Important Safety Information

This workbook is intended as a supportive educational resource.

It is not a substitute for psychotherapy, medical care, crisis intervention, or emergency services.

If you are experiencing thoughts of harming yourself or others, are unable to maintain your safety, or are experiencing a mental health emergency, please seek immediate assistance.

Emergency resources include:

- Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)
- Call 911 or your local emergency services
- Go to the nearest emergency room
- Contact your therapist, psychiatrist, physician, or crisis support provider

Please use this workbook within your personal limits.

If an exercise feels overwhelming, stop and return to a Lighthouse Practice focused on orientation, grounding, or support.

Healing does not require pushing beyond your capacity.

Going slowly is often the fastest way forward.

Please remember:

You do not have to do this alone.
Support is available.

Chapter 9: When Anxiety Takes Over

Understanding Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the most common reasons people seek support.

It can feel exhausting, overwhelming, confusing, and relentless.

It can show up as racing thoughts, restlessness, tension, worry, fear, or a sense that something bad is about to happen.

When anxiety is present, it often feels as though the mind is trying to protect us by constantly scanning for problems.

Your mind may tell you:

- "What if something goes wrong?"
- "What if I make the wrong decision?"
- "What if I am not prepared?"
- "What if I miss something important?"
- "What if I cannot handle it?"

Anxiety often believes that if it can think hard enough, worry enough, or prepare enough, it can prevent pain.

While anxiety's intentions may be protective, its strategies can become exhausting.

The goal of this chapter is not to eliminate anxiety.

The goal is to develop a different relationship with it.

Recognizing Anxiety

Check any experiences that feel familiar.

Thoughts

☐ Racing thoughts

☐ Constant planning

☐ Catastrophic thinking

☐ Difficulty focusing

☐ Difficulty making decisions

☐ Replaying conversations

☐ Imagining worst-case scenarios

☐ Feeling responsible for everything

Emotions

☐ Fear

☐ Worry

☐ Apprehension

☐ Uneasiness

☐ Irritability

☐ Dread

Body Sensations

☐ Tight chest

☐ Rapid heartbeat

☐ Butterflies in stomach

☐ Tight jaw

☐ Shallow breathing

☐ Restlessness

☐ Muscle tension

☐ Difficulty relaxing

☐ Difficulty sleeping

How Anxiety Shows Up For Me

What does anxiety typically sound like in your mind?

What does anxiety typically feel like in your body?

What situations tend to activate anxiety?

A Different Question

When anxiety appears, many people ask:

"How do I make this stop?"

Try asking a different question:

"What might anxiety be trying to protect me from?"

Take a moment to reflect.

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Orient Before You Analyze

When anxiety takes over, our attention often moves into the future.

Before trying to solve anything, return to the present moment.

Look around the room.

Notice:

- Five things you can see
- Four things you can feel
- Three things you can hear

Then ask yourself:

What is actually happening right now?

What evidence do I have that I am safe in this moment?

Separating Thoughts From Reality

Anxiety often presents possibilities as certainty.

Examples:

Anxious Thought:
"I am going to fail."

Reality:
I do not know what will happen.

Anxious Thought:
"Something bad is going to happen."

Reality:
I am anticipating a future event.

Anxious Thought:
"I cannot handle this."

Reality:
I have handled difficult things before.

Choose one anxious thought.

The Thought

What is the thought predicting?

What do I actually know right now?

🗼 Lighthouse Practice

Bringing Attention Back to the Body

Anxiety often pulls us into thinking.

This practice helps bring awareness back to sensation.

Take a moment and notice:

My feet

My legs

My abdomen

My chest

My shoulders

My face

Without changing anything, simply notice.

Awareness itself can be regulating.

The Anxiety and Resource Exercise

Imagine anxiety sitting across from you.

You do not need to fight it.

You do not need to make it disappear.

Ask:

What is anxiety worried about?

What is anxiety trying to prevent?

What resources do I have that anxiety may be forgetting?

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The 10-Minute Question

When anxiety becomes overwhelming, ask:

What do I need in the next ten minutes?

Not tomorrow.

Not next month.

Not next year.

The next ten minutes.

My answer:

Sometimes the nervous system settles when the focus becomes smaller.

When Anxiety Wants Certainty

One of anxiety's favorite goals is certainty.

Unfortunately, life rarely provides complete certainty.

Healing often involves learning to tolerate uncertainty while remaining connected to ourselves.

Complete the following sentence:

Even though I do not know what will happen, I can:

Building an Anxiety Response Plan

When anxiety appears, what helps?

People I Can Contact

Regulation Practices That Help

Activities That Support Me

Reminders I Need To Hear

🗼 Lighthouse Practice

Finding the Glimmer

Take a moment and look around.

Notice one thing that feels:

- Pleasant
- Interesting
- Beautiful
- Familiar
- Comforting

What did you notice?

What happens in your body as you notice it?

Reflection

What did I learn about my anxiety?

What surprised me?

What feels most important to remember?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What resources do I have available right now?

Is there anything that feels even 1% easier than when I began this chapter?

Before Moving On

Anxiety is often trying to help.

Its methods may be exhausting, but its intention is usually protection.

You do not need to argue with anxiety.

You do not need to eliminate anxiety.

You do not need to become fearless.

You only need to remember that anxiety is one voice within you.

It is not the whole story.

And even when anxiety is present, there are still resources, choices, supports, and possibilities available to you.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 10: When I Feel Frozen or Shut Down.

Chapter 10: When I Feel Frozen or Shut Down

Understanding Freeze

Many people are familiar with fight and flight.

Fewer people understand freeze.

Freeze is a natural survival response.

When the nervous system believes that fighting or escaping is not possible, it may shift into a state of conservation and protection.

This response is not weakness.

It is not laziness.

It is not a character flaw.

It is a deeply intelligent survival strategy.

Freeze often develops when the nervous system becomes overwhelmed and does not know what action will create safety.

The goal of this chapter is not to force yourself out of freeze.

The goal is to gently reconnect with movement, awareness, and support.

Recognizing Freeze

Freeze can look different for different people.

Check any experiences that feel familiar.

Thoughts

☐ I don't know what to do

☐ I can't decide

☐ Everything feels overwhelming

☐ I should be doing something

☐ I don't care

☐ My mind feels blank

☐ I feel disconnected

Emotions

☐ Numbness

☐ Hopelessness

☐ Helplessness

☐ Confusion

☐ Detachment

☐ Emptiness

Body Sensations

☐ Heavy limbs

☐ Low energy

☐ Fatigue

☐ Difficulty moving

☐ Reduced motivation

☐ Feeling distant from my body

☐ Feeling collapsed

☐ Fogginess

How Freeze Shows Up For Me

What does freeze look like in my life?

What situations tend to trigger freeze?

What do I usually do when freeze appears?

A Different Perspective

When freeze appears, many people become self-critical.

They may tell themselves:

- "I need to try harder."
- "I'm being lazy."
- "I should be able to do this."
- "What's wrong with me?"

What if freeze is not a failure?

What if your nervous system is trying to protect you from overwhelm?

Take a moment to reflect.

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Start Small

When freeze is present, big goals often feel impossible.

The nervous system usually responds better to very small actions.

Ask yourself:

What is the smallest possible step I can take right now?

Examples:

- Wiggle my toes
- Move one finger
- Sit up
- Stand up
- Walk to another room
- Drink a glass of water
- Open a window

My small step:

Meeting Yourself Where You Are

Freeze often improves when we reduce demands.

Instead of asking:

"How do I get everything done?"

Try asking:

"What is realistic for me right now?"

What feels manageable?

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Reconnecting Through Orientation

Look around your environment.

Take your time.

Notice:

- Colors
- Shapes
- Light
- Texture
- Familiar objects

What do I see?

What feels familiar?

What feels comforting or neutral?

Reconnecting Through Sensation

Freeze often creates disconnection from the body.

Instead of looking for strong sensations, begin with simple awareness.

Notice:

My feet

My legs

My hands

My breathing

The support beneath my body

You do not need to feel anything dramatic.

Simple awareness is enough.

🗼 Lighthouse Practice

Gentle Movement

Freeze often responds best to slow, gentle movement.

Choose one:

☐ Roll shoulders

☐ Stretch arms

☐ Slowly turn head side to side

☐ Walk around the room

☐ Stand and sit several times

☐ Shake hands gently

☐ Walk outside briefly

Afterward:

What do I notice?

The Energy Scale

Rate your current energy level.

0 = Completely shut down

10 = Highly energized

Current level:

_____ /10

Now ask:

What would help me move up just one point?

Not five points.

Not ten points.

One point.

When Freeze Looks Like Procrastination

Sometimes freeze is mistaken for procrastination.

You may want to do something but feel unable to begin.

If this happens:

Break the task into the smallest possible step.

Example:

Instead of:
"Finish the project."

Try:
"Open the document."

Instead of:
"Clean the house."

Try:
"Put away one item."

Instead of:
"Exercise."

Try:
"Put on my shoes."

What is one task I have been avoiding?

What is the smallest possible first step?

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Borrowing Support

When freeze is strong, it can be difficult to access your own energy.

Sometimes it helps to borrow support.

Consider:

- Calling a friend
- Sitting with a pet
- Going to a coffee shop
- Being around safe people
- Listening to a familiar voice
- Watching a comforting show

What support feels available to me?

A Message for the Frozen Part

Take a moment and imagine speaking to the part of you that feels shut down.

Complete the sentence:

I see that you are trying to protect me from:

What do I want this part to know?

Reflection

What did I learn about my freeze response?

What surprised me?

What feels most important to remember?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What small step feels possible?

Is there anything that feels even 1% easier than when I began this chapter?

Before Moving On

Freeze is not weakness.

Freeze is not failure.

Freeze is not proof that something is wrong with you.

Freeze is a survival response that developed for a reason.

Healing often begins not by forcing yourself into action, but by learning how to gently reconnect with yourself.

Small movements matter.

Small choices matter.

Small steps matter.

And sometimes one small step is enough to begin creating momentum.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 11: When I Cannot Stop Thinking.

Chapter 11: When I Cannot Stop Thinking

When the Mind Will Not Slow Down

There are times when our minds become very busy.

Thoughts may race.

Worries may repeat.

Conversations replay.

Decisions feel impossible.

Questions circle without answers.

You may find yourself thinking about the same issue repeatedly, hoping that one more round of analysis will finally bring relief.

Unfortunately, more thinking does not always create more clarity.

Sometimes it creates more thinking.

If you have opened this chapter, there is a good chance that your mind has been working very hard.

Before going any further, take a moment and acknowledge that effort.

Your mind is likely trying to help.

It may be trying to create certainty.

It may be trying to prevent pain.

It may be trying to solve a problem.

It may be trying to keep you safe.

The goal of this chapter is not to stop your thoughts.

The goal is to create enough space that your thoughts are no longer carrying the entire burden alone.

Recognizing When Thinking Has Taken Over

Check any that feel familiar.

My Mind Is:

☐ Replaying conversations

☐ Imagining future scenarios

☐ Searching for certainty

☐ Trying to solve everything

☐ Comparing options repeatedly

☐ Rehashing the past

☐ Creating worst-case scenarios

☐ Looking for reassurance

☐ Trying to make sense of something

☐ Looking for the perfect answer

My Body Feels:

☐ Tight

☐ Restless

☐ Tired

☐ Wired

☐ Tense

☐ Activated

☐ Disconnected

☐ Exhausted

☐ Stuck

What Is My Mind Trying To Do?

Complete the following sentence:

My mind is currently trying to help me by:

What does my mind seem worried might happen?

A Gentle Reminder

Thinking is not the problem.

The problem is when thinking becomes the only strategy available.

Your mind is one source of information.

Your body is another.

Your emotions are another.

Your relationships are another.

Wisdom often emerges when all of these sources can participate.

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Leaving the Story and Entering the Body

For the next minute, pause the story.

Not forever.

Just for one minute.

Bring your attention to:

Your feet

What do you notice?

Your legs

What do you notice?

Your breathing

What do you notice?

Your shoulders

What do you notice?

Your jaw

What do you notice?

Notice that your body is happening right now.

Thoughts often live in the future or the past.

Sensation lives in the present.

The Thought Loop Exercise

Choose one thought that keeps repeating.

The Thought

How many times have I thought this today?

What has this thought been trying to accomplish?

Has repeating this thought created the result I hoped for?

Expanding Awareness

When we become trapped in thinking, attention often becomes very narrow.

Try widening your awareness.

Look around the room.

Notice:

- Colors
- Shapes
- Sounds
- Temperature
- Light

What do I notice?

How does widening my awareness affect my thinking?

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The Container Exercise

Imagine placing your thoughts into a container.

The container may be:

- A box
- A safe
- A vault
- A chest
- A basket
- Any image that feels supportive

You are not getting rid of the thoughts.

You are simply setting them aside temporarily.

The thoughts will still be there if you need them later.

Reflection

What container did I choose?

How did it feel to set the thoughts down temporarily?

The Difference Between Thinking and Knowing

Sometimes clarity comes through analysis.

Sometimes clarity comes through experience.

Consider the situation you have been thinking about.

What do I think?

What do I feel?

What do I notice in my body?

Often these answers are different.

Sometimes that difference is important.

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The Next Right Thing

When thinking becomes overwhelming, return to simplicity. Ask:

What is the next right thing?

Not the perfect thing.

Not the final answer.

Not the five-year plan.

Just the next right thing.

My answer:

When No Answer Comes

Sometimes the mind keeps searching because it believes an answer exists right now.

But not all questions can be answered immediately.

Sometimes clarity develops through time.

Sometimes clarity develops through action.

Sometimes clarity develops through rest.

Complete the following sentence:

I do not know the answer yet, and that is okay because:

Reconnecting With Resources

When thoughts become loud, resources often become quiet.

Take a moment to remember:

People Who Support Me

Places That Support Me

Activities That Help Me Feel Grounded

Things That Bring Me Alive

Reflection

What was I able to learn by slowing down?

What surprised me?

What do I want to remember?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What do I notice in my body right now?

Is there anything that feels even 1% easier than when I began this chapter?

Before Moving On

Your mind has worked hard for you.

It has tried to protect you, prepare you, understand things, and keep you safe.

You do not need to fight your thoughts.

You do not need to silence your mind.

You only need to remember that thinking is one form of intelligence.

Your body carries intelligence too.

Your emotions carry intelligence too.

Your relationships carry intelligence too.

Sometimes healing happens not when we think harder, but when we allow other forms of wisdom to join the conversation.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 12: When Grief Arrives.

Chapter 12: When Grief Arrives

Making Room for What Matters

Grief is one of the most natural experiences we have as human beings.

And yet it is often one of the most misunderstood.

Many people think grief only happens after a death.

But grief can arise after any significant loss.

We may grieve:

- A loved one
- A relationship
- A marriage
- A friendship
- A pet
- A home
- A dream
- A future we imagined
- A version of ourselves
- Time we cannot get back
- Opportunities we never had

Grief appears wherever love, meaning, attachment, or longing have existed.

The goal of this chapter is not to move past grief.

The goal is to create space for it.

Grief is not a problem to solve.

It is an experience to move through.

Recognizing Grief

Grief can appear in many forms.

Check any that feel familiar.

Emotions

☐ Sadness

☐ Longing

☐ Loneliness

☐ Anger

☐ Numbness

☐ Relief

☐ Regret

☐ Confusion

☐ Guilt

☐ Love

☐ Gratitude

Thoughts

☐ I miss them

☐ It should have been different

☐ I wasn't ready

☐ I wish I had more time

☐ I don't understand

☐ Things will never be the same

☐ I keep replaying memories

Body Sensations

☐ Heaviness

☐ Tight chest

☐ Lump in throat

☐ Fatigue

☐ Emptiness

☐ Pressure

☐ Tears

☐ Restlessness

☐ Numbness

What Am I Grieving?

Take a moment to reflect.

Loss is not always obvious.

What am I grieving right now?

What mattered to me about what was lost?

A Gentle Reminder

Grief is not a sign that something is wrong.

Grief is often a reflection of love.

The depth of grief does not mean you are failing to heal.

The depth of grief often reflects the depth of what mattered.

Take a moment and notice what happens when you read those words.

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Allowing What Is Here

Take a slow breath.

Notice what emotion feels most present.

Without trying to change it, complete the sentence:

Right now I notice:

Can I allow 5% more space for this feeling?

Not all of it.

Just a little more.

What do I notice?

The Many Faces of Grief

Grief is rarely one feeling.

It often moves.

Sometimes sadness appears.

Sometimes anger.

Sometimes relief.

Sometimes numbness.

Sometimes gratitude.

Sometimes laughter.

Sometimes all of them in the same day.

This is normal.

Grief is not linear.

It moves like weather.

What emotions have been moving through my grief?

Remembering

Sometimes grief asks us to remember.

Take a moment to reflect on the person, relationship, experience, or chapter that has been lost.

What do I want to remember?

What did this person, experience, or chapter give me?

What remains with me today?

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Finding Support in the Body

Grief often creates contraction.

Take a moment to notice where grief lives in your body.

Where do I feel grief most strongly?

Place a hand gently on that area if it feels supportive.

Notice:

- Warmth
- Contact
- Pressure
- Support

What do I notice?

When Grief Feels Too Big

Sometimes grief arrives in waves.

If a wave feels overwhelming:

1. Look around the room.
2. Feel your feet on the floor.
3. Notice your breathing.
4. Find one thing that feels supportive.
5. Remind yourself:

This feeling is here right now.

It will not stay at this intensity forever.

Like all emotions, grief moves.

What Has Grief Asked Of Me?

Loss often changes us.

Sometimes grief asks us to slow down.

Sometimes it asks us to let go.

Sometimes it asks us to become someone new.

Reflect:

What has grief been asking of me?

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Love That Remains

Take a moment to consider:

Even when something is gone, the impact of that relationship, experience, or chapter may still live within you.

Complete the sentence:

What I carry forward is:

What strengths, lessons, memories, or gifts remain?

Grief and Vitality

Many people fear that grief and vitality cannot exist together.

But often they do.

You can miss someone and still laugh.

You can mourn a chapter and still begin a new one.

You can feel sadness and gratitude at the same time.

You do not have to choose between honoring your loss and continuing your life.

Both can exist.

Reflection

What did I discover while sitting with my grief?

What surprised me?

What feels important to remember?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What memory, person, place, or experience brings me comfort?

Is there anything that feels even 1% easier than when I began this chapter?

Before Moving On

Grief is not something you get over.

It is something you learn to carry.

Over time, grief often changes shape.

The sharp edges may soften.

The waves may become less frequent.

But the love, meaning, and significance of what mattered remain.

You do not need to rush your grief.

You do not need to force healing.

You do not need to be anywhere other than where you are.

For now, simply remember:

Grief exists because something mattered.

And what mattered is worthy of being honored.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 13: When I Feel Alone.

Chapter 13: When I Feel Alone

The Human Need for Connection

Human beings are wired for connection.

From the moment we are born, our nervous systems develop in relationship with others.

We look for safety.

We look for belonging.

We look for understanding.

We look for connection.

Because connection is such an important need, feelings of loneliness or isolation can be deeply painful.

Feeling alone does not necessarily mean you are alone.

Sometimes we can be surrounded by people and still feel disconnected.

Sometimes we can be physically alone and still feel connected to ourselves, others, nature, community, or something larger than ourselves.

The goal of this chapter is not to force connection.

The goal is to help you reconnect with the sources of support that may already exist around you and within you.

Recognizing Loneliness

Loneliness can appear in many different ways.

Check any that feel familiar.

Thoughts

☐ Nobody understands me

☐ I don't belong

☐ I feel disconnected

☐ I am carrying this by myself

☐ Nobody would understand if I shared

☐ I miss having someone to talk to

☐ I feel invisible

Emotions

☐ Loneliness

☐ Sadness

☐ Longing

☐ Emptiness

☐ Disappointment

☐ Grief

☐ Hopelessness

☐ Disconnection

Body Sensations

☐ Tight chest

☐ Heaviness

☐ Emptiness

☐ Numbness

☐ Fatigue

☐ Restlessness

☐ Pressure in throat

☐ Feeling collapsed

What Does Alone Feel Like For Me?

Take a moment to reflect.

How do I know when I am feeling alone?

What thoughts tend to appear?

What sensations do I notice in my body?

A Gentle Reminder

Feeling lonely is not a sign that something is wrong with you.

Loneliness is often a signal.

It may be pointing toward a need for connection, support, belonging, understanding, or companionship.

Take a moment to notice what happens when you consider that possibility.

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Orienting to Connection

Take a slow look around your environment.

Notice:

- Pictures
- Objects

- Gifts
- Memories
- Books
- Pets
- Symbols of people you care about

Ask yourself:

What reminds me that I am connected?

Who comes to mind?

Expanding the Definition of Connection

Connection can come from many places.

Consider the following:

People

Friends

Family

Neighbors

Coworkers

Support groups

Therapists

Mentors

Animals

Pets

Wildlife

Animals that bring comfort

Places

Nature

A favorite coffee shop

A spiritual community

A park

A favorite room

Experiences

Music

Art

Movement

Prayer

Meditation

Creative expression

Learning

What sources of connection are available to me?

The Relationship With Myself

Sometimes loneliness is connected to a loss of connection with ourselves.

Take a moment and ask:

How connected do I feel to myself right now?

_____ /10

What helps me feel more like myself?

_____

_____

_____

When do I feel most alive?

_____

_____

_____

_____

🗼 Lighthouse Practice

Remembering Your People

When we feel lonely, it is easy to forget the people who care about us.

Take a moment to list people who have supported you at some point in your life.

They do not have to be perfect.

They do not have to be available right now.

Simply notice who comes to mind.

People Who Matter To Me

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

As you think about them, what do you notice in your body?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reaching Out

Connection often requires vulnerability.

Sometimes we wait until we feel completely ready.

Sometimes we wait until we know exactly what to say.

What if connection could begin with something simple?

Examples:

- Sending a text
- Making a phone call
- Inviting someone for coffee
- Sharing honestly
- Spending time with a pet
- Sitting in a public space
- Joining a group activity

What is one small way I could reach toward connection?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Borrowing Connection

There may be times when direct connection is unavailable.

During those moments, consider:

- Reading a favorite book
- Listening to a podcast
- Watching a comforting show
- Looking at photos
- Spending time in nature
- Listening to music
- Visiting a familiar place

These experiences can help remind the nervous system that connection still exists.

What helps me feel connected when I am alone?

Loneliness and Vitality

When we feel disconnected, vitality often becomes harder to access.

Isolation can narrow our world.

Connection helps expand it again.

Ask yourself:

What experiences help me feel more engaged with life?

What helps me feel part of something larger?

Reflection

What did I learn about loneliness today?

What surprised me?

What feels important to remember?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What connections are available to me right now?

Is there anything that feels even 1% easier than when I began this chapter?

Before Moving On

Feeling alone can be painful.

It can convince us that we are disconnected, forgotten, unseen, or separate.

But loneliness is not always the full story.

Even in moments of isolation, there are often threads of connection still present.

A memory.

A friend.

A pet.

A place.

A community.

A part of yourself that remains steady.

You do not have to solve loneliness all at once.

Sometimes connection begins with a single step toward yourself, another person, or the world around you.

And sometimes that single step is enough.

When you are ready, continue to Chapter 14: When a Trauma Trigger Appears.

Chapter 14: When a Trauma Trigger Appears

Understanding Triggers

A trauma trigger is anything that activates a survival response in your nervous system.

Sometimes triggers are obvious.

A place.

A person.

A smell.

A memory.

A conversation.

A date on the calendar.

Sometimes triggers are less obvious.

A tone of voice.

A feeling of rejection.

A conflict.

A disappointment.

An unexpected change.

A sensation in the body.

When a trigger appears, your nervous system may begin responding as if an old experience is happening again right now.

This does not mean you are weak.

This does not mean you are broken.

This does not mean you are moving backward.

It means your nervous system has recognized something that feels familiar.

The goal of this chapter is not to prevent triggers.

The goal is to help you navigate them with greater awareness and support.

Recognizing a Trigger

Trauma triggers often happen quickly.

Check any experiences that feel familiar.

Thoughts

☐ Something is wrong

☐ I am not safe

☐ I need to fix this immediately

☐ I am trapped

☐ Nobody understands

☐ I am going to be abandoned

☐ I cannot handle this

☐ I need to get away

Emotions

☐ Fear

☐ Panic

☐ Shame

☐ Anger

☐ Sadness

☐ Helplessness

☐ Anxiety

☐ Confusion

Body Sensations

☐ Tight chest

☐ Rapid heartbeat

☐ Shaking

☐ Nausea

☐ Numbness

☐ Pressure

☐ Tension

☐ Restlessness

☐ Feeling frozen

☐ Feeling disconnected

What Just Happened?

When you notice a trigger, begin here.

Without judgment, ask:

What happened just before I noticed this shift?

What do I think activated me?

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Pause Before Reacting

The first goal is not understanding.

The first goal is slowing down.

Take a moment.

Feel your feet.

Look around the room.

Notice:

- Five things you can see
- Four things you can feel
- Three things you can hear

Remind yourself:

I am here.

I am in the present.

This feeling is real.

And I am in this moment.

Then and Now

One of the challenges of a trigger is that the past and present can begin to blur together.

Take a moment to complete the following.

What year is it?

How old am I?

Where am I right now?

Who am I with?

What is different about this moment compared to the past?

What Is My Nervous System Doing?

Which state feels most present?

☐ Fight

☐ Flight

☐ Freeze

☐ Fawn

☐ Collapse

☐ Connection

What clues helped me identify that state?

What might my nervous system be trying to accomplish?

🗼 Lighthouse Practice

Resource Before Story

When we are triggered, the mind often wants to analyze what happened.

Before doing that, identify resources.

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels familiar and safe?

Stay with these resources for a few moments before returning to the story.

Separating Past From Present

Triggers often bring old emotions into current situations.

Ask yourself:

What part of this reaction belongs to the present moment?

What part may belong to an earlier experience?

You do not need to know the answer perfectly.

Curiosity is enough.

🗼 Lighthouse Practice

The Containment Exercise

If memories, emotions, or sensations feel overwhelming:

Imagine placing them into a container.

Perhaps:

- A box
- A safe
- A vault
- A chest

You are not getting rid of the experience.

You are creating enough space to stay present.

What container did I imagine?

What do I notice now?

What Does This Trigger Need?

Instead of asking:

"How do I make this stop?"

Try asking:

"What does this activated part of me need right now?"

Examples:

- Grounding
- Rest
- Support
- Reassurance
- Boundaries
- Movement
- Compassion

My answer:

The Trigger Response Plan

When I am triggered:

1. Pause.
2. Orient to my environment.
3. Feel my feet.
4. Identify my nervous system state.
5. Find resources.
6. Reduce expectations.
7. Take one supportive action.
8. Reach out for support if needed.

Which step is usually hardest for me?

🗼 Lighthouse Practice

Returning to the Present

Take a moment and look around the room.

Notice:

Something blue.

Something soft.

Something stable.

Something familiar.

Something supportive.

Now ask:

What do I know to be true right now?

What do I notice in my body?

Reflection

What did I learn about this trigger?

What surprised me?

What helped most?

Resource Check

What feels supportive right now?

What feels neutral?

What feels difficult?

What resource feels most available to me?

Is there anything that feels even 1% easier than when I began this chapter?

Before Moving On

Triggers can be painful.

They can make old experiences feel very close.

They can convince us that we are back in places we have already survived.

But triggers are not proof that you are failing.

They are opportunities to practice new responses.

Each time you pause, orient, notice, resource, and reconnect, you strengthen your ability to move through activation without becoming lost inside it.

You do not have to do this perfectly.

You only have to keep returning to the present moment.

Again and again.

When you are ready, continue to Part V: Finding Vitality.