

- Mental health

5 WAYS TO CALM NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

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Trying to interrupt unhelpful thoughts during times of distress does not mean you do not have to acknowledge your anxiety.

Psychological health expert, educator and cognitive neuroscientist Nawal Mustafa noted that it is best to consider what these feelings might be telling you.

“Maybe you need to reframe your viewpoint? Maybe you need to slow down? Or maybe you are under a real threat and need to take action?” she asked.

For World Mental Health Week this October, Benilde Well-Being Center of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde is one with Mustafa in extending a helping hand to those who need support, as well as reminding others to check in on their family and friends during these trying times.

“Let us all take this opportunity to unite and recognize the importance of protecting, nurturing, and improving our well-being and mental health,” the center said in a statement.

To calm negative thought patterns, here are Mustafa’s top five tips to keep in mind:

Think and rest. Respond if it still bothers you within 24 hours. It is normal to react right away when we are upset. However, during this time, our nervous system is unregulated. It can lead to a negative reaction. Pausing allows us to think more clearly. This lets us respond to the situation more deliberately.

Stop apologizing for taking up space and expressing your feelings. How you treat yourself is teaching others how to treat you. Do not constantly apologize for setting boundaries and sharing opinions. Own your authentic self and love it unconditionally.

The way you speak to yourself matters. The words we use to speak to ourselves have a significant impact on our psychological health. If you always judge yourself, put yourself down, and criticize your own abilities, you will later on believe those phrases. Talk to yourself as if you are talking to a loved one.

People aren’t thinking about you the way you are thinking about you. There is a term in social psychology called the “spotlight effect.” This refers to a tendency to overestimate how much others think about us. Everyone else has their own problems or lives to think about.

Rejection is redirection. When you feel rejected or unwanted, acknowledge that this feeling is awful. But do not let it consume you. You will likely not take many chances if you have not experienced rejection. Turn your hardships into self-growth. Use this momentum to explore new opportunities.