

Rumination & Mental Replay

When repetitive thinking feels productive but keeps mood, shame, or anger active.

What rumination is

Rumination is repetitive thinking about causes, meanings, mistakes, or unfairness without moving toward a decision or action. It often shows up in depression, anxiety, shame, anger, and grief.

Signs you are looping

- The same questions repeat without new information.
- You are trying to achieve certainty about the past.
- Mood worsens while the thinking continues.
- You delay sleep, work, connection, or problem-solving to keep reviewing.

Interrupt the loop

- Ask whether there is a new decision to make.
- Write one sentence summarizing the lesson, then shift to action.
- Use external attention: movement, a task, conversation, or sensory grounding.
- Set a brief reflection period rather than unlimited replay.

Try this reflection

What question does your mind keep asking that may not have a perfect answer?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.