

WHEN YOU FEEL PANICKY OR SCARED

A VISUAL REGULATION GUIDE

First, remind yourself: this feeling can pass.

Your body may be responding as though there is danger. You do not have to use every strategy. Choose one that feels safe, accessible and comfortable for your body.

CHECK: Am I in immediate danger?

If yes, move towards a safer place or trusted person. If no, reduce demands and try one step below.

Choose one regulation step



ORIENT TO THE PRESENT

Name where you are, the date and one thing that tells you this moment is different from the danger you fear.



MAKE THE OUT-BREATH LONGER

Breathe in gently, then breathe out a little more slowly. Do not force a deep breath or hold it if that feels uncomfortable.



REDUCE SENSORY LOAD

Move away from noise, crowds or bright light. Use headphones, dim lighting, a hood or another familiar support.



TRY COMFORTABLE PRESSURE

Hold a pillow, use a preferred blanket, press your palms together or choose a hug only if you want one.



MOVE OR STIM SAFELY

Rock, pace, stretch, shake out your hands, push against a wall or repeat a familiar movement that helps you regulate.



ASK FOR SUPPORT YOUR WAY

Speak, type, point, sign, draw or use AAC: "I feel scared." "Please stay." "I need quiet." "Help me feel safe."



USE A SHORT FOCUS TASK

Count objects of one colour, sort something, trace a shape, listen to familiar music or follow a predictable routine.



GROUND THROUGH THE SENSES

Notice 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell and 1 you taste - or use fewer senses if easier.

GET URGENT HELP IF SOMETHING FEELS MEDICALLY WRONG

Seek urgent care for severe or new chest pain, fainting, major breathing difficulty, serious injury, or if you may harm yourself or someone else. In Kenya, call 999 or 112 or go to the nearest emergency department.