A PAUSE, A PRACTICE, A NEXT STEP

Intrusive Thoughts

When an unwanted thought catches your attention.

Use a few words, draw, or talk this through. Skip anything that does not fit. This is an educational worksheet, not a diagnostic test or a substitute for care.

Safety comes first

If you have intent to harm yourself or someone else, feel unable to stay safe, or hear commands to cause harm, use the immediate support options now. Do not rely on a self-help exercise to decide whether you are safe.

Name the experience

Try a neutral description: “An unwanted thought showed up.” You do not need to analyze its details in this moment.

01 / Notice and reflect

What response does the thought pull me toward?

02 / Notice and reflect

Does that response help briefly but keep the cycle going?

03 / One next step

What will I try next, and what support would make it easier?

When to seek help: Seek care when thoughts or rituals take up time, cause avoidance, or interfere with daily life. If you want to act on a harmful thought, feel an urge you may follow, or are unsure you can stay safe, seek immediate human support.

Read more: NIMH · Understanding obsessive-compulsive disorder

More tools and immediate support: Our Healing Room / Crisis Support.