

What Am I Actually Needing Right Now?

Sometimes we know we're distressed, but we don't know what we actually need.

Need	Signs	Ask yourself...	Ideas to try
Safety- reducing threat	Feeling on edge, activated, overwhelmed, unsafe, tense, or like something bad is about to happen	What would help my body feel a little safer right now?	Orient to the room, grounding, slow breathing, reduce stimulation, wrap up in a blanket, create physical space, hold something comforting, creating a quieter environment
Comfort- warmth, soothing, nurturing, physical comfort/ touch	Feeling emotionally drained, exhausted, vulnerable, sad, or needing to be cared for	What would feel nurturing or comforting right now?	Warm tea, soft blanket, hot shower, calming music, gentle movement, self-compassion, rest, comforting scents
Connection- feeling emotional linked, understood, belonging	Feeling lonely, unseen, disconnected, or wishing someone understood	What is the closest available form of connection right now?	Call or text a trusted person, spend time with a pet, be around people (coffee shop, library, park), listen to a familiar voice, read encouraging messages, spend time in nature
Expression- allowing emotions to move	Emotions feel stuck, bottled up, or like they need somewhere to go	What needs to be expressed instead of held inside?	Cry, journal, draw, move your body, talk with someone, create music, pray

Remember

- Your first guess doesn't have to be perfect.
- More than one need can be true at the same time.
- If one strategy doesn't help, you may need something different.
- Sometimes your body needs a little more safety before comfort is possible.
- Sometimes comfort helps you feel safe enough to connect.