

Coping Statements For Anxiety

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Purpose: to put a stop to the thoughts that lead to anxiety, and to replace those thoughts with realistic, rational thoughts. When these rational self-statements are practiced and learned, your brain takes over and they automatically occur. This is a form of gentle conditioning, meaning that your brain chemistry (neurotransmission) actually changes as a result of your new thinking habits.

First, use thought stoppage. Be gentle but firm about it.

"STOP! These thoughts are not good for me. They are not healthy or helpful thoughts, and I have decided to move in a better direction and learn to think differently." (You are reminding and reinforcing your brain each and every time you make this rational and realistic statement.)

Then, pick two or three statements from the list below that seem to help you, and repeat them to yourself OUT LOUD each day. (You don't have to believe them fully yet – that will happen later).

When Anxiety is Near

1. I'm going to be all right. My feelings are not always rational. I'm just going to relax, calm down, and everything will be all right.
2. Anxiety is not dangerous -- it's just uncomfortable. I am fine; I'll just continue with what I'm doing or find something more active to do.
3. Right now I have some feelings I don't like. They are really just phantoms, however, because they are disappearing. I will be fine.
4. Right now I have feelings I don't like. They will be over with soon and I'll be fine. For now, I am going to focus on doing something else around me.
5. That picture (image) in my head is not a healthy or rational picture. Instead, I'm going to focus on something healthy like _____.
6. I've stopped my negative thoughts before and I'm going to do it again now. I am becoming better and better at deflecting these automatic negative thoughts (ANTs) and that makes me happy.
7. So I feel a little anxiety now, SO WHAT? It's not like it's the first time. I am going to take some nice deep breaths and keep on going. This will help me continue to get better.

Statements to use when preparing for a stressful situation

1. I've done this before so I know I can do it again.
2. When this is over, I'll be glad that I did it.
3. The feeling I have about this event doesn't make much sense. This anxiety is like a mirage in the desert. I'll just continue to "walk" forward until I pass right through it.
4. This may seem hard now, but it will become easier and easier over time.
5. I think I have more control over these thoughts and feelings than I once imagined. I am very gently going to turn away from my old feelings and move in a new, better direction.

Statements to use when I feel overwhelmed

1. I can be anxious and still focus on the task at hand. As I focus on the task, my anxiety will go down.
2. Anxiety is an old habit pattern that my body responds to. I am going to calmly and nicely change this old habit. I feel a little bit of peace, despite my anxiety, and this peace is going to grow and grow. As my peace and security grow, then anxiety and panic will have to shrink.
3. At first, my anxiety was powerful and scary, but as time goes by it doesn't have the hold on me that I once thought it had. I am moving forward gently and nicely all the time.
4. I don't need to fight my feelings. I realize that these feelings won't be allowed to stay around very much longer. I just accept my new feelings of peace, contentment, security, and confidence.
5. All these things that are happening to me seem overwhelming. But I've caught myself this time and I refuse to focus on these things. Instead, I'm going to talk slowly to myself, focus away from my problem, and continue with what I have to do. In this way, my anxiety will have to shrink away and disappear.