

SELF-HELP KIT FOR ADULTS

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♥ THANK YOU TO MANY HANDS THAT HELPED PUT THESE SELF-HELP KITS TOGETHER — YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

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BREATHING TECHNIQUES

BREATHING
CAN HELP
YOU RELAX



RELAXATION CAN
CHANGE HOW YOUR
BRAIN AND BODY
RESPONDS TO STRESS



IT CAN REDUCE
YOUR HEART RATE,
BLOOD PRESSURE AND
MUSCLE TENSION

EXERCISE 1

1. Sit down.
2. Relax your shoulders and neck.
3. Slowly breathe in through your nose for two seconds.
4. Breath out through the mouth for four seconds.
5. Keep your breath slow and steady as you breath out.

EXERCISE 2

1. Lie down and close your eyes.
2. Gently breathe in through your nose for about 5 seconds.
3. Breath out for 5 seconds. Let your breath leave your body slowly.
4. Continue this for 10 minutes.
5. Take a moment to lay still and focus on how your body feels.

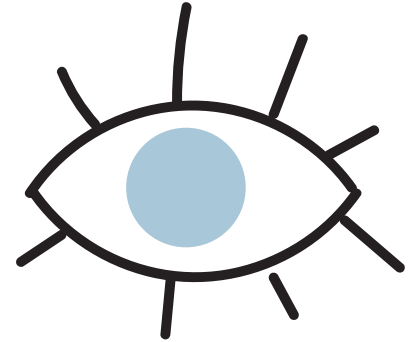
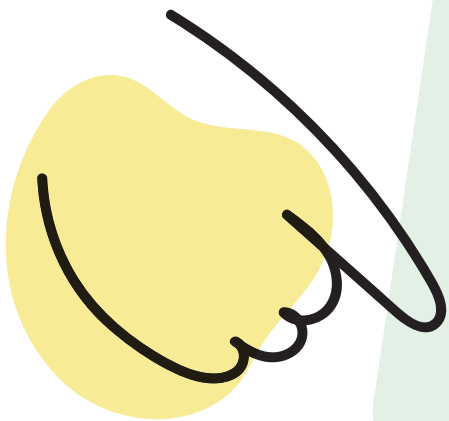


EMBODIED EXPERIENCE EXERCISES

GROUNDING

Focus on the body and breath to release natural responses to the ongoing crisis, and reinforce physical boundaries. Connecting to the body decreases dissociation and increases groundedness so we are more prepared to respond and act as needed.

- Move your body regularly: stretch, sway, rock, jump, jog in place, dance, sing, hum.
- Progressively squeeze and release body parts from your toes to your nose.
- Hug yourself & or others.
- Tap your body all over using your cupped hand.
- Notice your breath. Count during the inhaled and exhaled. See if you can make each inhalation and exhalation longer and deeper. Consider using the pointer finger on one hand to trace the other hand: breathe in as you trace up, out as you trace down.



RESOURCING

Access memory, Visualization, and use your senses to internally reference feelings of relative safety or neutrality

- Remember, visualize and talk about times when you felt safer or when you will feel safer. Imagine, or talk about the colors, smells, sensations you associate with feeling more secure.
- Look around the room: At the corners of the room, at the doors and windows. Change your focal length to scan the horizon if you are outside. Identify colors and shapes in the environment, especially those that are symbolically neutral or hopeful, for example trees, the moon, the sun, clouds, colors, shapes.

CALMING AND REGULATING BODY BASED ACTIVITIES AND TRAUMA INFORMED THERAPEUTIC ART PRACTICE WITHOUT MATERIALS.

1

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BUTTERFLY HUG

Sit comfortably on the floor or in a chair. Settle yourself and feel yourself sitting. Place your hands across your chest. Link your thumbs, if you prefer. Alternately tap the 'wings' (your hands) of the butterfly and breathe slowly. As you tap back and forth, imagine a calm place. Maintain this image of calm in your mind as you tap. Do this for 10 or 20 slow breaths.



DRAW IN THE AIR

Stand or sit comfortably. Feel your feet on the ground or seat on the floor / chair. Imagine one of your favourite things. Draw this shape in the air with your fingers or hands. If possible use both hands at the same time! Breathe slowly and try to smile. Have fun with it.



HUG A TREE

Stand comfortably and securely on the ground. Feel your feet connected to the ground. Possibly wiggle your feet or toes to really feel the ground. When you feel stable raise your arms to 'hug' an imaginary tree. Maybe it is wide or thin. Wrap your arm around it. Maybe you sway a bit with the tree, maybe you imagine you have roots like a tree. Feel the strength of the tree and breathe slowly for 10 - 20 breaths.

CALMING AND REGULATING BODY BASED ACTIVITIES AND TRAUMA INFORMED THERAPEUTIC ART PRACTICE WITHOUT MATERIALS.

2

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THE FLOW OF WATER

Imaging your favourite water... is it a river, a lake, the ocean or the rain? comfortably stand or sit. Slow your breath and start to 'flow' with the water.... Making waves or rainfall or river movements. Possibly you synchronise your breath to the flowing water.



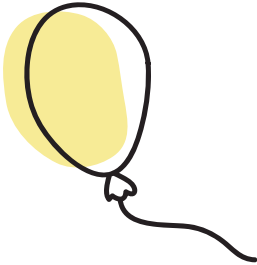
ELEPHANT WALK

Stand comfortably but attentively. Feel your feet planted securely on the ground. When your feet feel secure, hold at the hips / waist and reach for your toes. Maybe you can reach the floor, or your feet, or your shins? Let yourself 'hang' and relax your head, neck and shoulders. Maybe you can reach further? When you feel comfortable in the position, imaging your arm is an Elephant Trunk! Move your trunk around, maybe you even make an elephant noise. Now, maybe even you can walk and move your trunk? Don't forget to stay solid in your feet and breath slowly and deeply.

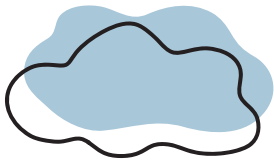
SELF-CARE TIPS / 1



- **SENSORY SOOTHING** — find and expose yourself to sensory stimuli that is soothing, whether it's a candle, warm cup of tea, or calming music, etc.



- **BALLOON BREATHING** - imagine as you breathe in, you are filling your abdomen up like a balloon, and as you breathe out, you are slowly emptying the balloon. We tend to hold our breath when stressed, so try to focus on exhaling all the air out before breathing in



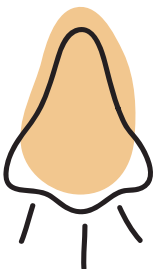
- **PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION** — starting at your feet and traveling towards your head, slowly relax each muscle in your body. If this is hard to do, try tensing the muscle before relaxing it.



- **CARDIO (RUN IN PLACE, JUMPING JACKS, ETC.)** exercise is also a great way to release cortisol, if your body feels up for it.



- It may sound silly, but lying on your bed or the ground and **SHAKING YOUR BODY** can be really helpful for releasing traumatic stress stored in the body.



- **PENDULATION** is a somatic experiencing technique in which as you breathe in (or for a whole breath), you focus on the uncomfortable sensations in your body caused by stress, and you then focus on a neutral or pleasant sensation in the body as you breathe out (or for a whole breath — whatever pacing works best for you!). For example, notice a rapid heartbeat and tension in your chest as you breathe in, and then notice a neutral sensation in your elbows as you breathe out. This tends to offer comfort to the unpleasant sensations and allow them to become more tolerable.

SELF-CARE TIPS / 2



- **SELF-COMPASSION** — offer compassion to yourself. Recognize you are doing the best you can considering the situation. Offer yourself some grace. Traumatic stress can make us more irritable, anxious, and reactive. It can make it difficult to focus and function. This is normal, and believe it or not, it's your body's way to protect itself.

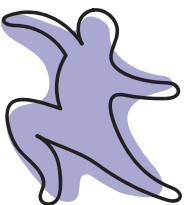
One way to show compassion to yourself is to put your hands on your heart and send 'love' to parts of yourself that are scared, sad, angry, hurting, etc. These parts and feelings know what they need. Make time for this even amidst chaos, it does not take long to show yourself compassion.



- Remember to care for your **BASIC NEEDS** as much as possible, including eating, drinking water, and sleeping. If eating is challenging, allow yourself to eat whatever you can get in your system. If sleeping is challenging, allow your body to rest even if your mind cannot. Just do the best you can.



- **BODY SCAN BEFORE SLEEP/REST:** Try a mindful body scan relaxing each element of your body step by step giving them permission to sleep/relax. I.e., start with your toes, then ankles, calves, knees, thighs, etc. Noticing each part of your body separately helps bring awareness and enables yourself to release tension in those areas of the body.



- **YOGA AND MINDFUL STRETCHING CAN BE HELPFUL.** It could be simple ones like, crocodile, and forward bends for down-regulation.



- **THE ARTS** can be a great way to express what you are feeling when words cannot. Whether it's scribbling on a page or in the air, playing an instrument real or imaginary, singing/humming, doing whatever feels right and nourishing in the moment.