

## PRETZEL BREATHING

This is a strategy for calming and containing excess energy and can be particularly useful for reducing stress and anxiety in the moment, for calming overwhelming thoughts and feelings, and for re-establishing a sense of peace after nightmares or other disturbances.

To practice it, sit and extend your arms. Cross your hands at your wrists so that your palms are facing each other with your pinkies to the sky and thumbs toward ground. Interlace the fingers and then pull your interlaced hands into your chest, letting your thumbs move up from your torso towards your chest and neck as you let your hands flip. Then, cross your ankles.

Sit and breathe. With each inhale, allow your tongue to press to the roof of your mouth. On the exhale, allow the tongue to drop to the bottom of your mouth. Sit and breathe for one to two minutes.... or as long as you need!



## BUTTERFLY TAPPING

Cross your arms comfortably over your chest and allow the hands to rest on each opposite upper arm.

Begin gently tapping, alternating each tap with the whole hand, or using just one to two fingers. If tapping is uncomfortable, use gentle, alternate squeezes.

Use 4 extended exhales breathing in the nose and out the mouth through pursed lips to extend the exhale. Close eyes or soften gaze then breathe normal for 2 minutes.



## CHAIR PULLS & WALL PUSHES

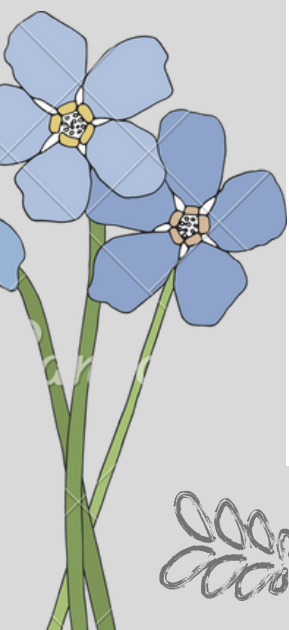
Especially good for when feeling tension in your body:  
Find a way to position so you are able to tense and hold  
your large muscles isometrically for 30 seconds.

Some suggestions are:

Push your back against a wall, face a wall and push  
against the wall with your hands, bracing your legs, sit on  
a chair and grip the bottom of it with your hands.

Set a stopwatch for 33 seconds (the additional 3 sec gives  
you time to assume your position), position your body and  
exert as much energy into your large muscles as you can  
and hold it for 30 seconds. You may find yourself wanting  
to release before then, but hang in there for the full 30  
to give your body enough time to reset. Try to tighten and  
sustain as many of your large muscles as you can, your  
limbs, abs, gluts, etc. When the timer goes off, allow your  
self some time to simply enjoy relaxing. Ahhhh...!

Credit: Resources for Resilience



## **4-8 BREATH**

This is a counted breathing technique specifically for self-calming stress or anxiety. It's easy to learn and remember, but still will become more effective with practice.

Count in a steady rhythm to yourself as you do this:

Count slowly to 4 as you inhale.

Count slowly to 8\* as you exhale.

Repeat as many times as you wish until you feel more calm.

Stretch the inhales and exhales out over the entire count for each. Pace your counting so that you're breathing more slowly than normal but still comfortable, getting plenty of oxygen.

\*Count only to 6 or 7 on the exhale if 8 is uncomfortable.

Effectiveness increases with practice, even just a few times a day. Before sleep is a great time for this practice.



## BUTTERFLY HUG

Place one palm over the center of your chest. Place other palm on top of first, pressing gently into the chest for more contact. Thumbs will be close to each other. If comfortable, touch thumbprints lightly together. Fingers will be pointing diagonally up toward collarbone, out toward shoulder, perhaps forming a butterfly shape with your hands. Feel the warm pressure of the palms as you breathe gently, comfortably deeply. You could imagine with each inhale, breathing warmth and calming or caring through the hands into your heart or into your whole body. Feel the firm pressure of your fingers against the chest in sort of a mini-hug.

Experiment with:

- holding the fingers still
- giving yourself a gentle massage with your fingers, palms remaining in place
- gently tapping right fingers, then left fingers, right, left, about 1 tap per second
- ignoring fingers, keeping focus on the warm contact of your palms on the chest



## **SENSING IN**

As you go through your day, Intentionally look around you for any sensory input that is pleasing to you as you see, smell, touch, taste or hear it.

Pause when you notice it, focus on it and physically experience it with the sense or senses that are appropriate.

Breathe in through your nose slowly and calmly as you notice it, with an intention of absorbing its pleasant qualities, as if you could breathe them in with the air you're inhaling, and simultaneously imagine sort of pulling them in through your skin, as if you were a sponge.

On the slow exhale, let those qualities settle into your body in a comforting, calming way.

Even one slow breath cycle of noticing and absorbing can shift the nervous system from stressed (sympathetic nervous system dominance) to calm (parasympathetic nervous system dominance) . If you can do two or three breaths before moving on (15-30 seconds), the benefits can be strengthened, and the memory will tend to be more clear.

## BODY SCAN MEDITATION

Take a few deep breaths. Let your breathing slow down, and start breathing from your belly instead of from your chest, letting your abdomen expand and contract with each breath. If you find your shoulders rising and falling with each breath, focus more on breathing from your belly, as though a balloon is inflating and deflating in your abdomen with each breath.

Now slowly bring your attention down to your feet. Begin observing sensations in your feet. If you notice pain, acknowledge it and any thoughts or emotions that accompany it, and gently breathe through it. Breathe into the tension. Visualize the tension leaving your body through your breath and evaporating into the air.

Move on when you feel ready. Scan your entire body. Continue this practice with each area of your body, gradually moving up through your feet until you reach the top of your head. Notice how you feel and where you're holding your stress.



## 4-3-2-1

Four things you see:

I see \_\_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_

Four things you hear:

I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_

Four things you feel (that your body is touching right now):

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_

(Repeat) Three things you see:

I see \_\_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_

Three things you hear:

I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_

Three things you feel (that your body is touching right now):

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_

(Repeat) Two things you see:

(Repeat) One thing you see:

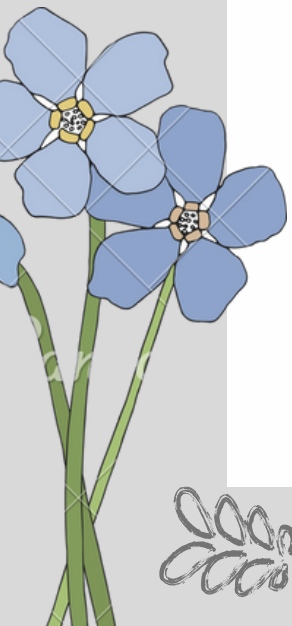
## RESOURCING & CONNECTING

Tap into a positive memory of someone who has been a resource for you for a few seconds. Take 1 minute to reach out to them. If you're unable to reach out to this person, reach out to someone else. It can be someone you have a close connection with or someone you haven't seen in years.



## ONE MINUTE SIT & REFLECT

Take one minute to sit in silence & reflect in silence.



# RESOURCE FOR RESILIENCY

## RAPID RESET

- **Take A Sip**- Take a long, full sip of a drink. Focus intently on noticing the physical sensations.
- **Tap Side to Side**- Also known as bilateral stimulation. Cross your hands and tap your shoulders for 60 seconds.
- **Ground**- Notice the physical sensations that support you.
- **Push Up Against A Wall**- Notice the physical sensations.
- **Take a Walk**- Notice the sensations of walking. Get fresh air, if possible.
- **Sing/ Hum**- Notice the sensations in your face, chest and your breathing.
- **Do Heavy Work**- Notice the pressure and sensations in your muscles.
- **Orient**- Look around the room and bring focus to the details of something that catches your eye (A variation of this includes looking for something specific, such as things that are a certain color)



# DONUT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Rather than an empty space, invert the hole to be the CORE- the main task or responsibility you have. It's what is actually yours to do, own, be concerned with. Notice the boundary circle containing it.

Now, look at the space between that circle and the outer circle and boundary line of the donut itself- that's the yummy part, where you have creativity and opportunity in the task/role beyond the basics. But also be careful not to load on too much glaze and sprinkles or consume it all too quickly as this is also the dangerous area that can sometimes be irresistible and make us overloaded and sick. This is where you DO have control over how little or much you want to consume.

Lastly, look at the space beyond the outer boundary of the donut. That's not yours- that's the stuff on the plate that is not yours to take responsibility for, blame for, stress over or be overwhelmed about.



Adapted from  
Charles Handy,  
The Empty Raincoat 1994



## USING THE SENSE OF SMELL

Find a way to taking in pleasant smells.

One way to build resilience in our brains and bodies is to be proactive and intentional about using the sense of smell to manage emotions and memories.

The sense of smell can also help us be more intentional about breathing. Taking a deep breath to inhale all those scent molecules into your limbic system also brings fresh oxygen into your body and creates a brief moment of mindfulness that you can incorporate very easily into your daily life! You can wear diffuser jewelry (a necklace or bracelet that absorbs essential oils or perfumes), so you have preferred scents with you all the time.

Set a goal for today: seek out a scent that you know brings up a positive response in your body that calls up happy feelings and memories for you. Spend a minute taking that deep breath, sending the scent into your limbic system and the oxygen into your lungs in your bloodstream, and give your body and your mind a boost.

# SENSES OF THE SEASONS

Let's start with Winter. Think of the tastes that remind you of Winter. What does Winter smell like? What do you hear in Winter – is it the shush of snow? What does Winter feel like? What do you see when you think of Winter?

Now let's move into Spring. What tastes like Spring? What are the scents of Spring? What do you hear in Spring? What does your skin feel in Spring?

What about the senses of Summer? Do you hear and see children playing in the sprinkler or splashing in the pool? What does summer smell like?

Last is Fall. What does Fall taste like? What smells remind you of Fall? What do you hear and touch in Fall? And what does Fall look like? What colors do you see?

Now I invite you to take a few more seconds to place yourself in the season that feels most comfortable to you right in this moment. Take a deep breath and release it.



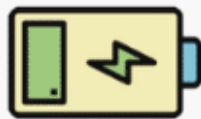
# TYPES OF SELF CARE

## Physical



Sleep  
Stretching  
Walking  
Exercise  
Nutrition  
Yoga

## Emotional



Stress Management  
Coping Skills  
Compassion  
Therapy  
Journaling

## Social



Boundaries  
Support System  
Positive  
Social Media  
Communication  
Friends

## Spiritual



Time Alone  
Meditation  
Prayer  
Nature  
Sacred Space

## Personal



Hobbies  
Creativity  
Goals  
Identity  
Authenticity

## Space



Safety  
Healthy  
Environment  
Stability  
Clean Space

## Financial



Saving  
Budgeting  
Money  
Management  
Paying Bills  
Boundaries

## Work



Time Management  
Work  
Boundaries  
Breaks

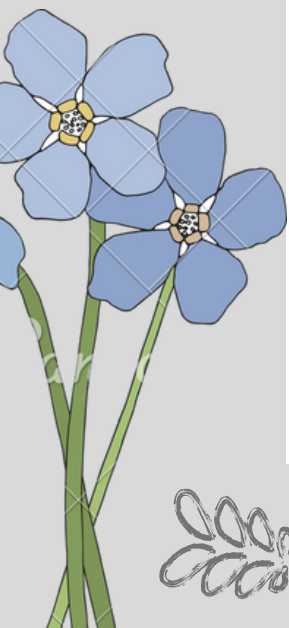
Blessing Manifesting








# EMOTIONAL WELLNESS TOOLKIT

Link to this resource: <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL CONNECTIONS  
BRIGHTEN YOUR OUTLOOK  
GET QUALITY SLEEP  
RESILIENCY SKILL  
COPE WITH LOSS  
BE MINDFUL



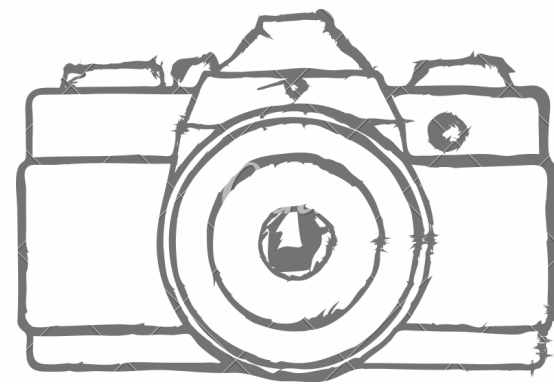
## 5 POINT SCALE

	How I feel	What I can do
5	 I need some help!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use theraputty</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here]</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths</li></ul>
4	 I'm really upset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use theraputty</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here]</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths</li></ul>
3	 I've got a problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Let a teacher know that you have a problem and need some help</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Play with your squishy thing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here]</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths</li></ul>
2	 Things are pretty good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Play with my squishy thing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Think of my favorite things</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Say "I'm going to be O.K." to yourself</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Take 3 or 4 deep breaths</li></ul>
1	 Feeling Great!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy the feeling!</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Have fun</li></ul>

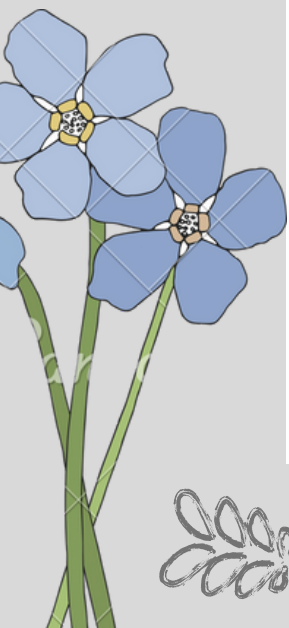
## PICTURE A MOMENT

Closing your eyes, remember a time you were filled with joy. Picture a calming place in your mind. Maybe it was a moment in time that you were the happiest. Maybe it's a place where you felt at peace. Picture the details.

Where were you?  
What can you see?  
What can you feel?  
What do you hear?  
What can you taste?  
What can you smell?  
Who were you with?

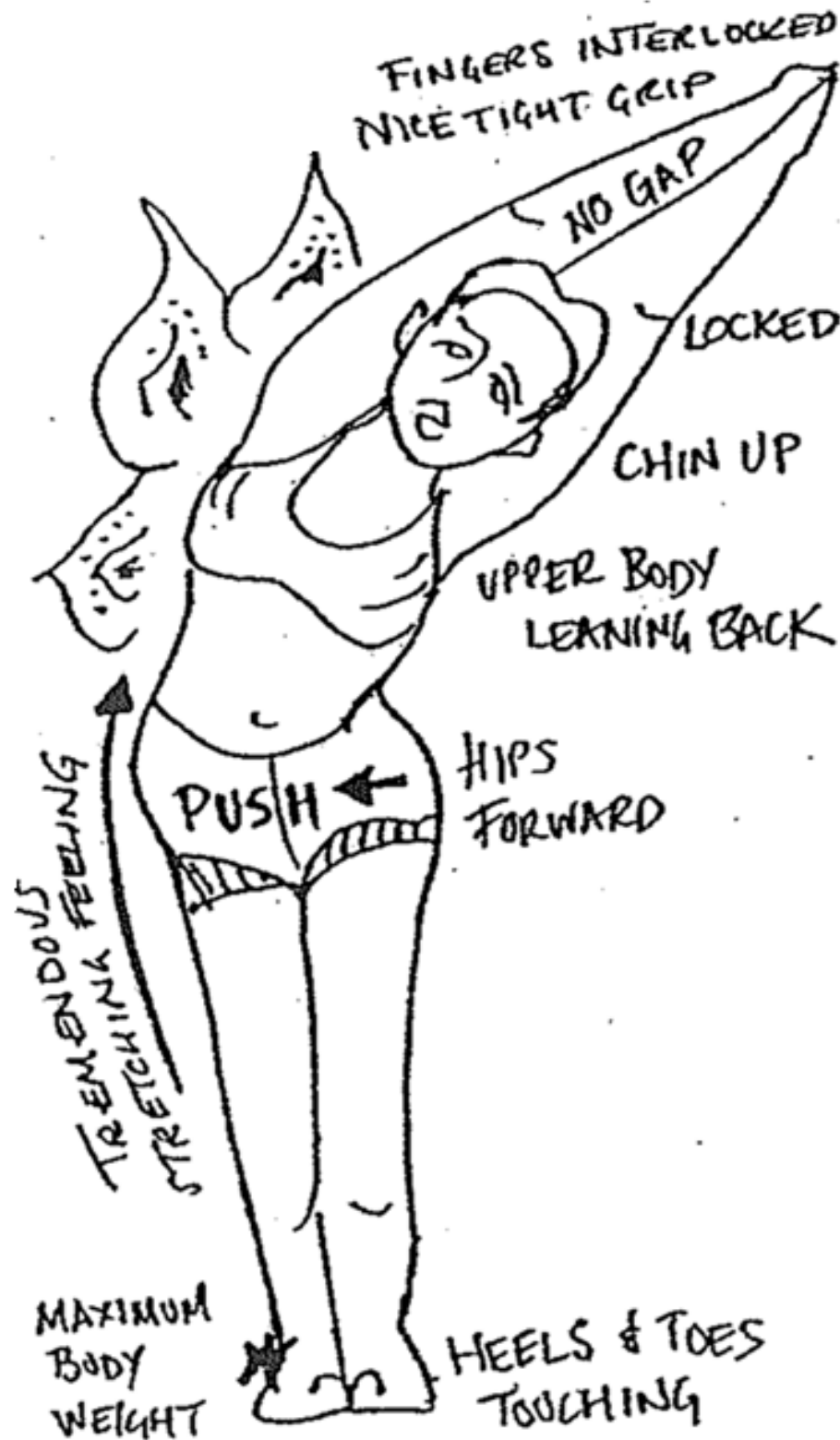


Take a few slow breaths as you soak in this memory. By picturing it in your mind, you have made this memory stronger. When you are worried or stressed, pull up this memory for a moment of joy.





# HALF MOON POSE



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUvo5RXkgrk>

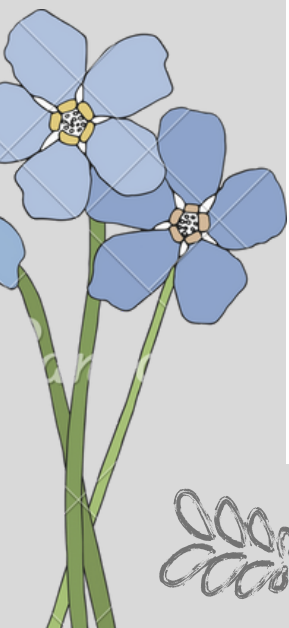


## RESILIENCE KITS: MOVEMENT

Sometimes moving our body helps to reset our brain when we are full of emotion. You may have experienced the feeling of wanting to hit something when upset.

For a safer option, and to help keep your emotions steady, release some of that nervous energy on a regular basis.

Go for a walk or run, push up against a wall, pull against something (like a rubber band), squeeze a stress ball, or pop bubble wrap. Throwing something (like confetti!) might even help!



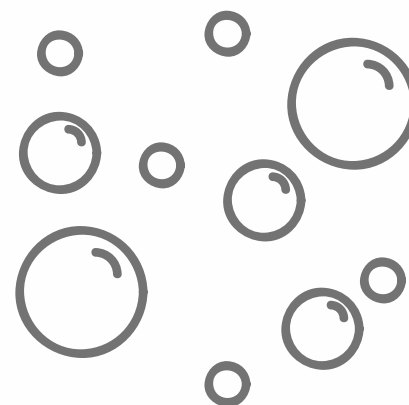
## RESILIENCE KITS: BREATHE

The simplest and easiest way to calm the brain and begin to relax is through slow, deep breathing.

Slowly inhale through your nose, filling your belly with air, pause, exhale through your mouth even more slowly.

Focus on making your exhale longer with each slow breath.

Sometimes it's helpful to imagine smelling a favorite scent, blowing out birthday candles, or blowing bubbles.



## RESILIENCE KIT: TASTE

When we are stressed or upset, sometimes just a simple sip of water can help reset our brain. Try a taste sensations as you take a moment for a deep breath and to be mindful of your sense of taste.

Place a morsel in your mouth, just let it sit there on your tongue without biting for a moment. Notice the texture and temperature. Now, deliberately and slowly, really taste it. What do you notice?



# **GROUNDING MOVEMENTS**

## **Feet on the Floor/Ground**

Stand comfortably. Notice the pressure on the bottoms of your feet in contact with what's beneath them. You might enhance the sensation by pressing down with one foot, then the other, or with different parts of your feet.

## **Sitting**

Sit in a sturdy chair. Breathe gently and comfortably. Pull your focus inside and notice the places where your body makes contact with that chair.

## **Leaning**

Lean your hip (perhaps part of your upper torso if it's high enough) against something sturdy so that it is supporting some of your weight. Breathe comfortably and notice from inside your body the sensations at the points of contact.

## **Pushing**

Push against a wall or a sturdy door. Try leaning & pushing. Try pushing harder if you're comfortable, and notice the pressure of your palms against the wall, and the way that pressure feels up through your arms and shoulders, in your back and torso, in your legs.

## **RESILIENCE KIT: TENSE & RELAX**

Make a fist, directing all your energy into squeezing your hand with as much intensity as you can. Squeeze so tightly that you activate the muscles in your arms and shoulders up towards your ears.

Tighten the muscles in your face, wrinkling your forehead, nose, and mouth, gritting your teeth. Hold everything tight for a moment and take a slow breathe in.

As you exhale, loosen all these tense muscles, letting go of the tension slowly. Notice how you feel more relaxed.



# CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE: STAR, BALLOON & DRAIN



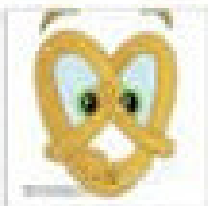
## Drain

Extend arms out, pretending your arms are faucets. Tighten arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly making a "sssshhh" sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.



## S.T.A.R.

**S**mile, **T**ake a deep breath **A**nd **R**elax. Encourage belly breathing where the tummy goes out when the air goes in, and in when the air goes out. Also help children learn to exhale slower than they inhale.



## Pretzel

Standing up, cross your ankles. Now cross your right wrist over left, turn your hands so your thumbs are facing the floor, put palms together and interlace fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your hands down and toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Relax and breathe.



## Balloon

Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a "pbpbpbpbpb" sound.

## RESILIENCE KIT: WRITE/ DRAW

One proven way to deal with stress is to write about it. Just recording on paper helps many people sort out their feelings and begin to manage their response.

Drawing and coloring are helpful as well, providing a repetitive, soothing activity for calming.

## ONE WORD EMOTIONS

In one word, describe how you feel. Try to challenge yourself by thinking of new adjectives.





# **MOMENTS OF SILENCE, MEDITATION & REFLECTION**

Try to find between 1-10 minutes a day to dedicate for silence. Choose a quiet, calming room, and try to clear your head for as long as your time permits.

You can:

- Use a guided meditation practice
- Sit & reflect on your day, troubling thoughts, peaceful moments, times of joy, etc.
- Clear your head and practice complete tranquility

Being still and silent can help you:

- Lower your blood pressure.
- Decrease your heart rate.
- Steady your breathing.
- Reduce muscle tension.
- Increase focus and cognition.
- Develop more profound thoughts.
- Create stronger relationships.
- Increase creativity.
- Improve communication skills



<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/why-you-need-more-silence-in-your-life/>

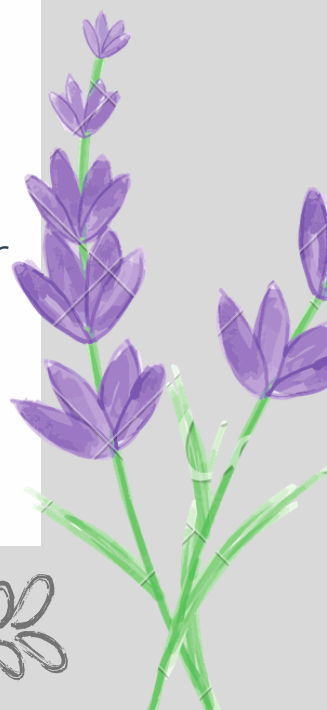
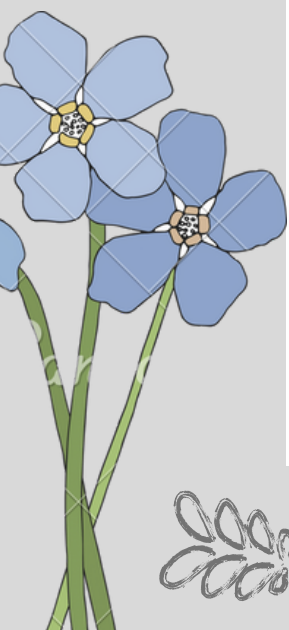
# MINDFUL SELF COMPASSION

Mindful Self Compassion provides a powerful tool for emotional resilience. Research has shown that self-compassion boosts happiness, reduces anxiety and depression, and can even help maintain healthy lifestyle habits such as diet and exercise.

Here are some tips:

- Stop or slow down for at least a moment when you realize you are experiencing distress.
- Name what you're experiencing in a non-judgmentally, kindly, gently, in a nurturing, "prosodic" tone of voice  
"I'm really scared right now. "I'm frustrated and feel like a failure."
- Kindness: Take in/ breathe in: caring, gentleness, love, kindness for yourself in that difficult, uncomfortable state of mind and emotion
- Common humanity: Remind yourself that anything you're feeling or experiencing is part of being human, no matter how alone you may have started to feel. In your own words, say something like:  
"The reasons may be different, but there are millions of other people on the planet who are feeling fear, pain, (whatever it is you're experiencing), just as you are."
- Use words in silent self-talk that reflect these intentions of self-acceptance, such as  
"I'm okay as I am." "May I be at peace."  
"It's okay to be human." Find words that fit for you.
- If it feels right to you, you can add in a similar wish or prayer or intention for others. This can be a separate piece that follows your words of self-compassion, such as:  
"I wish for all of us who are feeling afraid to feel safe"

<https://self-compassion.org/the-program/>



## VALUES AFFIRMATION

Studies show that reflecting on our values, particularly in times of stress, help reduce stress, strengthen willpower, increase openness, and improve performance. Which of these are important to you?

- Acceptance
- Adventure
- Artistic Ability
- Athletic Ability
- Challenge
- Collaboration
- Commitment
- Community
- Compassion
- Courage
- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Discipline
- Discovery
- Efficiency
- Enthusiasm
- Environment
- Equality
- Excellence
- Fairness
- Faith/Religion
- Family
- Freedom
- Friendship
- Fun
- Generosity
- Gratitude
- Happiness
- Hard Work
- Harmony
- Health
- Helping Others
- Honesty
- Humor
- Independence
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Interdependence
- Leadership
- Love
- Loyalty
- Musical Ability
- Openness
- Peace
- Personal Growth
- Problem Solving
- Reliability
- Resourcefulness
- Self-Reliance
- Simplicity
- Strength
- Tradition
- Trust
- Willingness

A Simple Exercise That Works Wonders: Affirm Your Values

## 3 MINUTE BODY SCAN

Stress often has physical symptoms in addition to the mental and emotional stress. Body Scans are particularly helpful in bringing awareness to your body and the areas that may hold stress. Research shows that body scan meditation has many mental and physical benefits including reducing stress, increasing focus, and improving sleep.

<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/body-scan>

Whenever you feel ready, slowly follow the following steps to notice sensations throughout your body.

- Gently close your eyes and ground yourself in the moment.
- Bring awareness to the feet- notice sensations in the soles, toes, tops of the feet and even up to the ankles.
- Shift focus into the legs. Notice sensations that you may have not noticed before. Choose to bring awareness to things you have noticed but have never brought focus to.
- Shift up into the hips, then into the torso, being aware of the back, chest, abdomen
- Begin to be aware of the arms and the hands.
- Choose to bring attention to the shoulders, which are often a place of tension and stress.
- Move up into the neck, and into the face.
- Take deep breaths and find sensations throughout the whole body.
- Whenever you feel ready, open your eyes.

The Body Scan Practice- Dr. Elisha Goldstein



# WELLNESS IN THE WORKSPACE

## **Focusing Your Attention: The Pomodoro Technique**

<https://todoist.com/productivity-methods/pomodoro-technique>

- Set a timer for 25 minutes.
- Work on one task until the timer goes off
- Take a 5 minute break and repeat

## **Micro Meditations**

- Get comfortable. Sit in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth.
- In for the count of four, out for the count of 8. The longer exhale is what slows your physiological processes.
- While you're focused on your breathing, silently count your breaths. Deeply drop into your body and mind, like a weight that's been lifted.
- When thoughts infiltrate your mind, welcome them, then let them go. You'll be surprised at how just 60 seconds can help your refocus and recharge.

## **Chair Yoga & Desk Stretches**

1 minute Neck Exercises:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re-h\\_rtttIE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re-h_rtttIE)

1 minute Chair Yoga:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgf21Tqfwwg\\_](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgf21Tqfwwg_)

Stretch at Your Desk (2 mins):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vE1idGTZOIY>



# LETTING GO MEDITATION

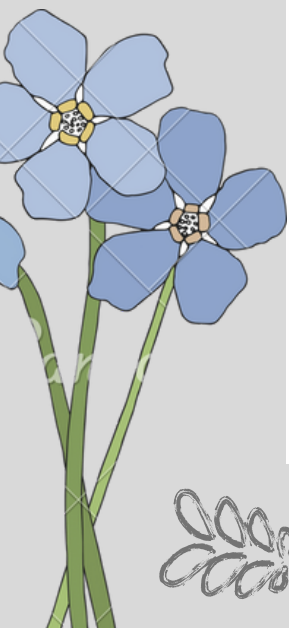
Created by: Jack Kornfield

<https://theminfulcoach.com/letting-go-meditation-by-jkornfield/>

Letting go meditation is a proven and safe way to let go of what is not helpful.

The 4-steps to letting go:

- 1. Settling in
  - Sit comfortably and quietly
  - Bring kind attention to your body and breath.
  - Soften and let yourself be settled in the present moment
- 2. Recognizing
  - Bring into awareness to what you want to let go of.
- 3. Accepting
  - Breathe in softly and let it be. Allow the unpleasantness to be embraced within your heart.
  - Name the feeling gently and allow them the space to be.
- 4. Understanding
  - Ask yourself if it is wise to release this past experience.
  - Say to yourself, "Let go", "Let go", gently over and over.
  - Feel the space that comes as you let go.
  - Direct the mind to envision the future where this situation has been released. Sense the freedom, the innocence, the ease that this letting go can bring.



## WELLNESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Did you know that a NAMI study showed that 64% of people with mental illness report holidays make their conditions worse?

Here are some suggestions for how you can reduce stress and maintain good mental health during the holiday season:

- Take steps to stay COVID safe.
- Accept your needs.
- Write a gratitude list and offer thanks.
- Manage your time and don't try to do too much.
- Be realistic.
- Set boundaries.
- Practice relaxation.
- Exercise daily.
- Set aside time for yourself and prioritize self-care.
- Eat well.
- Get enough sleep.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Spend time in nature.
- Volunteer.
- Find support.
- Keep up or seek Therapy

<https://namica.org/blog/handling-stress-during-the-holiday-season/>



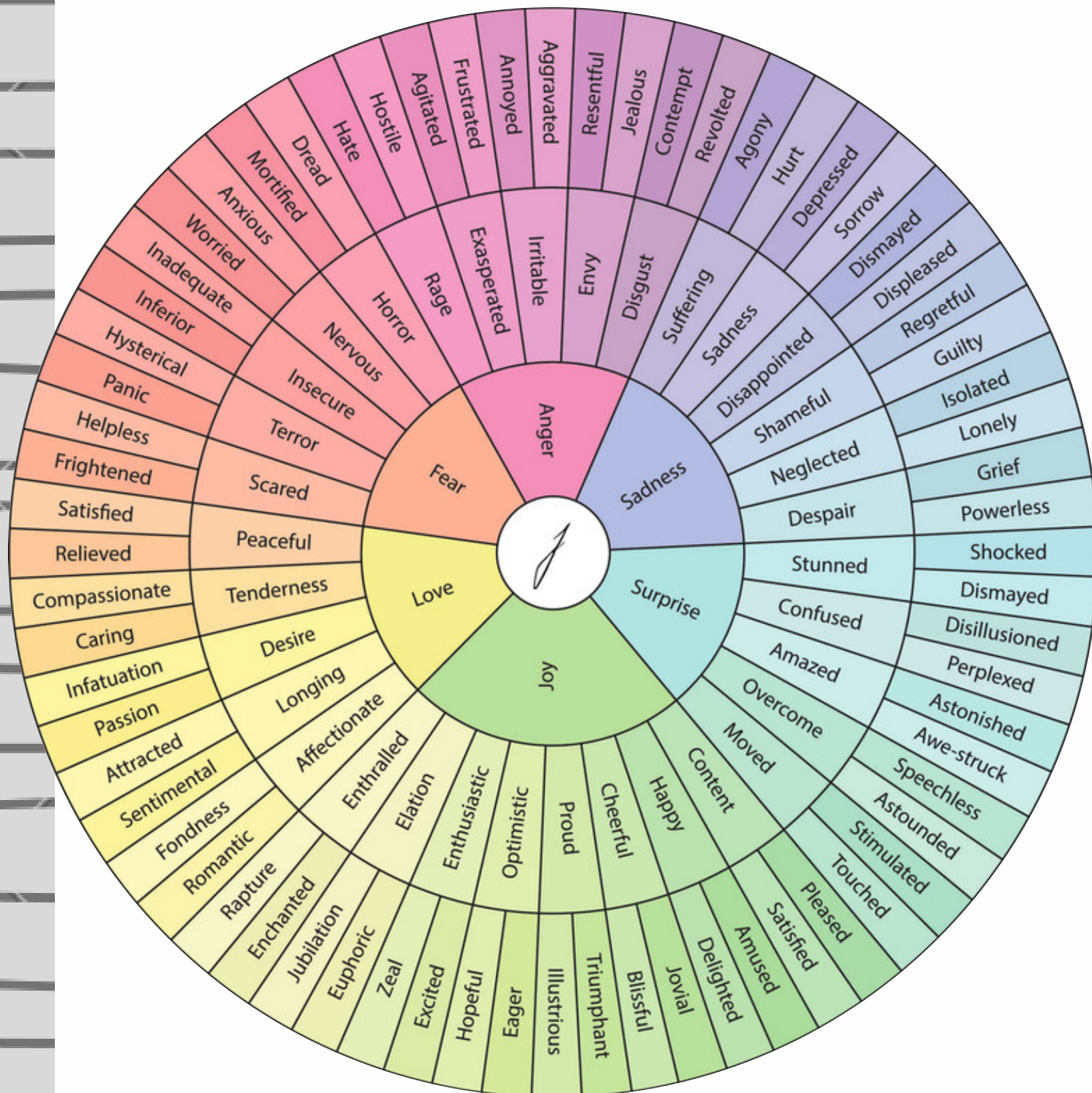
# WELLNESS PLANS

## SELF-CARE WHEEL



This Self-Care Wheel was inspired by and adapted from "Self-Care Assessment Worksheet" from *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996). Created by Olga Phoenix Project: Healing for Social Change (2013).

# EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY





## "I AM CALM"

The "I am Calm" breath has an extra-long exhale to help calm our bodies and minds to allow access to our best thinking. It can be useful when we feel strong emotions like being angry, scared, sad or frustrated.

As you breathe in slowly, think "I am" for the whole inhale.

As you slowly breathe out, think, "Calm, 2, 3, 4." allowing the words to last for the whole exhale. Your exhale should be about twice as long as the inhale.

Continue breathing on your own thinking "I am" on the inhale and "Calm 2, 3, 4" on the exhale.

Continue breathing this way for the next minute or so.



## RESONANCE BREATHING

Resonance frequency breathing is a way of breathing (slow relaxed diaphragmatic breathing at around 3-7 breaths per minute) that has a regulating effect on the autonomic nervous system and other key body systems such as the circulatory system.

Slowing your breathing, breathe in, counting in for 6, and breathe out, counting out for 6. You can also use another number that feels good to you, such as 4 or 8.



# GRATITUDE JOURNALING

Write down up to five things for which you feel grateful. The physical record is important—don't just do this exercise in your head. The things you list can be relatively small in importance or relatively large.

Be as specific as possible.

Go for depth over breadth.

Get personal.

Think, not only, of the positive things that are present, but the negative things that are absent.

See good things as "gifts."

Save surprises or unexpected moments.

If you repeat thoughts, focus in on different details.

Write regularly.

A gratitude journal forces ourselves to pay attention to the good things in life we might otherwise take for granted. In that way, we start to become more attuned to the everyday sources of pleasure around us—and the emotional tone of our life can shift in profound ways. What's more, actually writing about these events is key: Research suggests translating thoughts into concrete language makes us more aware of them, deepening their emotional impact.

[https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude\\_journal](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude_journal)



## LISTENING TO MUSIC

Can music really affect your well-being, learning, cognitive function, quality of life, and even happiness?

A recent survey on music and brain health conducted by AARP revealed some interesting findings about the impact of music on cognitive and emotional well-being:

- Music listeners had higher scores for mental well-being and slightly reduced levels of anxiety and depression compared to people overall.
- Active musical engagement, including those over age 50, was associated with higher rates of happiness and good cognitive function.
- Adults with no early music exposure but who currently engage in some music appreciation show above average mental well-being scores.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/why-is-music-good-for-the-brain-2020100721062>





# LEAVES ON A STREAM

During the leaves on a stream exercise, you will visualize yourself resting near a stream. Whenever thoughts enter your mind, you will imagine placing them atop a leaf, and watching as they float away.

Find a quiet place, free of distractions.  
Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.  
Close your eyes or let your gaze soften.  
Begin taking slow, deep breaths.

## Visualize

Use all your senses to imagine you are resting by the side of a stream.

## Meditate

Your objective during this exercise is simply to focus on the stream. When distractions enter your mind, take a moment to notice them without judgment.

## Manage Your Thoughts

After taking a moment to observe a thought or feeling, return your attention to the stream. Place your thought upon a leaf. Place the leaf in the water and watch it float down the stream until it disappears.

## Practice

Continue visualizing the stream, simply observing and releasing any thoughts that enter your mind.



## MINDFUL EATING

As you begin to eat, start by grounding into the moment and space. Tune into the sensation that you have in your body of feeling hungry, thirsty or maybe even feeling full.

Now, bring your attention to the item in your hand and imagine that you are seeing it for the first time. Notice the color, shape, texture, and size. Is there anything else that you notice, sense or feel? Imagine what it took for this item to get to your hands. You may choose to be aware of gratitude for everyone involved in the cultivation and preparation of this item of food.

Now place the item between your fingers and feel the texture, temperature and ridges. Notice if you have any thoughts, sensations or emotions at this time.

With full awareness of your hand moving toward your mouth, place the object into your mouth without chewing or swallowing it. Just allow it to be in your mouth, roll it around to different parts of your mouth and tongue. Notice the flavor and texture. Take just one bite and notice the flavor, notice the change of texture. Then very slowly begin to chew this piece of food, and notice the parts of your mouth that are involved in chewing. When you are ready, swallow this item and notice the path that it follows from your mouth and throat into your stomach.

# CHANGE YOUR BODY TEMPERATURE

Rapidly changing your body temperature activates your parasympathetic nervous system. Your parasympathetic nervous system down-regulates the fight-flight-freeze-fawn stress response to bring your body back to a resting state.

## Cool/Cold Temperature Regulation Ideas

- Submerge head in water or splash water on your face
- Dip your hands in cold water or pour cool water on wrists
- Take a bite out of a frozen lemon, orange or popsicle
- Take a cold shower or bath
- Place frozen ice pack on your eyes or back of your neck
- Hold ice cubes or a cup of ice, or suck or chew on ice
- Blast air conditioning, or stand in front of a fridge/ freezer
- Stand in front of an open window, fan or air conditioner
- Walk outside for a short amount of time on a cold day
- Put a cold compress or wet cloth on your face
- Consume a cool glass of water or other cold drink
- Remove layers of clothing

## Hot/Warm Temperature Regulation Ideas

- You can use many of the ideas above with warm objects
- Rub hands together gently until they're warm
- Curl up under a blanket (or wear warm clothing)
- Drink a cup of hot tea or coffee
- Use a heating pad or hot water bottle
- Gently blow warm air on yourself using a hairdryer

<https://themighty.com/topic/mental-health/rapidly-change-body-temperature-in-emotional-crisis>



# I am poem



I am \_\_\_\_\_

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

I hear \_\_\_\_\_

I see \_\_\_\_\_

I want \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I pretend \_\_\_\_\_

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

I touch \_\_\_\_\_

I worry \_\_\_\_\_

I cry \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I understand \_\_\_\_\_

I say \_\_\_\_\_

I dream \_\_\_\_\_

I try \_\_\_\_\_

I hope \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

## RELATIONAL CARE

Bodies settle and unsettle one another. Simply stated, a signal of safety from another nervous system is received, the relaxation response is triggered in our own nervous system. Intentional awareness of connection and active steps for connection can expand this response. With this understanding, relational care can be defined as the practice of presence and connection as action to preserve or improve another's and/or one's own health, well-being, and happiness, including during periods of stress.

Bonnie Badenoch tells us that “emotional regulation flows naturally from being in the presence of someone we trust.” This presence can be offered “naturally” and intentionally through:

- vocal patterns and facial expressions as positive social cues
  - (smiles, gentle eye contact, nodding, soft vocal tone)
- relaxed body posture
- reflective listening
- empathy

Further embracing a both/and perspective, active self-care practices can intentionally trigger the benefits of co-regulation even when one is alone, such as through:

- “compassionate attention” (“consciously directing our attention to notice and focus on things that are helpful to ourselves and to others” ~ Aundi Kolber, in Try Softer)
- making eye contact to help establish a sense of safety and connection and, thereby reverse some effects of PTSD (Ruth Lanius, MD, PhD)
- visualizing someone you trust — even a pet — or otherwise looking for cues of safety and connection in your space or with another person (Kimberly Schmidt Bevens).

