

**Everything is AWFUL and I'm Not Okay:
Questions to ask before giving up on yourself**

Are you hydrated?

If not, have a glass of water. Dehydration can mimic or increase feelings associated with anxiety and a well hydrated brain functions optimally. Avoid excess caffeine.

Have you eaten in the past three hours?

Don't be a victim of hanger! Get some food- something with protein, not just simple carbs or high-fat. Nuts, hummus, and veggies are great options to feed your studying brain. Keep healthy snacks within reach to avoid mindlessly chowing down on sweets.

Have you stretched your legs in the past day?

If not, do so right now. If you don't have the energy or time for a run or a trip to the gym, just walk around the block or building. Even minimal exercise preps the mind for learning so that you can focus better and recall things easier, plus it's good to get a change of scenery.

Have you said something nice to someone in the past day?

Do so, whether online or in person. Make it genuine! We bet your study partner would appreciate a compliment.

Have you moved your body to music in the past day?

If not, jog for the length of a song at your favorite tempo, or just dance around your bedroom for the length of an upbeat song (singing along is a bonus)

Have you cuddled a living being in the past two days?

If not, do so. Don't be afraid to ask for hugs from friends of friends' pets. Most of them will enjoy the cuddles too; you're not imposing.

Have you started or changed any medications in the past couple of weeks, including skipped doses or a change in generic prescription brand?

That may be screwing with your head. Give things a few days, then talk to your doctor if it doesn't settle down.

If daytime: are you dressed?

If no, put on clean clothes that aren't PJs. Give yourself permission to wear something special, whether it's a funny t-shirt or a pretty dress.

If nighttime: are you sleepy and fatigued but resisting going to sleep?

Put on PJs, make yourself cozy in bed with a teddy bear and the sound of falling rain, and close your eyes for fifteen minutes while focusing on breathing deeper with every breath- no electronic screens allowed! **Adequate sleep is a necessity for stress management.**

Do you feel ineffective?

Pause right now and get something small completed, whether it's responding to an email, loading the dishwasher, or tidying up your room. Good job!

Do you feel unattractive?

Take a darn selfie. Your friends will remind you how great you look. You are always insta-worthy.

Do you feel paralyzed by indecision?

Give yourself ten minutes to sit back and figure out a game plan for the day. IF a particular decision or problem is still being a roadblock, simply set it aside for now, and pick something else that seems doable. Right now, the important part is to break through that stasis, even if it means doing something trivial.

Have you over-exerted yourself lately- physically, emotionally, socially, or intellectually?

That can take a toll that lingers for days. Give yourself a break in that area, whether it's physical rest, taking some time alone, or relaxing with some silly entertainment for a little. Time spent refreshing yourself is never time "wasted!"

Have you waited a week?

Sometimes or perception of life is skewed, and we can't even tell that we're not thinking clearly, and there's no obvious external cause. It happens. Keep yourself going for a full week, whatever it takes, and see if you still feel the same way then.

What is stress? Everyone experiences both positive and negative stress. However, too much negative stress can create uncomfortable symptoms such as :

- Problems eating or sudden changes in eating habits
- Difficulty sleeping, oversleeping, or experiencing frequent nightmares
- Problems making decisions
- Increased procrastination
- Anxiety and confusion over unimportant events; weakness dizziness, and shortness of breath
- Overpowering urges to cry or run away
- Head, back, or muscle aches, and indigestion

What is a panic attack? It's like your body and mind behave as if you've just been leapt at by a lion- but there is no lion. However the feelings are real. They may be so intense they feel like a heart attack or other life-threatening emergency. Many factors cause panic attacks including genetics, stress, and drug use. If you've been under constant stress for some time (ie. A semester at school) you may be more prone to having a panic attack. Symptoms of panic attacks include:

- Pounding heart
- Sweating and shaking
- A choking feeling
- Nausea
- Numbness in parts of the body
- Fear of losing control

Short-Term Ways to Handle Stress

- **Breathe.** Breathe deeply through your nose, feeling your hands rise as your abdomen fills with air. Still inhaling, count to four and feel your chest expand. Hold your breath for 4 counts, and then release your breath over 4 counts. Repeat 4 times, but stop if you become light-headed.
- **Take a break.** Get some exercise or fresh air, or go somewhere private and yell or cry
- **Remember that you have a choice.** Ask yourself whether it's worth being upset over the situation.
- **Prioritize.** List all the things that you need to do right away. Then, prioritize the list and place your focus on only the top few. The rest can be your first priority tomorrow.

Handling a Panic Attack

- **Remember, you aren't in danger.** Your experience is frightening, but it's not harmful.
- **Don't try to fight** off the attack
- **Pay attention** to what actually is going on- "I'm feeling out of breath." Observe the sensations. Notice how they change from moment to moment and fade within a few minutes.
- **Give yourself a simple task.** For example, count backwards from 100 by 3s. This will focus your mind on something else until the attack fades.