

22 bringing mindfulness to your emotions

At our core, we humans have just a few basic emotions, but even these can be hard to recognize when we are feeling anxious. Take some time to explore these other emotions mindfully, in addition to exploring the mental and physical aspects of anxiety.

Exercise: What Your Emotions Feel Like

Remember a time when you felt each of these emotions. If nothing comes to mind, you might want to watch YouTube clips or listen to songs that you know make you feel these ways. Write down what you feel in your body and mind as you experience these emotions.

Emotion	What I Feel in My Body	What I Feel in My Mind
Happiness		
Sadness		
Anger		
Anxiety		

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Once you start to know your body and learn to listen to its wisdom, you can start to use mindfulness of the body to ease your anxiety. This next practice is an experiment in bringing mindfulness to emotions in the body.

Mindfulness Practice: Releasing Fear

- Close your eyes and bring to mind an upcoming situation that regularly raises your anxiety level. Imagine it in your mind's eye: the people, the place, sounds, and smells.
- Now turn your attention inward, and notice where in your body you feel that stress or anxiety. Notice what these sensations feel like. Begin to imagine yourself breathing into this part of your body, just a breath at a time, slowly breathing into that spot. With each breath, breathing some calm and warmth into that area, and breathing out fear and anxiety.
- Breathing in calm...
- Breathing out worry...
- Breathing in peace...
- Breathing out fear...

You may need to try this a few times before it feels natural, or you may want to find words that fit better with your personality or the feelings you experience when you think about a difficult person, place, or thing that triggers your anxiety.