

EASY ANXIETY TIPS: TELLS, TRIGGERS, AND GLIMMERS



Learning your personal signals that anxiety's been triggered and what helps you feel better is a great place to start when creating a coping plan for anxiety.

Use the spaces below to explore your tells, triggers, and glimmers and the action steps available to you.

Tell: a personal signal that anxiety's been triggered.

Studies on our anxiety response suggest that our body can show signs of anxiety before we notice them and that noticing anxiety earlier can make a huge difference in how well our coping skills work. You can start to notice your anxiety earlier by recognizing your tells.

A tell can be physical sensations, emotions, behaviors, communication patterns, thought patterns, or anything else that signals your anxiety has been triggered.

What are at least two personal signals of anxiety you've noticed? What do you know helps you in those situations?

Trigger: a signal to your body that you're in danger.

Your brain and body are designed to notice danger quickly and get you out of danger fast. This is why anxiety can feel like it comes on so suddenly and feel so urgent to deal with. Lots of things can trigger anxiety: specific kinds of interactions or situations, people, sudden or startling events, how your environment feels, noises, crowds, emotions, thoughts, physical sensations, and even your own physiological state like being hungry or thirsty.

Knowing your triggers can help you practice self-care and make intentional choices about your anxiety. The goal isn't to avoid all triggers. That's impossible and makes your world a lot smaller. But knowing triggers can help you anticipate and manage your anxiety.

What are at least two anxiety triggers you've noticed? What do you know helps you in those situations?

Glimmer: a signal to your body that you're safe.

Glimmer is a term from polyvagal theory that refers to the little things that give you a sense of joy or ease. They may be small, but they are powerful. Common glimmers include feeling the warmth of the sun, petting a dog or cat, the sound of the ocean or windchimes, the smell of fresh rain or a favorite food, the sound of a friend's voice, or time in nature.

When you're anxious, you can use your glimmers to step your way out of fight-flight-freeze and into a calmer place. You can give yourself brief glimmer breaks in the day as part of your self-care.

What are at least two glimmers you've noticed? How can you use them as part of your self-care or anxiety coping strategy?

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