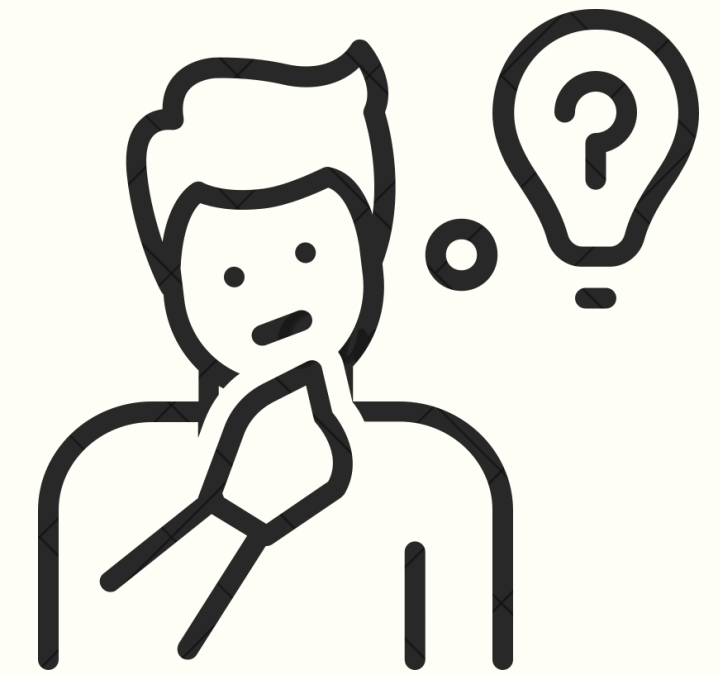


The “I Don’t Know” Emergency Menu

What to Do When Your Brain Goes Blank and Your Feelings Feel Hidden



When you are dealing with deep stress, a tough memory, or big changes, your brain’s language center can temporarily shut down to protect you. Saying “I don’t know” is not a failure, and it doesn’t mean you are doing therapy wrong. It simply means your system has maxed out its words for a moment. Instead of forcing yourself to think of a perfect explanation, take a slow breath and pick an option from the menu below.

The Silence Anchor

“I need a moment to just stop talking.”

The Action: I truly do not know the words right now. I want to pause and sit in absolute silence for a minute or two. I want to see if a feeling or a word shows up on its own without any pressure.

The Body Clue

“My brain is blank, but my body is talking.”

The Action: I cannot find an emotional word like *sad* or *angry*. However, I can feel a physical sensation inside. (See “My Body’s Language” handout.)

The Step Outside

“The inside feels too big. Let’s look outside.”

The Action: Trying to look inward feels too confusing or unsafe right now. Instead of forcing it, let’s pause and focus on the room around us. I want to look at something neutral in the room or do a quick grounding exercise to reset.

The “Too Big” Boundary

“I feel it, but I cannot speak it.”

The Action: I actually *can* feel the emotion inside me, but it feels way too massive, messy, or overwhelming to squeeze into a single word today. I just need you to know it is there, without making me explain it yet.