

My Gentle Coping List

Safer alternatives when urges feel overwhelming

When emotions feel overwhelming

- Take slow breaths (in for 4, out for 6)
- Hold ice or splash cold water on your face
- Wrap up in a blanket or hug a pillow
- Sit on the floor and feel the ground beneath you
- Name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear

When you feel numb and need sensation

- Snap a hair tie on your wrist
- Hold something textured (stone, fabric, stress ball)
- Take a hot shower or warm bath
- Stretch your body or go for a brisk walk
- Chew strong mint gum or suck on sour candy

When anger, shame, or self-blame hits

- Write everything you're feeling—no censoring
- Tear up paper or cardboard
- Punch a pillow or scream into a towel
- Draw lines on skin with a washable marker
- Listen to music that matches your mood

When you need comfort or care

- Make a warm drink and sip it slowly
- Put on cozy clothes or pajamas
- Rewatch a familiar, comforting show
- Light a candle or use a calming scent
- Write yourself a kind note

When you feel alone

- Text or call someone safe
- Sit in a public place (library, café, park)
- Join an online support space
- Write out what you wish someone understood
- Reach out for confidential support (U.S. call or text 988)

Gentle reminders: Progress is not linear. Slips don't erase growth. You only have to get through this moment.