

Understanding self-medication

We all have a space where life feels manageable and predictable. While this zone helps us feel safe, it can also keep us stuck in anxiety patterns. Moving forward means taking small steps beyond what feels familiar.

NOTICE WHEN REACHING FOR

- Alcohol to relax
- Cannabis to quiet thoughts
- Food for comfort
- Social media to escape
- Work to stay busy
- Shopping to feel better

These are common ways we try to feel better quickly. Noticing is not about judging - it is about understanding what we're trying to avoid feeling.

EXAMPLE PATTERNS

- Using these things to handle social situations
- Needing them more often
- Finding it hard to cope without them
- Planning life around having them handy

These patterns often develop slowly, helping us handle difficult feelings. Understanding their role helps us see what needs our attention.

THE CYCLE

- Quick relief feels good
- Anxiety comes back stronger
- Trust in handling anxiety naturally drops
- Need for quick fixes grows

What helps right now might make anxiety stronger over time. This isn't about blame - it is about seeing patterns that might not be helping anymore.

CREATING CHANGE

While these ways of coping helped you handle hard times, they might now be keeping anxiety going. Noticing these patterns helps us see when we are choosing quick relief over lasting change, creating space for different choices.