

Workshop Description: Core Practices & Techniques for Stress Relief and Resilience

This 6-week workshop offers a practical and embodied approach to managing stress and anxiety by introducing participants to four foundational practices: breathwork, journaling, body scanning meditation, yoga and evidence-based coping techniques. Each practice is taught with accessible techniques that can be easily integrated into daily life for lasting emotional balance and nervous system regulation.

Breathwork

Purpose: To regulate the nervous system, calm the mind, and create internal stability.

Techniques Taught:

Box Breathing (4-4-4-4): A structured breath pattern (inhale-hold-exhale-hold) that calms the mind and supports focus.

4-7-8 Breathing: A deep, paced breathing method used to reduce anxiety and promote sleep.

Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing: Encourages full oxygen exchange and activates the parasympathetic nervous system (rest-and-digest mode).

Coherent Breathing: A smooth, rhythmic breathing technique (about 5 breaths per minute) used to synchronize heart and brain function for emotional regulation.

These techniques are practiced in-session and suggested for personal daily use, especially in moments of overwhelm or high stress.

Journaling

Purpose: To enhance self-awareness, process emotions, and reduce mental clutter.

Techniques Explored:

Stream of Consciousness Writing: Free-flow writing without filters to access deeper thoughts and feelings.

Guided Prompts: Reflective questions designed to uncover emotional patterns, triggers, and insights (e.g., “What does stress feel like in my body?” or “What am I holding onto that I can let go of?”).

Gratitude Journaling: A simple but effective method to shift focus from stress to appreciation, helping rewire the brain for positivity.

Stress Trigger Mapping: Using journaling to track recurring stressors and habitual responses to them.

Journaling is encouraged as a daily or weekly reflection tool and used in tandem with breath and meditation work.

Body Scanning Meditation

Purpose: To cultivate mind-body awareness, release physical tension, and promote presence.

Techniques Practiced:

Guided Body Scan Meditation: A slow, deliberate journey of attention through different parts of the body, observing sensations without judgment.

Tension Awareness & Release: Identifying areas of physical tension (often linked to emotional stress) and practicing gentle breath-based release.

Somatic Check-Ins: Brief body scans used throughout the day to assess internal states and reconnect to the present moment.

This practice enhances interoception (internal body awareness) and supports emotional grounding.

Stress & Anxiety Coping Mechanisms

Purpose: To build emotional resilience, reduce reactivity, and respond to challenges with clarity.

Strategies and Tools Introduced:

Grounding Techniques: Including the 5-4-3-2-1 sensory method and physical anchoring (e.g., pressing feet into the floor).

Cognitive Reframing: Learning to shift perspective and challenge unhelpful thought patterns.

Emotion Naming (Affect Labeling): Reducing emotional intensity by accurately naming what you're feeling.

Boundary Setting Practices: Identifying where stress stems from lack of boundaries and learning how to communicate needs clearly.

Stress Response Mapping: Identifying personal triggers and reactions using journaling and mindfulness techniques.

Participants are guided to develop a personalized coping toolkit by the end of the program.

Integrated Outcome

By the end of the 6 weeks, participants have established a personal practice routine that includes breathwork, reflective journaling, mindful body awareness, and real-life coping strategies. Together, these practices foster resilience, clarity, and a deeper connection to one's inner resources for managing stress and anxiety in everyday life.

How to begin Journaling.

1. Set Your Intention

Decide why you want to journal (e.g., mental clarity, productivity, emotional health, creativity).

Keep it simple—just one or two goals to start.

2. Choose a Time and Place

Pick a consistent time (morning or evening are common).

Choose a quiet or cozy spot to make journaling a ritual.

3. Pick a Format

Notebook (paper), app (like Day One), or a simple digital doc.

Choose one that feels natural and low-pressure to use.

4. Start with a Simple Prompt or Template

Use starter prompts like:

“Today I feel...”

“What’s on my mind right now?”

“3 things I’m grateful for...”

Or use a format like:

Date

Mood

Highlights of the day

Thoughts/reflections

5. Don't Overthink It

Write like you're talking to yourself—spelling and grammar don't matter.

Be honest, not perfect.

6. Keep It Short (At First)

Start with 5 minutes or a few sentences.

Consistency > length.

7. Stay Consistent

Journal a few times a week, or daily if you can.

Use reminders or habit-stacking (e.g., journal after brushing your teeth).

8. Keep It Private (If Needed)

This is your space—feel free to lock it, hide it, or encrypt it if privacy helps you open up.

9. Review Occasionally

Every few weeks, re-read old entries to track patterns, progress, or growth.

10. Experiment Freely

Try different styles: bullet journaling, stream of consciousness, gratitude lists, or even sketches.

There's no wrong way—make it yours.

How to Begin Journaling Your Feelings

1. Start With a Feeling Check-In

Ask yourself:

“How am I feeling right now?”

“What’s taking up space in my mind?”

If you’re not sure, try:

“Something feels off, and I’m not sure why.”

2. Use Sentence Starters

These help you ease into writing:

“I feel... because...”

“Right now, I’m overwhelmed by...”

“Part of me feels ____, but another part feels ____.”

“I wish I could tell someone...”

“I keep thinking about...”

3. Name Your Emotions (Even Imperfectly)

Use basic emotion words: happy, sad, anxious, angry, numb, hopeful, etc.

Or go deeper with: rejected, peaceful, ashamed, grateful, disappointed.

If stuck, use this shortcut:

“If I had to pick one word for this feeling, maybe it’s...”

4. Give Yourself Permission to Be Honest

No need to filter. You don’t need to sound wise or composed.

You can write “I don’t know what I’m feeling” — that is a feeling worth exploring.

5. Try Free-Writing for 5 Minutes

Set a timer.

Don’t stop to correct or reread—just dump the thoughts as they come.

Let it be messy.

6. End with a Small Reflection

Ask:

“What do I need right now?”

“What helped me feel better in the past?”

“What’s one small thing I can do to support myself today?”

Optional Tools

Use an emotion wheel to expand your feeling vocabulary.

Rate the intensity of the feeling (e.g., “sadness: 6/10”).

Add a drawing, doodle, or symbol.

Example Entry Starter:

“I’m not sure what’s going on, but I feel a tightness in my chest. Maybe I’m anxious. I keep thinking about that conversation, and I don’t know if I said the right thing. Part of me wants to forget it, but another part keeps replaying it...”