

TRAUMA, ACEs & SELF-CARE

Understanding How You & Your Students Hold Trauma and What You Can Do About It

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Somatic Experiencing International
Board of Directors

Identifying, Preventing and Addressing Trauma

8th Annual Salem as a Safer Child Community Symposium

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SE™ CRISIS STABILIZATION AND SAFETY AID

The SCOPE Safety Aid stabilizes physiological stress response and helps build resilience to get through crisis. This can be an effective tool for frontline workers, first responders, and people dealing with intense pressure.



S C O P E

SLOW DOWN

Take 10 steps very slowly, noticing any sensations on the bottom of your feet.

CONNECT TO BODY

Cross your arms and ankles, tuck hands under armpits, lower head, and breathe.

ORIENT

Slowly look around, noticing colors and shapes. Let your gaze rest on something pleasant or comforting, like a brief visual vacation.

PENDULATE

Notice a place of ease in the body and a place of tension. Slowly shift attention between ease - tension - ease.

ENGAGE

Engage socially. Connect with someone who can support you.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SIGNALS FROM OUR NERVOUS SYSTEM:

- Accelerated heart rate
- Shallow breathing
- Social avoidance
- Erratic thoughts
- Muscle tension
- Heavy fatigue
- Rapid speech
- Numbness
- Insomnia

HIGH ACTIVATION OF THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM MAY RESULT IN:

- Fight/Flight/Hypertension Response (Sympathetic)
- Freeze/Immobility/Helplessness (Parasympathetic)



WALK THRU IT WITH OTHERS
OR FIND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:
traumahealing.org/scope

Somatic Experiencing
TRAUMA INSTITUTE

These somatic (body-centered) exercises are designed to help you slow down, connect with yourself and “down regulate” (calm down) by engaging your parasympathetic nervous system.

Exercises are designed to be:

- **Short:** <5 minutes,
- **Accessible:** you can do these anywhere
- **Build resilience**
- **Address burnout and stress**

SCOPE is based on neuroscience, principles of body-psychotherapy, and trauma research

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SLOW STEPPING SLOW BREATHING


Purpose: To ground and track what is happening in the body. Regain sense of time and space.

During a crisis, we can lose sight that it is temporary, that it is not going to last forever. Slowing down our steps lets our body remember that time still exists

Exercise: Take 10 steps very slowly. Notice any sensations on the bottom of your feet, how your weight is distributed

If seated, feel weight of body on chair, slowly move body around, notice how weight is distributed

Outcome: Being more present in our bodies and with a sense of time and space



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CONNECT TO BODY (Closed Loop Connection)

Purpose: Closes your system off from outside world, allows you to go inside and settle, slow breathing. You're telling your body, "These are my boundaries, and there's nobody here except me."

Familiar to children – they will do it naturally when they are upset

Exercise: Cross your arms, tucking your hands under your opposite armpits. Next, cross your ankles maybe squeezing them a little tightly if that feels good, and slowly lower your head, tucking yourself in. Breathe – continued 30-60 seconds or until you feel calm, complete.

Outcome: Feel more contained, supported, and more present when you're under high pressure.



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ORIENT TO EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Purpose: Use a sense of sight to signal our automatic, unconscious “fight flight or freeze” survival response that it is safe to look around, expand ourselves in space.

Exercise: Look around and notice something that you enjoy looking at, that brings neutral or pleasant sensations. As you orient, notice what happens in your body

If you're not finding anything in your environment that you're drawn to naturally, you can give yourself some feature to look for. This can be searching for a specific color, shape or a certain pattern

Outcome: Lets our nervous system know that we still exist in our environment, that is it safe to look around.



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PENDULATE

Move back and forth between different internal experiences

Purpose: Crisis takes away your choice of what you would pay attention to. This exercise empowers you and restores sense of having choice.

Exercise: Noticing what is going on in your body, where you are feeling a sense of tension or discomfort. After a brief moment, shift your focus to where are you feeling ease or comfort. Move back and forth very slowly from one state to another

Outcome: Reintroduces a sense of choice at the neurological level. Choice is the opposite of helplessness. It's a restorative relief practice.



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ENGAGE WITH OTHERS

Purpose: Social engagement is hardwired into human survival. Crisis trauma is often about disconnecting or being disconnected... from the sensations of our own bodies and other people. This sense of connection is part of what it means to be a person and is critical to our survival.

Exercise: Reach out to someone, either in person or over technology, whatever you are most comfortable with. Talk to someone you trust, someone that you feel safe and comfortable talking to or sharing your experience with. Reach out to someone and just be with them.

Outcome: Counteracts feelings of isolation, disconnection from others. Allows us to feel seen and heard, cared for. Helps nervous systems remember how to function in a world of other people, beyond this current crisis stressor

SCOPE: Summary

- Effective short exercises to reduce stress, take us out of crisis mode, build resilience
- Engages parasympathetic nervous system – the part of our nervous system that lets us know we are safe and all is well
- As we move back and forth between putting our attention inward, then outward, we are flexing the nervous system “muscle” so to speak as we get ourselves back from a crisis moment
- (Re)introduces choice back into a sense of stress, remind us of what we are capable of. that we are not helpless.