
Information from your Patient Aligned Care Team

Managing Menopausal Hot Flashes with Reassuring Thinking

Stressful, alarming thoughts may increase the severity of menopausal hot flashes. Alarming thoughts about the hot flashes may also lead to more difficulty coping effectively with the symptoms. One tool to help better manage menopausal symptoms is to change or disrupt a pattern of alarming thoughts by replacing them with more reassuring or supportive statements.

1. Identify Your Negative Self-Talk

The first step in changing alarming thinking is to identify your negative, alarming self-talk related to menopausal symptoms. Here are some examples of common thoughts women may have about these symptoms.

Place a checkmark next to any thoughts that seem relevant to you:

- “Oh, no- here it comes.”
- “Everyone is noticing how much I’m sweating right now.”
- “I can’t deal with this right now.”
- “People will think I’m strange/anxious/old/etc.”
- “Something is physically wrong with me.”
- “I can’t stand this.”
- “This sweating is so embarrassing.”

What other alarming or negative self-talk might you notice when you experience hot flashes?
Please list them below:

2. Develop Reassuring Coping Statements

The second step in changing alarming thinking is to accept what’s happening by making reassuring, calming statements to yourself. This may help to keep your initial symptoms from escalating to higher levels and can give you a greater sense of control over the situation.

Some people find it helpful to write several coping statements on a 3x5 index card. When hot flash symptoms begin, pull this card out and repeat the coping statements to yourself to help manage the symptoms and your reaction in a healthier manner.

Here are some examples of positive coping statements that people have found helpful when they first feel the symptoms of hot flashes coming on.

Put a check in the boxes of coping statements you believe could be most helpful for you:

- I don’t *like* feeling this way, but I can accept it.
- I can feel like this and still be okay.
- I can handle these symptoms or sensations.

- These symptoms are natural-I'm perfectly healthy.
- I'm going to go on with what I'm doing and wait for my symptoms to decrease.
- I'll just let my body do its thing. This will pass.
- I can do my coping strategies (e.g., relaxation) and allow this to pass.
- Fighting and resisting isn't going to get help -so I'll just let it flow.
- My symptoms are not very noticeable- they feel stronger than they look to others.
- So what?

What additional coping statements do you believe would be helpful for you to combat your own alarming self-talk?

Reference

Hunter, C.L., Goodie, J.L., Oordt, M.S., & Dobmeyer, A.C. (2017). *Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care: Step-by-step Guidance for Assessment and Intervention* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association.