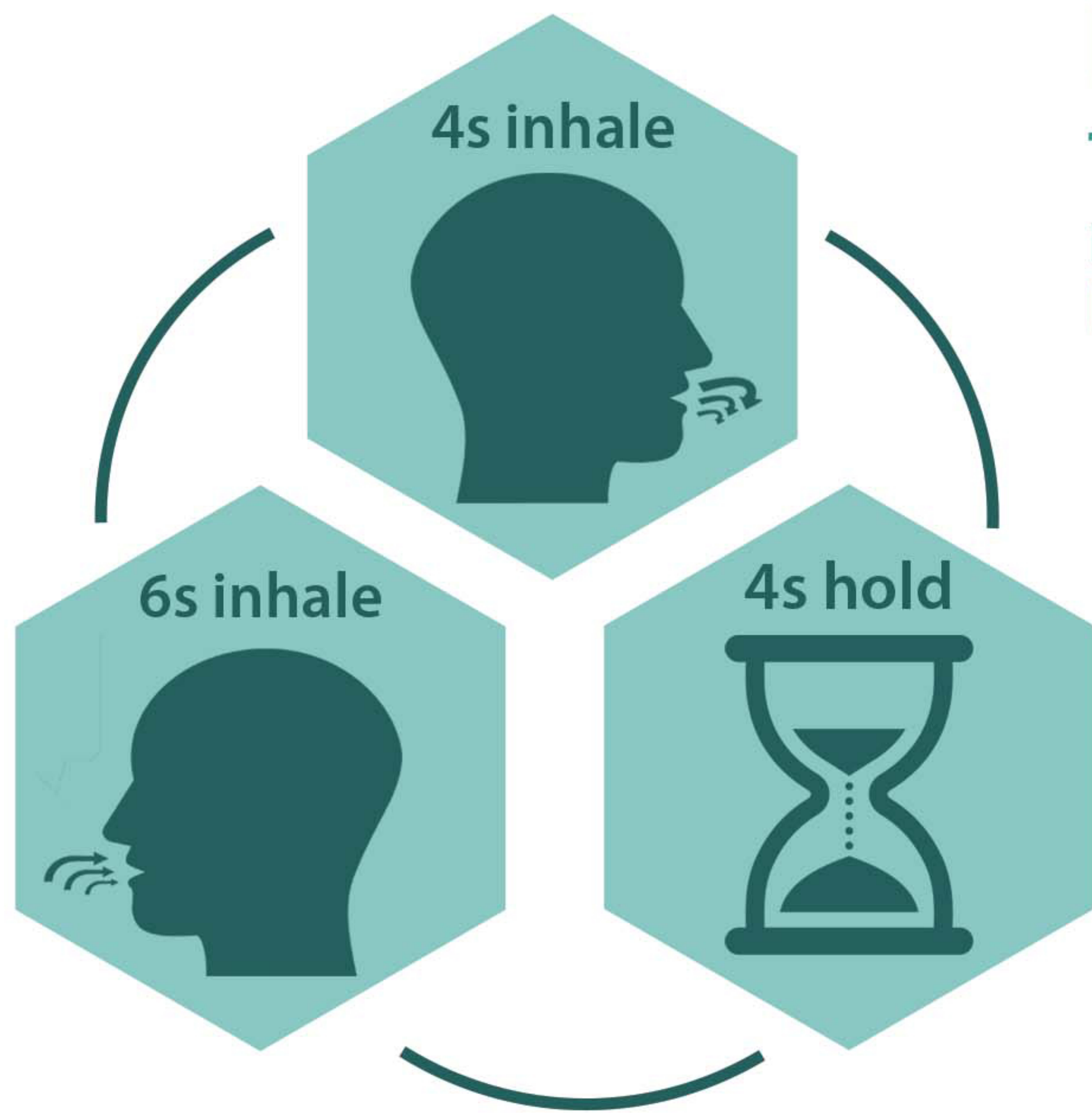


COPING SKILLS FOR ANXIETY



Deep Breathing:

This is a simple technique that's excellent for managing emotions. It is effective AND discreet. It's easy to use any time or place.

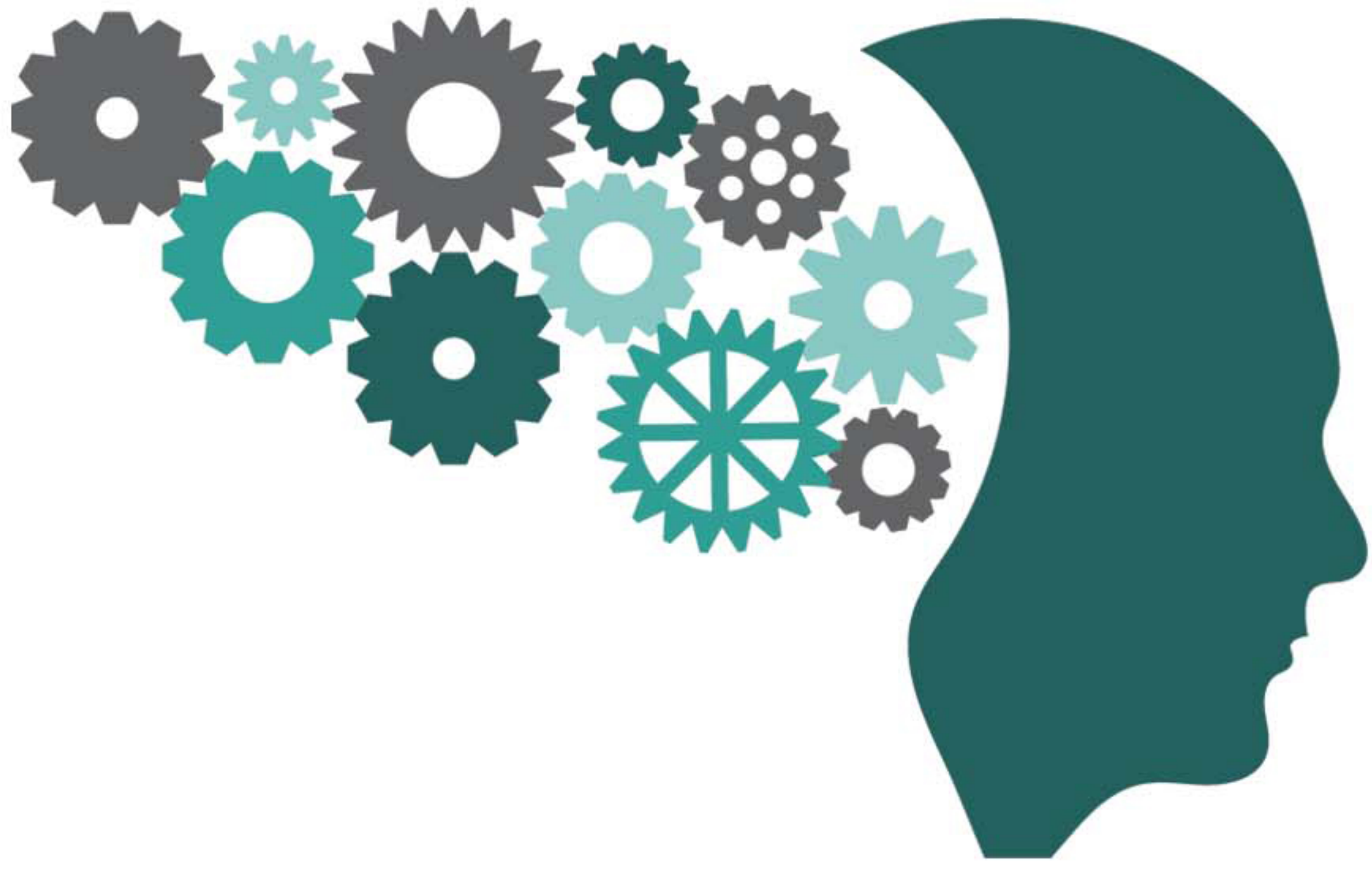
- Sit comfortable and place a hand on your abdomen.
- Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises.
- Hold the air in your lungs and then exhale slowly through your mouth with your lips puckered as if you are blowing out of a straw.
- Inhale for 4 seconds, pause for 4 seconds, and exhale for 6 seconds. *Repeat for 3 - 5 minutes.*

Progressive Muscle Relaxation:

By tensing and relaxing muscles throughout your body, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation. Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation will help you spot anxiety by teaching you to recognize feelings of muscle tension.

FEET:	Curl your toes tightly into your feet, then release them
CALVES:	Point or flex your feet, then let them relax
THIGHS:	Squeeze your thighs together tightly, then let them relax
TORSO:	Suck in your abdomen, then release the tension and let it fall
BACK:	Squeeze your shoulder blades together, then release them
SHOULDERS:	Lift and squeeze your shoulders toward your ears, then let them drop
ARMS:	Make fists and squeeze them toward your shoulders, then let them drop
HANDS:	Make a fist by curling your fingers into your palm, then relax your fingers
FACE:	Scrunch your facial features to the center of your face, then relax
FULL BODY:	Squeeze all muscles together, then release all tension





Challenging Irrational Thoughts

Anxiety can be magnified by irrational thoughts. For example, the thoughts that “something bad will happen” or “I will make a mistake” might lack evidence, but still impact how you feel. By examining the evidence and challenging these thoughts, you can reduce anxiety.

Put thoughts on trial. Choose a thought that has contributed to your anxiety. Gather evidence in support of your thought (*verifiable facts only*), and against your thought. Compare the evidence and determine whether your thought is accurate or not.

Use Socratic questioning. Question the thoughts that contribute to your anxiety. Ask yourself:

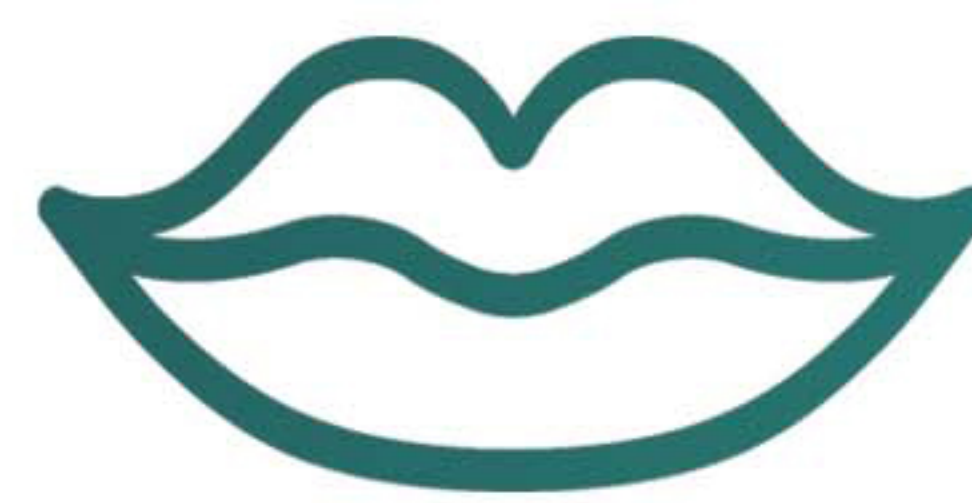
- “Is my thought based on facts or feelings?”
- “How would my best friend see this situation?”
- “How likely is it my fear will come true?”
- “What is most likely to happen?”
- “If my fear comes true, will it still matter in a wee? A month? A year?”

Imagery

Your thoughts have the power to change how you feel. If you think of something sad, it’s likely you’ll start to feel sad. The opposite is also true: When you think of something positive and calming, you feel relaxed. The imagery technique harnesses this power to reduce anxiety.



What do you see around you? What do you notice in the distance? Look all around to take in all your surroundings. Look for small details you would usually miss.



Are you eating or drinking something enjoyable? What is the flavor like? How does it taste? Savor all the tastes of the food or drink.



What sounds can you hear? Are they soft or loud? Listen closely to everything around you. Keep listening to see if you notice any distant sounds.



What scents are present? Are they strong or faint? What does the air smell like? Take some time to appreciate the scents/



What can you feel? What is the temperature like? Think of how the air feels on your skin, and how your clothes feel on your body. Soak in all these sensations.