

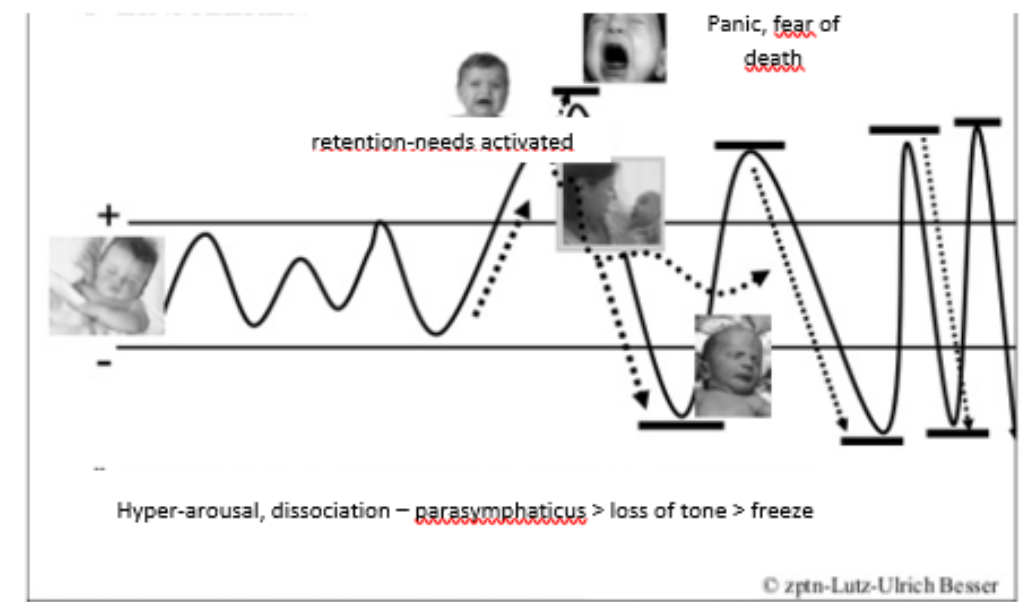
Dealing with stress and trauma. First aid, empowerment and healing in refugee accompaniment

Mytilene/Lesvos 20-21 of December 2019

1. Background information

Stress – tolerance- window

Hyper-arousal > sympathetic



stress

normal reaction to an un-normal event (critical incident)

+ eustress (positive)

- distress (negative)

Immediate effects

Heartbeat goes up, breathing is faster, blood pressure is rising, adrenaline level is rising, liver delivers glucose (no hunger), sweating hands

Limbic system takes over (area in the brain responsible for emotional life and the formation of memories):

- primitive survival system,
- five times more capacity for detecting threats than to noticing potential rewards,
- ready to react to threats with fight, flight or freeze response
- still on guard (more focusing on social aspects of human survival than worrying about predators)
- always monitoring for threats and rewards

Opportunities to reduce immediate threat reactions (stress-management):

- awareness (own reactions, adrenaline and stress chemicals, thoughts, emotions, body signals “I am reacting to XYZ”)
- breathe (lower level of stress chemicals, makes it possible to observe events nonjudgmentally and more objective)
- choose (we can have a choice about how to respond – from the PFC, prefrontal cortex)

Trauma: critical incidents cause unusual strong emotional reactions together with feelings of guilt, powerlessness, helplessness, identification with victims, massive personal concern, high intensity. They are stored in our emotional memory, the same way like stress (adrenaline, limbic system), but longer lasting

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Acute Traumatic stress occurs soon after the incident

- “flashbacks” (re-experience of the event)
- Amnesia: memory loss, sometimes with orientation disorders and confusion
- sleep disturbance
- poor concentration
- withdrawal and absence (in social situations)
- irritability and hypersensitivity to irritation
- depression
- changing in interactions with others
- anxiety

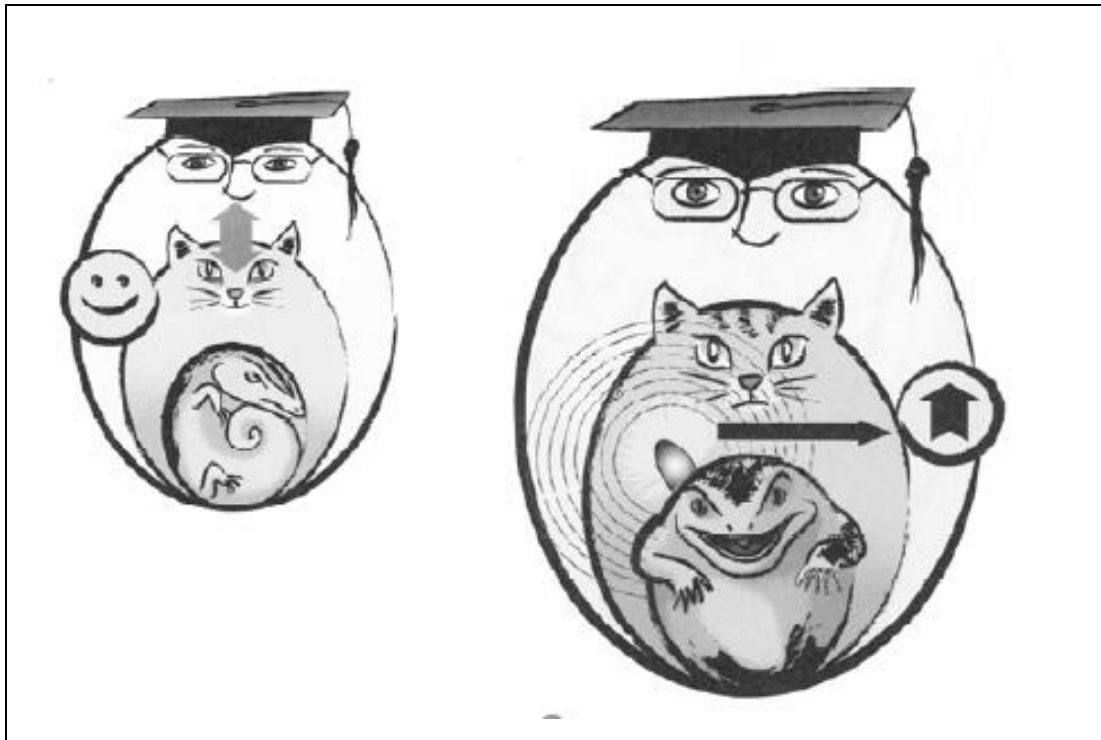
What is helpful?

- Support from others
- Conversations
- Accepting emotions
- stress-management
- accepting reactions as normal

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- if significant stress symptoms last longer than one month
- emotional memory is chronically active and is activated by triggers

Then seek for professional support!!!



Suffering traumatic stress disorder, what happens:

The "cat-brain" switches, to emergency supply: It is the reptile part of our brain

Reaction: flee, fight or freeze.

Professor's brain is out of order and not reachable

Cat's brain keeps the emergency-supply working

It does not make any sense to try to get in contact with the reptiles mind if the cause of danger is still there. Professor's brain is set out of order!

In professor's brain will stay only very fragmented memories but no coherent story at all. In worse cases of complex ptbs may appear a separated self as if two different person would be acting in the same person.

Different types of trauma disorders

- Sequential trauma
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Complex post traumatic stress disorder
- secondary traumatisation
- retraumatisation

The following definitions according to the ICD-10 diagnostic key are used:

ICD-10 F43.0 Acute stress reaction: "Temporary (hours to several days lasting), usually a few minutes after an incriminating event occurring mental disorder in a previously mentally unobtrusive person."

ICD-10 F43.1 Posttraumatic stress disorder: "Delayed response (latency from weeks to 6 months) to an extraordinary threat or disaster, which usually causes a mental impairment in every human being."

Latency is symptom-free time.
main symptoms:

- Impending, **incriminating thoughts** and memories to the trauma (intrusions) or
- **memory gaps** (pictures, nightmares, flashbacks, partial amnesia)
- **overexcitation symptoms** (sleeping disorders, frightiness, increased irritability)
- affective intolerance, Difficulty concentrating)
- **avoidance behavior** (avoidance of trauma – associated stimuli)
- **emotional numbness** (numbing, general retreat, Loss of interest, inner indifference).

ICD-10 F43.2 Adapting disorder: "Subjective suffering and emotional impairment with restriction of social functions and performance after crucial changes in life (e.g., emigration) or incriminating events (e.g., death, separation)." The disorder usually starts within one month after the onset event and rarely lasts longer than 6 months.

Secondary traumatization

- Take care and share with the medics if You suffered already a trauma
- If you after some stressful hours of rescue have a kind of fragmented memory of what was going on or other symptoms of secondary traumatization you should accept, that this is normal. Contact the medics!
- If the whole crew was involved the medics should offer individuals talks about your personal situation. If you don't want to share you can even tell about something else or the next days in the meeting.
- Being back home and if you can't get rid of heavy memories, imaginations of suffering or of dead people even after some weeks or up to six months you might be in a situation of secondary traumatization and then you need help.
- Don't think badly about your reptile-brain. You need it for your security! But as our mind gives priority for bad experiences it gets stuck in them.
- The reptile-brain and cat-brain you also need to pull twenty people out of the water. Please, don't think badly about it. It is you and need to be handled.

Secondary trauma

Secondary Traumatization (ST) describes the phenomenon of transmission of posttraumatic stress symptoms to professional helpers working with children and adolescents traumatized by violence, neglect, war in the country of origin, and loss of caregivers. "This is a transmitted traumatization which comes about, even though the therapist is not confronted with the traumatic event itself." (Daniels 2007)

Helpers are empathic witnesses of the traumatized trauma of the people: what the affected people tell and re-enact is as clear as their own imagination and experience of the specialists (cf Haak 2009).

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Symptoms spread throughout the life of the affected person
(See Brauchle et al., 2000)

1. Emotional Reactions

- Depressions
- Pathological "grief"
- inner tension and depression
- Anger and general irritability
- Fear and oppression

2. Cognitive Reactions

- Difficulty concentrating
- Change of internal values and settings
- Intrusions (unexpected images from traumatic experiences told by the involved people, which trigger violent emotional reactions)
- avoidance behavior

3. Physical Reactions

- Common colds
- Sleep disorders
- Loss of appetite
- a reduced sex life
- fatigue
- Headache and abdominal pain
- Neck and back discomfort
- Skin irritation and eruptions
- Increased frequency of accidents

4. Harmful coping strategies

- active health-damaging behavior (excessive use of addiction and tranquilizers, such as alcohol, cigarettes or drugs)
- Cover fatigue with caffeine and nicotine

5. Social impact

- Conflicts in partnership
- cynicism
- Distancing and social retreat
- increased awareness of injustice and violence
- An impression that the family or friends care about one or not at all
- Disputes at home after incriminating experiences (especially in women)
- Denials of symptoms

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6. Impairment of mental health

Persons with a high degree of mental health are particularly subject to three illusionary beliefs:

- the overestimation of one's abilities and one's own positive qualities
- the degree of control over the environment
- an overly optimistic assessment of one's own future

Self care: Prevention of secondary traumatization

Many practical strategies for the prevention of secondary traumatising come from the disaster relief sector. Supporting emergency helpers after stressful missions is a must and has been the standard there for years.

Primary prevention includes the prevention of stress and its consequences or the reduction of their intensity as well as the strengthening of the resistance of socially engaged persons through knowledge, experience and social networks (cf. Brauchle et al. 2000):

Stress can be reduced through further training and exercises. It is particularly important to understand trauma dynamics and their effects and to know how to stabilise traumatised people and stop trauma stories.

An important aspect for coping with traumatic experiences is the feeling of to have control over your own actions ("mastery"). This includes, for example, experienced Procedures such as structured procedures and checklists, the professional Security.

Among professional helpers, more security is also achieved by tried and tested teams.

The knowledge about the abilities of the colleagues and the trust in their competences. help to reduce stress and to improve psychological hygiene and self-care to be able to support each other.

Strategies in dealing with secondary traumatising Strikingly, one can encourage involved people to do what they do to their traumatized clients!

One of the tried and tested strategies is the so-called ABC of protection against secondary traumatising.

In detail, this means paying attention to oneself, striving for balance between different areas of life and cultivating the connection between oneself and the world (cf. Haak 2009):

A for mindfulness

Mindfulness means paying attention to oneself, one's own needs, limits and resources in order to live a healthy life.

Social workers and therapists are advised to focus about half of their attention on themselves in order not to get "involved" and to maintain their own emotional balance. It is important to know and understand yourself well. To be clear in contact with clients, to be able to distinguish between transference and counter-transference, your own therapy seems indispensable.

B like balance

Balance between work, leisure and rest, balance between the variety of activities in professional and personal life are the most important "power station".

C like connection

In social work it is important to stay in touch with oneself and other people, nature, life (also spiritually). This solidarity is the counterpart to the manifold burdens and restrictions in private life that a social commitment often entails. to the world. The connection to one's own self allows to perceive personal needs and to realize them.

The Buddy System

This fact sheet will help you understand the buddy system and how to use it.

What is the Buddy System?

The buddy system is an effective method by which a deployed staff member shares in the responsibility for his or her partner's safety and well-being. This type of active support is important in any deployment. Buddies are responsible for looking after each other in two main areas:

- Personal safety
- Resilience

Putting the Buddy System into Action

Deploy in 2-person teams (minimum).

- Get to know your buddy's background, prior experience, and job role (especially if different from your own).
- Stay close to your buddy and communicate regularly, especially when traveling in-country.

Look out for hazardous conditions, safety demands, and stressors.

- Identify your buddy's strengths and weaknesses.
- Monitor your buddy for stress (including environmental stressors).
- Check on your buddy's workload and encourage breaks when needed.
- Observe each other putting on and taking off personal protective equipment.

Manage stress to prevent burnout

- Communicate basic needs and limits to leadership – make your buddy feel “safe” to speak up.
- Encourage routine sleep, exercise, eating.
- Acknowledge tough situations and recognize accomplishments, even small ones.
- Identify opportunities to have stress relief.
- Acknowledge burnout and discuss its impact.
- Talk with one another about your experiences.

Do

- Be a listener to your buddy.
- Actively communicate with your buddy to understand his/her perspective.
- Reach out to a buddy who may be struggling.
- Offer help with practical needs or finding services.
- Get help if you have reason to believe your buddy may be a threat to themselves or to others.

Do Not

- Offer clinical diagnosis or treatment.
- Take on the role of a therapist.
- Pass judgment on people or decisions.
- Pry or demand that a buddy discuss problems.

Remember

Not everyone reacts to stress in the same way. As a buddy, be sensitive to differences in culture and perspective. Your buddy may not even be aware of how they are handling the stress of deployment. You can help by identifying and advising on immediate needs, discussing an action plan, and acting to address their needs. If you are unsure what to do or need more help, please speak with your team leader or supervisor.

First aid

Eleven tips for volunteers in contact with refugees

1. **Trust the strength** of your counterpart. Even if the women have had traumatic experiences: Most of them will be able to overcome the consequences of what they have experienced on their own.
2. Support your counterpart in **perceiving this strength**. Ask the woman what she has experienced and has done good in the past. Ask for positive memories, goals and dreams. Also when the woman is now confronted with feelings of helplessness, she has many competences.
3. **Trust your gut feeling**, which you also use when dealing with other people. Your natural empathy is your compass.
4. **Ask** as soon as you are unsure whether your behavior is appropriate. If not with words, then with a questioning look or a small sketch.
5. An important clue for helping men: do not seek **physical contact**! For women: Offer body contact, for example a touch on the arm, only in a very reserved way. Pay attention to signals from your counterpart such as gestures in order to assess whether the touch is desired.
- 6 Explain **your role within the helper system** and the possibilities and limits of support, for example when and how you can be reached and who represents you.
7. Don't ask curiously about **past experiences** like escape or war. If the woman signals that she wants to tell a story, listen carefully, but keep to the limits (see 8).
8. Look for a way to **redirect the conversation** if you or your counterpart show reactions such as sweating, trembling, difficulty breathing, numbness, or limited perception of time; and environment. Offer a glass of water, ask the woman if she would like fresh air and tell her how strong it is that she survived such hard things.
9. Be **patient**. Stress and trauma reactions can result in lack of concentration. Do not become angry if your explanations or remarks have not been implemented or forgotten.
10. **Protect the woman's privacy** from (male) family members and do not ask questions, who could violate their dignity as women or touch feelings of shame.
11. Do not overtax yourself. Pay attention to the **signals of your body**, take a break from helping and you provide variety in your life - because your help is needed in the long run.

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Source: medica mondiale

Care for acutely traumatised people

Safety and security

1. *Communicate security, remove from danger zone (physical as well as psychological)*

- *Getting away from the place of danger/ perpetrator*
- *"It's over" is the most important sentence*
- *Caution with body contact, but if possible convey warmth through gentle touch, blanket, serving a drink, a cigarette...*
- *Transparency: to communicate information about all steps of the rescue team, but also about the rest of the action.*
- *Individually consider different security aspects, e.g. door open/closed, other person with/without...*

Message and goal: "Danger is over" signals an end to the need to produce stress hormones.

2. *Information transfer / recognition of what has happened*

- *Pay attention to reactions, do not overload: relaxation and calming have priority.*
- *provide information about the course of events, injuries and procedures, even for seemingly unresponsive patients. The own fantasies are often worse than the information about existing injuries.*
- *When trembling or shaking, consider this as a desired reaction of the body that facilitates the mobilization of the traumatized, but get rid of blocked energy*
- *you describe what happened, you don't taboo what happened. They help to integrate the incomprehensible.*

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Message and goal: orientation and sense of security; recognition of what has happened encourages value creation.

3. *Orientation in space and time*

- *"You are safe" and "It is over" Only if this is the case, otherwise a further, even more serious loss of trust threatens! These are important hints for the client, who is still stuck inside in the traumatic situation.*
- *Ask questions about before and after, about harmless, non-traumatic situations; they promote orientation in the here and now.*

Message and goal: Orientation and classification

4. *Supporting the capacity to act*

- *If the person shows the impulse to tackle structuring actions (making calls, compiling paperwork, informing relatives, etc.), support them empathetically and calmly.*

- *If possible, steer undirected activity back to relaxation by emphasizing the need for calm, and point out that you will support subsequent action. But don't do it now under any circumstances, accompany if necessary, the person and pace (pacing) them back to relaxation.*

Message and goal: Increase the feeling of control, overcome helplessness,

To be there

5. Help to find language

- *let somebody talk*
- *Let them tell you about what happened, but don't force them!*
- *Signal readiness that you are listening*

Message and goal: Speaking promotes integration, but only if someone wants to speak for themselves; people process differently! If narration is forced, there is a danger of renewed traumatising.

6. Showing feelings

- *If the person concerned shows feelings, reacts strongly, allow it, support it as an important integrating experience, stay there.*
- *When the person is shaking, trembling, sobbing, support the process by empathetically explaining that the feelings expressed are*
 - *appropriate*
 - *are helpful for a successful process*

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Message and goal: You support the self-acceptance, the grieving process, the trust in the appropriateness of your own behavior and the physiological integration of the excess energies.

7. Unload

- *"Your experience is normal, it's almost the same for everyone who experiences something so bad."*
- *"You did everything you could. Nobody could have done it differently."*
- *"You survived."*

Message and goal: feelings of guilt and shame are individual feelings from experience; they are defused by comparison with others, generalized as experiences.

8. Allow avoidance behavior or defense

- *Stand by, don't force yourself on somebody.*
- *Show your understanding and tolerance for rejection and signal that you are there when you need to be.*
- *But also be ready to inform them about your departure.*

Message and goal: Loss of control is a central experience in trauma, through your behavior you give control back to the other. He can decide for himself when he will

come back to you; keeping you available also over a longer period of time (and information in the event of changes in the situation) creates a basis for trust

9. Note dissociations

- Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal signals that tell you that your counterpart is "not here".
- Orient your counterpart by changing modalities and haptic/acoustic/visual orientation into the here and now.
- Be determined, but not overly violent, and avoid horrific situations.

Message and goal: Dissociations are remnants of the traumatic situation, but also attempts to integrate them. Emphasize the normality and increasing normalization of the processes. Also treat "absentees" as if they were here; some of them are present, otherwise they would not have survived.

Reduce stress

Stress hormones are remnants from the traumatic experience, a processing can be stimulated by targeted movement and relaxation procedures.

10. Movement is helpful

- Make sure that the person is (increasingly) oriented in moving in the here and now; help by addressing, inviting to other movements.
- Shivering and involuntary body twitches are usually (socially) undesirable and are therefore quickly suppressed; promote this automatic discharge of accumulated energy!
- Concentrate on the breath, if this is still too much for the affected person, pay attention even to permeable free breathing.

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Message and goal: Movement helps with integration in the here and now, if it does not happen fully automatically and without conscious attention. The breath is a good mediator between the energy of the body and the anchoring in the present.

Source: www.Institut-berlin.de (13.12.2015)

Dissociation stop interventions

Aim:

Interruption of situation-related dissociations to increase self-control experience (pattern interruption) and establishment of a working contact

Options:

- Eye contact and touch hand: "You give me your hand now!" (according to Perren-Klingler)
- Breathe!
- Specific addressing of the inner adult person
- Let the client go into movement, take a different attitude than before
- Cognitive and haptic reorientation (we are here..., feel the backrests, the wall, the floor under your feet...)
- Make body contact, if this was discussed before and only same-sex, or let rubber ring flip on the arm
- Call up previously established anchors in the room
- Interruptions of any kind: open windows, stand up, turn on music, get coffee together...
- pose absurd tasks in context, such as puzzles, arithmetical tasks, the question of a day-to-day political event.
- Film stop (emergency screen technology) ; must be established in advance
- safe technology
- Arm-shoulder-drawing technique (Michaela Huber)
- Standing with bent knees on the wall

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Procedure:

- In case of emergency, introduce the technique according to the condition. Pacing* is often a good start, sometimes also setting a different stimulus necessary.
- All topics, tasks etc. should have pleasant, harmless contents.
- It's about a reorientation, so: pattern interruption!
- Make arrangements beforehand as far as possible: "If you slip into one of the states of which you have just spoken, but also if I fear that this will happen and we could then no longer have working contact, I will..., I would like to..., may I then...?"

 *In pacing, the person who wants to lead consciously adapts his or her behaviour to that of the persons to be led. In this way he tries to win the trust of the people. This could be done (according to NLP) on the following levels:

Body language: Adjusting posture, gestures and breathing rate.

Facial expression: Adjustment of facial expressions.

Voice: Adjustment of vocal pitch, volume and speaking speed.

Language: Use of similar words.

Source: www.institut-berlin.de

Protective cover/jacket/room

Aim

Establishment of a protective area around one's own person, which enables demarcation and well-being and concentrates resources. It should also be available and transportable at all times.

Note

- Outward orientation: with threatening dissociation always outward and in the here and now orientation!
- Suggest possibilities of association (for the extension of the shelter), but do not make any decisions!
- Again and again stress that it should be about pleasant impressions, that the components are protective, that the ideas are helpful etc... No negative formulations (the traumatized psyche is much faster with finding unpleasant associations than with pleasant ones).
- Just do for yourself what you have tried and what makes sense to you.

Procedure

- First establish a good stand and orientation in the room
- Let the space around the person be determined: How much space does she need, let her feel it.
- Construct a wall, wall, glass screen... Ensure completeness and flexible solutions for the spaces between...
- Think carefully about how the entrances, openings, etc. should look; plan for all eventualities (flexible design)
- Fill the interior with color, sound, resources (cuddly toys, dogs...), smells, wind, tastes... and a set that gives strength.
- Practice packing and unpacking with your hands and let a small gesture symbolize unpacking be shown to you.
- And then let them practice and enjoy!

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An example: shelter to take away

Stand firmly on the floor, feel your feet? Where exactly do they touch the ground? Move them back and forth, make sure they stand well. If you can feel your roots or have the feeling good, as you want to be able to stand in an appropriate position, then take a look into the room: How much space do you need around you for yourself? Can you palpate it with your hands, take your arms with you, stretch out around you and make plenty of room for yourself? Feel the walls of your room: in front of you, behind you, on the sides, is the top closed or a hole for air and sun?

What material could the wall of your shelter be made of, imagine how it should look so that you feel best protected: stone? Thick bulletproof glass? Made of rubber? A soap bubble? Are there holes in it or windows that you can open or close at will? Roller shutters perhaps? Or is it simply a transparent skin that you can adjust so that something only penetrates from the outside if you want it to? Remember, it is your

shelter, a wish perhaps, but which is just now coming true, becomes palpable. And let your hands continue to feel this space, to swing through it, to develop...

There is a lot of space, a lot of space in between now around you... If you could fill it with a colour, your favourite colour, which protects you, what would that be? Blue, yellow, red, green or quite different? Very bright or better quite intense? Unicoloured or colourful, perhaps even striped, with dots or stars?

And if this beautiful colour washes around you, what sound would you like to have with you for support? A favourite song, a classical piece, the sound of a stream, birdsong? Do you hear that? Let us take you with us...

When you feel your feet like this and your arms feel the space around you, in your colour, your sound, with your protective wall around you... Which sentence fits to this pleasant feeling of being with you, protected and safe in the now: "I am strong", "It is good that I am here", "I take my space"... Find your very own sentence or simply let it come into being, listen to what's coming... "I am!"

With your room, your wall, your colour, your sound, your sentence, there is a smell of spring meadow, of flowers, of fresh wind?

Do you feel the wind on your skin or is it the sun? Is it a warm feeling of security or the refreshing experience of clear water?

With what sentence can you now confront the world, the other people? "I am curious about you", "I am strong enough to endure you", "I go my way and all others yours"?

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Feel once again all the different impressions: the room, the wall in its condition, your colour, your sound, your pleasant smell and your pleasant feeling, grasp your protection with both hands around you... And when you have everything with you, bring your hands together, very carefully, they hold a precious treasure.

Your shelter is in your hands and you can easily unfold it again, put it into the room with your hands, with a big gesture or a small one that only you notice... Try it, take your protection with you everywhere, unpack it whenever you want...

See listen feel 5-4-3-2-1 (nach Yvonne Dolan)

Aim: Way out of "eternal turning in the head", beginning panic - arriving here and now and becoming calm, lying down to fall asleep

What it takes: Quite an exercise without any prerequisites, a few minutes would be good, also the possibility not to have to talk
For the beginning a quarter of an hour quiet sitting down, retreat not necessary

Procedure: Let your eyes look in one direction, let them rest on a point a little above your eye level. Perceive your breath and let it determine the rhythm

Name (quietly for yourself) 5 things or impressions you **see** right now; pay attention to how far your field of vision is, even if you let your eyes look relaxed forward. Take your time: e.g. I see a leaf moving... I see the hands of a watch... I see my nose...

Then name 5 sounds or acoustic impressions you just **hear**: I hear the buzzing of the heating... I hear a car in the background... I hear a rustling in the room... I hear my heartbeat...

Now name 5 body sensations (not feelings!) that you **feel** right now: e.g. I feel my bottom on the chair... my right foot on the floor... I feel a tingling sensation on my nose... I feel a hole in my stomach

- Now do the same four times.
- Three times
- Then twice
- Then once (and if you like you can start again from the beginning)

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What else you need to know:

- It's okay if you miscount, but first follow the sequence
- It's perfectly all right if you ever confuse the order of events
- If there's something in between that bothers you, just name it!
- You are welcome to name the same thing several times, if that is decisive
- All this is just a sign that you're relaxing! In other words the "here and now".

Reversing the exercise as a 1-2-3-4-5-exercise:

For crisis intervention or flashbacks, some clients find the reverse order easier to apply in order to come out with perception.

Source www.trauma-institute.de

Exercises for well-being

My (inner) place of retreat

Choose a (virtual) room in which you feel comfortable and where you are undisturbed. This can be the corner of a room in your home or an entire room, a large place on the sofa or the sheltered one under the table. Take your time, to find this place, to become safe: Here it is good!

Trust your feeling: Where do you feel most comfortable today? Rather at the window or on the wall, near the door, opposite her or in the middle of the room. We often have many more possibilities to choose our place of residence well than we perceive are used to.

Set up your seat now, take your time, this is the whole exercise: that you carefully choose your place, decorate it, perhaps later a little bit of yourself wondering what landed there and what you left out there.

Design your place in a way that is pleasant for you - with blankets, pillows, a underlay for legs, cuddly toys, stones, plants or whatever you like to feel comfortable and secure right now.

Once you have set up your place, enjoy it... Track down where your body touches the surface and how it feels. How do your shoulders feel? the neck, which may be a little loose, the belly, the center, large and may be strong, the chest may be wider. Perceive how your breath flows more smoothly. What kind of noises are there in and around you, very small, familiar, the sure beat of your heart, a rumbling in your belly, the gargling of the heater, the quiet rushing traffic? How does the feeling of security feel, what does it consist of? together: Where do you feel the pleasant warmth? The gentle touch of fabric on your skin? The safe wall in your back?

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What does your place look like, what colors are there that will do you good, what shapes? Perhaps a very pleasant smell rises in your nose...

If your thoughts wander off, if you cling to other things, you could watch them: "Oh yes, there they go, always so worried" and return to the pleasant sensations.

And then you slowly return to your larger context, taking the Impressions with, perhaps smile at each other as thanks for the pleasant experience, get ready for the everyday life and leave this pleasant feeling still resonate, feel the flow of breath in your body...

And before you pack up and start working again, find yourself a symbol, something small to take with you, which you can attach to your place of retreat, reminiscent of this feeling, the respiratory flow: a little stone or a Shell, any object you took there, a shell, an old cuddly toy... Or paint it on yourself. And place it next to you, put it in your pocket, hang it in front of your desk... Should others ask, maybe you can come up with a funny story.

Resource: www.institut-berlin.de

3-Minutes- Breathing (for stress reduction)

Try to take a quiet place, try to come to rest

Invite your attention

How do you **feel** in this moment? Be in contact with yourself.

- Try to observe yourself without judging your minds or feelings, regardless of whether you feel fine or you feel loaded.

How is your **breathing**? Just watch this friendly, without judging.

1 minute: be aware what you are listening and perceive!

1 minute: be aware about the contact with your body and its environment

1 minute: concentrate on your breathing

How does your **body** feel now?

- Maybe you have pleasant feelings; maybe there are unpleasant or painful body sensations. Try to just notice this in a friendly way, do not do any judgement.

After this time for yourself – **how do like to continue your day?**

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5-4-3-2-1 (by Yvonne Dolan)

Aim: Way out of "eternal turning in the head", beginning panic - Arrive in the here and now and getting quiet, lying down to fall asleep

What it takes:

Quite presupposition-free exercise, a few minutes time would be good, too the possibility not to speak

For the first quarter of a quarter of an hour, sit down, do not need to retreat procedure:

Let your eyes look in one direction, leave them on a point, rest a little above your gaze

Take your breath and let it determine the rhythm

Call quietly for yourself 5 things or impressions you are **seeing**;

Pay attention to how far your field of vision is, even if it is just your eyes

Relaxed look forward.

Take your time: e.g. I can see leaf that moves ..., I see the hands of a clock, ... I see my nose ...

Then, rename 5 **sounds or acoustic impressions** that you are listening:

I hear the buzzing of the heater ... I hear a car in the background ... I hear a rustling in the room ... I hear my heart beat ...

Now name **5 body sensations** (not emotions!) That you just feel: e.g. I feel my butt on the chair ... my right foot on the chair Floor ... I feel a tingling sensation on my nose ... I feel a hole in my stomach...

Now make the same 4 times > Then 3 times > Then 2 times Then 1 time > ... and if you want you can start over again

What you should know:

- > It's all right if you count your time; But be prepared
- > respect the chronological order
- > It's all right if you mistake the order
- > If you are bothered by something in between, just name it!
- > You can call it several times if this is the case
- > All this is just a sign that you can relax! In other words the "here and now".

Reversing the exercise as a 1-2-3-4-5 exercise:

- > For crises or flashbacks, some people find the Reverse order easier to apply with the perception to come out.

Recovering your energy

If you feel exhausted, the following exercises are helpful:

Hands rubbing: Rub your two hands together 20 times until the palms become warm, then place the inside on your temples, or on your eyes.

Tapping: You can also tap each other. Gently tap from the head with 10 fingers, the neck, the shoulder, arms.

CAPACITAR Emergency Response Tool Kit

Patricia Mathes Cane, Ph.D., Capacitar Founder/CoDirector

The health of body, mind and emotions is continuously affected by trauma, violence, weather, diet, environment, daily news, and the challenges of life. The use of simple ancient healing skills can empower us to live with peace and wellbeing no matter what is happening around us. The following Capacitar exercises are offered to be used at times when we feel drained, scattered or depressed. These tools are for all of us, whether we are survivors of trauma, caregivers working with others or persons overwhelmed and stressed by daily life. The challenge is to build these practices into our lives and lifestyle, so they become second nature and can be readily called upon whenever we are aware of traumatic stress, energy drain, depressed feelings or loss of center. Please copy, distribute and use these with yourself and with others. More practices and theory can be found in our manuals and website www.capacitar.org.

BREATHWORK

Breath is the source of life, bringing fresh energy into the tissues and cells to nourish body, mind and the whole person. When we breathe out, accumulated stress and toxins are released. Breathing through a stressful time is an effective way to let go of the tension that accumulates in the body. A few long deep breaths at a difficult moment can completely change the way we handle a situation. Breathwork combined with images of light or nature can promote feelings of peace, calm and focus.

- **Abdominal Breathing** Sit comfortably supported and close your eyes. Breathe deeply and center yourself, letting go of all worries and thoughts. Place your hands on your abdomen, breathe in deeply through your nose and imagine the air moving down through the body into your center within your abdomen. Imagine that your abdomen fills with air as if it were a balloon. Hold your breath for a few moments and then exhale slowly through your mouth, contracting the muscles of your abdomen, letting go of all the tension in your body. Continue abdominal breathing for several minutes. If thoughts come into your mind, gently release them, returning to the image of the air moving in and out of your body.

- **Breathing in Nature** Nature is a great resource for healing and grounding. With feet on the ground, breathe in deeply imagining that your feet are long roots running into the earth. Breathe in earth energy, breathe out stress, tension and pain.

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TAI CHI ENERGY EXERCISES

The Rocking Movement



Stand with feet separated shoulder-width apart, hands at sides. Raise your heels and with palms facing upwards raise your hands to the level of your chest. Turn your palms downward and move your hands downward while you lower your heels and raise your toes in a rocking movement. Continue slowly rocking back and forth, breathing deeply. With each move drop your shoulders, relax your arms and fingers. Do the exercise smoothly and slowly. Breathe deeply and imagine that your feet are planted securely on the earth. As you raise your hands imagine that you are able to bring down into body and mind healing energy to cleanse and fill

you. This is a very beneficial movement for trauma and depression.

The Shower of Light



With left foot forward, raise your hands up over your head, then move them downward as if showering yourself with light. Feel the energy cleansing and filling your being. Repeat on the right side, with right foot forward. Breathe in the shower of light, and then exhale and let go of any negativity within you. Feel the light cleansing and renewing you. This is an excellent for persons who are depressed or dealing with past wounds of trauma.

Let Go of the Past and Open to Receive



With left foot forward, palms curved softly downward, push your hands outward in a gentle arc, letting go of all tension, negativity, and violence within you. Turn palms upward and draw them back towards the chest, breathing in peace and healing.. Repeat with right foot forward. Breathe out the pain and violence. Breathe in peace and healing.

Fly through the Air



With your left foot forward, your left hand upward, swim or fly through the air. The motion should be free and light with arms and shoulders relaxed. Repeat the movement on the right side starting with your right hand upward. Fly freely through the air letting go of all that weighs you down, feeling light, alive and free. Open your heart to all the possibilities for your life and healing. This is good to release pain in back, shoulders and head.

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FINGERHOLDS TO MANAGE EMOTIONS

The following practice is a simple way to work with emotions by holding each finger. Emotions and feelings are like waves of energy moving through the body and mind. Through each finger runs a channel or meridian of energy connected with an organ system and related emotions. With strong or overwhelming feelings, energy can become blocked or repressed, resulting in pain or congestion in the body. Holding each finger while breathing deeply can bring emotional and physical release and healing.



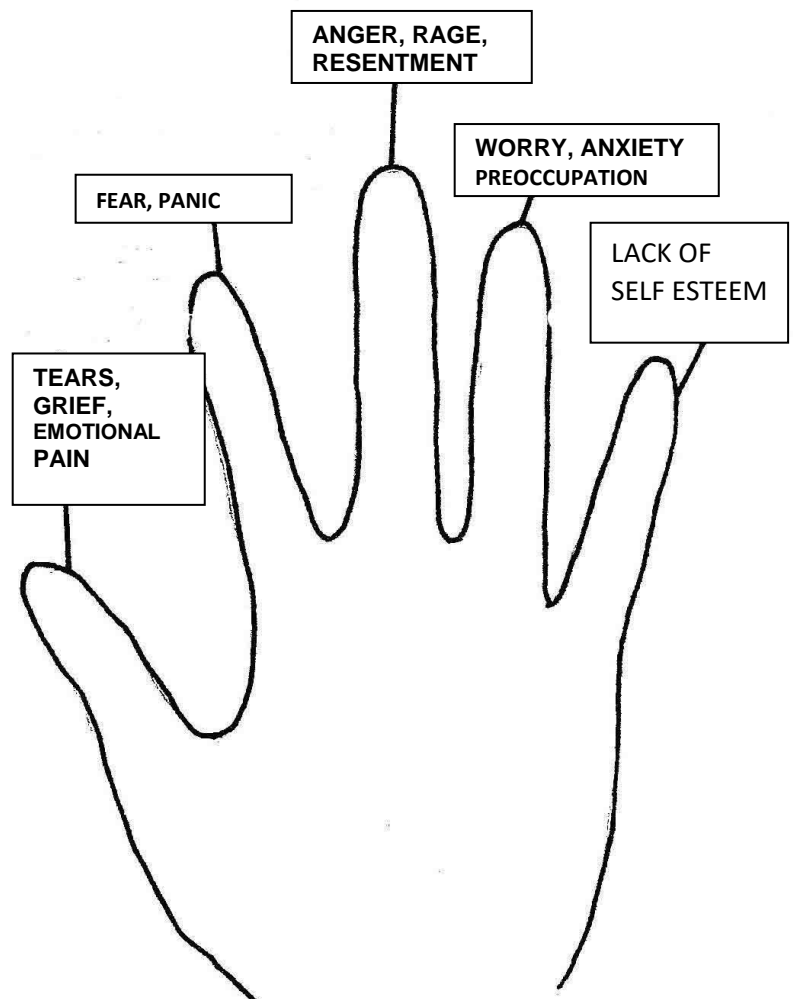
The fingerholds are a very helpful tool to use in daily life. In difficult or challenging situations when tears, anger or anxiety arise, the fingers may be held to bring peace, focus and calm so that the appropriate response or action may be taken. The

practice may also be done for relaxation with music, or used before going to sleep to release the problems of the day and to bring deep peace to body and mind. The practice may be done on oneself or on another person.

FINGERHOLD PRACTICE:

Hold each finger with the opposite hand 2-5 minutes. You can work with either hand. Breathe in deeply; recognize and acknowledge the strong or disturbing feelings or emotions you hold inside yourself. Breathe out slowly and let go. Imagine the feelings draining out your finger into the earth. Breathe in a sense of harmony, strength and healing. And breathe out slowly, releasing past feelings and problems.

Often as you hold each finger, you can feel a pulsing sensation as the energy and feelings move and become balanced. You can hold the fingers of someone else who is angry or upset. The finger holds are very helpful for young children who are crying or having a tantrum, or can be used with people who are very fearful, anxious, sick or dying.



EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE—EFT

The Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) developed by Gary Craig, Ph.D., is very useful for unblocking and healing strong emotions, fears, anxiety, emotional pain, anger, traumatic memories, phobias and addictions, as well as for alleviating body symptoms and pain, such as headaches and overall body pain. The technique is based on the theory of the energy field of body, mind and emotions, along with meridian theory of Eastern medicine. Problems, traumas, anxiety and pain can cause a block in the energy flow of the body. Tapping or pressing acupressure points connected with channels or meridians of energy can help move blocked energy in congested areas and promote the healthy flow of energy in the body and in mental and emotional fields.



(Adapted with permission from the EFT materials of Gary Flint, Ph.D. Emotional Freedom Technique.)

EFT Practice:

1. Think of an issue to work with and measure your anxiety level:

Choose to work with a problem, worry, phobia, anxiety, traumatic memory or negative self-concept. Using a scale of 0—10, measure the level of anxiety that you feel when thinking about the issue. (0 means no anxiety, 10 means extremely high level of anxiety). If it is difficult to quantify or measure with a number, use a simple scale such as: (none, small, medium, large) or (big to little) or (tall to short).

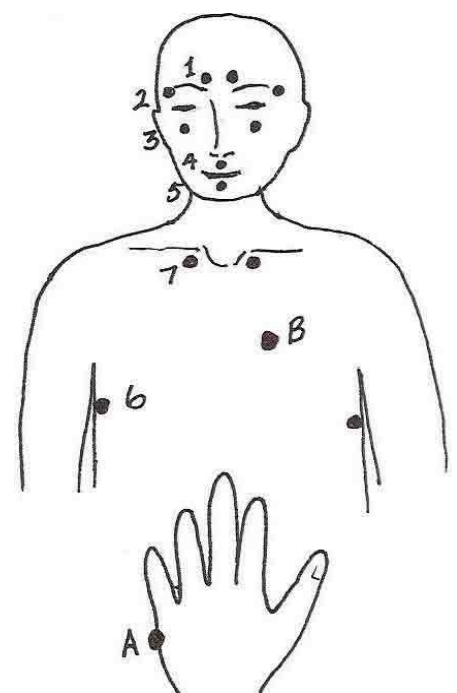


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2. Tap the sequence of Acupressure Points 7-9 times:

Breathe deeply and tap 7 to 9 times with index & middle finger:

- Points above where the eyebrows begin 1
- Points at the side of the eyebrows 2
- Points below the pupils of eyes on bone 3
- Point below the nose 4
- Point below the lips on the chin 5
- Points below armpits (about 4 inches down) 6
- Points below clavicles on sides of sternum 7



3. Tap point A at side of hand and say:

Tap the Polarity Reversal Point A at the side of the

hand while saying 3 times:

“In spite of the fact I have this problem, I’m OK, I accept myself.”

(Wording may be adapted for culture or age of person.)

4. Repeat the sequence in #2 & #3

Repeat sequence until anxiety level is down to 0-2.

5. Rub the Sore Spot B:



Rub or press the Sore Spot located on the left side of the chest about 3 inches below the left collar bone and 2-3 inches to the side of the sternum.

THE HOLDS

This practice consists of several simple energy holds that may be done on oneself or on another person for anxiety, emotional or physical pain, traumatic memories, strong emotions, such as anger or fear, insomnia and for deep relaxation. Through the energy of our hands we have the power to bring profound peace, harmony and healing to body, mind and emotions. As the practice is used on oneself or on another, hold in mind and heart a deep sense of peace, light and spaciousness. The holds can be done for several minutes each, accompanied by deep abdominal breathing to promote greater release. The touch is very light, and if someone fears touch because of pain or their history of abuse, the holds may be done off the body working in the energy field. Always ask permission when you do any practice involving touch of another person.



Halo Hold



Head Hold

One hand lightly holds the head high on the forehead; the other hand holds the base of the skull. The energy of the hands connects with parts of the brain related to memories and emotions.

Crown Hold

Thumbs of both hands together contact crown center at the top of head. Fingertips softly touch area across the forehead. Along with deep breath this hold is used in different bodywork modalities to promote emotional release.



Shoulder Hold

The hands rest lightly on the shoulders, the place in the body related to anxiety, excess baggage or the burdens of life.



Heart Hold

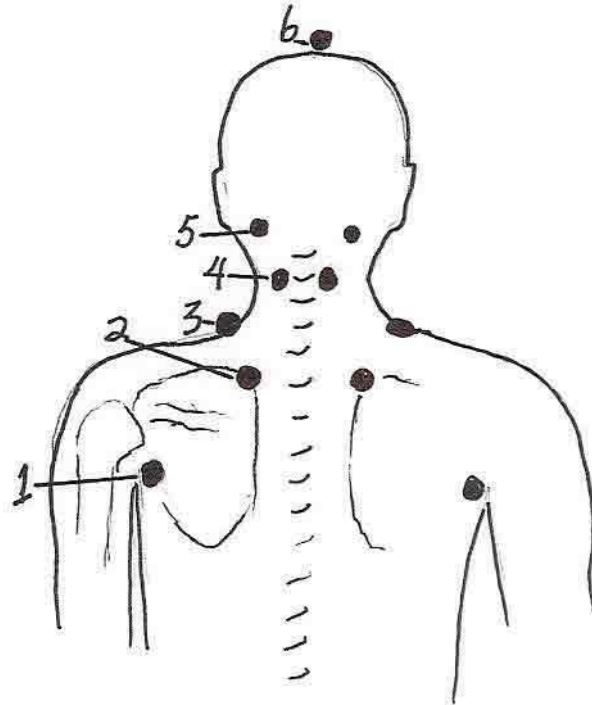
One hand rests across sternum high on chest. The other hand touches upper back behind the heart. The heart area often holds emotional pain, wounds of the past, grief and resentment. Breathe deeply and imagine the heart pain draining down into the earth. You can also do this hold several inches off the body respectful of the person's boundaries.



To finish: Lightly brush off the energy field with the hands. The tops of the feet may also be held to ground the person.

HEAD NECK SHOULDER RELEASE

This acupressure practice releases pain, tension and congestion in the upper back, shoulders, neck and head. Often with trauma and stress, energy becomes blocked in shoulders, neck and head. Most of the energy channels or meridians flow through this area, resulting in a “bottle neck” of tension in some people. This practice can easily be done on oneself, or on another person, either seated or lying comfortably face-up. This is a very good practice for anxiety at night or when one is unable to sleep. If doing this with another person, be sure that you keep clear boundaries, and if you feel their energy coming into your hands, imagine that it can flow through and down into the earth. With slightly curved fingertips, press into each of the sets of points (1-6) for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the energy pulse is clear, strong and flowing. The points will usually be very sensitive. During the practice you can imagine energy flowing upward and out the top of the head while breathing deeply. To end the practice imagine that your feet are rooted to the earth to ground you. If working on another, you can hold the tops of their feet for a few moments to ground them.



(Adapted from the work of Aminah Raheem and Iona Teegarden.)

Sets of Points:

1. About an inch outside the bottom of the shoulder joint where the arm connects to the trunk of the body.
2. At the top of the inside curve of shoulder blades about 2 inches from the center of the spine.
3. On top of the shoulders at the base of the neck in the trapezius muscle.
4. Midway up the neck in the band of muscles on either side of the spine.
5. In the hollows at the base of the skull at the sides of the head.
6. The crown center at the top of the head.

To Finish:

Hold the tops of the feet for grounding or if done on oneself, imagine that the feet are rooted in the ground. Breathe deeply and feel peace and harmony in body, mind and emotions.

ACUPRESSURE FOR PAIN AND TRAUMATIC STRESS

Depression

These acupressure points are for depression and emotional heaviness to bring a sense of peace and wellbeing.

Crown of head

Hold lightly the top of the head. There are three acupressure points in a line in this area.

Forehead between the Eyebrows

With the fingertips of one hand hold the sensitive area between the eyebrows where the nose connects with the forehead.

Base of Skull at the Sides of the Head

Interlace fingers, place your hands behind your head, and with the thumbs press the two points at left and right sides of the base of the skull in the indentation between the muscles and bones.



Anxiety, Crisis & Overwhelm



Point in the Outer Wrist

Press point in the indentation on the outside of the crease of the wrist, down from the small finger.

Point on Top of the Shoulders

With the fingertips of both hand hold the points on top of the shoulders. The arms may be crossed if this position is more comfortable.



Sore Spot

Locate a spore spot in the left side of the chest about 2-3 inches down from the collar bone and about 2 inches to the side of the sternum.



Fainting, Crisis & High Blood Pressure

This point can be used on oneself or another if a person is fainting or in crisis.

Point Beneath the Nose

With index fingertip or knuckle of the finger, press into the point directly below the nose on the upper lip.



Insomnia

Point in Forehead with Point in Center of Chest

Hold at the same time the point in the middle of the forehead and the point in the middle of the chest.



PAL DAN GUM

Pal Dan Gum is the name of a series of traditional exercises that have been used in China and Korea for thousands of years to promote health and strength, longevity, and spiritual awareness. The exercises release tension and balance the energies in the meridians of the body. With regular exercise, they cleanse and strengthen the energy pathways and internal organs, improve the circulation of blood and other body fluids, promote the mobility and elasticity of muscles and joints, improve posture and eliminate many chronic complaints. The morning hours are great for practicing Pal Dan Gum to keep your day focused and energized. The exercises are excellent as everyday practice for people with anxiety, chronic pain, depression or traumatic stress.

Support the skies



Stand shoulder-width apart and parallel with knees slightly bent, holding both sides of the arms. With the inhalation you lift both hands slowly in front of the body with upwardly opened palms over your head. Then interlace your fingers and turn your palms upwards. Stand on tiptoe and reach up, as if your hands were touching the sky and holding and supporting it. Look up when you stretch out, and hold that stretch for a few seconds. Then exhale, loosen your hands and slowly bring your arms and hands down again. Repeat the exercise 3 or 4 times.

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Tighten the bow



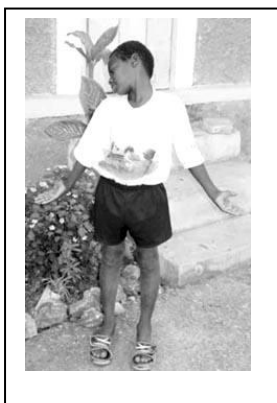
Stand your feet a little farther than shoulder-width apart, with your knees bent, as if you were sitting on a horse. Cross the forearms in front of the chest so that the left arm is in front of the right, the hands are slightly bent. Extend your left arm to the left, reach out the index finger of the left hand and imagine that you hold a bow. Tighten the bow of the bow with your right hand to the right while fully stretching the left arm. Next, take a deep breath while turning your head to the left. Look at your index finger and imagine energy flowing from your fingertip. Exhale and release the bow, and allow the arms to return to the crossed position in front of the chest with the right hand in front of the left. From the starting position repeat the exercise in the other direction and spread the bow with the other hand. Repeat the movements 3 or 4 times.

Touch heaven and earth

Stand straight (feet about shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent) and cross the wrists at the level of the solar plexus. Inhale and raise your left arm over your head and stretch your palm towards the sky. Lower your right arm behind your back and point your palm towards the ground. Inhale and stretch your arms as if you could touch heaven and earth. Exhale and return to the starting position. Repeat the exercise with the right arm upwards and repeat both sides 3 to 4 times.



Look to the rear



Stand with your knees slightly bent (feet about shoulder-width apart) and cross your arms over your chest with your left hand in front of your right. Breathe deeply as you move your arms back and to the side, at the same time turn your head to the left and look as far as you can to the left over your shoulder. The chest is arched and open, with the palms pointing towards the ground. You'll feel the tension in your arms, wrists, neck and eyes as you look back. Exhale, return to the starting position, and put your right hand in front of the left. Repeat the exercise with your head and gaze to the right, repeating both sides 3 or 4 times.

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Hull and head swing

Stand straight (feet about shoulder-width apart), knees slightly bent, hands on hips. Make sure your body weight is evenly distributed. Take a deep breath and bend your upper body to the left as you exhale, feeling the stretch on the right side. Bend slowly forward, to the right, backwards as if drawing circles with the body.

Do not overwork in this exercise! Inhale when you return to the starting position. Repeat the circle with the exhalation on the left 3 or 4 times and also on the right 3 or 4 times.

Boxing and screaming

Stand with your knees slightly bent (feet slightly apart). Keep your hands in the middle of your body with your palms up and clench your fists. Inhale. Open your eyes wide and bump your left fist straight forward, then the right one. While doing so, turn your fists so that they point down when you have your arms outstretched. As you box forward, you exhale and make all the inner tension a loud 'HO'. Turn right and repeat the exercise, then left. Repeat the exercises three more times in all three directions.



Roar like a lion




Finish the exercises with a lion roar. Stretch your arms sideways, stretch your fingers as if they were claws. Pull your arms forward, lean forward and yell frighteningly, tensing all the muscles in your face and jaw. In the movement, imagine that you can let go of all the tension and all the words that got stuck in your throat. Whine with a full voice and all the strength that sits deep within you

Switching


SWITCHING

The following exercise, adapted from the work of Brain Gym, is very effective in helping a person to connect with their center and release strong emotions.


- Sit comfortably and breathe deeply.
- Cross your left ankle over your right ankle.
- Extend your hands forward and turn your hands over so that the thumbs are directed toward the ground.



- Cross your right hand over the left hand and interlace your fingers.
- With interlaced fingers touch the center of the sternum.
- Close your eyes, breathe deeply and relax your entire body. Imagine that you are able to drop down deeply into the center of your being.
(You can imagine a center beneath your navel in the middle of your abdomen. For the people of China this center is called the Dantien. For the people of India this center is the Hara.)
- Relax your tongue in the roof of your mouth with the tip of the tongue touching behind the upper front teeth.



- Breathe deeply and let go of all thought. Rest in stillness and deep peace for several minutes.
- After several minutes relax your hands into your lap. Breathe and slowly open your eyes.
- Stretch your hands and arms and gently tap your head to stimulate your brain and energy.



Switching is a very beneficial exercise to calm and center oneself; to use before meditation for centering; to lighten depression and anxiety; and to focus the mind and spirit. When working with individuals or groups, the practice helps to calm and settle a person before therapy; or helps to focus refugees who are having flashbacks or strong memories and emotions. With children it can be adapted as a game.

TRAUMA AND THE INSTINCT TO HEAL

There are many new methods being developed to treat depression, anxiety and traumatic stress. Medical professionals studying the impact of trauma on the body, now recognize that the human brain is composed of a "cognitive" brain responsible for language and abstract thinking, and a "limbic or emotional" brain responsible for emotions and the instinctual control of behavior. The emotional brain controls much of the body's physiology, autonomic responses and psychological wellbeing. Cognitive psychotherapy and medication are the usual methods used for stabilizing and treating traumatized persons, but in many cases this approach is not enough, nor is it appropriate in many cultures. In his book *The Instinct to Heal*, psychiatrist David Servan-Schreiber, M.D. (2004), says that "emotional disorders result from dysfunctions in the emotional brain. . . The primary task of treatment is to 'reprogram' the emotional brain so that it adapts to the present instead of continuing to react to past experiences... It is generally more effective to use methods that act via the body and directly influence the emotional brain rather than use approaches that depend entirely on language and reason, to which the emotional brain is not receptive. The emotional brain contains natural mechanisms for self-healing: 'an instinct to heal'." This instinct to heal is the natural ability to find balance and wellbeing in body, mind and emotions.

Capacitar: A Popular Education Approach to Trauma Healing

In working with the traumatized, Capacitar's methods involve awakening and empowering this "instinct to heal". Because the experience of grassroots trauma is so vast, Capacitar uses a popular education approach rather than an individual therapeutic approach, placing in people's hands simple body-based skills they can use for themselves to release stress, manage emotions and live with balance in the midst of the challenges of life.

A key to this approach is the inherent "instinct" or wisdom in the organism to return to balance and wholeness. Healing occurs through the release of undischarged energy as well as through a strengthening of the natural flow of energy. With the renewed flow of energy the person returns to a state of balance and wellbeing.

Living in Wellness

Living with wellbeing is a very different experience of health than stabilizing symptoms or curing mental or physical disease. In contrast to a scientific worldview of health that involves "fixing or curing", wellness in Eastern and indigenous models is based on wholeness and harmony in the energy or life force of body, mind and emotions. When energy is flowing freely and without obstruction through the channels and energy centers of the body, the person experiences good health, emotional balance, mental clarity, and overall wellbeing.

The practices offered in this Capacitar Emergency Tool Kit help to awaken this state of wellbeing, providing tools for the healing of past wounds and for the recuperation of inner strength and energy in the person. The practices have been used with many thousands of people in 26 countries and many different cultures. They have been found to be helpful for persons with traumatic stress, as well as for self care for those working with others. These practices are meant to be used as part of daily life to help rebalance depleted, congested or excessive energy, as well as to nourish and build core energy. Regular use of practices such as T ai Chi, acupressure, and breath work help to alleviate traumatic stress symptoms manifesting as headaches, body

pain, stomach disorders, diarrhea, insomnia, anxiety, and chronic fatigue. But it is not enough to only alleviate physical or emotional symptoms. Healing involves a deeper change in the whole system—from the person, their relationships, and their environment, down to cellular and energetic levels. The way traumatic experience is handled can be a catalyst for growth and transformation. Past wounds can be transformed into wisdom to live more fully. There is a return to balance and wholeness, the natural state of the person and the community. As individuals heal they in turn are able to reach out to their family, community and the larger world to bring health and wholeness to the human family. For other resources, manuals and CDs of practices, see our Capacitar website: www.capacitar.org.

We join with the earth and with each other
 With our ancestors and all beings of the future
 To bring new life to the land
 To recreate the human community
 To provide justice and peace
 To remember our children
 To remember who we are.
 We join together as many and diverse expressions
 Of community and empowerment,
 For the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.

You find the exercises in different languages on the website: www.capacitar.org © 2005

Trauma Tapping Technique

Think lightly about whatever bothers you, and tap firmly and rhythmically, approximately 15 times on each point shown below using two fingers, at a fairly fast rate. Take two deep breaths, relax and repeat the whole sequence on the opposite side. Take two deep breaths and relax again when done. Repeat until calm.

Visit www.SelfHelpForTrauma.com for an instruction video and to learn about the project.

Other websites: <https://peacefulheart.se>

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