

Coping Skills for Traumatic Stress

Below are five methods for coping with trauma symptoms.

01

Breathing

Becoming aware of your breath allows you to slow down, quiet your mind, and calm your body.



02

Grounding

Bringing yourself back to the present moment with sensory and cognitive techniques.



03

Body Awareness

Listening and connecting to our bodies by identifying where we are, the sensations in our body, and how our body reacts to stress.



04

Visualization

Calling on mental images in our imagination to improve the way we feel.



05

Self-Compassion

Extending ourselves kindness in how we talk and think about ourselves.



01. Breathing

4-7-8 Breathing



4-7-8 Breathing

Lay or sit with one hand on your chest and another on your belly.

Take a deep slow breath from your belly, counting to 4 as you breath in.

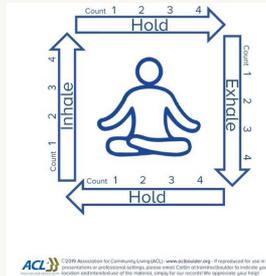
Hold your breath while mentally counting 1 to 7.

Release your breath completely and slowly, while silently counting from 1 to 8.

Repeat 3 to 7 times or until you feel calm.

NOYSE

Square Breathing



Slow Breathing

- Sit upright
- Support your arms
- Slow breath through the nose (4 secs)
- Hold breath (1-2 secs)
- Slow exhale through the mouth (4 secs)
- Wait a few seconds before doing it again

02. Grounding

Mental Grounding

- Remind yourself of who you are and where you are
- Describe the current environment in detail
- Describe a favorite place in detail
- Think in categories (i.e. Ice cream flavors)
- Count backwards (i.e. 100, 97, 94, 91....)

Physical Grounding: 5321 Method

- Name 5 things that you can see
- Name 4 things you can feel
- Name 3 things you can hear
- Name 2 things you can smell
- Name 1 thing you can taste

Mindful Walking

- Concentrate on your footsteps
- What do you see around you?
- What sounds do you hear?
- What does the climate feel like?

03. Body Awareness

Body Scan

- Goal= get to know sensations
- Paying attention to different parts, gradually, top to bottom.
- Scanning brings awareness to every part and sensation
- You can identify the points of your body causing you tension

04. Visualization

Guided Imagery

- Get in a comfortable position and begin to imagine a peaceful place or experience, such as your favorite place in nature
- Concentrate on a specific object, sound or experience in your mind such as how it feels, what it sounds like, and what it looks like
- Tip: guided imagery videos can also be found on Youtube

The Container Exercise

- Imagine a container in your mind's eye
- You can bring things into the container that are distressing
- Picture those distressing images or ideas and send them into the container and shut the door.
- Next time that distressing thought arrives, imagine sending it here.

05. Self Compassion

Change Critical Self-talk

- Notice the inner critic...what does it say?
- Soften the inner critic with compassion not self-judgment
- Try on supportive self-talk

The Self Compassion Break

- Breathe
- Tell yourself..."This is a moment of suffering."
- Tell yourself..."Others suffer like this and I'm not alone."
- Hands over heart, tell yourself... "May I be kind to myself. May I live with ease."