S. crisis support: call or text 988 | Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC

Supportive practices and reminders

Trauma-informed choice

You are in charge of pace, privacy, and participation. Keep your eyes open if that feels safer. Change the words, position, movement, or environment. Skip any prompt that increases distress. You never have to describe a traumatic experience to benefit from grounding or reflection.

A one-minute mindfulness pause

Notice one point of support beneath you. Look around and name three neutral things you see. Notice one sound and one body sensation without trying to change either. Ask, 'What would support me in the next few minutes?' Choose the smallest workable response.

Believable affirmations

Choose language your mind can accept. Try: 'I can take one step at a time.' 'My needs and boundaries matter.' 'I am allowed to pause.' 'I can ask for support.' 'This moment is difficult, and it will not always feel exactly like this.' Edit any statement until it feels honest and respectful.

Practical tips

Pair reflection with water, food, movement, rest, medication as prescribed, or contact with a safe person when needed. Save the most helpful page where it is easy to find. Revisit the resource when you are relatively steady so the choices feel familiar during harder moments.

When more support is appropriate

A worksheet cannot provide emergency care, diagnosis, or individualized treatment. Consider a qualified health or mental-health professional when distress is intense, persistent, worsening, affecting daily functioning, or connected with safety concerns. In immediate danger, contact local emergency services or a crisis service available in your country.

Integrate and choose your next step

Pause after reading. More information is not always more helpful; the goal is to leave with one choice you can actually use.

What stood out?

_____

_____

What is one kind, realistic next step?

_____

_____

What support, boundary, or adaptation would help?

_____

_____

If this did not help

You did not fail. Try making the step smaller, changing from a thinking practice to a body or sensory practice, checking basic needs, or involving a safe person. Strong, persistent, or worsening distress may need professional or crisis support beyond a worksheet.