

I NEED TO SCREAM

When everything has built up inside

A Depression & Anxiety Library resource from **Space to Breathe Therapy**

Sometimes the feeling is not simply sadness or worry. It is pressure. Thoughts, responsibilities, fear, frustration, exhaustion and everything you have held back can begin to feel as though they are fighting for space inside you.

Wanting to scream can be the body's way of saying: *I cannot keep containing all of this*. This guide gives that experience somewhere to go. You do not have to make your feelings tidy before you are allowed to express them.

Use this resource your way

Write quickly. Scribble. Circle words. Tear up a separate sheet of paper. Sit quietly and notice what is happening in your body. You can skip anything that does not feel useful. Expression does not have to look calm to be meaningful.

What can sit underneath the scream?

Anxiety: racing thoughts, dread, hypervigilance, panic, irritability, muscle tension, nausea, a pounding heart, restlessness or the feeling that something bad is about to happen.

Depression: heaviness, exhaustion, numbness, hopelessness, withdrawing, difficulty concentrating, frustration, loss of pleasure or feeling unable to keep meeting everybody else's expectations.

Overload: sometimes depression and anxiety overlap with grief, burnout, relationship difficulties, work pressure, caring responsibilities, trauma, loneliness or simply having had to cope for too long.

A scream is not a diagnosis. It can be a signal to become curious about what you have been carrying and what support might now be needed.

Before you continue

If expressing emotion starts to make you feel more overwhelmed rather than relieved, stop the exercise and return to something grounding: put your feet on the floor, look around the room, slow your breathing, hold something cool, drink some water, or contact somebody you trust.

THE SCREAM PAGE

This page does not need to be polite, sensible or organised.

Finish these sentences

I want to scream because...

I am tired of...

What nobody seems to understand is...

Words I need to get out

Write the words exactly as they arrive. They can be angry, frightened, confused, contradictory or unfinished.

If my scream could speak

What would it ask for? Rest? Space? Help? Reassurance? A boundary? An answer? Permission to stop? To be heard without somebody trying to fix everything?

My scream would say: _____

It needs: _____

One thing I wish I could say out loud is: _____

You do not have to act on every feeling

Feelings can be expressed without being turned into harmful actions. The purpose of this page is to create space between the emotion and what you do next.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN MY BODY?

Anxiety and prolonged stress can be intensely physical. Depression can also show up as heaviness, slowing, fatigue and pain. Notice rather than judge.

Area	What I notice
Head / jaw	pressure • headache • clenched jaw • racing thoughts • fog
Chest / breathing	tightness • shallow breathing • pounding heart • sighing
Stomach	butterflies • nausea • knotting • appetite changes
Shoulders / hands	tension • shaking • gripping • restlessness
Whole body	heavy • wired • exhausted • numb • unable to settle

Safe ways to release some pressure

There is no single correct technique. Choose something that feels safe and appropriate for you. You might write uncensored thoughts and then destroy the page; cry; talk to somebody; move your body; shake out your hands; walk; use music; push firmly against a wall; squeeze a cushion; draw what the feeling looks like; or use your voice privately without straining it.

The aim is not to force yourself to 'calm down'. It is to give the nervous system a route from intense activation toward greater safety.

My release plan

Right now my intensity is: ____ / 10

The safest form of release for me today is: _____

Afterwards I will help my body settle by: _____

If I still feel overwhelmed, I can contact: _____

After the release: orient to the present

Name five things you can see. Feel the support of the chair or floor. Unclench your jaw if you can. Let your exhale become a little longer without forcing a deep breath. Remind yourself where you are and what day it is. Then ask: *what would make the next ten minutes slightly easier?*

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HOLD IT ALL IN

Understanding the pressure underneath depression and anxiety

Anonymous personal perspective

"People thought I was coping because I still turned up and did what I had to do. Inside, I felt as though I was constantly swallowing everything. I wasn't always sad; sometimes I was furious, restless or completely numb. The turning point was realising that needing somewhere to put those feelings did not mean I was failing. I needed to stop performing 'fine' and start being more truthful about what I could manage."

A message from Maggie

If you have reached the point where you feel like screaming, I want this resource to give you permission to acknowledge just how much you may have been carrying. You do not need the perfect words and you do not have to minimise your experience because somebody else may have it differently.

Depression and anxiety can become very good at hiding behind functioning, smiling, working and looking after everybody else. Sometimes the first honest sentence is simply: *I am not coping as well as I look*. That sentence matters. Let it be the beginning of listening to yourself rather than another reason to criticise yourself.

Use these pages as a place to unload some of the pressure, but please also let other people support you when you need them. You deserve space to be heard as a whole person, not reduced to a symptom or expected to push through indefinitely.

When to seek more support

Consider speaking with your GP, therapist or another appropriate health professional if depression or anxiety is persistent, worsening, disrupting everyday life, or your usual ways of coping are no longer enough. In the UK, NHS talking therapies may be available for anxiety and depression, and your GP can discuss treatment and support options.

If you may be in immediate danger or cannot keep yourself safe: call 999 or go to A&E.; For urgent mental-health help in England, NHS guidance directs people to use NHS 111 and select the mental-health option where available. Samaritans can be contacted free on 116 123, 24 hours a day.

Books & further reading

Overcoming Depression - Paul Gilbert

Overcoming Anxiety - Helen Kennerley

The Compassionate Mind - Paul Gilbert

Reasons to Stay Alive - Matt Haig

Information sources

NHS: clinical information on depression, anxiety, urgent mental-health support and talking therapies.

NICE: guidance on depression in adults and generalised anxiety disorder/panic disorder.

Samaritans: emotional support and crisis listening.

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