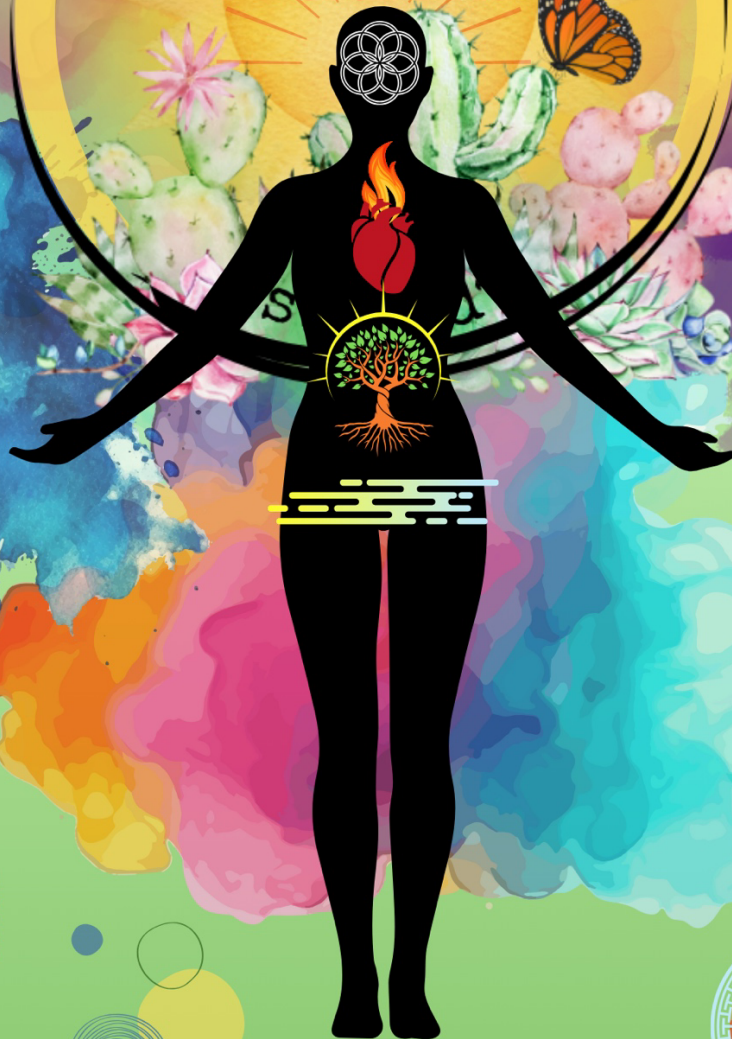


Holistic Self-Care Plan

Give us courage
not to look away
Together, we all pave the path
from trauma to transcendence
do justice ♥ love mercy ♥ walk humbly
be human.



Instructions

Welcome to your holistic self-care plan, a vital component of this course designed specifically for individuals responding to crime victimization and/or trauma.

This plan serves as an invitation to explore and deepen your understanding of what it truly means to nurture yourself in every dimension—mind, body, and spirit.

In the midst of challenging experiences, it can be easy to overlook the importance of self-care, yet it remains a powerful act of resilience and self-compassion. Working in environments where violence occurs can expose you to repeated trauma, often leaving you feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, or emotionally drained. Recognizing that trauma is being experienced at work is an essential step in taking care of yourself, as it helps you understand the impact your environment can have on your well-being.

Through this process, you are encouraged to engage in critical reflection, questioning how different aspects of your well-being intersect and influence one another. By cultivating a thoughtful approach to self-care, you not only foster personal growth but also strengthen your capacity to support others and sustain your own well-being in demanding circumstances.

Our hope is that the skills offered here will empower you to integrate these practices into your own life, and ultimately, help your clients learn and embody the same principles. This journey is about more than routines; it's about fostering a mindful relationship with yourself that promotes healing, balance, and enduring strength.

Please complete pages: 1-32



Self-comfort vs Self-care

Self-care is how you take care yourself holistically, this would include all the different ways in which we exist as humans: physically, emotionally, spiritually, professionally, socially, financially and psychologically. ***Self-Care has a positive long-term impact.***

- ⇒ It is important to make time for self-care practices *daily*, not just when you feel burned out. Build it into your regular routine. **Self-care is a life style.**
- ⇒ It is about achieving day-to-day balance (*see Appendix A*)
- ⇒ Self-care helps you learn more about what you need – daily, during stressful times, and when your energy is low.
- ⇒ Creating a self-care plan takes time. It is a gradual process of figuring out what you need and what suits you best.
- ⇒ Sometimes you might need support and asking is part of self-care, you don't have to do it all alone. Having your own tools in place means you will be better prepared to use additional support when you need it.

Self-Comfort is about soothing or calming yourself in the moment in a way that is not healthy but offers instant gratification. This is often in response to stress, overwhelm, or discomfort. **Self-Comfort has a negative long-term impact.**

- ⇒ It looks different to everybody, but it might look like binge-watching your favorite show, eating bad food, scrolling on your phone, drinking alcohol or doing drugs.
- ⇒ These things aren't "bad"- they serve a purpose, but it is important to label them honestly as comfort, not care. It is ok to sometimes have a drink or binge watch TV, but if it is all you do to cope with stress, that could develop into a problem.
- ⇒ The goal isn't to cut out self-comfort – it is to be aware of when you're choosing it, and to ask: *Is this what I need right now? Where and when can I make time for self-care?*

The Self-Care Pivot

- Sometimes, what starts as a plan for self-care shifts into something else – and that's okay.
- Pivoting can *be* self-care when it is done with awareness.

For example: Maybe you planned to go to the gym five times this week but only went three times and instead went for a walk in the woods. *That is not a failure. That is a self-care pivot.*

- Listening to your real-time needs, even if they differ from the original plan, is part of building a flexible, and realistic self-care approach.

Reflection:

What do you usually do when you're feeling stressed or low?	
Is it more self-care or self-comfort?	

No judgement – just awareness

Self-care plan

Daily Self-Care Reflection:

What are you doing to support your overall well-being on a day-to-day basis? Do you engage in any self-care practices? Are you more active in some areas of self-care than others? Use the table below to reflect on what you're already doing and identify areas where you might want to add support or try something new.

Area of Self Care	Current Practices	Practices to Try
Physical (e.g. eat regular and healthy meals, good sleep habits, regular exercise, medical check-ups, etc.)		
Emotional (e.g. engage in positive activities, acknowledge my own accomplishments, express emotions in a healthy way, etc.)		
Spiritual (e.g. read inspirational literature, self-reflection, spend time in nature, meditate, explore spiritual connections, etc.)		
Professional (e.g. pursue meaningful work, maintain work-life balance, positive relationships with co-workers, time management skills, etc.)		

Area of Self Care	Current Practices	Practices to Try
Social (e.g. healthy relationships, make time for family/friends, schedule dates with partner/spouse, analyze relationships and ask, “is this a healthy relationship”, ask for support from family and friends, etc.)		
Financial (e.g. explore your finances and their impact your quality of life, create a budget or financial plan, pay off debt, consider a new job, or more education, etc.)		
Psychological (e.g. take time for yourself, disconnect from electronic devices, journal, pursue new interests, learn new skills, access psychotherapy, got to yoga, life coaching, or counselling support, etc.)		
Self-Regulation (e.g. practice grounding techniques, use breathwork to manage stress, notice when you're becoming dysregulated, return to the present moment, track your window of tolerance, use tools like coloring or movement to regulate your nervous system, etc.)		

Self-regulation

⇒ **Self-regulation** is the ability to notice what is happening in your body and mind, and to use tools to shift your emotional or physical state. This could be by calming yourself down when you're feeling overwhelmed, or re-energizing when you feel shut down.

Rather than trying to get rid of your emotions, it is about recognizing them and staying connected to your mind and body so you can respond in the way that works best for you to self-regulate and return to or stay within your window of tolerance.

⇒ **The window of tolerance** refers to the optimal zone of arousal in which an individual can effectively manage their emotions and respond to stressors and memory cues without becoming overwhelmed or disengaged.

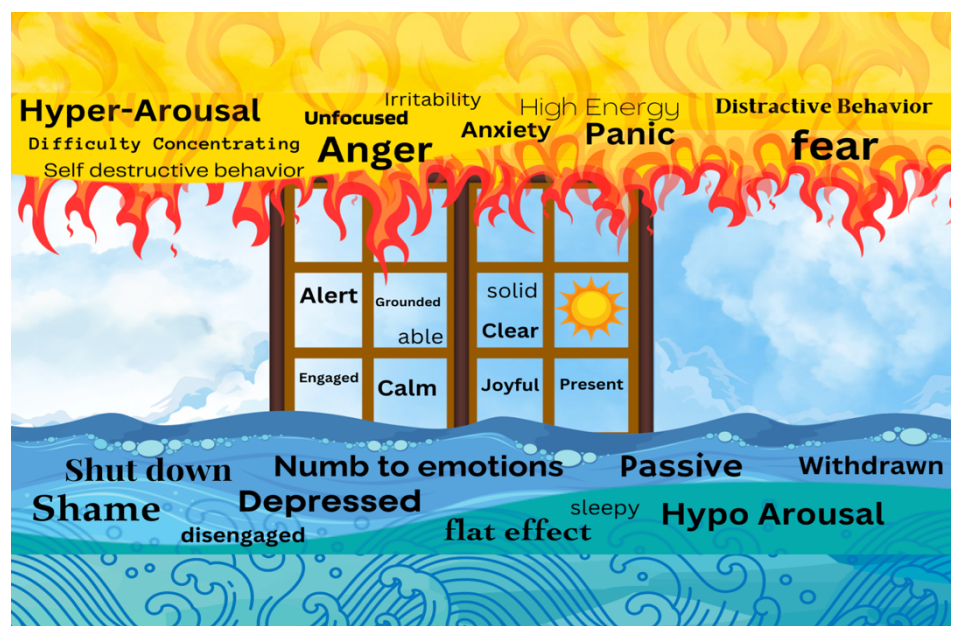
Self-regulation tools allow us to recognise how we are feeling and get out of a hyper-arousal or hypo-arousal state.

⇒ **Hyper-arousal** is a heightened state of physiological and psychological alertness characterized by increased anxiety, irritability, and sensitivity to external stimuli, often resulting from trauma or chronic stress.

⇒ **Hypo-arousal** is a state of diminished physiological and psychological responsiveness, often characterized by feelings of numbness, disconnection, or lack of energy, typically resulting from overwhelming stress or trauma.

By practicing self-regulation while we are within our window of tolerance we engage in day-to-day balance. This means that we are better equipped for managing stress or withdrawal when we are in a state of hyper- or hypo- arousal. *Go to Appendix A, B & C for additional tools.*

GOAL:
*To help ourselves and others
stay within the window of
tolerance*



Emergency self-care plan: *HYPER-AROUSAL*

Emergency Self Care tools	Helpful (what to do)	Harmful (what to avoid)
Staying grounded What activities help you relax and feel calm? <i>(e.g. deep breathing, body tapping, a gentle self-hug, rhythmic rocking)</i> Which activities make you irritated or anxious? <i>(e.g. being in a crowded and overstimulating environment, listening to loud noises)</i>		
Self-Talk What are some helping self-talk mantras that you can say? <i>(e.g. "I am safe", "I can do this", "This feeling will pass")</i> What are some harmful self-talk words? <i>(e.g. "I can't handle this", "I knew this would happen", "This is too much")</i>		
Social Support Who can you reach out to for help or support - who brings calming energy and helps you feel relaxed? Which people should you avoid during times of stress? Be honest about who heightens stressful moments and makes you feel more agitated.		
Mood Which activities support a positive and relaxed mood? <i>(e.g. listening to calming music, inhaling soothing scents, coloring)</i> What tends to make things worse? <i>(e.g. drinking coffee, avoiding your thoughts and feelings)</i>		
Resilience Resilience doesn't mean you don't struggle, it means you keep showing up for yourself. What helps you shift from being overwhelmed to feeling centered again? <i>(e.g. visualizing your safe place, acknowledging your thoughts and feelings and allowing them to pass by)</i>		

Emergency self-care plan: *HYPO-AROUSAL*

Emergency Self Care tools	Helpful (what to do)	Harmful (what to avoid)
Energize/awaken Which activities help you energize and become present? <i>(e.g. shocking your senses, cold thermogenesis, tension shaking)</i> Which activities make you feel disconnected, numb or withdrawn? <i>(e.g. skipping meals, oversleeping, avoiding all decision making, not getting dressed for the day)</i>		
Self-Talk What are some helpful self-talk mantras you can say? <i>(e.g. "I am who I am and who I am is enough", "Doing one thing is better than doing nothing")</i> What harmful self-talk should you avoid?(e.g. "I deserve this", "What's the point", "I will never get out of this")		
Social Support Which people can you reach out to for help or support – who helps you feel clear and alert? Who should you avoid when you are feeling shame and shut down? Be honest about who zaps your energy and leaves you feeling low.		
Mood Which activities support a positive and energized mood? <i>(e.g. listening to uplifting music and singing and dancing along, inhaling activating scents to help you become more alert)</i> What should you avoid when you are feeling disengaged? <i>(e.g. staying in bed all day, avoiding social activities, doom-scrolling)</i>		
Resilience Resilience isn't just about action; it is also about softening into care when you feel numb or checked out. What helps you bounce back when you feel disconnected or drained? <i>(e.g. practicing self-compassion, focusing on small tasks)</i>		

Glimmers



A glimmer is a faint or brief flash of light, hope, or positivity that is often a sensory memory, such as a song, a smell, or a warm feeling. Individuals can create or call upon these glimmers to help self-regulate, using them as mental or sensory cues to shift focus away from distress or negative emotions.

Recognizing and intentionally accessing these moments of hope or positivity can provide a sense of calm and perspective, aiding emotional resilience. Using a glimmer as a grounding tool encourages mindfulness and helps maintain emotional balance during challenging times.

Write some of your personal Glimmers here:

Song	
Smell	
Emotion or feeling	
Person	
Place	
Touch or Physical Sensations	
Memories or Visual Images	
Things to be thankful for	
Past Achievements or Successes	

Daily self-care plan

Having a daily self-care routine helps you stay balanced and better equipped to manage stress. These practices are especially helpful when you're feeling overwhelmed (hyper-arousal) or disconnected and low (hypo-arousal). By using self-care tools regularly, when you're calm and within your window of tolerance, you train your body and mind to access them more easily when things feel tough. Building small, steady habits for day-to-day balance increases your resilience and strengthens your ability to self-regulate.

⇒ Refer to Appendix A for a full list of daily balance tools.

Here are some examples of things you could try:

Body	Mind	Spirit	Emotions	Relationships	Work
Gentle yoga or stretching	Reading something inspiring	Enjoying a moment of laughter	Naming how you feel without judgement	Reaching out to a friend or a loved one	Reflecting on what you have accomplished (even the small wins)
Drinking water	Limiting social media consumption	Daily gratitude	Allow yourself to laugh, cry or rest without guilt	Expressing appreciation to someone in your life	Breaking tasks into small, manageable steps
Taking a warm shower or bath	Journaling	Practicing mindfulness or meditation			
Walking outdoors in nature	Coloring				

Pull together some of the things you would like to try and create a daily plan:

Daily Self-Care Plan:

Body	Mind	Spirit	Emotions	Relationships	Work

What are the top 3 self-regulating behaviors that worked for you?

Emotional Intelligence

The importance of recognizing emotions and being able to articulate them

A big part of self-care is knowing what you are feeling. That might sound simple, but a lot of us were never taught how to recognize and identify our emotions.

“Over the course of 5-years, we collected these surveys from more than seven thousand people. The average number of emotions names across the surveys was three. The emotions were happy, sad, and angry.” – Brené Brown, Atlas of the Heart.

When we don't have the language to describe how we feel, it is hard to make sense of what's happening inside us. We can end up feeling disconnected, stuck, or unsure how to explain ourselves. If all we can say is “I'm mad”, “I'm sad”, or “I'm happy”; we might miss naming deeper experiences like joy, shame, awe, heartbreak, wonder, grief, gratitude or disappointment. We miss out on so much.

Developing emotional intelligence means expanding our emotional vocabulary. It is not about overthinking everything, it is about gaining clarity about what is going on. Naming an emotion doesn't make it stronger, it helps us understand it. Research shows that even just naming an emotion can calm the nervous system and support emotional balance. It helps us move through what we are feeling, rather than getting stuck in it.

Our emotions shape how we think, how we act, and how we connect with other people. Learning how to recognize and name what we are feeling is a major part of the healing process. It gives us more choice in how we respond because we will have a better idea of what we are dealing with.

This is not about being able to label every feeling ‘perfectly’. It is about better understanding yourself better so you can move through tough moments with more ease and clarity.

“Language is our portal to meaning-making, connection, healing, learning, and self-awareness.” - Brené Brown, Atlas of the Heart.

Building emotional awareness takes time, but it is a powerful tool. The more language you have to describe how you feel, the easier it becomes to understand your own experiences and to share them with others. This is a place where healing can truly begin.

NOTES:

Quick check- in

Ask yourself: What am I feeling right now? Describe it with the knowledge and vocabulary you already have.

Now try go a little bit deeper and explore what feelings might be underneath. Maybe you are feeling more than one thing at once. Try to name 2 more emotions you are feeling.

Example:

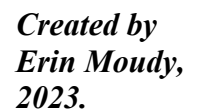
“I feel tired” – I am overwhelmed and emotionally drained.

“I feel annoyed” – I feel disappointed and betrayed.

Growing your emotional vocabulary

Think of a moment when life felt good. Write down some words that describe how you felt.

Now, using the wheel below, see if you can add some new words that you hadn’t included.



Self-care Chemical Processes

Supporting your body through food and drink

The things you eat, and drink can have a big impact on how you feel physically, mentally and emotionally. Nourishing your body with supportive foods can help regulate your nervous system. This is beneficial for people dealing with trauma and/or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, focusing on food and drink consumption alone is not enough, which is why a holistic approach will help combine this with all other aspects of holistic healing.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *This section is not about dieting or weight fluctuation.* To us, the goal is to be holistically healthy. It is about understanding the foods and drinks that most positively impact healing and what counteracts this process.

It is also about tuning into your body's needs and making the best choices for yourself. You are focusing on cultivating healthy habits. This is a guide not a strict plan- it is an invitation to learn more. Consult a nutritionist for further help in creating a plan that meets your specific needs to promote overall health and well-being.

HYDRATION

Helpful drinks:

- **Water**
- Staying hydrated is one of the easiest ways to support your mind and body. Water helps clear out toxins, boosts energy, and keeps your brain functioning properly making it easier to manage stress. Try to sip water regularly throughout the day, rather than waiting until you're thirsty. This will have an impact on your focus and mood as dehydration leaves you feeling foggy, tired or irritable. It may be beneficial to utilize a water calculator to determine the optimal amount of water required for your body.
- **Herbal teas**
They have many benefits and can be great replacement for caffeinated drinks, some examples:
 - Chamomile: Helps calm the nervous system and can support better sleep
 - Lime flower (Linden): Soothes headaches, tension and feelings of restlessness
 - Lemon balm: Uplifting and gently mood-boosting, often used to ease anxiety and mild depression
 - There are many more! *Tea is amazing.*

Drinks to be mindful of:

- **Caffeinated drinks** – Too much caffeine (coffee, energy drinks) can increase anxiety, make it harder to sleep, and leave you feeling jittery and on edge, which makes it harder to relax.
- **Soda and energy drinks** – Soda and energy drinks can lead to numerous health issues, including obesity, dental problems, and increased risk of heart disease due to their high sugar and caffeine content.
- **Alcohol** – While it might feel like a stress reliever in the moment, it can worsen symptoms of depression and trauma. It disrupts sleep, amplifies low moods, and interferes with emotional processing.

FOOD

Food is fuel for your brain and nervous system. It powers all the chemical processes in your body, including the ones that affect your mood and energy. There is also a strong link between gut health and brain function – some foods can help you feel more balanced, while others can make it harder to regulate your emotions.

Food Type	Benefits	Try
Fruits and vegetables <i>Nutrient powerhouses</i>	<p>Packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and fiber, that support your brain and emotional well-being. They are rich in antioxidants, fiber, and folate, which protect the brain from stress, help regulate mood and support digestive health. Including a variety of fruit and vegetables can help you feel more balanced, grounded, and emotionally resilient.</p> <p>Try ‘eating across the rainbow’. Each color of fruit and vegetable have different health benefits due to the phytochemicals that are naturally within these foods. Although each color has individual benefits, it is important to eat a variety of colors for overall positive health gain.</p> <p>Red - Supports heart and brain health; may reduce risk of prostate and breast cancer, and stroke.</p> <p>Orange/Yellow – Boosts immunity, skin and eye health; reduces inflammation and heart disease risk.</p> <p>Green – Rich in antioxidants and folic acid; may prevent cancer and support prenatal health</p> <p>White/Brown – May reduce cholesterol, blood pressure, and cancer risk; supports bone health.</p> <p>Blue/Purple – Enhances brain function and memory; lowers blood pressure and stroke risk.</p>	<p>Red (e.g. beets, radish, cherries, strawberries, red onions, red peppers)</p> <p>Orange and Yellow (e.g. carrots, apricots, yellow peppers, sweet potatoes, bananas, peaches, oranges)</p> <p>Green (e.g. spinach, kiwis, kale, avocados, green tea, broccoli, arugula, artichokes, asparagus)</p> <p>White and Brown (e.g. onions, mushrooms, cauliflower, garlic, leeks)</p> <p>Blue and Purple (e.g. blueberries, eggplant, figs, purple cabbage, plums, grapes)</p>

<p>Protein <i>Mood support from the inside out</i></p>	<p>Protein helps support mood by providing the building blocks your body needs to produce brain chemicals that promote balance, improve focus, and regulate emotions, which is especially important for those dealing with trauma and PTSD.</p> <p>The amount of protein you need per day is depends on your: age, body weight and composition, activity level, health status, health goals, dietary preferences and restrictions and/or pregnancy and lactation. There are “protein calculators” available online or you could talk to your doctor or nutritionist to find what will work with your body and your bodies goals. <i>It is worth looking into this because one’s perfect number of protein grams per day is usually a surprise.</i></p> <p>Keep in mind that balancing your protein intake with other nutrient-rich foods, like vegetables and a healthy fat, is key to maintaining a well-rounded diet.</p>	<p>Lean meats (e.g. chicken or turkey) Fish Eggs Lentils Tofu Greek yogurt Beans</p>
<p>Gut health <i>Support your second brain</i></p> <p><i>Note: There are literally brain cells in your stomach- so when someone says: “Listen to your gut”- they are right!</i></p> <p><i>There are also brain cells in your heart.</i></p>	<p>Your gut and brain are constantly communicating through the Vagus nerve. When you have experienced trauma, especially in childhood, this connection can be disrupted, leading to gut issues like IBS, bloating, constipation, diarrhea, stomach aches or pain as well as mental health struggles like anxiety, brain fog, and low mood.</p> <p>This strong connection can create a vicious cycle where gut issues and trauma responses reinforce each other, worsening both physical and mental health problems. When your digestion <i>is</i> supported, your mood and stress levels often improve too. A healthy gut can help reduce inflammation and improve how your body processes stress – making it a powerful piece of trauma recovery.</p>	<p>Fermented foods (e.g. yogurt, sauerkraut, kimchi, miso)</p> <p>High-fiber foods (e.g. apples, carrots, broccoli, oats, beans)</p> <p>Hydration and regular meals to support digestion</p>

Antioxidants <i>Fighting stress from the inside</i>	<p>Chronic stress and trauma can lead to long-term inflammation and oxidative stress in the body which disrupts cortisol, the hormone your body uses to manage stress.</p> <p>This is why antioxidants are so important. They lower inflammation and bring cortisol back into balance which results in less energy/ emotional crashes and less burnout. They help regulate stress in the body and support gut and brain health.</p>	Berries (e.g. blueberries, strawberries, raspberries) Red cabbage Carrots Avocados Almonds Apples Kiwi Green tea Beetroot Sweet potatoes Dark Chocolate
Whole grains <i>For lasting energy and mood support</i>	<p>They give your body a steady release of energy which helps keep your mood and energy levels more balanced throughout the day. They are also a great source of B vitamins, which support your brain and help with the production of feel-good chemicals like serotonin and dopamine. Eating more of these grains can make it easier to stay calm and focused.</p>	Oats Quinoa Brown rice Whole grain bread Pasta
Magnesium-rich foods <i>Natural calmer</i> <i>NOTE: some research asserts that Magnesium is better absorbed in the skin</i>	<p>Helps relax the nervous system, support sleep, and manage stress. Low levels are linked to anxiety, tension, and fatigue. Eating magnesium-rich foods can help you feel more grounded.</p>	Bananas Avocados Dark chocolate (in moderation) Pumpkin seeds Sunflower seeds Black beans Chickpeas Leafy greens (e.g. spinach and kale) Magnesium topicals
Omega-3 fats	<p>Essential for brain health, emotional balance, and reducing inflammation in the body. To help regulate serotonin and dopamine levels, which support mood stability and clear thinking, A diet rich in Omega-3s can help improve cognitive function, calm the nervous system, and make it easier to manage emotions - especially when dealing with trauma or stress. Omega-3s can also help with joints pain like arthritis.</p>	Fatty fish (e.g. salmon, sardines, and mackerel) Algae-based supplements if you don't eat fish Plant-based options (e.g. chia seeds, flax seeds, and walnuts)

HARMFUL FOODS TO BE AWARE OF

Some foods can make it harder to regulate your emotions and energy levels. Limiting them can support your overall mental and physical health, especially when managing trauma or PTSD. Some foods are bad for you. This section is hard to read (and it was hard to write) because so many of our regular foods are on these lists. Be aware this is just a short list with the goal to make you aware of the complications in contemporary eating.

In the Untitled States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) tends to allow additives unless “proven harmful” and have less stringent regulations. Whereas other countries only allow food that is generally recognized as safe and tend to be proactive in safer food laws. There is great need to advocate for safer food safety laws.

Food Type	Negatives	Examples
White Processed Sugar	Can cause blood sugar fluctuations (spikes and crashes), making mood swings and emotional instability worse.	Sugary snacks Sodas Instead, try natural sweeteners like honey, fruit or dark chocolate.
High Fructose Corn Syrup	Can cause Obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, fatty and liver disease. There is much research to support that HFCS can contribute to metabolic syndrome.	Soda, Bread, Yogurt, Ketchup, Packaged Sweets, Juice, Fast Food, Ice Cream, Jelly or Jam, Bread and crackers, Applesauce
Artificial Sweeteners	Can cause disruption of gut micro biota, headaches, potential links to metabolic disorders.	Aspartame, Sucralose, Saccharin
Processed foods	Processed foods often contain high levels of unhealthy fats, sugars, and additives. It can contribute to inflammation and negatively affect your mood.	Fried food/fast food (burgers, fries, fried chicken, pizza) Milkshakes
Highly Processed Meats	There is an increased risk of colorectal and stomach cancers and of cardiovascular disease. The world health organization classifies processed meat as carcinogenic to humans.	Sausages, Hot Dogs, Deli Meats

Trans Fats	<p>Eating a lot of foods high in trans or saturated fats can trigger inflammation in the body and brain. This kind of internal stress can make it harder to manage low mood, anxiety, or the emotional weight of trauma.</p> <p>Cutting back on high unhealthy fat foods can help ease some of that load and support your emotional balance and support better mental and physical health.</p>	<p>Deep-fried foods (onion rings, mozzarella sticks)</p> <p>Processed meats (hot dogs, bacon, sausages)</p> <p>Full fat dairy in excess</p> <p>Packaged snacks (potato chips, buttery popcorn)</p> <p>Donuts, pastries</p>
Artificial food additives: Allura Red (Red Dye 40) BHA (Butylated hydroxyanisole) BHT (Butylated Hydroxytoluene)	<p>It is a synthetic food dye made from petroleum. Frequent and long-term exposure can harm gut health and promote inflammation. It drives DNA damage and inflammation in the colon.</p> <p>These additives cause hyper activity in children and are potential carcinogenics.</p>	<p>A synthetic food coloring found in many processed foods, candies, sodas, and snacks.</p>
Microplastics	<p>Studies have concluded that exposure to microplastics can negatively impact reproductive, digestive, and respiratory health, as well as the risk of cancer.</p> <p>While the immediate effects may not be drastic, microplastics likely worsen existing medical conditions, particularly respiratory issues.</p>	<p>Packaged and processed foods (chips, snacks, ready-to-eat meals) can contain microplastics from the packaging.</p> <p>Although you cannot completely avoid consuming microplastics, you should reduce your consumption by opting for natural, organically produced foods.</p>

NOTES:

Mindful Eating

Mindful eating is a powerful practice that encourages slowing down and paying attention to your food.

Try focus on one meal a day without distractions. This will help create a sense of stillness, which can be very grounding and help you connect with your body's needs.

GUIDED MEDITATION

Prepare a meal and position yourself sitting upright with your feet touching the ground.

- When your meal is ready, consciously take a moment to relax your body and breath – inhale through your nose, pause, exhale through your mouth.
- Bring your attention to the space around you, becoming aware of the sounds you can hear. Notice how your body feels. Sense the weight of your feet on the ground.
- Slowly guide your eyes across your food, noticing the different textures, shapes, smells, and colors.
- When picking up your cutlery, engage with the feeling of your arms as they move. Notice how the cutlery feels in your hand(s).
- As you begin eating, notice your taste buds, becoming aware of how the food tastes.
- Savor this taste, chewing slowly and mindfully.
- If you notice your mind moving ahead to the next step, catch it, and slowly guide it back to the present moment – savoring the food you are eating. Try placing your cutlery down after each mouthful to remain present.
- As you swallow your food, continue to engage with your senses.
- Carry on with this mindfulness as you go from bite to bite.
- Allow the meal to be a time of appreciation and relaxation from start to finish.
- Pay attention to the sensations in your body as it shifts from hunger to satisfaction.
- Notice the cues in your body telling you when it has had enough and stop there.
- As your meal comes to an end, return your focus to the sensations in your body.
- Once again, notice how your body feels as it is sitting down, y=the weight of your feet on the ground, and the smells, sounds and sights around you.
- Lastly, take another deep breath – inhale through your nose, pause, exhale through your mouth.

NOTES:

What was this like for you? How did it feel? Was there a shift from beginning to end?

Timing of meals

When and how often you eat can have a big impact on how you feel. Eating at the right times and given your body enough time to digest, helps with mood regulation and overall health.

- ⇒ **Eat in the morning:** Your digestive system works most effectively early in the day, so eating a balanced breakfast can help you boost your focus and energy levels.
- ⇒ **Avoid late-night eating:** Eating close to bedtime can make it harder for your body to wind down as it is still working to digest food. Aim to finish meals at least 2-3 hours before going to sleep.
- ⇒ **Keep meals regular:** Eating at regular intervals can help balance your blood sugar and prevent energy dips and mood swings. Try to space your meals and snacks evenly throughout the day.

Intermittent fasting

Some research suggests that *when* you eat may be just as important as *what* you eat. One growing body of research shows the benefits is intermittent fasting. There are many different approaches to intermittent fasting, one of which involves eating within a set window of time each day.

For example, a 10-hour eating window would mean eating from 9am to 7pm, then fasting for the remaining 14 hours (including overnight).

Positive health benefits:

- Improved energy and mood
 - Better sleep quality
 - Support for digestion and metabolic health
- ⇒ Consistency is key with this practice to gain optimal results. People who stick to the same eating window each day, over long periods of time, tend to see the best results. Do not expect to immediately feel a change, this is a long-term process.
- ⇒ **Go slow:** This is not suitable for everyone. Check with your doctor if you are going to try intermittent fasting, especially if you have diabetes or have blood pressure concerns.

NOTES:

What are your current practices? When do you typically eat your first and last meals? Do you have consistent daily eating habits?

Food Chart

Log your current daily eating habits for the period of a week, without adjustments just log it as it is day by day, there is no right or wrong with this. Following this, you will be able to see an overview of what areas you may need to adjust, as well as what areas you are already doing well!

WEEK 1- Current eating habits	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS	DRINKS
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

When adjusting, consider the changes in diet that will benefit you personally given your needs and goals. This will differ for everyone so what works for one person may not work for you and vice versa – just do what works for you and take it step by step. These changes do not happen immediately, they take time so be patient with yourself and do what you can little by little.

<i>WEEK 2 – with adjustments</i>	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS	DRINKS
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

⇒ Use this weekly log again for a whole month. At the end of the month, take some time to revisit your previous log inputs and notice the changes. You can then consider some more changes and implement them into your daily eating habits for the next month. This is a recurring cycle and can be done at your own pace.

WEEK 3	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS	DRINKS
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

NOTES:

*Take note of some diet goals you accomplished, new foods tried

WEEK 4	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS	DRINKS
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

NOTES:

- *How are you feeling?
- *Have you noticed any changes in your body?
- *How challenging was it to adjust?

Organizational Trauma

While self-care is essential, it is difficult when you work in an agency that is toxic. Are you able to navigate organizational trauma?

<i>Symptoms of Organizational Trauma</i>	<i>Current Practices</i>	<i>Practices to try</i>
GOSSIPING AND RUMOR MAKING (Gossiping and rumor making create a toxic and unsafe environment)		
TOXIC LOYALTY (When organizational trauma sets in, the organization will become isolated, and everyone inside will develop a form of “loyalty” that is resistant to conflicting opinions and becomes unable to self-assess)		
MOBBING (A form of workplace bullying where groups of staff or volunteers gang up on one person)		
BOUNDARIES (In order to be healthy, there must be balance between work and home. Are you allowed to be home without working creeping in?)		

MEANINGFUL COMMITMENT TO SELF CARE (Does your agency have a true commitment to yourself care to point where it is a true priority?)		
ISOLATION (Is your agency isolated from partner agencies, or do you act with transparency and collaboration?)		
EMOTIONAL DEFAULT SETTING (What five words most describe your work environment?)		
COMMITMENT TO HEALTHY CULTURE (Does your agency work to “tend” the culture to keep it healthy?)		

NOTES:

My Self-Care Partner(s)				
Sometimes it is easier to permanently incorporate self-regulating behaviors that support holistic self-care when you have a partner(s) in practice.				
Partners names:				
Log of Partnership				
Date	What we discussed			

Supervision meetings	
Because professional wellness is an ethical responsibility, your regular meetings with your boss should always include your wellness on the agenda. It helps to keep a running log of these discussions.	
Log of supported self-care at work	
Date	What we discussed

Teaching the Client

You have explored holistic self-care tools and engaged with them yourself. Now it is time to start passing the self-regulation and holistic health practices on to your clients.

Here are some ways to start:

Share this plan

Introduce your client to this holistic self-care plan. Walk them through it step-by-step. Help them explore each section, allowing them to reflect on their thoughts. Provide encouragement and allow time for this to be done over a few sessions and revisit it regularly. You can set manageable goals with them to achieve weekly and guide them through challenges as they work through each section. Celebrate their successes and help them learn from the things that may not have gone so well – they are not failures, but opportunities to learn and grow.

Use the last 10-15 minutes of every session intentionally

Set aside the end of each session to focus on one tool.

- Try a breathing exercise together.
- Choose one self-care action to try during the week.
- Reflect together on how they coped with a stressful moment recently and what helped them manage it.

Over time this will become integrated into your work with them and not just an add on at the end of a session.

Host workshops or groups for clients.

Create a space for clients to explore self-care with others. This environment allows them to learn from and support each other. You could focus on topics like the window of tolerance, identifying self-comfort vs self-care, daily balance, or building emergency self-care plans.

Integrate self-regulation tools into your meetings/conversations

You don't have to always formally introduce self-regulation to teach it. You can introduce techniques into conversations naturally.

- When a client feels overwhelmed, guide them through a **grounding** technique.
- If they are feeling anxious, model a **breathwork** tool.
- Invite **movement** (e.g. stretching, shaking out tension) when there is low energy.

Model self-regulation practices

You are not only guiding your clients, but you are also showing them what holistic self-care looks like in action.

Lead by example and demonstrate healthy coping mechanisms and self-care behaviors. This could be simply taking a few slow breaths during a tense moment. This gives clients the chance to observe the tools and learn by experiencing.

⇒ **Practice:** Try it out with your clients 10 different times and log how it went using the chart below.

Log of working with client		
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:

Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:
Date	Tool or topic introduced	Notes:

Coloring

Perfectly Imperfect

Try approaching the activity with an open mind, letting go of expectations. Simply be present. There is no right or wrong way to color. Let go of the need to judge or achieve anything. Coloring invites freedom and play. It is not about the results - it is about the experience.

Promotes Mindfulness

- Being mindful means staying grounded and intentionally focusing your awareness on the present moment. Engaging in simple, joyful activities - like coloring - supports emotional well-being. Boosting happiness through such activities can enhance mindfulness and improve overall quality of life.
- By focusing on movements, sensations, and emotions tied to the action of coloring - like color choice and design - you can tune into and express your feelings while anchoring your awareness in the here and now.
- If your thoughts drift, which is completely natural, gently guide your focus back to what is in front of you. Coloring naturally engages the brain's attention systems, helping settle your thoughts and sharpen concentration. It is a gentle way to step away from stress and reconnect with a sense of ease.

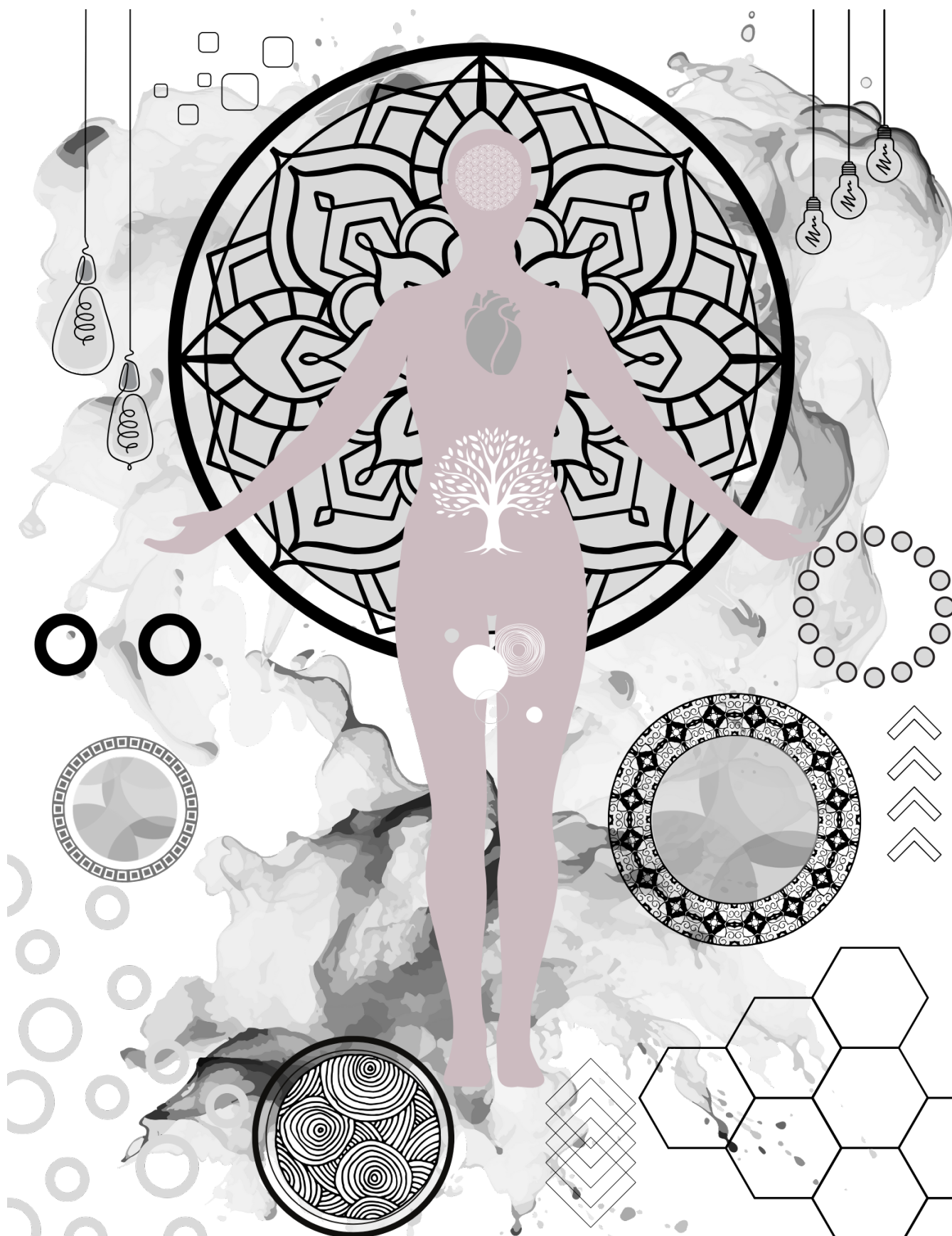
Relieves Stress

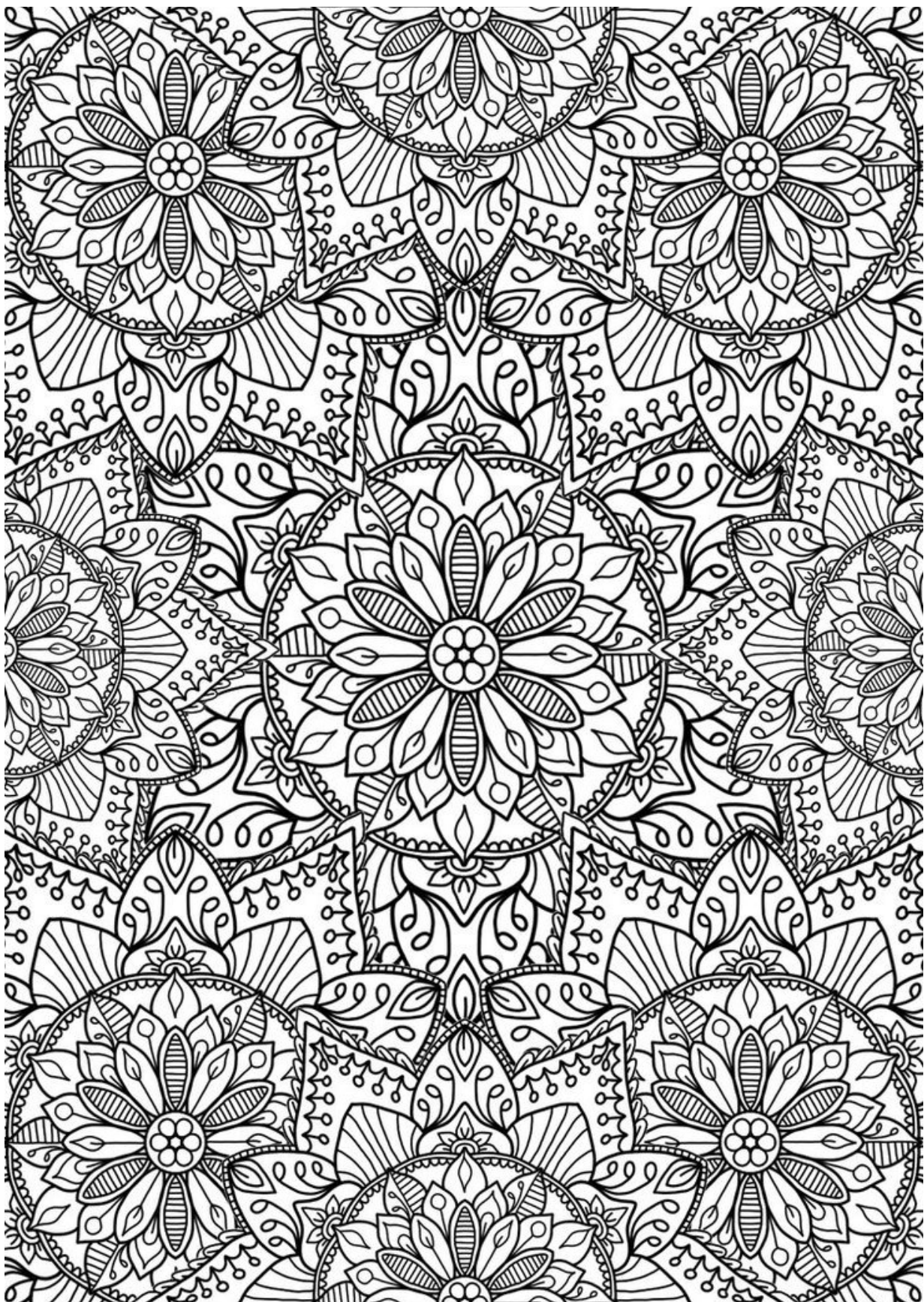
- Coloring is a simple, effective way to unwind. It calms your mind and relaxes your body, making it easier to release tension. As you color, focus on breathing deeply and steadily. If possible, check in with your heart rate every now and then - simply noticing it can help you stay grounded.
- Coloring also engages the frontal lobe, the part of your brain responsible for organization and problem-solving. The act of choosing colors and navigating intricate patterns offers a gentle yet effective mental workout, boosting your focus and decision-making skills.

Happiness

- Coloring can naturally improve your mood by activating the brain's reward system and releasing dopamine, the "feel-good" chemical. This not only boosts your mood but also encourages positive habits. For those dealing with PTSD, this small act of creativity can be a key part of the healing process. By stimulating the brain, coloring contributes to your overall sense of well-being.
- Additionally, coloring has been shown to reduce fear and anxiety by calming the amygdala, the part of the brain that controls emotional responses. This reduction in amygdala activity helps ease reactions to stress, making it easier to remain calm and grounded, even in triggering situations.







Appendix A – Day-to-Day Balance

The tools in this section and the following Appendix B & C, are optional supports.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach here, it is about finding what fits you.

Try them out and see what works and doesn't work for you.

Day-to-day balance is an ongoing process of checking in with yourself, noticing what you need and responding with care. Prioritizing daily self-regulation helps you stay grounded, even in the middle of a busy and stressful life.

The tools below are designed to support your daily balance. You do not have to use them all at once, start by picking one or two that feel manageable and build from there. Over time, these small practices will naturally become part of your daily routine.

It is important to engage with these tools regularly – not just when you are in a moment of stress or crisis. The more familiar you are with these self-regulation techniques, the easier it will be to return to balance when things are more difficult.

There is a card deck available that contains the information within *Appendix A, B & C*. They are a great visual aid that can be used personally and with clients. They are sold at cost: \$25 + postage on www.strandsquared.com

DRIFT INTO CALM	<p>Sitting by water helps you sync with your surroundings and activate your body's calming system. The gentle movement of water serves as a natural anchor, easing stress, deepening relaxation, and fostering a sense of safety and connection.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Find water – Seek out a peaceful aquatic environment2. Sit comfortably- with a clear view of the water. Relax and watch its movement for at least 10 minutes. Let your thoughts drift like the water.3. Engage your senses - Breathe deeply. Observe the colors, textures and patterns. Notice what you see, hear, feel, smell and taste. Let the rhythm of the water soothe your mind.4. Take this literally- If you have a safe swimming spot and feel at ease in the water, take some time to float and drift. The soothing motion of the water can help you relieve stress.	Reflection:
SURVIVAL KIT	<p>Prepare yourself for emotional challenges by creating a kit to manage distress. Having this toolkit ready can help you stay grounded when difficult moments arise.</p>	Reflection:

	<p>How to create your kit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather your tools – find a bag, drawer, box or any container to store items that help you self-regulate. Include things that help you manage stress and stay calm in tough situations. • Customize for Different Spaces – Make separate kits for home, work, or travel. Each should have items that work best in that setting. • Ideas for Your Kit – You might include an ice pack, warm pack, acupressure accessories, essential oils, a coloring book, calm readings or a fidget spinner; anything that helps you stay calm and focused. 	
RELEASE AND RESTORE	<p>Begin at the top of your head and gently move through your joints to release built-up tension and crisis mode energy. Repeat each movement five times to help calm your body.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neck Rotations – Gently rotate your neck, then change direction and do other side. 2. Shoulder Rolls – Roll shoulders forward, up, and back. Reverse and roll backward, down and up. 3. Elbow Movements – Bend and straighten your elbows. 4. Wrist Rotations – Rotate your wrists in both directions. 5. Finger Extensions – Extend fingers, then clench into fists. 6. Torso Circles – Move your torso in circles, inhaling as your chest moves forward and exhaling as your spine shifts backward. Reverse and move in opposite direction. 7. Knee Movements – Bend and straighten your knees. 8. Ankle Rotations – Rotate ankles in both directions. 9. Toe Flexing – Expand and contract your toes <p>Observe each movement and notice what feels good, what releases tension, what is uncomfortable. If you feel any pain, stop.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>

THE POWER OF POSSIBILITY	<p>Adding "yet" to a statement shifts your mindset from "limitation" to "possibility". This acknowledges that growth takes time and effort, empowering you to keep going despite challenges.</p> <p><i>Examples</i> "I can't do it yet." "I don't get it yet." "It doesn't work yet." "I don't understand this yet." "This doesn't make sense yet."</p> <p>Embrace the power of "yet" to recognize that progress is ongoing and to give yourself permission to grow, knowing success is ahead.</p> <p><i>"Just because I cannot do it today, does not mean I won't be able to do it someday".</i> -Arthur Boorman</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
TENSE AND RELEASE	<p>Find a comfortable place to lie down, bring awareness to your body by tensing and relaxing each muscle group one at a time.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage – Inhale as you tense a specific muscle group. 2. Hold – Once at full tension, hold your breath for 5 seconds. 3. Release – Exhale slowly as you soften the muscles completely. 4. Observe – Notice the contrast between tension and relaxation, allowing your body to fully unwind <p>This practice helps release built-up stress and promotes deep relaxation.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
LEGS UP THE WALL	<p>This shape offers numerous benefits, including reducing swelling and fatigue in the feet, alleviating tension and stress, stretching the lower back and hamstrings, improving circulation and strengthening the heart, aiding digestion, and alleviating PMS symptoms.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume the Position – Lie on your back with your legs resting against the wall. Adjust your body so that your hips are close to the wall, and 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<p>keep your knees slightly bent for comfort if needed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Connect with Your Breath – Place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. Allow your breathing to become slow and steady. 3. Enhance Relaxation – Inhale deeply, feeling your belly rise into your hand. Exhale completely, allowing it to soften toward your spine. 4. Hold & Relax – Remain in this position for 5 to 20 minutes, or for as long as feels comfortable. 	
THE POWER OF ANCHORS	<p>Anchors are people, activities, places, or moments that provide a sense of safety, calm, and balance, helping to stabilize and ground us during challenging times.</p> <p>Identify three or more anchors in each category that bring you safety, calm, and balance.</p> <p>Add to your list as you discover more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connection (someone you feel supported by) - Grounding (an activity that grounds you) - Place (somewhere you feel at ease) - Time (a day, season or moment) <p>Immersive Anchor Experience: Choose a favorite and familiar place, perhaps the beach. Close your eyes and imagine the feel of warm sand beneath your toes, the sound of waves gently crashing, and the salty breeze on your skin. Recall the joy and peace you feel as you watch the horizon, allowing the warmth of the sun to envelop you, bringing a deep sense of calm and contentment. Focus on senses, physical sensations, emotions and mental feelings.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
NATURES EMBRACE	<p>Spending time outside in nature offers numerous benefits, including reduced stress and anxiety, improved mood, and enhanced overall well-being. Exposure to natural environments has been shown to boost mental clarity, increase creativity, and promote physical health through increased activity levels. Additionally, being in nature fosters a deeper</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<p>connection to the environment, encouraging mindfulness and a sense of peace.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spend some time outside in nature. 2. Slow your breathing and notice the sensations of the weather on your skin. 3. Shift your attention to the colors around you, allowing your mind to relax. 4. Notice the beauty of small things: the symmetry of the spider's web, the veins of the leaf, the tiny mushrooms, the mossy forest floor... <p><i>"When we spend time outside in beautiful places, a part of our brain called the subgenual prefrontal cortex, quiets down, and this is the part of the brain that is associated with negative self-reported rumination"</i></p> <p>- Florence Williams</p>	
CAT/COW POSE	<p>The Cat-Cow yoga poses provide a gentle way to warm up the spine, improving flexibility and promoting better posture. By alternating between arching and rounding the back, these poses help relieve tension in the back and neck, enhancing overall spinal health. Additionally, they encourage mindful breathing, which can reduce stress and promote relaxation. Lastly, these poses boost energy, balances the mind and body, and leave you feeling refreshed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start Position – Get onto your hands and knees in a comfortable position. 2. Cow Pose – Inhale as you lower your belly toward the earth, lifting your chest and tailbone. 3. Cat Pose – Exhale as you round your spine toward the sky. <p>Align your breath with each movement to strengthen your practice and boost energy flow while letting go of unnecessary stress. This connection helps you feel more grounded and relaxed as you work through the poses.</p> <p>This shape can also be done while sitting in a chair or</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>

	while standing. Try the different ways to find what works for your body.	
SIX SPINES	<p>Moving your spine in all six different ways - flexion, extension, lateral flexion, rotation, axial extension, and compression - promotes overall spinal health and flexibility.</p> <p>This comprehensive movement helps to release tension, improve posture, and enhance mobility, reducing the risk of injury. Additionally, it supports better circulation and can alleviate discomfort, contributing to a greater sense of well-being.</p>	Reflection:
CHOOSE YOUR FOCUS	<p><i>"You cannot control the behavior of others, but you can always choose how you respond to it."</i> - Roy T. Bennett, The Light in the Heart</p> <p>You cannot control other people, but you can control your own thoughts, actions, and responses. This is an important aspect of self-regulation.</p> <p>Let go of what's beyond your control and focus your time and energy on what you can act on.</p> <p>Shift from having a reactive mindset to a proactive one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive mindset: Spends energy on uncontrollable concerns. • Proactive mindset: Directs energy toward what's within reach. <p>For example: Instead of becoming frustrated when a person in crisis reacts defensively or with anger, a proactive mindset listens with empathy and offers support, helping them feel understood and safe.</p>	Reflection:
ACCEPT & ADAPT	<p>"Acceptance" means to fully recognize and accept reality, as it is, without resistance. <u>This does not</u> equate to approval or surrender; instead, it lays the groundwork for critical thinking, effective problem-solving, and personal growth.</p> <p>Note- this practice is difficult and can bring up complicated or painful feelings. That's ok. We advocate for space and time to navigate difficult things. Just make sure you have time to "land softly".</p>	Reflection:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind-Body Connection: Cultivate acceptance by aligning your body—sit comfortably with your palms facing upward and relax your shoulders. • Acknowledge Resistance: Pay attention to thoughts, feelings, or physical tension that indicate that this is a stressful activity. Simply be a witness and allow these to float away. • Confront Reality: Identify what you've been avoiding to gain clarity and move forward effectively. Notice how your feelings, emotions and bodily sensations change while you are moving through this. • Land Softly: Find your way back to your center. Go for a walk in nature. Attend a yoga class. Write in your journal about the experience. Talk to a trusted confident. 	
THOUGHT CHECK	<p>Not all thoughts are facts—question them before accepting them as truth.</p> <p>It's crucial to recognize that not all thoughts reflect reality; questioning them helps prevent unnecessary stress and misunderstanding. By critically evaluating our thoughts, we can avoid being misled by negative or inaccurate beliefs, leading to healthier perspectives and better decision-making. This practice fosters mental clarity and empowers us to respond to situations more effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift Perspective: Is there another way to see this? • Check the Evidence: What supports or challenges this thought? • Consider Possibilities: Are there other potential outcomes? • Assess Control: Is this worry within my control? <p>Use grounding statements to navigate anxiety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Anxiety is a normal emotion. ✓ I am safe in my body. ✓ I can feel anxious and still handle this <p>Land Softly: Find your way back to your center. Go for a walk in nature. Attend a yoga class. Write in your journal about the experience. Talk to a trusted confident.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>

GROUNDING SUPPORT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit comfortably in a chair or lie on the ground. 2. Focus on the texture and temperature beneath you. 3. Notice how your body feels. 4. Breathe deeply, relaxing further into the support beneath you. 5. Stay present in the moment, allowing a sense of safety and calm to grow 	Reflection:
GROUNDING BODY SCAN	<p>This practice helps you reconnect with your body, calm your mind, and stay present by observing physical sensations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down. 2. Start by focusing on any area of your body, noting and describing the physical sensations you feel. 3. Gradually shift your attention through each part of your body. 4. Deliberately let go of any tension you're holding, allowing it to flow away with gravity. 5. Maintain deep breathing throughout, staying mindful of each sensation. 	Reflection:
MINDFUL COMPASSION	<p>These practices are important because they help individuals reconnect with their bodies and minds, fostering a sense of safety, calm, and compassion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit comfortably with your hands open on your lap or over your heart. 2. Think of someone you care about and notice your feelings or emotions. 3. Send them warm wishes by repeating the mantra: "May you be safe; may you be at peace". 4. Now, shift your focus to yourself and send positive thoughts or good intentions in the same way by repeating the mantra: "I am who I am and who I am is enough". <p>With practice, you can do this at any given time. For example, when you are feeling tension towards someone, in the moment and in your head simply think: "May you be safe, may you be at peace" and notice that empathy and compassion will simply appear.</p>	Reflection:
SOOTHING SENSATIONS	Grounding through physical sensations helps manage stress and emotions effectively. It reconnects	Reflection:

	<p>individuals with their bodies and minds, enhancing well-being. Soothing sensations create safety and calm, aiding in handling tension and emotional challenges.</p> <p>Choose a calming sensation that works for you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rub your hands briskly together to make warmth. • Feel fabric that is soft, rough, bumpy, or silky. • Hold a comforting object, like a blanket or stone or glass sculpture. • Self-Massage your hands, neck, or shoulders. • Cold: use a cold pack, put your face in a bowl of ice water, wet a towel with ice water and put behind neck or on face, take a cold shower, submerge into a cold bath • Hot: use a hot pad, wrap yourself in a heated blanket, wet a towel with hot water and put behind neck or on face, take a warm shower, submerge into a hot bath, use a sauna. 	
FREE WRITING	<p>Free writing acts as a mental cleanse, allowing you to release emotions and alleviate stress, ultimately paving the way for greater clarity and a profound sense of relief.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set aside 10-20 minutes. 2. Let your thoughts flow freely and write whatever comes to mind without judgement or structure. 3. When you're done, do not read it. Tear it up, burn it or throw it away. 4. Notice how you felt when it was suggested that you let it go.... 5. Try it anyway. 	Reflection:
POSTURE POWER	<p>Engaging in mindful posture exercises offers a powerful way to enhance both physical and mental well-being. By grounding your body and aligning your spine, you create a supportive foundation that encourages deeper breathing and relaxation. This practice not only promotes better posture but also fosters a sense of calm and clarity, helping you feel more centered and present.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit comfortably, grounding the base of your spine. 2. Reach the top of your head upwards to lengthen your spine. 	Reflection:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Tuck your chin slightly to straighten your neck, relaxing your throat 4. Relax your shoulders, drawing them down and back to open your chest. 5. Breathe deeply three times, expanding into the space in your body. 	
MINDFUL OBSERVATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set a daily alarm on your phone for 2:22 pm (or some random time). When the alarm rings, take a moment to pause and consciously pay attention to what's happening in your body or surroundings. 2. Focus on your senses without analyzing or interpreting your experience. 3. Choose one thing to observe closely or expand your focus to everything around you. <p>For example: slowly eat a piece of food while exploring each sense, watch the colors change at sunset, or listen to your surroundings during a walk.</p>	Reflection:
BREATH RESET	<p>Deep breathing provides an immediate sense of calm by activating the body's relaxation response, which reduces stress and anxiety levels. It enhances oxygen flow to the brain, promoting mental clarity and focus.</p> <p>This simple practice can quickly restore a sense of balance and tranquility, making it an effective tool for managing overwhelming feelings. This is a simple way to calm your nervous system anytime and anywhere under most circumstances.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inhale slowly through your nose to the count of five 2. Exhale slowly through the nose for the count of five 3. Do this for 2-5 cycles 4. Repeat as needed throughout the day. <p>There are apps that will remind you to breathe every hour - this can be very helpful in trying to establish a habit of using breath as way to self-regulate.</p>	Reflection:
SOOTHING SIGHTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify: Find something that is visually pleasing to you. 	Reflection:

	<p>For example: a favorite image, a plant, the sky, a photo of a loved one, art... etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the details: Pay attention to the colors, textures, and shapes. Notice your emotions and feelings. Identify what makes this sight pleasing to you. Immerse yourself: Take a moment engage with the visual experience, letting it bring a sense of calm and grounding. 	
GLIMMERS	<p><i>"Glimmers are guided by our ventral vagal system. These make us feel safe, connected to ourselves and other people. Calling attention to our glimmers can bring a return to autonomic regulation, creating a meaningful shift in perspective".</i> - JK Murphy</p> <p>A "glimmer" refers to a subtle or fleeting moment when someone experiences a positive or hopeful feeling in response to a smell, a sound, a sight, a memory, a feeling or an emotion. It signifies an opportunity for growth or healing, highlighting moments of resilience or insight amidst challenging emotions. Glimmers can serve as reminders of progress and the possibility of navigating trauma echoes with greater ease.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice glimmers - small moments of joy or comfort. When you find one, pause to fully take it in. Acknowledge how it feels in your body and mind, letting the positive sensation settle. Bring forth glimmers - Play a song that fills you with joy or hope, bake something that reminds you a moment in time where you felt connection with friends or family, go somewhere that brings you peace... Create a glimmer - By beginning each morning in Mountain Pose - stand with your feet hip-width apart, spine straight, palms facing forward, and eyes closed. Position yourself in sunlight, whether outside or by a window, and concentrate on deep breathing. Take a moment to list ten things you're grateful for; over time, this practice 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	will create a safe space you can return to whenever you need a boost.	
DAILY GRATITUDE	<p>Daily gratitude has significant health benefits, as it can reduce stress and improve overall mental well-being. By shifting focus from negative thoughts to positive experiences, gratitude fosters a more optimistic outlook on life, which can enhance emotional resilience and promote better physical health. This practice also encourages stronger relationships and a greater sense of community, contributing to overall happiness and fulfilment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place your hand over your heart. Breathe in, imagining your breath flowing into your heart, and exhale, releasing from your heart. Identify at least one thing you're grateful for. Notice the feelings and sensations attached to it, and allow them to wash over you. 2. Write down 20 things that you are thankful for. Re-read your list and highlight the ones that you are "especially thankful for". Do this daily and challenge yourself to have new things each day. 3. Write a letter to someone who has changed your life for the better. Call them up or sit them down and read it to them. Notice how this makes you feel. Notice how this makes them feel. 	Reflection:
LAUGHTER	<p>Laughter offers numerous health benefits, including reducing stress and promoting relaxation by lowering levels of the stress hormone cortisol. It also boosts the immune system, enhances mood by triggering the release of endorphins, and can even alleviate pain through natural pain-relieving effects. Additionally, laughter fosters social connections and strengthens relationships, contributing to overall emotional well-being.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch Comedies: enjoy a funny video, movie or TV show 2. Read Humorous Books or Comics: Dive into a funny book, comic strip, or online memes 	Reflection:

	<p>3. Try Laughter Yoga: Participate in laughter yoga sessions, which combine laughter exercises with yoga breathing</p> <p>4. Recall Funny Memories: Think about amusing experiences or inside jokes</p> <p>5. Play with Pets: Spend time with pets or animals</p> <p>What did the Buddhist ask the hot dog vendor? <i>"Make me one with everything."</i> <i>bada bing</i></p>	
--	---	--

Appendix B – On the Edges

This section is useful for when you can feel yourself shifting out of balance. Maybe you're starting to feel agitated, restless, or just a little bit off. The tools listed below are practices you can turn to when you notice that you are beginning to drift outside your window of tolerance. Before things escalate, pause and check in with yourself. Notice how you're feeling and then choose a tool that meets you where you're at.

⇒ Afterwards, when your feeling grounded, take a moment to reflect:

How did that feel? Did it help? What did you notice? Would you use this tool again, or try a different one next time?

These small reflections help you figure out what works for you so you can respond more effectively in the future.

NOTE: If you're not sure where to start, begin by picking a tool that sounds easy and doable in the moment. The goal is not to fix everything – it is to help you move back toward balance.

MOMENTARY MIND MAPPING	<p>When feeling overwhelmed, anchor yourself in the present moment by engaging your mind in something grounding. Choose a category and silently name as many things as you can.</p> <p>Some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colors • Fruits • Shapes • Vegetables • Sports • Movies • Countries • TV Shows • Singers • Loved Ones <p>Keep going until you feel more centred. This simple exercise helps shift your focus away from distress and back to the present moment.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Reflection: </div>
SOFT GAZE, CALM MIND	<p>This simple practice not only soothes your nervous system but also alleviates eye strain, promoting a sense of relaxation for both body and mind.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close your eyes and notice the gentle weight of your eyelids pressing down. 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Reflection: </div>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Feel the muscles around your eyes loosen—your forehead, eyebrows, temples, and neck following suit. 3. If tightness remains, briskly rub your hands together until warm. Place your palms over your closed eyes, letting the warmth dissolve any lingering strain. 4. Breathe deeply, allowing each exhale to release more tension. 5. When ready, slowly lift your hands and open your eyes with ease 	
DEEP BELLY BREATHING	<p>This deep-breathing practice helps you take in more oxygen, calming the body and mind while improving relaxation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. 2. Breathe in slowly through your nose, letting your belly rise first, then your chest. 3. Exhale slowly through your mouth, letting the air out from your chest and belly. Make a gentle “Vooooooooo” sound. 4. Gently tighten your belly to push out any extra air. Pause and repeat. 	Reflection:
BREATH EXPANSION	<p>This practice helps slow your breath and focus your mind, bringing you back to the present moment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. Relax your shoulders away from your ears. 2. Bring your hands in front of your stomach, palms facing each other, and keep them parallel to your body, as if holding a basketball between them. 3. Inhale slowly and separate your hands as your breath expands, feeling the space in your chest and abdomen. 4. Exhale and slowly bring your hands back to the starting position, focusing on the sensations in your body. 5. Repeat 5 times. 	Reflection:
GROUNDED STEPS	<p>This simple grounding exercise promotes stability and relaxation, allowing you to release tension while reconnecting with your body.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take off your shoes. 	Reflection:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Sit comfortably in a chair with your feet flat on the ground for stability. 3. Inhale deeply and press the balls of your feet into the floor, lifting your heels. 4. Exhale slowly, allowing your heels to return to the ground as you release tension. 5. Pause for a moment to notice any vibrations or sensations moving through your legs and feet. 	
CHILDS POSE	<p>This grounding shape encourages deep breathing, enhances circulation, and helps calm both the mind and body.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start on your hands and knees, spreading your knees wide while keeping the tops of your feet on the floor and big toes touching. 2. Rest your belly between your thighs and place your forehead on the floor, relaxing your shoulders, jaw, and eyes; use a block or stacked fists for comfort if needed. 3. If your hips don't reach your heels, place a cushion or blanket between your thighs and calves. 4. Stretch your arms forward with palms down, or alongside your thighs with palms up, or bend your elbows with palms touching at the back of your neck. 5. Stay as long as you like, focusing on your steady breath. 	Reflection:
COLOR FLOW	<p>Coloring offers a creative outlet for expressing emotions and cultivating a sense of calm, while also awakening your childlike sense of wonder.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather coloring materials that resonate with you. Do you like crayons, colored pencils or markers? 2. Choose images, words or colors that feel comforting or meaningful. 3. Let your intuition guide you, allow your creativity to flow freely without judgment. 4. Immerse yourself in the process for 10-15 minutes, focusing on the soothing rhythm of coloring 5. Notice how feel while you are coloring. Are you experiencing any emotions or sensations that surprise you? Take a moment to acknowledge these 	Reflection:

	<p>feelings without judgement. Take a few deep breaths, allow yourself to relax and appreciate this time of creativity.</p>	
INTUITIVE TAPPING	<p>This simple tapping technique can help you cultivate mindfulness and deepen your self-awareness. By gently tapping the center of your forehead while focusing on your breath, you create a space for reflection and connection with your inner thoughts. Engage in this practice for a minute to enhance your intuition and promote a sense of calm.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using your index and middle fingers, gently and rhythmically between your eyebrows for self-regulation, use your index and middle fingers to make light taps at a steady pace. Aim for a rhythm similar to a soft heartbeat—about one tap per second. 2. As you tap, take a slow, deep breath in through your nose and exhale fully through your mouth. 3. Allow your focus to turn inward, becoming more attuned to your thoughts and intuition. 4. Continue for at least minute or until you feel calm and grounded. 	<div>Reflection:</div>
BILATERAL STIMULATION	<p>Bilateral stimulation is a therapeutic technique that involves alternating stimulation of both sides of the body, often through eye movements, tapping, or sound, to promote emotional processing and regulation. Engaging both sides of the body through rhythmic movement help regulate emotions and enhance focus.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold a small ball or object in one hand while standing or sitting with feet firmly planted. 2. Take a moment to become aware of any thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations without trying to alter them. 3. Begin tossing the ball across the centre of your body, switching hands with each pass. To increase focus, try maintaining a steady rhythm or avoiding direct eye contact with the ball. 4. After 1-2 minutes, pause and check in. Notice any changes in your focus, body, or emotional state. 5. For a bit of challenge, feel free to add an additional ball(s). Juggling is inherently a bilateral practice. 	<div>Reflection:</div>

PROTECTIVE BOUNDARIES	<p>This practice helps you create a protective boundary to preserve your energy and emotional well-being.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a calm, quiet space and sit in a relaxed position. 2. Take slow, intentional breaths. Feel free to close your eyes to enhance focus. 3. Visualize a protective boundary surrounding your body—imagine it taking on a shape, a color, or whatever imagery resonates with a sense of security and strength. 4. Set the intention for this boundary to protect your emotional space. 5. Imagine this boundary becoming more resilient and vibrant, radiating a sense of empowerment and inner peace. 	<div>Reflection:</div>
VIBRATE YOUR VAGUS NERVE AND BUILD VAGAL TONE	<p>The Vagus nerve is a vital component of the autonomic nervous system, crucial for emotional regulation and managing the stress response. Stimulating the Vagus nerve can greatly improve your emotional well-being by promoting relaxation and decreasing stress levels in the body, which helps lower heart rate and blood pressure, ultimately fostering a sense of calm and balance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep Breathing: Inhale through nose and Exhale through mouth. • Cold Exposure: Put face in bowl of cold water, put cold towel behind neck, use cold pack, emerge your body in cold water • Singing, Gargling, Chanting or Humming: create vibrations in the throat that vibrate the Vagus Nerve. • Meditation, Mindfulness or Yoga: can help activate the Vagus Nerve and enhance emotional regulation. • Make a routine: Practice stimulating the Vagus Nerve 3-4 times a week to strengthen Vagal Tone, making it easier to use these strategies for self-regulation. 	<div>Reflection:</div>
MINDFUL YAWNING	<p>Mindful yawning promotes relaxation by increasing oxygen intake and helping to release tension in the</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<p>body. It can also enhance focus and awareness, reduce stress, and improve overall emotional well-being by encouraging a moment of mindfulness and self-care in your day.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take a deep breath in and intentionally open your mouth wide, stretching your jaw downward and backward. 2. Hold the stretch briefly before exhaling fully. 3. Repeat this process for 6-7 artificial yawns. 4. As you continue, notice the feeling of relaxation and increased awareness, along with a deeper connection to your body. 5. A genuine yawn may naturally arise, signalling a shift in your energy and presence. 	
WALL PRESSES	<p>Wall presses offer several benefits, including improved upper body strength, enhanced stability, and better posture. They engage multiple muscle groups, particularly the chest, shoulders, and triceps, while also promoting core activation and balance. Additionally, wall presses can be a low-impact exercise suitable for all fitness levels, making them an effective option for strength training and rehabilitation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand tall facing a wall with your feet hip-width apart and your spine straight. 2. Place your hands flat on the wall at shoulder height with a slight bend in your arms. 3. Push against the wall, using your chest and shoulder muscles. As you push, exhale fully. Release your hands back toward the wall as you inhale. 4. Do as many as you can, then relax by letting your arms drop and shaking out any tension. 5. Repeat the sequence for a few rounds, breathing deeply throughout 	Reflection:
TRANQUILITY PRESSURE CIRCLES	<p>Self-massaging the base of the skull can relieve tension and reduce headaches by easing tightness in the neck and upper back. This practice promotes relaxation, improves blood circulation, and can stimulate the Vagus Nerve. Additionally, it helps to alleviate stress and anxiety, providing a soothing effect that encourages a sense of calm.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Settle into a comfortable position where you can relax fully. 	Reflection:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Lightly place your index and middle fingers on the back of your head, at the base of your skull. 3. Apply gentle pressure and begin massaging in slow, circular motions. Pay attention to the sensations as you do so. 4. When ready, reverse the circle direction. 5. Adjust the pressure as needed to ensure comfort and relaxation. 6. Feel free to explore, move your circles up or down or left to right. <p>This practice can be done each day to ease stress and restore balance.</p>	
INNER COMPASSION	<p>Practicing self-compassion strengthens emotional resilience, eases stress, and nurtures a sense of connection - both with yourself and others.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a quiet space with a pen and paper. 2. Picture a friend facing a difficult moment. Write down how you would support them – notice the words that you choose, the tone you take and the actions you identify. 3. Now, recall a time when you struggled. Jot down how you typically speak to yourself in those moments, including the words that you choose, the tone you take and the actions you identify. 4. Compare both responses. <i>Do you show yourself the same kindness that you offer others?</i> 5. Practice cultivating a gentle and compassionate inner voice. Notice when you are being hard on yourself and consciously seek to cultivate a compassionate relationship with self. 	<div>Reflection:</div>
PRACTICING JOY	<p>Smiling and/or laughing can enhance mood by triggering the release of feel-good neurotransmitters. This practice helps reduce stress, boost mood, and strengthen the mind-body connection.</p> <p><i>Even a simulated smile or laugh can produce similar effects and may gradually become genuine over time.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin by releasing any tension in your face. 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gently lift the corners of your mouth into a soft smile, noticing the subtle shift in your facial muscles. Allow the smile to evolve into a light chuckle. Take a deep breath in, and as you exhale, fake laugh (<i>Hahahahahaha</i>) Continue the laughter for at least 30-seconds. Pause, breathing naturally, and then repeat the process two more times. <p>Embrace any awkwardness and the silliness—<i>forced laughter often transforms into real joy</i>. Notice any changes in how you feel.</p>	
EXPLORING YOUR HANDS AND ARMS	<p>Gentle self-touch fosters self-compassion, enhances body awareness, and soothes the nervous system, helping to ease stress and tension.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Find a comfortable seat. Using your fingertips, trace slow circles on the palm and fingers of your opposite hand, noticing the sensations; then switch hands and repeat. Gently glide your fingers from wrist to elbow on your forearms, experimenting with varying pressure or using your nails. Create small circles on your shoulder and upper arm, then move toward your neck; repeat on the other side, exploring by gently pressing into the muscles or scratching along your arm. Stay aware of the warmth and connection between your hand and skin throughout. 	Reflection:
FULL BODY STRETCH	<p>This practice helps release built-up tension, improve circulation, and promote a sense of calm by engaging your entire body in a gentle, energizing stretch.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stand tall with your feet hip-width apart, grounding yourself for balance. Slowly reach your arms overhead, extending as if you're trying to touch the sky. Lift onto your tiptoes, elongating your entire body. Wiggle your fingertips and notice the stretch from head to toe. Hold for a moment, then gently lower back down and relax for 5 seconds. Repeat the stretch a few times, allowing tension to melt away and a sense of calm to settle in. <p>This stretch can also be done laying down on your back.</p>	Reflection:

STEADY TWIST	<p>This practice helps deepen your connection with your body and the environment around you, fostering a sense of stability and security.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand or sit with your feet hip-width apart, keeping your knees slightly bent for comfort. 2. Gently twist your upper body from side to side, moving slowly and mindfully. Listen to your body's needs. It is ok to feel uncomfortable, but it is not ok to feel pain. 3. Decide how to position your head: follow your twist with your gaze in the direction of movement or turn your head the opposite way, looking over your shoulder. 4. Sync your breath with your movements—inhale as you turn one way, exhale as you twist to the other side. 5. Let your arms swing freely or place them on your hips for added control. 6. Tune into the sensations in your body as you move. <p>To deepen the practice, as you turn from side to side, scan your surroundings and reassure yourself: <i>"I am safe."</i></p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
RELEASE THROUGH MOTION	<p>This practice uses intentional arm movements and controlled breathing to help release trapped energy and emotional tension. It allows for the processing of strong feelings through motion and breath.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on a challenging thought or emotion you'd like to release, starting with something small. As you practice, you can tackle more significant challenges. 2. Pace yourself to allow for discomfort without crossing into pain. 3. Breathe deeply, ensuring each exhale is longer than your inhale. 4. Extend your arms forward one at a time, envisioning that you're pushing away the experience. 5. Sync your breath with each arm movement, releasing tension as you exhale. 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<p>6. Continue until you feel grounded, letting the motion and breath facilitate your release.</p>	
ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING	<p>Alternate nostril breathing, or Nadi Shodhana, reduces stress and promotes relaxation by calming the nervous system. It enhances focus and mental clarity by balancing the brain's hemispheres, while also improving respiratory function and boosting energy levels. This simple practice fosters emotional balance, centers the mind, and slows the heart rate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use your right thumb to gently close your right nostril. 2. Inhale slowly through your left nostril. 3. Close your left nostril with your right ring finger and release your right nostril to exhale. 4. Inhale gently through your right nostril. 5. Close your right nostril and exhale through your left nostril. This completes one cycle. <p>Continue the cycle, taking your time with each breath until you feel a sense of relaxation and balance. Trust your intuition to guide you, and stop when it feels right.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
4-7-8 BREATHING	<p>The 4-7-8 breathing technique promotes relaxation and reduces stress by encouraging deep, rhythmic breaths that calm the nervous system. This practice can also improve sleep quality and enhance emotional resilience by helping to regulate anxiety and promote a sense of calm.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inhale gently through your nose for a count of 4 seconds. 2. Hold your breath for a count of 7 seconds. 3. Slowly exhale through your mouth for a count of 8 seconds. 4. Repeat the cycle until you feel a sense of calm. 	
MINDFUL NECK MOVEMENT	<p>Moving and stretching your neck offers several benefits, including improved flexibility and range of motion, reduced tension and stiffness, and enhanced blood circulation to the neck and surrounding areas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit or stand comfortably, with your shoulders relaxed and your gaze forward. 2. Consciously take a moment to acknowledge that you trust yourself to know how frequently and 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<p>deeply to engage with each stretch. Listen to your body.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Breathe deeply and slowly, syncing your breath with the rhythm of your movements. 4. Slowly tilt your right ear toward your right shoulder, then your left ear to your left shoulder, allowing your neck to lengthen. 5. Gently nod your head up and down, coordinating the movement with your gaze. 6. Shift your head side to side, looking left and right. 7. Begin to circle your head, incorporating the up, down, and side-to-side motions into a smooth circular movement. When you are ready, reverse the direction, continuing to explore the full range of motion. 	
BREATH-FLOW ARM MOVEMENT	<p>Raising and dropping your arms, in concert with your breath, enhances lung capacity and oxygen flow while releasing tension in the shoulders and upper body. It also strengthens the connection between the body and breath- enhancing one's ability to utilize breath in moments of stress.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent, and shoulders at ease. Let your arms rest naturally at your sides. 2. As you inhale, turn your palms outward and sweep your arms up in a wide arc, reaching toward the sky. 3. As you exhale, rotate your palms downward, bend your elbows outward, and gently guide your hands back down in front of you. 4. Allow your arms to fully relax at your sides before beginning the next breath cycle. 5. Repeat this fluid motion, noticing the sensations in your body and the rhythm of your breath. 	<div>Reflection:</div>
EYEBROW MASSAGE	<p>Eyebrow massage targets the Yin tang acupuncture point, helping to relieve tension and stress in the</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<p>forehead while promoting relaxation and reducing headaches. Additionally, it enhances circulation in the area, contributing to a greater sense of calm and well-being.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Position your index finger at the inner edge of one eyebrow, just above the bridge of your nose. 2. Apply gentle pressure or make small circular motions to massage the area. 3. Take deep breaths, allowing your body to relax as you continue until it feels right. 4. Switch to the other side and repeat. 	
--	--	--

Appendix C – Outside the Window of Tolerance

These tools serve to self-regulate when you notice that you are outside your window of tolerance. Take a moment to pause, choose a tool from the list below, and gently follow the steps to engage in the practice as described.

Pay attention to any shifts in your body or mind and slowly allow yourself to return to center.

⇒ Once you've finished the practice, and you feel more grounded and connected, take a moment to reflect.

How did that feel? What worked (or didn't)? Would you try it again?

These check-ins help you build a toolkit that is personally designed by and shaped for you.

SOME GUIDANCE:

- Feeling overstimulated or anxious? Try a calming card like *Soft Gaze*, *Calm Mind*, or *Fingers of Calm*. These can help your body or brain slow down.
- Feeling disconnected or frozen? Pick an activating card like *Lions Breath* or *Breath Expansion*. They can help you re-energize and allow your senses to reactivate.
- Unsure where you are? Start with a grounding tool like *Refreshing reset* or 'STOP' to pause, check in, and figure out what you need.

BOX BREATHING	<p>Box breathing is structured around equal inhalation, retention, exhalation, and retention intervals, which helps regulate the autonomic nervous system. This rhythmic pattern enhances mindfulness and can improve concentration while providing a tangible method for managing anxiety in real-time.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inhale through your nose for a slow count of 4 seconds. 2. Hold your breath for 4 seconds. 3. Exhale through your mouth for 4 seconds. 4. Hold your breath again for 4 seconds. 5. Repeat this cycle until you feel calm and grounded. <p>You can increase the count as you become more comfortable with the practice.</p>	Reflection:
GARUDA MUDRA	<p>Garuda Mudra is believed to enhance mental clarity and focus while promoting a sense of calm and balance. It is often used to alleviate stress and anxiety, improve concentration, and support emotional stability, making it beneficial for meditation and mindfulness practices.</p>	Reflection:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross your arms and place one hand on each side of your chest (you can interlace your thumbs if it feels comfortable). 2. Gently tap one hand and then the other, alternating the rhythm. 3. Focus on the sensation of the tapping and slow your breathing. 4. If needed, count down from 100 to deepen your focus and calm your mind. 5. Continue until you feel more grounded and centered 	
GENTLE EMBRACE	<p>A self-hug can provide a sense of comfort and security, helping to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. It promotes the release of oxytocin, often called the "love hormone," which can enhance mood, increase feelings of connection, and improve overall emotional well-being.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wrap your arms around yourself in a gentle hug. 2. Apply light pressure, keeping your posture relaxed. 3. Breathe slowly and deeply, focusing on your body and emotions. 4. Use positive self-talk to comfort yourself <p>Use the mantra: "I am who I am and who I am is enough"</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
TENSION SHAKE	<p>Tension Shaking helps release pent-up stress and anxiety by encouraging physical movement that stimulates the nervous system, particularly beneficial for those experiencing hypo arousal, a state of low energy and emotional numbness. This practice facilitates the release of endorphins, leading to a greater sense of well-being and emotional release.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move your body to reset your nervous system. 2. While standing, gently shake out tension. 3. Starting with your wrists, then moving to your arms, shoulders, neck, and head. 4. Finally, shake out your legs, releasing excess energy. 5. Breathe deeply throughout, allowing your body to reset and relax. 	<div>Reflection:</div>

RHYTHMIC ROCKING	<p>Rhythmic rocking can provide a calming effect by mimicking the soothing motions often associated with early childhood, which helps reduce anxiety and promote relaxation. This practice can also stimulate the vestibular system, enhancing body awareness and emotional regulation, making it particularly beneficial for individuals dealing with stress or sensory overload.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a comfortable position: sitting, standing, or lying down. 2. Wrap your arms around yourself in a comforting embrace. 3. As you gently rock side to side or back and forth, inhale deeply and exhale slowly. 4. Allow the rhythmic motion and breath to ease tension and bring a sense of calm. <p>For your office or a soft room, this can also be accomplished with a swivel chair.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
VISUALIZE YOUR SAFE PLACE	<p>Visualizing a safe space serves as a mental refuge, allowing individuals to create a supportive environment for an on-the-spot retreat to reduce anxiety and stress while fostering a profound sense of security and calm. This, in turn, enhances emotional regulation and resilience in challenging situations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. 2. Feel your body and let go of tension with each exhale. 3. Imagine a place that brings you comfort - real or imagined. 4. Engage your senses: What do you see, hear, feel? 5. Let the calm of this place settle into your body 	<div>Reflection:</div>
LENGTHEN AND SOOTH	<p>This breathing practice helps cultivate mindfulness and awareness by encouraging individuals to focus on their breath, effectively reducing immediate stress. By gradually extending the inhales and exhales, it enhances lung capacity, improves oxygen flow, and activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting a deeper state of calm.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start by breathing naturally, noticing your breath for 1 minute. 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Gently extend your inhales and exhales to a count of 4, breathing in and out for 1 minute. 3. Gradually increase to a count of 5, then 6 seconds per breath, maintaining a calm rhythm. 4. Continue extending the breath to whatever count feels comfortable, for as long as you are able 	
BILATERAL MINDFUL TAPPING	<p>Bilateral tapping can help reduce anxiety and stress by promoting a sense of grounding and balance through rhythmic, alternating movements. This practice stimulates both hemispheres of the brain, enhancing emotional regulation and facilitating the processing of difficult emotions.</p> <p>Begin tapping each side alternately at a steady rhythm of about one tap per second, feel free to go slower or faster.</p> <p>Breathe slowly and deeply as you focus on the sensation, allowing your mind to settle and your body to relax with each tap.</p> <p>Option One: Knee taps: Place your hands on your thighs with your palms facing down and gently tap one side at a time.</p> <p>Option Two: Shoulder taps: Cross your arms and rest your hands on opposite shoulders and gently tap one side at a time.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
NECK AND SHOULDER RELEASE	<p>Neck stretches can alleviate tension and stiffness in the neck and shoulders, promoting improved flexibility and range of motion. They also enhance blood circulation to the area, which can reduce headache frequency and severity, while fostering relaxation and stress relief through the activation of the body's parasympathetic nervous system.</p> <p>Sit comfortably and take a deep breath, directing your awareness to your neck and shoulders. If you sense any tension, take another deep breath and consciously relax.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<p>Repeat the following movements as many times as you need, ensure that you create balance by stretching each side equally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neck Rotation: Gently turn your head from left to right, <i>noticing four things in your surroundings as you move</i>. Then, reverse the motion, moving your head from right to left. • Upward and Downward: Inhale as you gently look up, and exhale as you lower your gaze down. • Neck Circles: Slowly move your neck in a circular motion. Start by bringing your left ear toward your left shoulder, then lower your chin to your chest, followed by your right ear to your right shoulder, and let the back of your head rest between your shoulder blades. Take a few rolls in this direction, then reverse the motion. <p>Continue breathing deeply, allowing your shoulders and neck to release any unnecessary stress.</p>	
SHOCK YOUR SENSES	<p>Eating something with a strong or distinct flavor can ground and soothe emotions by offering a sensory distraction that redirects attention from distressing feelings. This intense taste can stimulate the release of dopamine, boosting mood and engaging the taste buds, which helps regulate emotional responses during moments of activation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose a food with an intense flavor 2. Smell your food. Notice how feel when smelling. 3. Take a bite- hold it in your mouth for a moment- and notice the strong taste and sensations. 4. Focus on the sensory experience to redirect your thoughts. <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spicy (like chili or ginger) • Bitter (such as dark chocolate or coffee) • Savory (like umami-rich foods, such as miso or soy sauce) 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citrusy (like orange, lemon, grapefruit) • Herbaceous (such as fresh mint or basil) • Sour (like lemons, vinegar or pickles) • Salty (such as salted nuts or salted chocolate) 	
REFRESHING RESET: COLD THERMOGENESIS	<p>Cold thermogenesis can enhance metabolic function by promoting fat burning and increasing energy expenditure. It also improves circulation, reduces inflammation, and can boost mood by triggering the release of endorphins, making it beneficial for recovery, overall well-being, and resilience against stress.</p> <p>For any of the following options, make sure to focus on your breath. Inhale deeply through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Splash your face with cold water • Submerge your face in ice water • Place a cold pack or cold towel behind your neck • Take a cold shower • Take a cold bath • Spend time in a hot sauna, and then take a cold bath <p>For beginners, start with short cold-water experiences, like 30 seconds to a minute, and gradually increase the duration as your body adapts, aiming for (no-more than) 5-10 minutes.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
FEATHER BREATH	<p>This exercise helps promote relaxation and mindfulness by encouraging deep breathing and visualization, which can reduce anxiety and stress. Imagining the feather floating away facilitates a sense of letting go, allowing individuals to release negative thoughts or feelings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close your eyes and imagine a light feather in your hand. 2. Ask the feather to take hold of your stress, your sad thoughts or anything you wish to release. 3. Take a slow, deep breath, filling your belly with air. 4. Gently exhale through your mouth, visualizing the feather floating away. 	<div>Reflection:</div>

LIONS BREATH	<p>This exercise combines deep breathing with vocalization and physical movement. The act of inhaling deeply promotes oxygen flow and relaxation, while the loud exhale and tongue extension release pent-up energy and emotions, fostering a sense of empowerment and vitality. This practice can also enhance mood and increase feelings of joy and freedom.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inhale deeply through your nose, extending your neck and lifting your chin. 2. Exhale with a loud “roar” through your mouth, sticking out your tongue and looking upward. 3. This is very silly, feel free to laugh. 4. Do this as many times as you need. 5. This is especially fun with children. <p>Use this breath to carry confidence and connection throughout your day.</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>
THE POWER OF TEARS	<p>Crying triggers a physiological response that reduces stress by lowering cortisol levels and releasing endorphins. It activates the parasympathetic nervous system, allowing emotional regulation.</p> <p>When tears start to come, let them flow instead of holding them back. It may take time for your body to feel safe enough to release them, so be patient and gentle with yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crying helps your body process emotions, providing relief and balance. • By accepting your feelings, you cultivate a healthier relationship with your emotions. • Allow yourself to cry. • Consider scheduling time to cry and to process complicated emotions, as this can be quite beneficial. 	<div>Reflection:</div>
AROMA ALCHEMY	<p>Certain scents can trigger the relaxation response by activating the parasympathetic nervous system, lowering cortisol levels and reducing stress, which promotes emotional balance and well-being. Conversely, engaging with specific scents can also stimulate the sympathetic nervous system, boosting</p>	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<p>energy and increasing awareness, thereby enhancing overall sensory experience.</p> <p>Do you need be calmed, soothed or grounded? Do you need to be activated, awakened, or made more alert?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citrus: Uplifts mood and boosts alertness. • Jasmine: Promotes joy and happiness giving uplifting energy • Peppermint, Rosemary, Eucalyptus: Enhances focus and mental clarity, combats fatigue. • Ginger, Cinnamon, Black Pepper: Provides grounding, combats mental exhaustion. • Ylang Ylang: Enhances well-being and stress giving a sense of calm • Cloves: Reduces stress, improves mood and enhances focus • Palo Santo: Promotes peace and tranquility giving calm grounding <p>Inhale the scent slowly, taking notice of the sensations it brings.</p> <p>Keep your chosen scent nearby to use in moments of need, allowing it to reconnect you with a sense of calm and clarity. If using as a tool to help other people be calm, <i>allow them to pick and choose.</i></p>	
FINGERS OF CALM	<p>This practice offers a specific benefit by combining mindfulness with gentle movement, which helps calm the mind and reduce anxiety. As you trace each finger, the focus on the tactile sensation promotes grounding and awareness, while the deep breathing enhances relaxation and oxygen flow, fostering a greater sense of calm and emotional balance. Repeating this exercise can improve concentration and provide a moment of respite during stressful situations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stretch out your left hand and spread your fingers wide. 2. Using your right index finger, slowly trace around each finger. 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Inhale deeply through your nose as you trace upward, and exhale through your mouth as you trace downward. Switch and trace the right hand with your left index finger. Repeat as needed. <p>This can also be done by using a acupuncture ring, moving up and down each finger.</p>	
TONGLEN BREATH	<p>Tonglen breath is a mindfulness practice that involves “inhaling the suffering of others” (or self) and “exhaling compassion”, fostering empathy and emotional release. This technique not only reduces personal stress but also cultivates a greater sense of compassion towards oneself and others, enhancing overall emotional well-being.</p> <p>Focus on a challenging emotion or situation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Inhale deeply, breathing in the suffering of others without resistance. Exhale slowly, releasing compassion in the form of its opposite—peace, love, or ease. Continue for as long as needed, allowing each breath to soften your experience. Imagine the suffering transforming within, transforming it to compassion that will wash over the world. 	<div>Reflection:</div>
SOOTHING VIBRATIONS	<p>Certain sounds produce vibrations that ripple through the body, stimulating the Vagus nerve to lower stress and heart rate while increasing heart rate variability; this practice combines deep breathing and vocalization to release tension and enhance vagal tone, fostering a calming effect on the nervous system.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sit or stand comfortably with your feet grounded. Inhale deeply through your nose. As you exhale, create a steady sound: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hum Vooooo Oooo Aummmmm Bzzzzz A deep (audible) sigh 	<div>Reflection:</div>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Let the sound naturally flow from your body. Feel the vibration move through you, releasing tension. Repeat as needed, using the sound to center yourself. <p>Enhance the effect by covering your ears or changing the pitch of your sound.</p>	
5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING	<p>The 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique helps individuals anchor themselves in the present moment by engaging the senses, which can effectively reduce anxiety and overwhelm. This is a quick and accessible tool for managing stress in challenging situations.</p> <p>Create stability in your body and find:</p> <p>5 things you can see 4 things you can touch or feel 3 things you can hear 2 things you can smell 1 thing you can taste</p>	Reflection:
QUICK RELEASE	<p>This breathing technique stimulates the nervous system and promotes relaxation by combining rapid inhalation with controlled exhalation. The quick, surprised inhale activates alertness, while the slow, deep breaths enhance oxygen flow and calm the mind. This practice helps regulate the stress response and reduces anxiety, making it effective for managing overwhelming emotions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take a quick, short inhale through your nose, like you're surprised. Follow with a slow, deep inhale through your nose for 3-4 counts. Exhale quickly with a short breath through your mouth, like blowing out a candle. Then exhale slowly through your mouth for 3-4 counts. Do this until you feel grounded and calm. 	Reflection:
BODY TAPPING	<p>This practice integrates rhythmic tapping with deep breathing to enhance body awareness and connection. The firm tapping stimulates the nervous system and boosts circulation, facilitating the release of tension and stress while promoting a</p>	Reflection:

	<p>sense of grounding.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit or stand comfortably. 2. Ball your hands into fists. 3. Tap both sides of your body firmly, starting from either the top or bottom. 4. Gradually move up or down, feeling the vibrations. 5. Coordinate your taps with slow, deep breaths. 6. If comfortable, increase the pressure and observe the sensations throughout your body. 	
<p>EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE (EFT)</p>	<p>This practice enhances proprioception and body awareness through rhythmic tapping and deep breathing, helping individuals reconnect with their physical sensations. It stimulates the nervous system and increases circulation, releasing built-up tension and stress while promoting relaxation and emotional balance.</p> <p>Acknowledge the thoughts, feelings, or circumstances causing distress.</p> <p>Tap gently with your fingertips (6-8 rhythmic taps) on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Top of the head ▪ Eyebrow (near the nose) ▪ Outside of the eye ▪ Under the eye ▪ Under the nose ▪ Chin (just below the lip) ▪ Collarbone (just below the neck) ▪ Under the arm (about 4 inches below the armpit) ▪ Edge of the hand <p>While tapping, repeat positive affirmations or use calming self-talk:</p> <p>"I am in control of my thoughts and emotions." "I am resilient and can overcome challenges." "I am worthy of love and respect." "I am what I am and who I am is enough."</p>	<p>Reflection:</p>

<p>‘STOP’</p>	<p>This technique helps you create space between emotional impulses and your actions, allowing for more thoughtful responses and better control over your reactions.</p> <p>S - Stop: Interrupt your thoughts and actions by saying "stop" to yourself. Pause in the moment and take a deep, calming breath.</p> <p>T - Take a Step Back: Physically distance yourself from the situation to avoid acting on impulsive urges.</p> <p>O - Observe: Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings. Label the facts of the situation to gain clarity and awareness.</p> <p>P - Proceed: Mindfully decide your next steps, intentionally acting one moment at a time, with a sense of purpose and calm.</p>	<p>Reflection:</p>
<p>EMOTIONS, LIKE CLOUDS, PASS BY</p>	<p>Your thoughts and emotions are like clouds in the sky - sometimes heavy, sometimes light. Rather than holding onto them, let the breeze carry them along, using your breath to give them a gentle push. This practice helps you acknowledge and process emotions, creating space for self-regulation and acceptance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge – Name what you’re feeling: “I am feeling ____.” 2. Breathe – Inhale deeply, then exhale, allowing the emotion to simply be. 3. Explore – With kindness, recognize why you might feel this way and what your emotion is trying to do for you. 4. Thank – Show appreciation: “Thank you for trying to protect me.” 5. Accept – Remind yourself: <i>I am not my emotion</i>. Feelings come and go—let them move through you without defining who you are. 	<p>Reflection:</p>

HARMONIC HEALING	<p>This practice combines music, vocal expression, and movement to promote emotional release and self-connection. Singing stimulates the Vagus nerve, enhancing relaxation and reducing stress by activating the parasympathetic nervous system, while also releasing endorphins and oxytocin, which contribute to feelings of joy. Movement encourages bodily awareness and the release of tension, fostering mindfulness and helping individuals reconnect with their emotions, ultimately enhancing well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a song that resonates with you. • Sing - let your voice fill the space, focusing on the lyrics, melody, and the sensations in your body. • Move - start small, letting your body respond naturally. Focus on how it feels, not how it looks. • Express - allow your emotions to flow through sound and movement, using music as your guide to release and reconnect. 	<div>Reflection:</div>
-------------------------	---	------------------------

References

- Brown, B. (2021). *Atlas of the heart: Mapping meaningful connection and the language of human experience* (1st ed.). Random House.
- Carencia. (2025, March 27). *The PTSD-nutrition connection: How food can heal trauma*. Carencia. <https://carencia.com/blog/nutrition-for-ptsd-best-foods-and-dietary-strategies-for-ptsd-recovery/>
- CareSpace Health+Wellness. (2024, September 5). *Foods you should eat with PTSD*. CareSpace Health+Wellness. <https://carespace.health/post/foods-you-should-eat-with-ptsd/>
- CareSpace Health+Wellness. (2024, September 5). *Foods to avoid when dealing with trauma*. CareSpace Health+Wellness. <https://carespace.health/post/foods-to-avoid-when-dealing-with-trauma/>
- De-la-Torre, G. E. (2020). Microplastics: An emerging threat to food security and human health. *Journal of Food Science and Technology*, 57(5), 1601–1608. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13197-019-04138-1>
- Harvard Health Publishing. (2015, June 18). How much protein do you need every day? Harvard Health Blog. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-much-protein-do-you-need-every-day-201506188096>
- Harvard Health Publishing. (2023, July 18). The gut-brain connection. Harvard Health. Retrieved April 21, 2025, from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/the-gut-brain-connection>
- Khiron Clinics. (2024, October 25). The gut-brain connection: How stomach issues and trauma are linked. Khiron Clinics. Retrieved April 21, 2025, from <https://khironclinics.com/blog/the-gut-brain-connection-how-stomach-issues-and-trauma-are-linked/>
- King's College London. (2024, March 28). *Eating within a 10-hour window improves mood, sleep, and hunger regulation*. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/14-hour-fasting-improves-hunger-mood-sleep>
- Kubota, T. (2025, January). *What's the deal with microplastics, the material that 'never goes away'*. Stanford News. <https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2025/01/what-s-the-deal-with-microplastics-the-material-that-never-goes-away>
- Kumar, M., Xiong, X., He, M., Tsang, D. C. W., Gupta, J., Khan, E., & Bolan, N. S. (2022). Microplastics in human food chains: Food becoming a threat to health safety. *Science of The Total Environment*, 807, 151376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2021.151376>
- Leclercq, S., Forsythe, P., & Bienenstock, J. (2016). Posttraumatic stress disorder: Does the gut microbiome hold the key? *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 61(4), 204–213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/070674371663553>
- Mayo Clinic Health System. (2022, August 15). *Coloring is good for your health*. Mayo Clinic Health System. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/coloring-is-good-for-your-health>
- Mayo Clinic News Network. (2022, July 21). *Eat the rainbow for good health*. <https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/eat-the-rainbow-for-good-health/>
- Military Wellness. (2024, December 18). *The connection between PTSD and food*. Military Wellness. <https://militarywellness.org/the-connection-between-ptsd-and-food-44/>
- Nasiri, M. A., Sajadi, S. A., Farsi, Z., et al. (2024). The effect of mandala coloring and free coloring on happiness in veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder in the COVID-19 pandemic: A randomized clinical trial. *BMC Psychiatry*, 24(467). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-024-05886-x>

Nye, K., Cherrin, C., & Meires, J. (2024). Intermittent fasting: Exploring approaches, benefits, and implications for health and weight management. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, 20(3), Article 104893. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nurpra.2023.104893>

Propel Physiotherapy. (2023, August 1). *What is self-care, how to build a routine and teach others*. <https://propelphysiotherapy.com/general-health-and-wellbeing/what-is-self-care/>

PTS-DUK. (n.d.). *Colouring books*. PTS-DUK. <https://www.ptsduk.org/colouring-books/>

Solan, M. (2024, October 1). *Can intermittent fasting help with weight loss? Here's what the current research says*. Harvard Health Publishing. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/can-intermittent-fasting-help-with-weight-loss>

Song, D. K., & Kim, Y. W. (2023). Beneficial effects of intermittent fasting: A narrative review. *Journal of Yeungnam Medical Science*, 40(1), 4–11. <https://doi.org/10.12701/jyms.2022.00010>

University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy. (2025, February 15). *USC pharmacy researchers focus on impact of red dyes*. https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/pharmacy/about/news/2025/pharmacy-researchers-study-red-dyes.php

Urban Wellness. (2020, November 4). *Self-care vs. self-soothing: What you need to know*. Urban Wellness Counseling. <https://urbanwellnesscounseling.com/self-care-vs-self-soothing/>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2023, July 10). *Microplastics and nanoplastics in foods*. <https://www.fda.gov/food/environmental-contaminants-food/microplastics-and-nanoplastics-foods>

Ziani, K., Ioniță-Mîndrican, C.-B., Mititelu, M., Neacșu, S. M., Negrei, C., Moroșan, E., Drăgănescu, D., & Preda, O.-T. (2023). Microplastics: A real global threat for environment and food safety: A state-of-the-art review. *Nutrients*, 15(3), 617. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15030617>

Authors

Myra Strand, MA, CA, is the co-owner and Advocacy Diplomat at Strand², where she, and her partner Russell Strand, lead efforts in providing training, education, and technical assistance. Since its establishment in 2017, Strand² has successfully collaborated with thousands of responding professionals. With over 25 years of experience in the field of trauma and victimization, Myra brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her work. Myra is a certificated yoga instructor and places a special emphasis on health, healing and post traumatic growth.



Maya Keyes, based in Dublin, Ireland, recently graduated from University College Dublin, with a First-Class Honours Bachelor's degree in Social Justice and Sociology. She is currently interning at Strand² in New York, where she is gaining experience in trauma-informed and human-centered approaches within the criminal justice system. Passionate about understanding and addressing social inequalities, she is focusing her work on trauma-informed care, with a special emphasis on holistic health.