

WHEN EMOTIONS HIT HARD

A practical guide for moments of overwhelm.

Stronger people. Kinder systems. A brighter tomorrow.

People
Heal
in
Connection
♥

1 First, pause

Big emotions can narrow your thinking, make everything feel urgent, and activate your survival system. The first goal is **safety and slowing things down**, not solving everything. You do not have to figure it all out right now. Give yourself permission to pause.



A calmer moment can create a clearer tomorrow.
♥

You are safe enough to slow down.
♥

2 Notice your signs

Big emotions can show up in different ways. You might notice:



Body

Racing heart, tense muscles, shaking, feeling hot or cold, upset stomach.



Thoughts

Spiraling thoughts, catastrophizing, feeling overwhelmed or like you cannot think clearly.



Emotions

Crying, anger, sadness, fear, feeling numb, shame, or emptiness.



Behaviours

Urge to run away, shut down, lash out, isolate, use substances, or engage in unhelpful coping.

These are signs, not failures.
♥

Your reactions make sense. You are human.
♥

3 Use a fast support skill

These tools can help you calm your nervous system and feel more in control. Try one or a few. You do not have to do them all.



Cold water or temperature change

Splash cold water on your face, hold an ice cube, or step into a cool space.



Paced breathing

Try 4 in - 6 out (breathe in for 4, out for 6). A longer exhale helps calm your body.



Ground through the senses

Name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.



Move your body

Stretch, walk, shake it out, or do some gentle movement to release energy and tension.



Take space

Step away from the situation, even for a few minutes. Give yourself room to breathe.



Reduce stimulation

Turn down noise, limit screens, and remove yourself from overwhelming environments if possible.

4 Talk to yourself kindly

What you say to yourself matters. Try these supportive phrases:

"This is hard."

"I can get through this moment."

"I do not need to fix everything right now."

"My body is activated and it will settle."

A kinder inner voice creates a safer you.
♥

5 Choose the next right step

Once you feel a little calmer, ask yourself: What would be most helpful right now?



Drink water

Hydrate your body. It helps your brain and nervous system.



Text someone safe

Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or support person.



Step outside

Fresh air and nature can help reset your system.



Write it down
Get your thoughts and feelings out of your head and onto paper.



Return later

You can come back to this when you feel more grounded and clear.



Ask for professional support
A counsellor or therapist can help you navigate difficult emotions. You do not have to do this alone.

Overwhelm needs support, not shame.
♥

If you are too overwhelmed to think

When everything feels like too much, try this simple order:

1 Breathe out slowly
(longer exhale)

2 Feet on floor
Feel the ground beneath you.

3 Name 3 things you see
Look around you.

4 Sip water
A small sip can help.

5 Reach out
Text someone safe or seek support.