

Mind-Body Practices: An On-the-Go Handout for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs

This short handout offers a couple mind-body practices that can be used when we experience distress, overwhelm, and/or trauma responses. We can use these practices ourselves, or share them one-on-one and in groups. We use the word mind-body to mean practices that engage our bodies, as well as our thoughts and language. We are working on a longer guide that will be released in 2016.

Mind-body practices are helpful because they can directly address the overwhelm or dysregulation in our bodies and nervous systems, especially when we don't have words to express what we are experiencing or talking about it increases our agitation or distress. The practices included here are free, can often be used on-the-go without others noticing, and can be used in situations when other resources may not be available.

Pause to Reflect

- What helps me get back on track after I am upset? When I am afraid? When I am angry? When I feel numb or disconnected?
- Am I interested in learning new practices?
- What would I want try myself?

Breathing Exercises

- We can start by noticing our breath, right now, without judgment.
 - What is it like? Is it shallow? Are we holding our breath? Is it deep? Easy? Do we breathe through our mouth, our nose?
- Track breathing for five full breaths.
 - You can count (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) or put words to it (inhale/exhale; in/out) or intentions (breathe in calm/breathe out fear).

Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques helping us "get back" – into the room, back into our bodies, or back into the present moment. Possible practices:

- Room scan: This can help to reconnect to the present. Ask yourself or the person you are with to describe what is around the room or space, engaging any of the senses. What do you see, hear, and/or smell?
- Using a stone or object: Hold a stone or other object in your hand. What do you notice about its weight, temperature, texture, edges?

Fingerhold Practice for Managing Emotions and Stress


Each or several fingers can be held by the other hand, while breathing. As this can be done without others noticing, it can be a good on-the-go technique.

For a longer handout with instructions on using the fingerhold practice, see NCDVTMH's handout: <http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Fingerhold-Practice-for-Managing-Emotions-Stress-Final.pdf>

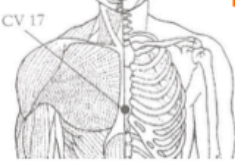
Self-Acupressure

Below are two self-acupressure points that can be used for crisis or overwhelm.

Self-Acupressure



- **Center of the Person:** between your upper lip and nose, on the center midline. Can be good for relieving dizziness, overwhelm
- **Sea of Tranquility:** center of sternum, 4 finger widths up from base. Can be good for easing anxiety, panic, can help breathing



Firm but comfortable pressure with the tips of your fingers, breathing for 1-3 minutes, or as comfortable.

56

Affirmations

Affirmations are written or spoken words that help you to feel connected to yourself, others, to a sense of purpose or belonging. Some people write, draw, or create small cards with words or quotes. They can be directions "take deep breaths" or reminders "I am held by my community" or "I am strong" or anything else that helps. You can also create affirmation cards for others.

