When my emotions feel too much

Pause, find support and choose one next step

Name what is happening gently

Try: "I feel angry," "I feel frightened," or "I am overwhelmed." You do not have to solve the feeling immediately. Put safety first and step away from an escalating situation if you can do so safely.

Try a simple grounding action

Notice your feet on the floor, name a few things you can see or hold a familiar object. Keep your eyes open if that feels better. If an exercise increases distress, stop and choose another action or contact support.

Pause before responding

Example: a message hurts and you want to send an angry reply or drink. Put the phone down, move somewhere comfortable and say: "I need a little time before I answer." A pause can make room to ask for help.

Ask what would help now

Do you need food, quieter surroundings, rest, company or professional support? Try: "I am overwhelmed. Can you talk with me?" If you feel unsafe or might harm yourself, contact crisis support; call 000 if there is immediate danger.

Before you change your drinking

If you drink heavily or regularly, need alcohol to feel steady, or have had withdrawal before, speak with a doctor before stopping or sharply reducing. Alcohol withdrawal can be life-threatening. Shaking, sweating or feeling unwell after cutting down needs prompt medical advice. Call 000 for seizures, severe confusion or hallucinations.

Australia: Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline 1800 250 015 (free, confidential advice). Lifeline 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support). Call 000 if there is immediate danger or a medical emergency.

Make it personal

Write a few words. You can leave questions blank or talk them through with someone.

What I am feeling, without judging it...

What was happening when the feeling grew...

One grounding action I feel comfortable trying...

My words to pause a conversation or decision...

What I need now, and who I will contact...

You do not have to do this alone.

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Safety and support sources: healthdirect.gov.au/alcoholism; adf.org.au/insights/safely-withdrawing-alcohol/; lifeline.org.au/131114; medicarementalhealth.gov.au/provider/national-alcohol-and-other-drug-hotline-16469. Checked 1 October 2026.