

Coaching Tips & Encouragement

A companion booklet for more conditions and difficult experiences

Anxiety • Depression and low mood • Burnout
Grief and loss • Social anxiety • Sensory overload

Anxiety

Anxiety is the body and mind responding to a sense of threat, uncertainty or pressure. It can show up as racing thoughts, tension, nausea, restlessness, breathlessness or a strong urge to avoid. Anxiety is not a sign of weakness. The aim is not to demand instant calm, but to help yourself feel safer and take one manageable step at a time.

Coaching tips to try

- Name the experience gently: 'I am noticing anxiety. I do not have to solve everything at once.'
- Separate what is happening now from what your mind predicts might happen. Write one short fact and one fear.
- Reduce the task. Ask what the smallest useful next step would be - opening the email, getting dressed or asking for help.
- Release some physical tension by lowering your shoulders, unclenching your jaw or taking a slow walk.
- Use a steady routine around sleep, food, movement and breaks. A supported nervous system has more capacity to cope.
- If anxiety is persistent, leads to avoidance or limits daily life, speak with a GP or mental-health professional.

Encouragement: You do not need to feel completely confident before you begin. Courage can be taking one small step while anxiety is still beside you. Each time you respond with care rather than criticism, you are building trust in yourself.

A gentle reminder: Choose one idea that feels manageable. These resources offer general support and do not replace individual medical or psychological care.

Depression and low mood

Depression can affect mood, energy, sleep, appetite, concentration, motivation and hope. Everyday tasks may feel unusually heavy, and withdrawing can seem easier than explaining how you feel. This is not laziness or a lack of willpower. Support often begins with lowering the pressure and making connection and basic care more reachable.

Coaching tips to try

- Shrink the day. Choose one essential task, one caring task and one point of connection.
- Use a 'minimum version': wash your face instead of taking a full shower, or stand outside for two minutes instead of going for a long walk.
- Put structure outside your head with a short written list, alarms or support from another person.
- Notice all-or-nothing thoughts such as 'I have done nothing'. Record small actions as evidence of effort.
- Tell someone plainly what would help: company, a meal, a lift, a check-in or support arranging an appointment.
- Seek professional help when low mood lasts, worsens or affects your ability to function. You deserve support before reaching crisis.

Encouragement: Your worth is not measured by your productivity. On difficult days, staying, resting, eating something or replying to one message can be meaningful progress. You are allowed to recover in small pieces.

A gentle reminder: Choose one idea that feels manageable. These resources offer general support and do not replace individual medical or psychological care.

Burnout

Burnout can develop after prolonged stress, responsibility or masking without enough recovery. It may bring exhaustion, detachment, irritability, reduced capacity, brain fog and a sense that even simple demands are too much. Recovery is rarely achieved by pushing harder. It usually requires genuine rest, reduced demands and changes to what created the overload.

Coaching tips to try

- Identify what is draining capacity: workload, caring roles, sensory demands, conflict, masking, uncertainty or lack of rest.
- Sort tasks into now, later, delegate and stop. Protect essentials rather than trying to maintain everything.
- Build low-demand recovery into the day before you are completely depleted.
- Reduce unnecessary decisions with simple meals, repeated routines, prepared clothing or a shorter list.
- Ask for practical adjustments at work, education or home. Support should change the load, not only help you tolerate it.
- Review recovery by energy and capacity, not by how quickly you return to your previous pace.

Encouragement: Burnout is not proof that you are incapable; it may be evidence that you have carried too much for too long. Rest is not something you must earn. Sustainable change begins by believing your limits matter.

A gentle reminder: Choose one idea that feels manageable. These resources offer general support and do not replace individual medical or psychological care.

Grief and loss

Grief can follow bereavement, relationship changes, illness, lost opportunities, identity changes or any ending that matters. It may include sadness, anger, numbness, guilt, relief, confusion or moments of ordinary life. There is no correct order and no fixed timetable. Grief can change shape while the importance of the loss remains.

Coaching tips to try

- Let the day be uneven. A difficult hour does not mean you have gone backwards, and a lighter moment does not mean you have forgotten.
- Choose a simple way to maintain connection: a photograph, a memory box, a familiar place, music or a private ritual.
- Plan extra support around anniversaries, birthdays, medical appointments or other dates that may carry weight.
- Use clear requests when others want to help: 'Please sit with me', 'Could you bring food?' or 'I do not want advice today.'
- Make space for physical needs. Grief can affect sleep, appetite, concentration and energy.
- Seek specialist or bereavement support if grief feels unmanageable, prolonged or leaves you unsafe or unable to function.

Encouragement: You do not have to tidy grief into a lesson. Love, loss and adjustment can exist together. Moving forward does not require leaving what mattered behind.

A gentle reminder: Choose one idea that feels manageable. These resources offer general support and do not replace individual medical or psychological care.

Social anxiety

Social anxiety can create intense fear of judgement, embarrassment or rejection. Before an interaction, the mind may predict everything that could go wrong; afterwards, it may replay every detail. Avoidance can bring short-term relief but may strengthen the fear over time. Progress works best when it is gradual, supported and compassionate.

Coaching tips to try

- Choose a small, specific practice step, such as saying hello, asking one question or staying for ten minutes.
- Decide your exit or support plan beforehand. Knowing you have choices can make participation feel safer.
- Shift attention outward. Notice what the other person is saying or three details in the room instead of monitoring yourself constantly.
- Afterwards, record what actually happened before reviewing what anxiety predicted.
- Avoid demanding a flawless performance. Aim to be present enough, not perfectly relaxed or interesting.
- Repeat manageable steps so your nervous system has time to learn. Professional support can help when anxiety is restricting your life.

Encouragement: You are not required to become the loudest person in the room. Progress may be letting yourself be seen for one more moment, speaking one honest sentence or returning after a difficult experience.

A gentle reminder: Choose one idea that feels manageable. These resources offer general support and do not replace individual medical or psychological care.

Sensory overload

Sensory overload happens when the brain receives more sound, light, movement, touch, smell or internal sensation than it can comfortably process. It can lead to distress, irritability, pain, shutdown, panic or an urgent need to escape. This response is real. Support begins by reducing input and respecting the body's warning signs.

Coaching tips to try

- Notice early signals such as losing words, rubbing your eyes, becoming unusually tense, feeling hot or needing to get away.
- Reduce input: lower lights, move away from noise, use headphones, remove uncomfortable clothing or step into a quieter space.
- Keep a small sensory kit with items that suit you, such as ear defenders, sunglasses, a familiar scent, water or a grounding object.
- Use fewer words during overload. A prepared card or message can explain: 'I need quiet and time. I will respond when I can.'
- Allow recovery afterwards. A nervous system that has been overloaded may need low demand, predictability and rest.
- Plan reasonable adjustments rather than relying on endurance. Prevention is a valid form of support.

Encouragement: Your sensory needs are not an inconvenience. Protecting yourself from overload is not being difficult; it is recognising what helps your nervous system remain safe, connected and able to participate.

A gentle reminder: Choose one idea that feels manageable. These resources offer general support and do not replace individual medical or psychological care.

Urgent support: If you or someone else may be in immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E. In the UK and ROI, Samaritans can be reached free on 116 123. For urgent mental-health help in England, call NHS 111 and select the mental-health option.

**Until next time, give yourself space to breathe.
With love, Maggie**