



## Tools for Supporting Ourselves

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These tools can be used as part of regular maintenance of a healthy baseline and for building resilience to stress or as acute care – when you need it on the spot, right now.

### 1) Practices for Grounding, Rootedness, Stabilizing.

- a) Sit comfortably, bring attention to breath, feet flat on ground. Deep inbreath all the way down to feet, slow release outbreath, feeling weight settle into the Earth. (can visualize roots, if you like, or just letting yourself land firmly in earth with each exhale.)
- b) Grounding in sensation: rubbing hands together and noticing the warmth that develops
- c) Staring at nothing in particular (out the window, etc.). For at least 3 minutes
- d) Body scan
- e) Grounding in the shower: let water run over your body and into the ground, washing off concerns, sending roots down into the earth and nourishing you at the soil

### 2) Relaxation (can use grounding practices as well)

- a) Breath: deep breathing, spacious breath
- b) Physical movement, exercise, walking
- c) Remembering to PAUSE and STOP.
  - i) Give yourself 5 min and just stare at nothing in particular (out the window, etc.)
  - ii) Or mid-activity as needed, pause, breathe, ground, resume activity

### 3) Regulating anxiety or panic

- a) Deep breathing
- b) Box breath (visualize moving up and around a box with your breath: 5 seconds a side, inhale, hold, exhale, hold, repeat)
- c) Ice on neck and wrists (activates parasympathetic nervous system)
- d) Splash cold water on your face, ice pack on forehead
- e) Music
- f) Pausing, as per above.
- g) Reappraisal of situation (what are other interpretations of what is happening here?)

#### 4) Spaciousness

- a) Spacious breath: sit comfortably, close your eyes, imagine you are drawing in your breath from across a vast distance (you can visualize this with some detail, use imagination; e.g., drawing it in from across the bay to the mountains and over the sea, drawing that all into you, filling you making you so big to hold so much and then letting out the warm outbreath over a vast distance, touching the grasses, the hills etc.). repeat for a few minutes, then resume natural rhythm of breath.
- b) Learn to say NO. Know when to say when.

#### 5) Focusing. In a panicky response, you can get destabilized. How to focus and stabilize mind. In the long-term things like meditation are very helpful, but there are some short-term tools you can do.

- a) 5-4-3-2-1 practice
  - i) Name **5** things you can see *right now*; **4** things you can touch; **3** things you can hear; **2** things you can smell; **1** thing you can taste. Engaging the senses brings you down and real and in contact with what is. Focusing as well as grounding
- b) Ground in sensation more generally, just look, or hear or touch. Sensation is NOW and anxiety is future, bringing yourself back into the moment helps.
- c) Eat mindfully, slowly, noticing the texture, temperature, weight, flavor, smell of food. Luxuriating in the details....

#### 6) Positive emotion-building tools (play and joy and humor → lightness), positive emotion enhances creativity and builds resources. Positive emotions help buffer stress and are palliative when stressed. They help you be lighter and this facilitates “letting go”

- a) Gratitude practice
- b) Noticing beauty (a few times a day just stop and notice beauty, whatever is there around you – in the otherwise mundane details of a moment...like the shadow cast by a glass on the table when the sun is hitting it just right) on the
- c) Play (sports, games, be goofy, etc..) play builds skills and resources
- d) Dancing and making music
- e) HAVE FUN... on a regular basis

#### 7) Learning:

- a) Putting everything on the path
  - i) Every little foible
- b) Reappraising

#### 8) Remember Death/Impermanence as a perspective to lean on

- a) You are only here for so long