



STEADY & CONNECTED

A quick guide for anxiety, low mood, and social distress

Symptoms are experiences - not measures of your worth. The goal is not to hide every sign of distress; it is to settle enough to regain choice and take the next workable step.

1 NOTICE THE SHIFT EARLY

BODY + SPEECH

- Sweating, flushing, hot feeling, shaking
- Tight chest, stomach, jaw, or shoulders
- Speech becomes rushed, quiet, shaky, or stuck

THOUGHTS + BEHAVIOUR

- Mind goes blank, races, or predicts judgment
- You cancel, hide, stop replying, or shut down
- Sleep, appetite, hygiene, or responsibilities change

Ask: "What has changed from my usual baseline - and what is this change asking me to do?"

2 USE THE S.T.E.A.D.Y. RESET

S SUPPORT - Feel the chair, wall, floor, or ground holding you.

T TELL THE TRUTH - "My alarm is active. I do not have to perform perfectly."

E EXHALE - Let the exhale be slightly longer than the inhale.

A AIM OUTWARD - Name three neutral details; reduce self-monitoring.

D DELAY THE DEMAND - Pause, sip water, use notes, or ask for a moment.

Y YOUR NEXT STEP - Continue slowly, step out briefly, or contact support.

3 RECONNECT WITHOUT DEMANDING A PERFECT OUTCOME

BEFORE A SOCIAL MOMENT

- "I am here to participate, not to prove my value."
- Listen for meaning; ask one genuine follow-up
- Measure success by showing up and practising one skill

WHEN MOOD IS LOW

- Choose one minimum step: water, food, hygiene, daylight, movement, or one message
- Action may come before motivation
- Current capacity is not character or worth

4 PROTECT TREATMENT, FUNCTIONING, AND SAFETY

[] Use prescribed medication and treatment as directed. [] Discuss side effects, worsening symptoms, or missed doses with the prescriber or pharmacist. [] Do not stop or change medication on your own. [] Add support when sleep, self-care, work, relationships, or safety are worsening.

"I can have symptoms and still have dignity, value, relationships, choices, pleasure, and a future."

EDUCATIONAL USE & SELECTED EVIDENCE-INFORMED SOURCES

1. NICE. Generalised Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder in Adults: Management (CG113; updated 2020).
2. NICE. Depression in Adults: Treatment and Management (NG222). 2022.
3. World Health Organization. Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) Guideline, 3rd ed. 2023.

IMPORTANT: General educational resource only. It is not diagnosis, individualized nursing care, psychotherapy, medication advice, or emergency care. New or severe physical symptoms need medical assessment. In Canada, call or text 9-8-8 for suicide crisis support; call 9-1-1 or use emergency services for immediate danger.