



Coping with Anxiety or Intrusive Thoughts

Anxiety and intrusive thoughts can appear out of nowhere and detail your mood. In those moments, you can use the following acronyms to support yourself

- 1) **ACCEPTS** to distract yourself from the anxious or intrusive thoughts
- 2) **IMPROVE** to self sooth.

Keep this sheet somewhere close by during times of intense anxiety.

Distract with ACCEPTS	Self sooth to IMPROVE the moment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities - Use positive activities that you enjoy • Contribute - Help out others or your community • Comparisons - Compare to less fortunate or a time that you were not doing as well • Emotions (other) - cause yourself to feel something different by engaging humor or joy with appropriate activities • Push away - Put your situation on the back-burner for a while. Put something else temporarily first in your mind • Thoughts (other) - Force your mind to think about something else • Sensations (other) – Do something that has an intense feeling other than what you are feeling, like a cold shower or a spicy candy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagery - Imagine relaxing scenes, things going well, or other things that please you • Meaning - Find some purpose or meaning in what you are feeling • Prayer – Personal or religious • Relaxation - Relax your muscles, breathe deeply, one body part at a time • One thing in the moment - Focus your entire attention on what you are doing right now • Keep yourself in the present. • Vacation (brief) - Take a break from it all for a short period of time • Encouragement - Cheerlead yourself. Tell yourself you can make it through this and cope