

Tracking the Body Checklist

POSTURE

- Upright
- Collapsed
- Shoulders back or forward
- Slumped
- Tight and stiff
- Expanded and puffy through chest
- Holds arms and legs
- Curved spine
- Legs tucked, crossed
- Expressive, lots of moving
- Pulled in, contracted

TENSIONS

- Jaw
- Shoulders
- Around the eyes
- Back of the neck
- Belly
- Back
- Arms and legs

EYES

- Direct eye contact
- Averting eye contact
- Blinking
- Blank stare
- Sleepiness
- Logging expression
- Scanning, vigilant
- Scanning, fearful
- Dilated pupils
- Curious and open
- Tears
- Sparkly
- Warm and affectionate
- Tight corners of eyes
- Fixed stare
- Inviting

FACIAL EXPRESSION

- Facial tone—relaxed
- Quick flashes of emotions across the face
- Facial expressions very emotive
- Micro-expressions (flashes of fear, anger, sadness, genuine grief that move quickly across the face)
- Squelched expressions (smiles with a grimace)
- Tilt to the chin
- Facial tone-tense
- Facial expressions frozen
- Nods
- Smiles, genuine and not
- Emotions (anger, grief, sadness, contempt, excitement, joy, distress, fear, surprise)

GESTURE

- Fidgeting hands
- Sitting on hands
- High animation/gesturing while talking
- Punctuating with gestures while storytelling
- Folding hands
- Pointing
- Self-touching
- Reaching out for touch
- Holding objects

MOVEMENT

- Active
- Still
- Restless
- Upper body movement
- Lower body movement
- Repetitive movements
- Controlled
- Spontaneous
- Jiggling of feet or legs
- Jerky, abrupt
- High energy
- Low energy

VOICE

- Loud, strong
- Weak, quiet
- Little emotion
- High emotional tone
- Low emotional tone
- Rapid
- Labored
- Staccato rhythm
- Singing, lulling quality
- Harsh quality
- Squeezed voice
- Childlike voice

SPEECH

- Slow, deliberate
- Speedy
- Brief
- Redundant
- Sparse
- Punctuating
- Patterns, tics ("you know.")
- Pauses
- Trails off in their thoughts as they are telling the story
- Rapid speech firing, no pauses in between sentences
- Thoughtful

BREATH

- Held in upper chest
- Ebb and flow throughout the front of the body
- Held in belly region
- Big inhale
- Big exhale
- Squeezed breath
- Gasping while talking

PRESENCE

- Alert
- Sleepy
- Absent
- Distracted
- Dissociated

Tracking for Trauma Cues

PURPOSE

When you track the body for information or cues, pay special attention to any signs that a trauma arousal is present. Tracking for trauma cues is the best indication that your client is getting emotionally overwhelmed, agitated, or beginning to freeze and dissociate.

Reading these cues early and accurately is important, as you have a therapeutic intervention choice to make. When the client is becoming anxious, overwhelmed, or freezing to the degree that they can no longer be present with their experience, you want to aid the client towards safety and resource.

Trauma cues are organized as hyper-arousal and hypo-arousal, indicating the spectrum of trauma arousal. Please note: These are body cues and need further assessment to make a full diagnosis. These tracking cues are in support of other trauma indicators.

Track for these cues and determine what your next therapeutic step is. Check all that apply.

HYPER-AROUSAL CUES

EYES

- Eyes widening (as if in shock)
- Eyes searching and scanning (vigilance)
- Eye contact direct and threatening
- Eye contact sustained with conflicting emotions (staring)
- Eye contact with confused look

SKIN

- Skin flushed
- Sweat pearls on forehead
- Tingling sensations on skin (reports pins and needles)
- Skin appears patchy (red blotches on neck and chest and parts of face)
- Client self-reports hot, itchy skin

EMOTIONS

- Anger flashes and irritation
- Crying easily

- Emotional affect high and quickly aroused
- Jumpy, jittery, looks nervous
- Vigilant to every sound in the room
- Vigilant to every movement in the room

BODY

- Reporting inner heat rising in the body
- Clammy hands and sweating
- Body movement erratic or abrupt (motor functioning impaired)
- Reports stomach flutters (butterflies)
- Reports taste changes (for example: metal)
- Ringing in ears (or tinnitus gets stronger)
- Various muscle tensions (shoulders, belly, arms, hands, legs)
- Body contorts into involuntary leaning postures and twists

MIND

- Memory loss/gaps
- Mind races and reports lots of details
- Attention is hyper-focused
- Reports intrusive memories or imagery

HYPO-AROUSAL CUES

EYES

- Eyes dull and withdrawn
- Eyes have a blank, fixed stare
- Eyes rolling back into head
- Eyes have a vigilance that is hidden (takes peeks, afraid to look)
- Eye contact quality is disrupted, can't sustain, or sustains for a long time

SKIN

- Skin gets pale (lifeless quality)
- Client self-reports cold skin
- Cold sweat
- Client self-reports tightness

EMOTION

- Numbness of feelings/sensations
- Flat affect
- Feelings are disconnected from body (reports cut off in body)
- Can't report sensation, jumps to meaning-making and analyzing
- Reports being "blank" or "nothing"

BODY

- Quality in body tone is held or lifeless
- Restricted body motions
- Crying, collapsed body (chest, belly)
- Overall muscle tension (deep internal muscles and tendons, holding tension)
- When asked to report experience, can't sense or feel own body
- Reports body numbness
- Feels overwhelmed or too confused to sense the body
- Speech listless, repetitive with a flat tone

MIND

- Memory loss, substantial time gaps
- Confused mind (time sequence off—in extreme fugue states)
- Attention impairment, delayed responses
- Delayed, slow responses in dialogue
- Avoids painful memories

Tracking My Body Chart

INSTRUCTIONS

Identify a body part that you want to learn more about. For example, it could be that you carry tension in your shoulders, or you notice that your belly is clenched a lot.

My body part to work with is:

Today: The way I view my body is:

After five days, summarize what you have learned. This chart provides you with a visual aid and concentrated data about what happened as you placed more awareness on your body in a sustained way.

How do you feel about this body part now?

What has changed?

What changes in your awareness made the difference?

Make a new statement about how you feel about this body part today.

Tracking My Body

client
worksheet

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Notes
How I think about my body part						
How I feel about my body part						
What triggered me today was...						
What helped was...						

Tracking My Body

client
worksheet

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Notes
I neglected my body in these ways today...						
I changed one thing today						
I looked at my body and I saw...						
When I close my eyes and sense my body I notice...						

Befriending the Body

PURPOSE

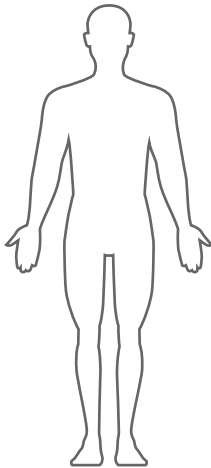
This exercise is cultivating a basic kindness to your body. Go through the steps. You can repeat any of them any time. Befriending is a process. Be patient.

INSTRUCTIONS

Part 1: Before the exercise

Notice your body right now. What are you noticing? How do you feel about your body? If I would ask you: "How friendly are you towards your body?" What would you say? How would you describe your body in three words or phrases?

Steps for befriending the body:



My body is:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

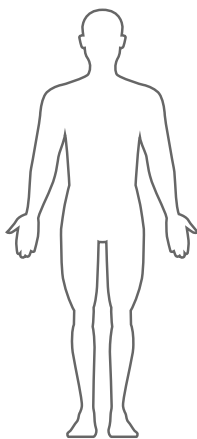
- Lay down on a comfortable surface where you feel supported.
- Relax the body as much as you can.
- Feel the gravity of the body and give into the support underneath you.
- Take three slow, sustained exhales and drop your awareness into your body and this present moment.
- Let go now and just sense and feel your body.
- Start with the back of your body: Soften the back as if you are melting into the ground.

- Continue with the front of the body and soften any tension.
- Take another three soft and sustained exhales and notice what is easier already.
- Now move your attention through the body. See what area of the body calls you. This can be a tension, an awareness, a place in the body you find challenging or a “feel-bad” area. Allow your ATTENTION to get you to the right place, not your thinking mind.
- Stay in this area of attention and apply some soft breathing, tender and gentle, like touching a beloved animal or person. Send a light, soft breath into this area of the body.
- Stay with your attention until you notice some change. This can be an opening of some kind, a change such as the tension melting.
- Then let go of the soft breath focus and see what is there now.
- NOW! Send a kind note to this area of the body. For example: “I welcome you. I love/ embrace you, too. Thank you.” Make it short and sweet.
- Notice again and see what is changing right now.
- You can now allow your attention to move to another area of the body, or repeat the steps in the same area if you are still curious about what is happening there.
- Be open, curious and allow the change to happen.

Part 2: After the exercise

Now sit up or report laying down what you feel and sense. If I asked your body right now: “How friendly are you towards your body?” What would it say? Describe your body in three words or phrases.

Reflection of change:



My body is befriending:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Take a moment and reflect on what you can change after this experience. Make one small change that you can keep this week.

I want to treat my body _____

I want to change _____

The one commitment I make to my body this week is _____

Highlight the reminder note for the week:

I am befriending my body....

Body Awareness Inventory

INSTRUCTIONS

Circle the ones that fit or add your own to describe your current experience.

pulsing	moving	pressure	prickly
calm	still	awake	yawning
burning	streaming	billowing	weak
strong	contraction	flowing	tense
twisting	rotating	restless	irritated
shivering	vibrating	trembling	quivering
pain	liquid	sleepy	pulling
hot	lengthening	cold	numb
pins and needles	relaxed	frazzled	at ease
shaking	breathing light	breathing strong	held
wringing	choking	pushed	wrapped
light	heavy	straight	crooked
loose	tight	bubbly	electric
agitated	alive	racing	blissful

Add your own descriptions in a sentence or image:

client
worksheet

Naming Your Present-Moment Experience in Your Body

PURPOSE

Develop your body awareness with this worksheet. This can be used in the session or as homework after a session.

INSTRUCTIONS

As you read through the following statements, fill in the blanks.

Right now I am feeling _____ (emotion) **and I am sensing in my body** _____, _____, _____ (at least 3 body sensations).

I am curious about my body _____ (name one sensation).

I am connecting with what is in my body _____
(name one curious aspect; what gives you pleasure) **and I am learning that my body shows me** _____ (describe a little detail).

I also notice my breath is _____ (be descriptive about what and how and where the breath is).

As I feel my overall body, I feel _____ (what is coming to as you feel and sense your body?).

I can say that now I am _____ (current-moment experience).



Identifying Body Themes

PURPOSE

If your body could talk, what would it say?

This exercise moves you systematically through the different areas of the body and shows you what answers you get. This exercise helps identify the themes of your body that you already know about, in addition to the themes that are hidden. By tuning into the body in a mindful way, you can deepen the answers and insights you will get.

INSTRUCTIONS

Do an initial pass-through by asking the question regularly in your ordinary state of mind; then switch into mindfulness: Slow down, close your eyes and ask the question again. There might be a phrase, an image, or a word that comes up.

Body Area	<i>If your body could talk, what would it say?</i> Ordinary State - What I know now.	<i>If your body could talk, what would it say?</i> Mindful State - What I know from the inside-out.
Front of Body		
Back of Body		
Head		
Neck		
Shoulders- Back of Shoulders		
Shoulders- Top of Shoulders, Joints		
Front of Chest		
Heart Area or Center		
Mid-Back		
Lower Back		

Body Area	<i>If your body could talk, what would it say?</i> Ordinary State - What I know now.	<i>If your body could talk, what would it say?</i> Mindful State - What I know from the inside-out.
Solar Plexus		
Belly		
Lower Abdomen		
Pelvis		
Upper Thighs		
Lower Legs		
Knees		
Ankles		
Feet		
Soles of Feet		
Upper Arms		
Elbows		
Forearms		
Wrists		
Hands		
Inner Palms		
Fingers		
Front of Neck		
Whole Face		
Mouth		
Around the Eyes		
Ears		
Front of Skull		
Back of Skull		
Top of the Head		

Somatic Beliefs of Self

PURPOSE

We have different “bodies.” This includes our skeletal, muscular, and fascia body, as well as our emotional, thinking and spiritual body. The way we move, hold our postures, use our muscles and faces can reflect our emotional and thinking life. There is a connection between how we feel and think and how we are; this presents in our bodies. This chart helps you to identify these beliefs and how they show up in the body.

INSTRUCTIONS

Use the body graph to chart the body areas and the beliefs.

- Start with the physical body and note what you are sensing in the body. You can write on the body graph or circle the areas you feel and sense.
- Now focus on the emotional beliefs that stem from the physical experience of the body, such as: “My tense shoulders feel like I am carrying rocks and burdens for my family.”
- Move to the thinking body. This is what you believe about the physical and emotional experience. For example, “I carry these rocks because I feel responsible for what happened to my family. It’s my fault.”
- Pick two to three core beliefs that are most familiar and govern your daily experience. Reflect on these beliefs and look for how your body and your mind are interconnected.

Thinking Body—What do you believe?

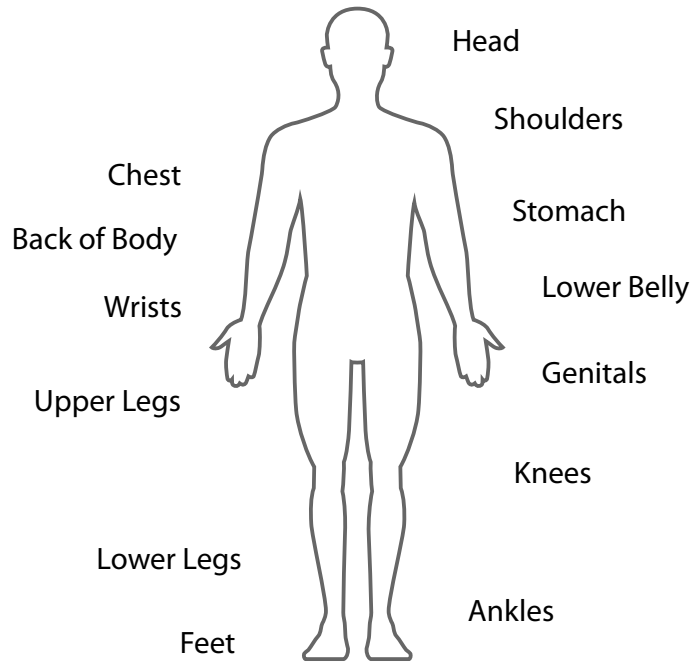
Example: I have to do it all alone. I can't do enough. It's my fault.

Emotional Body—What do you feel?

Example: I feel a heavy burden on my shoulders.

Physical Body—What do you sense and function?

Example: Shoulders are tense.



My core beliefs are:

1. _____

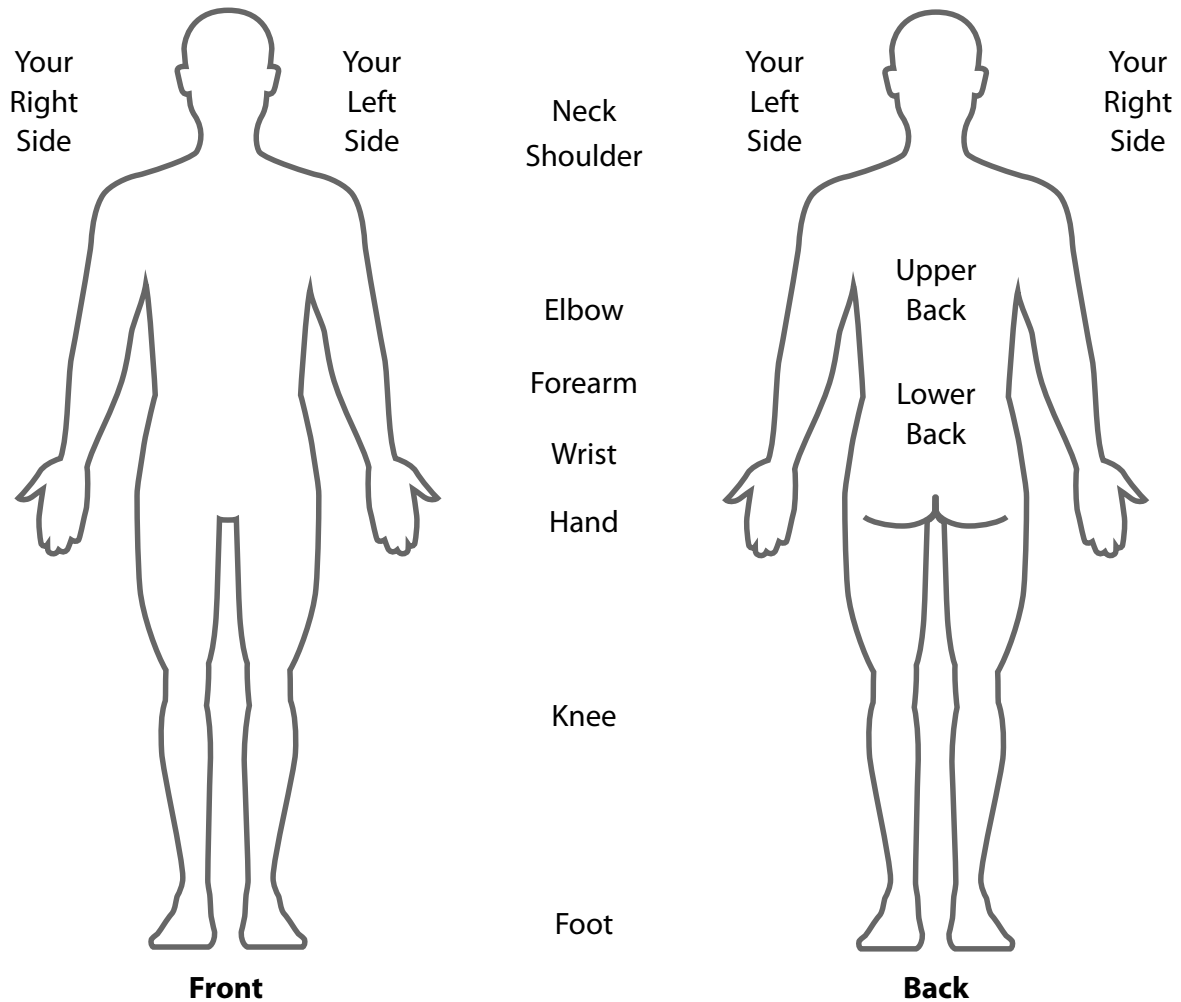
2. _____

3. _____

Mapping the Body

INSTRUCTIONS

In this quick exercise, you will color or draw on the body any areas of interest. As if you are making a drawing snapshot of your internal landscape, project the inner world in color onto the drawing. Use your imagination and creativity.



- Size/Height
- Shape (pear, apple, rounded, angular, etc.)
- Color of skin, variability
- Left/Right balance
- Up/Down balance

In a playful attitude consider:

- What part of the body calls your attention and why?
- If you had to assign a bumper sticker, what would it be?
- If there was a kind of wind, what direction would it come from?
- What kind of childhood can you imagine?
- If they were an animal, which one would they be?
- What character in a play do you see?
- What kind of child do you see?
- How do you see the balance of body/mind/spirit mirrored?
- What part of the body seems strongest?
- What parts of the body are hidden?
- What do you imagine is this body's greatest resource?
- Where does their body boundary end?

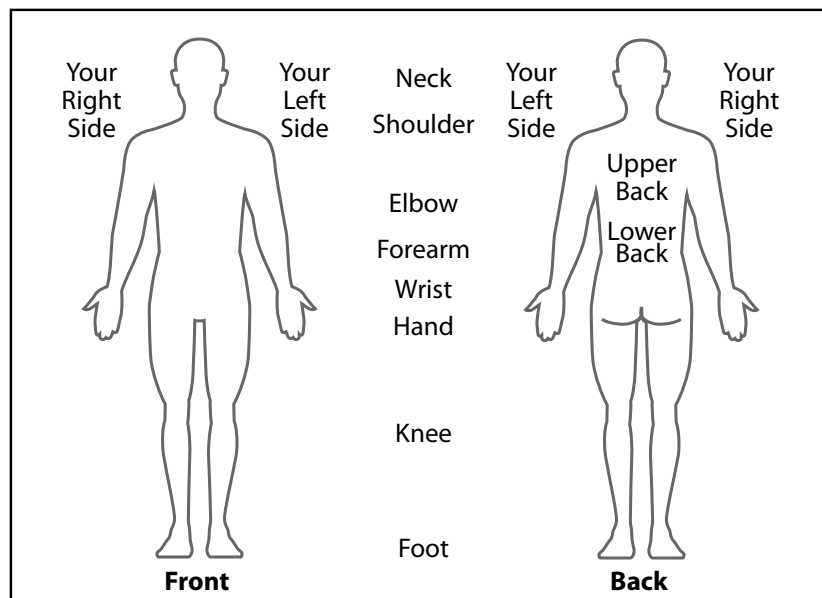
Assessment:

I see: _____

I imagine: _____

I make up a story about: _____

How does this information help you to "see" the whole person now? _____



Somagram #1

PURPOSE

Somagram is a visual feedback for the client and therapist. The client draws the sensations and feelings they're experiencing in the body on the provided Somagram. The client is asked to notice what is happening within the body and told how to relate it.

You can perform the Somagram as a daily check-in or as a one-time exercise. The Somagram is a visual aid that helps the client to see how they feel in their body. It also serves as a diagnostic tool for the therapist, to learn what area of the body needs attention.

INSTRUCTIONS

Before beginning, make sure you have markers and pens—use different colors.

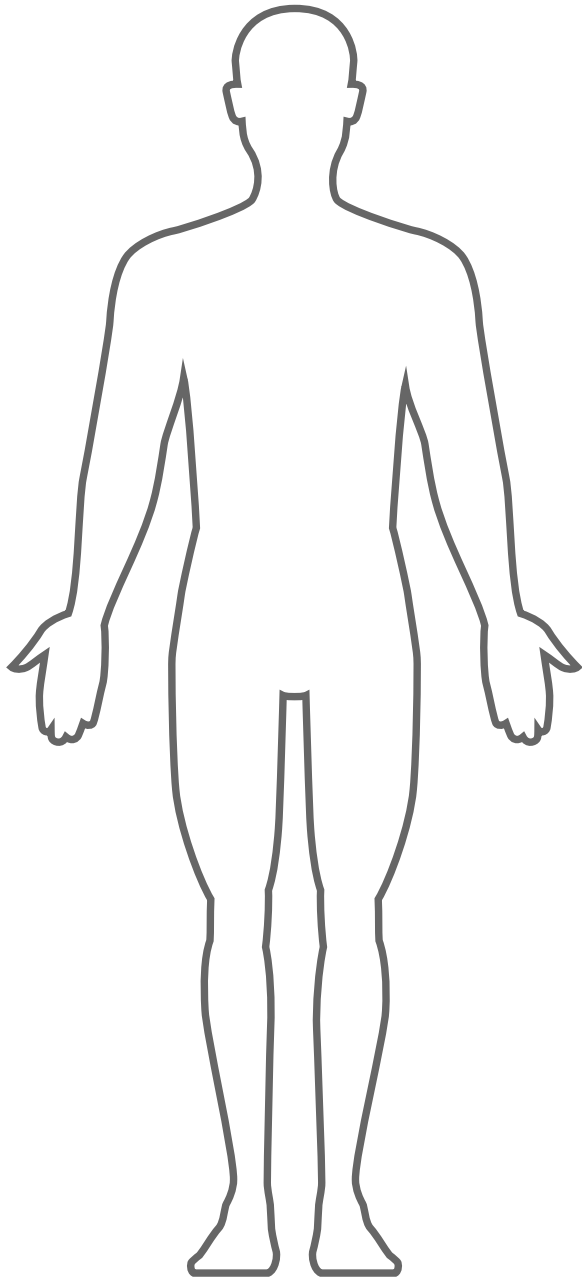
1. Have the Somagram outline in front of you; choose a few colors.
2. Take a breath and exhale, slow down your attention.
3. Tune into your body and ask: "How am I feeling in this moment?"
4. Ask yourself: "Where am I feeling my body?"
5. Instinctively (without thinking), draw the areas in your body that are responding. For example, you might shade or circle or draw any symbol or color that you like. Allow yourself to express as accurately as you can what you are experiencing.
6. When you are done, take a moment to review your drawing.
7. Write the first "title" that comes to mind.
8. Debrief with your therapist.

Note to therapist:

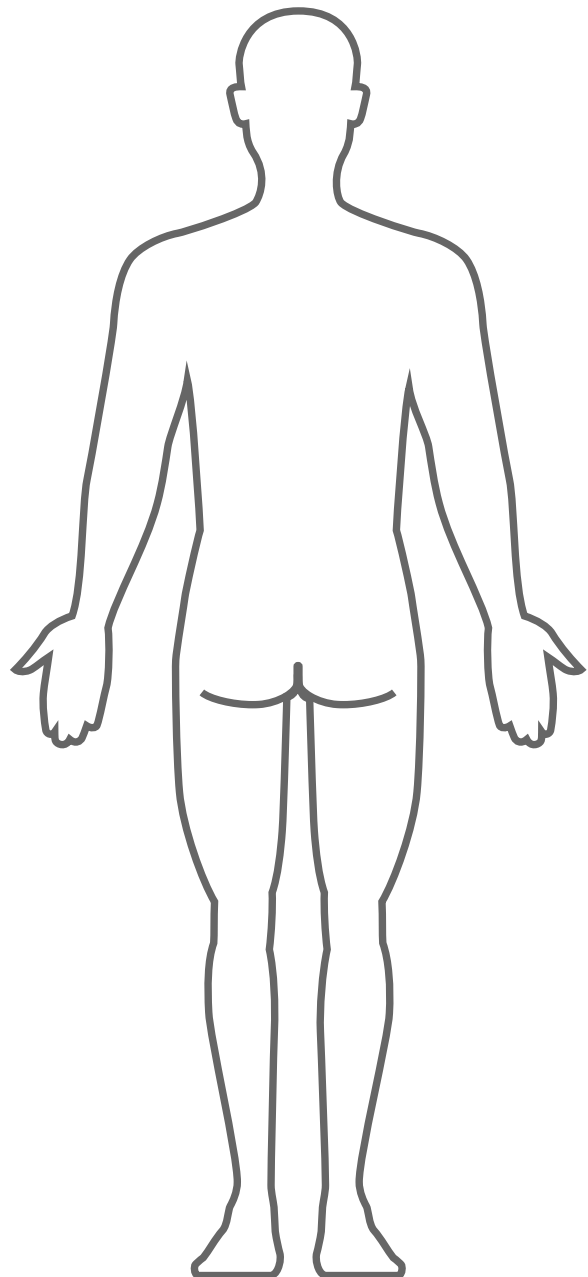
Once the exercise is done, take time to debrief with the client. Ask your client about the drawing. Refrain from making interpretive comments—this is a tool for self-discovery, not analysis.

Somagram

FRONT OF BODY



BACK OF BODY



client
worksheet

Somagram #2 - Free Charting

Freely chart your feelings and sensations about your body.

1. How do you feel inside your body?

2. How do you see your external body?

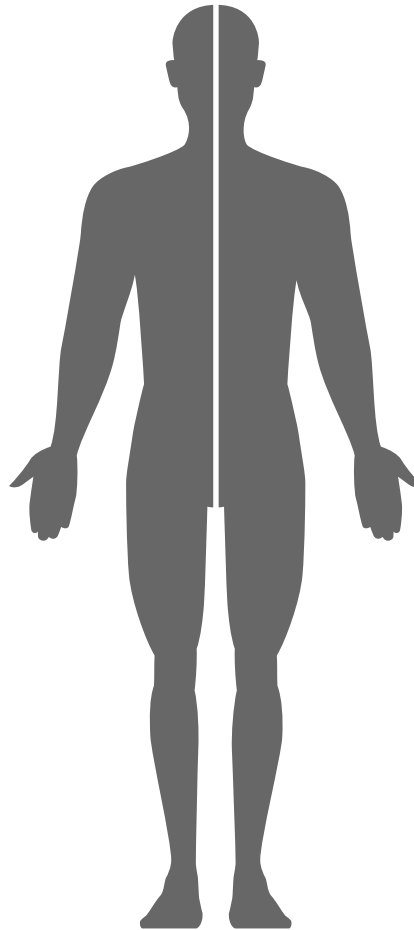
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Left/Right Body Split

Chart your experience of the two parts of the body and the split.

My Left Side Body is:

My Right Side Body is:



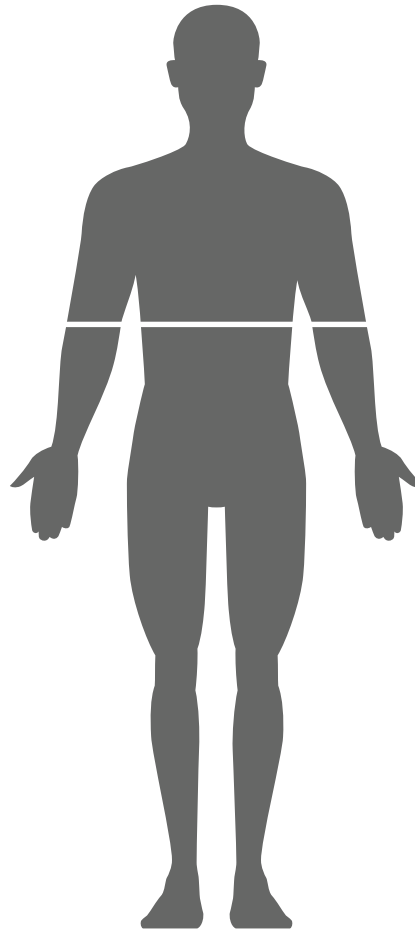
Reflections on my L/R Split:

client
worksheet

Upper/Lower Body Split

Chart your experience of your body and the split

My Upper Body is:



My Lower Body is:

Reflections on my U/L split:

Front/Back Body Split

Chart your experience of your body. Tune into the front and then the back of the body. Then write down the split you experience. Be as specific as you can to discover all the aspects of the split.

My Back of My Body is:



My Front of My Body is:

Reflections on my F/B split:

Body Splits

PURPOSE

Body splits can be experienced throughout the body in different ways. For example, you can feel a split by sensing part of your arm but not your whole arm. Where would you indicate the split? Where is that line between where you feel and sense and where you do not? By mapping out the splits you become aware and can bring your body back into self-awareness.

INSTRUCTIONS

Become quiet and sense your body. Notice what parts of your body feel connected and which ones do not. Notice where the split is.

- List the splits:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Draw your body splits.

- As you tune into where and how you experience the split in your body, you can get information from your body by asking the body about it. Get quiet and tune into what messages or beliefs you associate with the split. Name the belief of the split. If your body split had something to say, what would that be?

- Now think of a positive and nourishing statement for your body. What would the body split want to hear?

- What changes do you notice? As you tune into your body and the splits you identified, how do you view them now?

Sensing Your Fluid Brain

PURPOSE

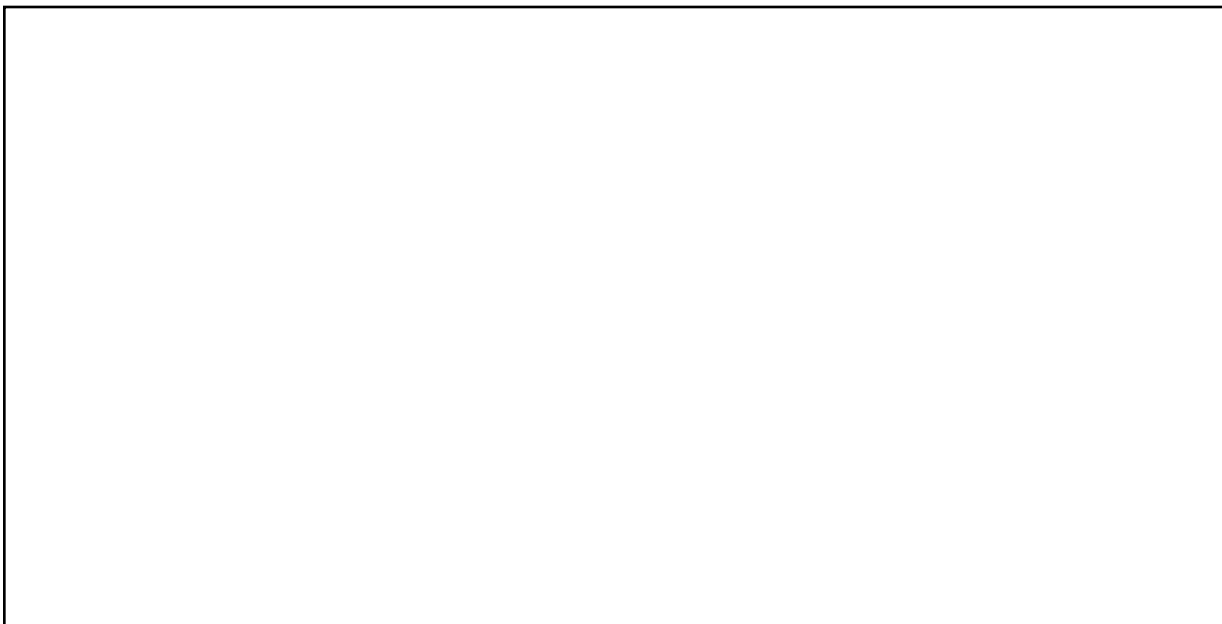
The cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) is found in the nervous system. Characteristics of tuning into the fluid system of our body are associated with meditative states, effortlessness, stillness and a sense of flow in the spine. The CSF is produced in the ventricles of the brain and moves along the spinal cord. It continues through the spinal and cranial nerves and into the fascia and connective tissue of the body into all the cells of the body. The CSF nourishes the entire body by cycling back from the cells through the veins of the heart and lymphatic vessels. The CSF is very slow moving. Think of it as a very slow inner movement that is happening continuously to a different inner rhythm. When you connect with that rhythm, you are slowing down and tuning into subtle levels of your experience. It has a different rhythm than that of the breath and pulse rhythms of the body.

The sutures on your cranium are movable and fluid, not static. Imagine your skull being fluid and supple, not hard.

This exercise can be useful when you experience headaches, stress, tension, or an overactive mind.

INSTRUCTIONS

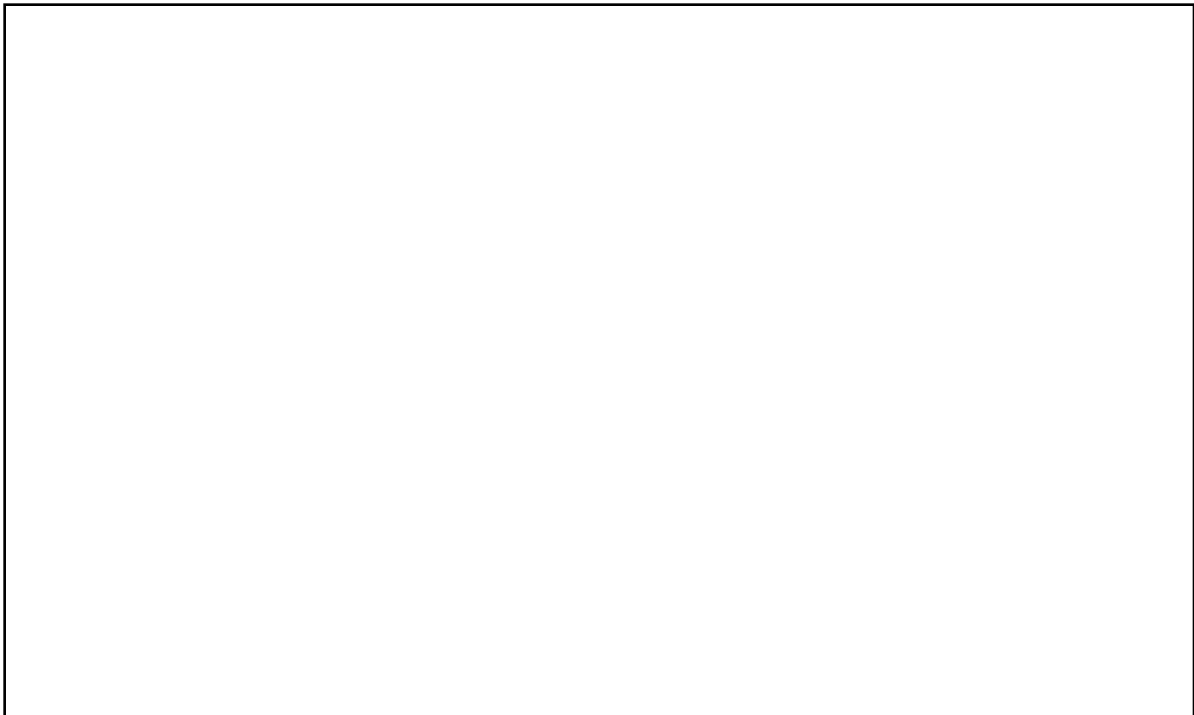
Draw your brain and head before the exercise. How does it feel to you?



Steps:

- Sit comfortably and quietly.
- Place each of your hands on the sides of your head.
- Give your head a gentle squeeze with each exhale, as if you are gently pushing into your head. With the inhale, release the pressure of the hands squeezing.
- Synchronize the head squeeze with the breath; slow it down with each breath cycle.
- Do five to six slow, focused breaths. Then lower your hands.
- Notice your head and focus your attention now on your cranium. Can you sense your breath in your cranium?
- Make a very, very small movement in your head/cranium. You want to make the movement so small that it is barely visible from the outside. This movement will be initiated in your whole head, but let that movement be felt in the cranium.
- Do about two to three movements, then stop and notice again.
- Can you sense a fluidity inside your body? How does your skull feel?

Draw your brain and head after the exercise. What changes do you notice?



Unfurling

PURPOSE

This exercise uses awareness of the spine to work with themes of coming out of a shell, shyness, and coming towards something that is unsure. The skill of slowly and gently finding a movement through the spine helps awaken one's awareness of the core and spine. The slow and deliberate movement can add more confidence in facing life's uncertainties.

Picture the image of a fern. The fern in its developmental stages unfurls a very tightly coiled leaf. Slowly it unwraps itself until it expands to the fullness of the leaf. Imagine your body unfurling like a fern leaf.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Start standing or sitting. Don't lean your back against anything. If you're sitting, come to the edge of your seat.
- Keep in mind the theme you are working with, such as feeling tight, afraid to open up, or unsure what it means to be open and vulnerable. Write down your answers on the baseline inquiry on the following page before you start.
- Start with your head bowed down towards your chest. Curl into a ball—imagine being a tightly-wrapped fern leaf.
- Notice your breath in this position.
- Gently find an impulse that wants to open and unfurl.
- Move very slowly! Make the unfurling motion that opens the spine and lifts the head. Savor this slow motion.
- Imagine you are the fern leaf that takes a long time to unwrap its tight coil.
- Go ahead and do this movement again. Make sure not to coil inwards, as if you are closing the fern bud again.
- You can repeat this motion a couple of times. Be careful to go slowly and deliberately and feel the moment of the spine.
- After the movement, rest in the openness or a coiled position (whichever feels more appropriate) and notice what has changed.
- Write down your thoughts and answers to the inquiry questions on the next page.

Baseline - Before the movement

How tight do I feel on a scale of 1-10? _____

What holds me back? _____

What is making me re-coil or shut down? _____

What am I afraid of if I open up? _____

Baseline - After the movement

How am I feeling in my body after the movement? _____

On a scale of 1-10, how willing am I to open to the issue/topic at hand? _____

What do I know about what makes me close down now? _____

What do I notice in my body after the movement? _____

What is my perception now on the topic/theme? _____

Describe the experience with one word: _____

Orienting Movements

Chart your experience of your body. Tune into the front and then the back.

"When I am oriented my body is: _____."

Circle the somatic markers in your body when you know you are oriented in time and space.

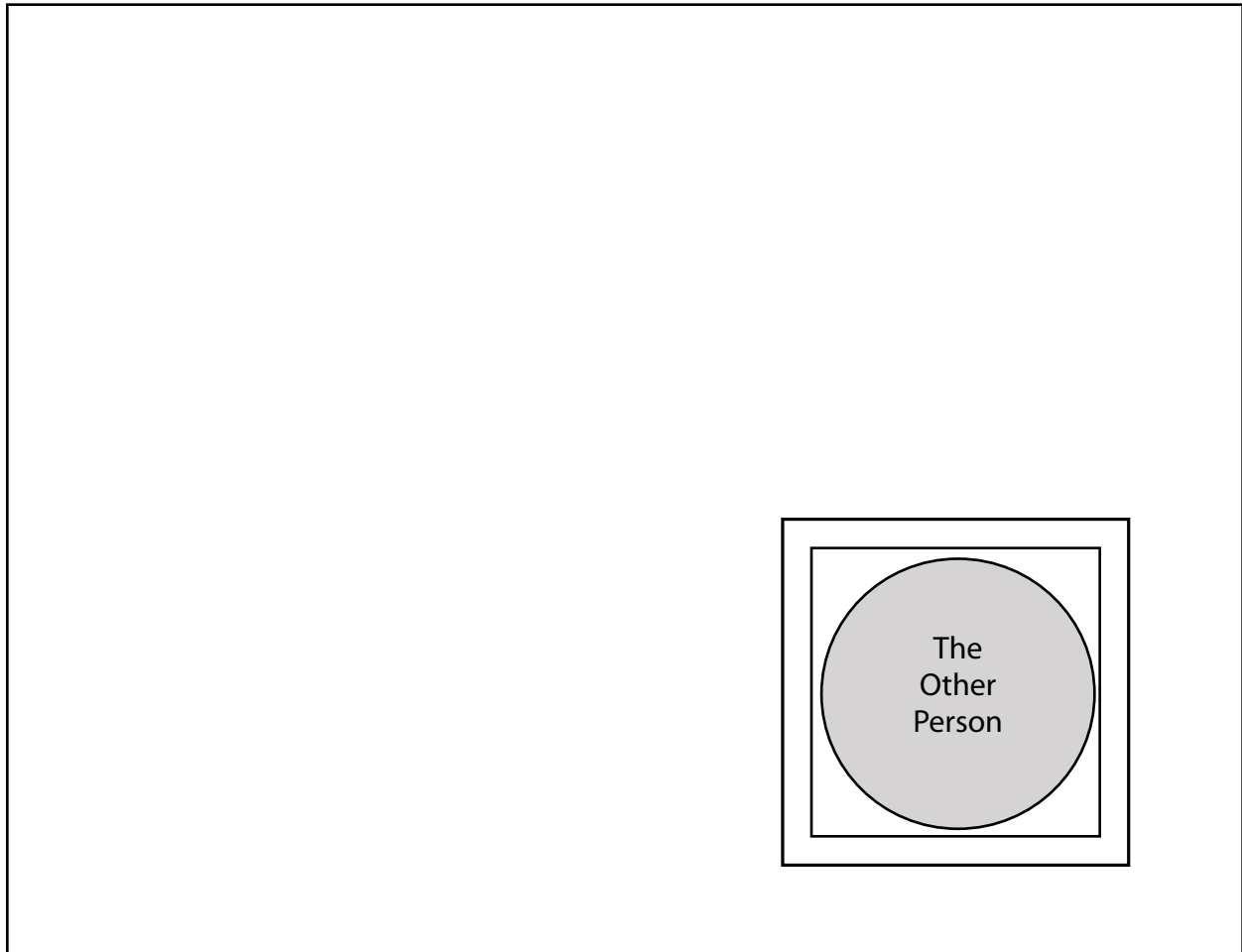
Spacious	Strong Legs	Feet Awareness	Belly Connected
Wide	Strong Gaze	Shoulder Awareness	Earth Connected
Clear	Power	Heart Awareness	Feeling My Face
No Fear	Fierce	Chest Awareness	Knowing Where I Am
No Anxiety	Calm	Grounded	Now: Present Moment

Your own description:

Personal Space Exploration

INSTRUCTIONS

The box below is a relationship you are in. Where do you position yourself in relation to the other person? Draw your ideal distance.



Follow-up questions:

What would you need to set this boundary? _____

What stands in the way of setting this boundary? _____

What can help you learn how to set this boundary? _____

Boundary Homework for Personal Space

PURPOSE

Boundaries help define your personal space. Boundaries can be physical, emotional, verbal, behavioral and spiritual. They can also be strong, rigid, loose, open, flexible, distant, close, merged, or fluid. There are internal boundaries and also external boundaries between you and other people. This exercise will help you reflect on your boundaries.

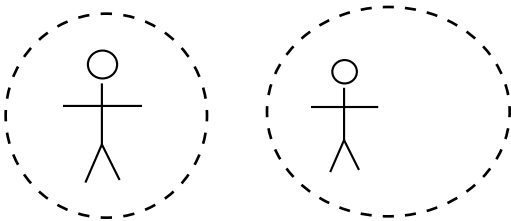
INSTRUCTIONS

Use the following questions to help you assess your boundaries.

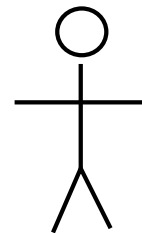
Inquiry questions:

- How would you describe your personal boundaries?
- How can you tell where your personal space begins and ends?
- What do you feel in your body when someone comes too close to your personal space?
- What do you feel in your body when someone is too far from your personal space?
- Draw your personal space. Make a circle around the figure to indicate your personal space.

Examples:



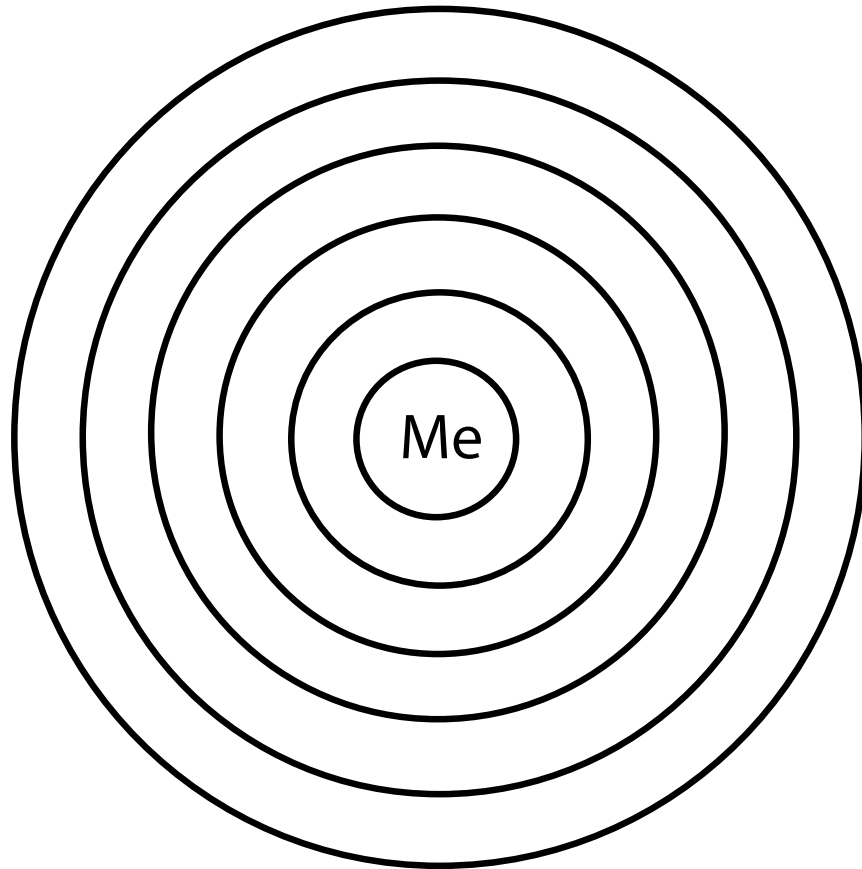
My Boundary:



- What color would your boundary be? _____
- What material would your boundary be made of? _____
- Who is in your personal space and who is not?

Examples:

Friends
 Close Friends
 Acquaintances
 Family
 New People
 Extended Family
 Partner



- What kind of boundaries did your family have? Were they strong, rigid, loose, open, flexible, distant, close, merged, fluid, etc.?
- Who in the family had the rigid boundaries and who had the loose boundaries?
- Think of a time when you did not feel comfortable and someone was too close to you. Imagine drawing a boundary around you as you envision this scenario. What words or actions can you take to re-establish this boundary?

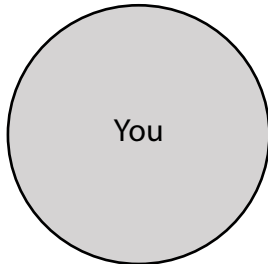
client
worksheet

When Boundary is Violated - Re-drawing the Territory

PURPOSE

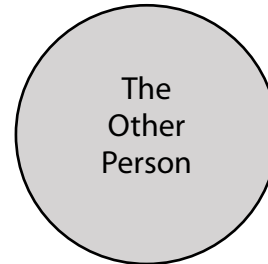
This exercise is designed to re-draw physical and emotional boundaries when your boundaries have been violated. The therapist can guide you through this visualization or you can visualize it by yourself.

INSTRUCTIONS



Visualize yourself and your personal body boundary. What do you need to feel safe?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



Visualize the "other" person that you want to set a boundary with. What can you say to them in order to state your boundary?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Make a statement that will affirm your motivation to set and state your boundaries. Write down the most essential boundary that you are working on. Post this declaration and notice what changes inside as you do so.

I need _____ boundary.

I need you to respect my boundary by _____.

I am asking you to consider my boundary request by _____.

I will no longer _____.

Personal Space in Relation

PURPOSE

This exercise brings awareness to your body boundary in relation to how you position yourself to another.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Start by visualizing a person whom you have an easy time with and imagine sitting across from them. How close or far would you sit from them? What is the optimum distance? How do you know that this is the optimum space between you?
- Now imagine a person you have a more difficult time with. Where is the optimum space between you? Is it easy to set that boundary? Difficult? What makes it difficult? What is in the way?
- Draw your ideal relationship distance. The box is the relationship you are in. Where do you position yourself in relation to the other person?

What would you need to set this boundary?

What stands in the way of setting the boundary?

What can help you in learning to set the boundary?

Take a look at the drawing; sense into this new boundary you just set. What do you notice in your body? What words go with the experience you are having right now?

Journal about the boundaries you know have been invaded and not treated with respect. Write down some key moments that you remember. What do these key moments have in common?

Write down ONE aspect you can change regarding your boundary setting. A word? A sentence you want to say to yourself inside? A feeling in the body you want to remember and come back to?

Remember, learning to set boundaries starts with a clear and concise statement of what you are not willing to do or be anymore.

I will change my boundaries by saying/doing: _____.

Take a stand for my boundary with this statement:

Posture Snapshot

PURPOSE

This is a body-reading tool to help you learn how to see and perceive your client's body from a somatic perspective. You can do this when the client first walks into the office, or when you sense that you need a fresh perspective on the client.

Important note:

Body readings are educated guesses and not truths. They need to be checked out with the client's experience. Be willing to be wrong.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Close your eyes very briefly, as if you were a camera.
- Take three quick snapshots, letting your eyes fall on different areas of the body.
- Write down the first impression, without any judgment, of what you see.

First Snapshot:

1. I see

2. I imagine

3. I am curious about

Second Snapshot:

1. I see

2. I imagine

3. I am curious about

Third Snapshot:

1. I see

2. I imagine

3. I am curious about

What my body reading is:

Draw Your Skeleton

PURPOSE

Our skeleton is part of our posture. We never see or feel into our skeleton. To correct our posture and feel alignment from the inside, let's imagine your skeleton. This does not have to be anatomically correct.

INSTRUCTIONS

Draw a picture of the front, side, and back of your skeleton using the three boxes below.

My Skeleton:

FRONT

SIDE

BACK

Reflection:

Reflect on how the skeleton you drew holds you up.

What kind of inner alignment do you imagine is based on this skeleton?

Find a word or phrase to describe it: _____

Non-Verbal Communications Chart

INSTRUCTIONS

Chart your observation of the client's non-verbal communications. This worksheet highlights what you observe and helps you track what needs improvement.

CATEGORIES OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Talking

- Pausing
- Rapid
- Slow

Posture

- Upright
- Stiff
- Slouching

Gesture

- Expressive
- Non-Expressive

Body Movement

- Rocking
- Fidgeting
- Still

Tone Of Voice

- High Pitch
- Low Pitch
- Pressed

Eye Movement

- Scanning
- Focused
- Withdrawn
- Intrusive

Sounds

- Nervous
- Laughter
- Umm, Ahh's

Spatial Use

- Appropriate
- Too Close
- Too Far Apart

Appearance

- Tidy
- Untidy

Head Movement

- Yes Nodding
- No Side to Side

Body Contact

- Seeks Contact
- Avoids Contact
- Slow

Use Of Words

- Dramatic
- Pauses
- Monotone

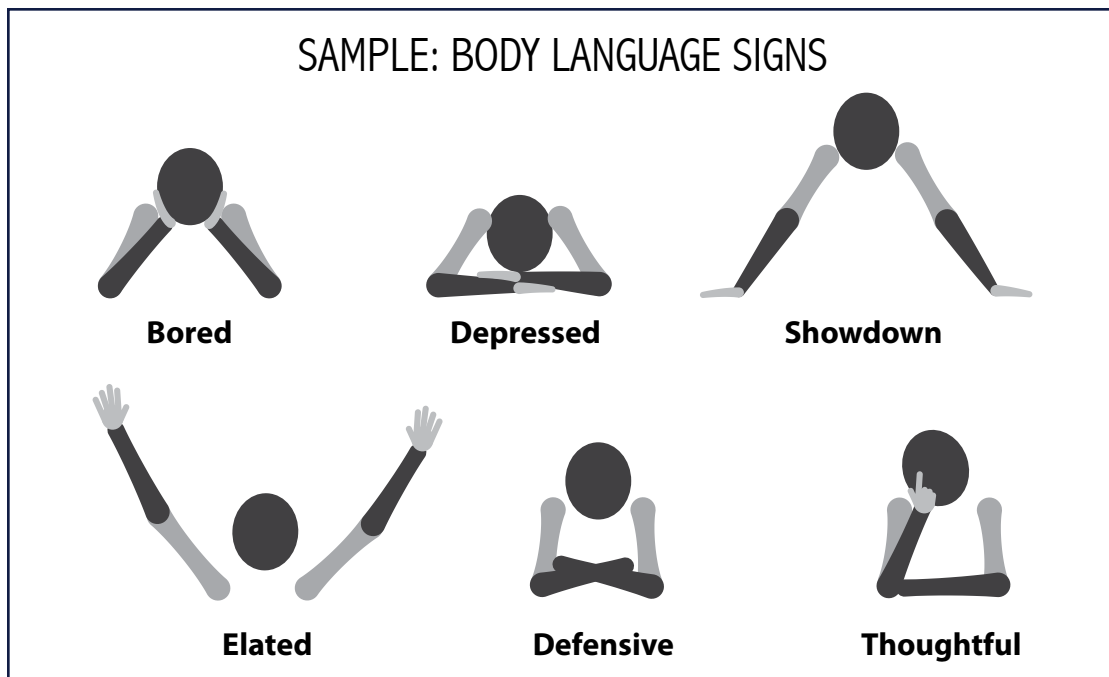
Facial Expression

- Tight & Held
- Frown
- Open/Relaxed

Tracking the Meaning of Gestures

PURPOSE

Gestures are part of the non-verbal communications system. A gesture communicates in tandem with facial and body expressions to reveal a person's feelings or inner mood. Gestures are unconscious communicators of the body. If read correctly, they can convey to the therapist what is truthful in the client's experience. When reading these gestures, you can comment on them in order to help the client become more aware of themselves. It is important to be non-judging and gentle when making observations.

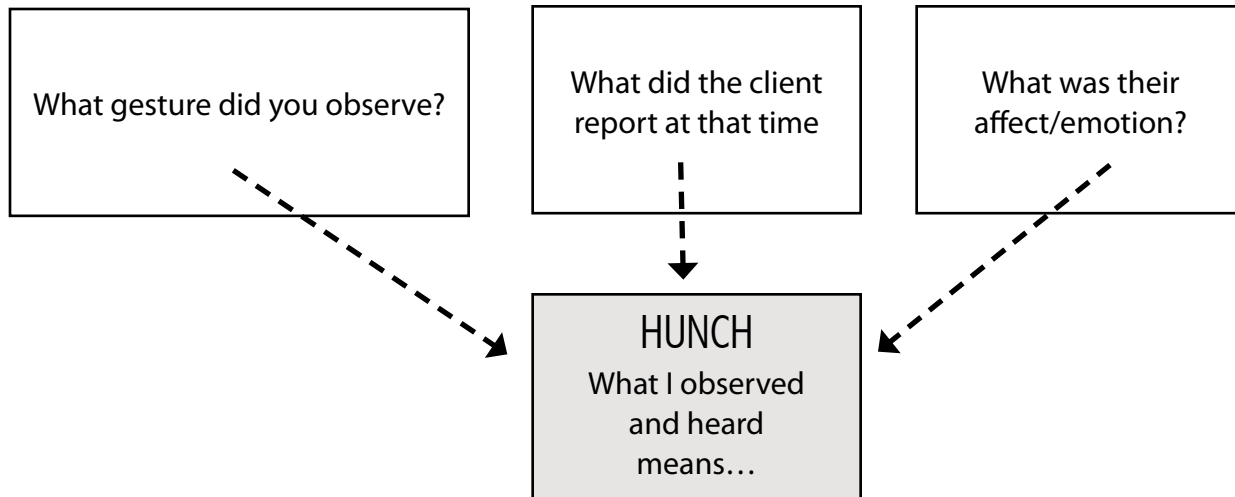


INSTRUCTIONS

This chart on page 160 is a systematic way of observing a gesture and putting it together with what you hear and sense so you can involve the client in exploring other options in their somatic sense.

Steps:

- Write down:
 - 1) What you observe.
 - 2) What the client reported.
 - 3) What the client's mood or emotion was at that time.
- Reflect on these three aspects and form a "hunch."



After your hunch is formed, confirm your hunch with a follow-up comment such as: "I noticed that your shoulders moved up as you talked about your friend. You also seemed a little fearful. What is happening right now in your body?"

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">GESTURE</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">REPORT</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">EMOTION</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">HUNCH</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/>

- Finish by asking the client the following questions:
 - 1) What needs to happen right now?
 - 2) Now that you are aware of this, what shift can you make in your body right now?

Meaning Making: High-Road vs. Low-Road

How do you create meaning based on your experiences? Do you rely primarily on the reasoning mind (the high-road), or do you depend mostly on the information you receive from your body-based emotional experiences? The low-road is referred to when we instinctively respond to a situation. This is often in a traumatic or stressful situation when we engage the fight or flight response. But the low-road can also be an instinctive response that is well tuned to a situation or experience.

Do you use a combination of both the high and low roads to bring meaning and process your experiences and life?

Often these meaning-making modes are not recognized, but rather instinctual or based on a "feeling," a "sense," or a "gut feeling." Becoming aware of how we create meanings is crucial to understanding our direct somatic experience.

We want to notice when a fear overrides the reasoning brain and learn the mindful and somatic techniques to integrate, regulate, and calm. We want to understand that the prefrontal cortex can help us out when we are emotional, and use thinking strategies to get through confusion or decision-making. Understanding where our basic physiology intersects with our body is part of understanding our whole human experience. Decisions are based on the meaning you attach to them. Reflect on the various ways you can make decisions and attach meaning to those decisions. What do you value most? How does your body or your mind respond? Do they respond in tandem? What is that process for you?

Reflection:

Think of a time when you made a calm and reasonable decision. How did you do this? What did that feel like? _____

Think of a time when you made an "emotional decision." What did that feel like? In hindsight it was a good decision or a poor one? _____

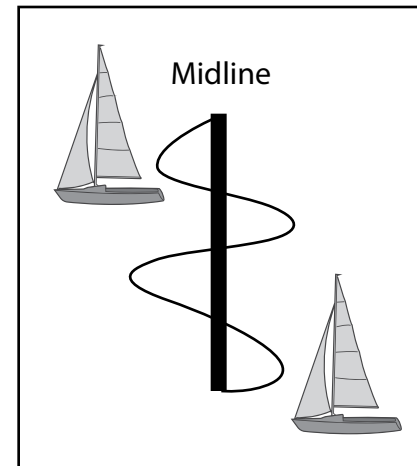
Think of a time when you made a body-based and instinctual decision. What did that feel like? How do you evaluate that decision in hindsight? _____

What do you consider as a good decision and what meaning do you attach to it?

Sailing the Midline

PURPOSE

Visualize a sailboat crisscrossing a midline. Every time it goes off course, it corrects and comes back towards the midline. This midline is a metaphor for our grounded being-ness. This exercise teaches you how to come back when you feel “off course” by using the midline of your body. The midline represents the middle of your body, or your core.



INSTRUCTIONS

- Stand tall. Have your eyes open and downcast.
- Imagine a midline in the center of your body, from the top of your head down to your feet.
- Notice how you feel “off course.” Name it out loud.

I feel off course because: _____

- Now lift your right arm. Turn your palm so it’s facing towards the left and stretch it across the imaginary midline of your body so you are crossing your hand and arm in front of your chest.
- Drop your arm and return it to the natural position.
- Now lift your left arm. Turn your palm so it’s facing towards the right and cross your hand and arm over the midline until you can’t go further. Then drop your arm so it returns to the natural position.
- With each crossing: exhale.
- With each returning to the natural position: inhale.
- Repeat this movement slowly and deliberately six to eight times.
- Stand and notice what is happening in your body. Are you calm? Grounded? More aware? Focused?

My body now feels: _____

Perception Log

client
worksheet

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
AM							
PM							
Worked with body parts							
Perception change							

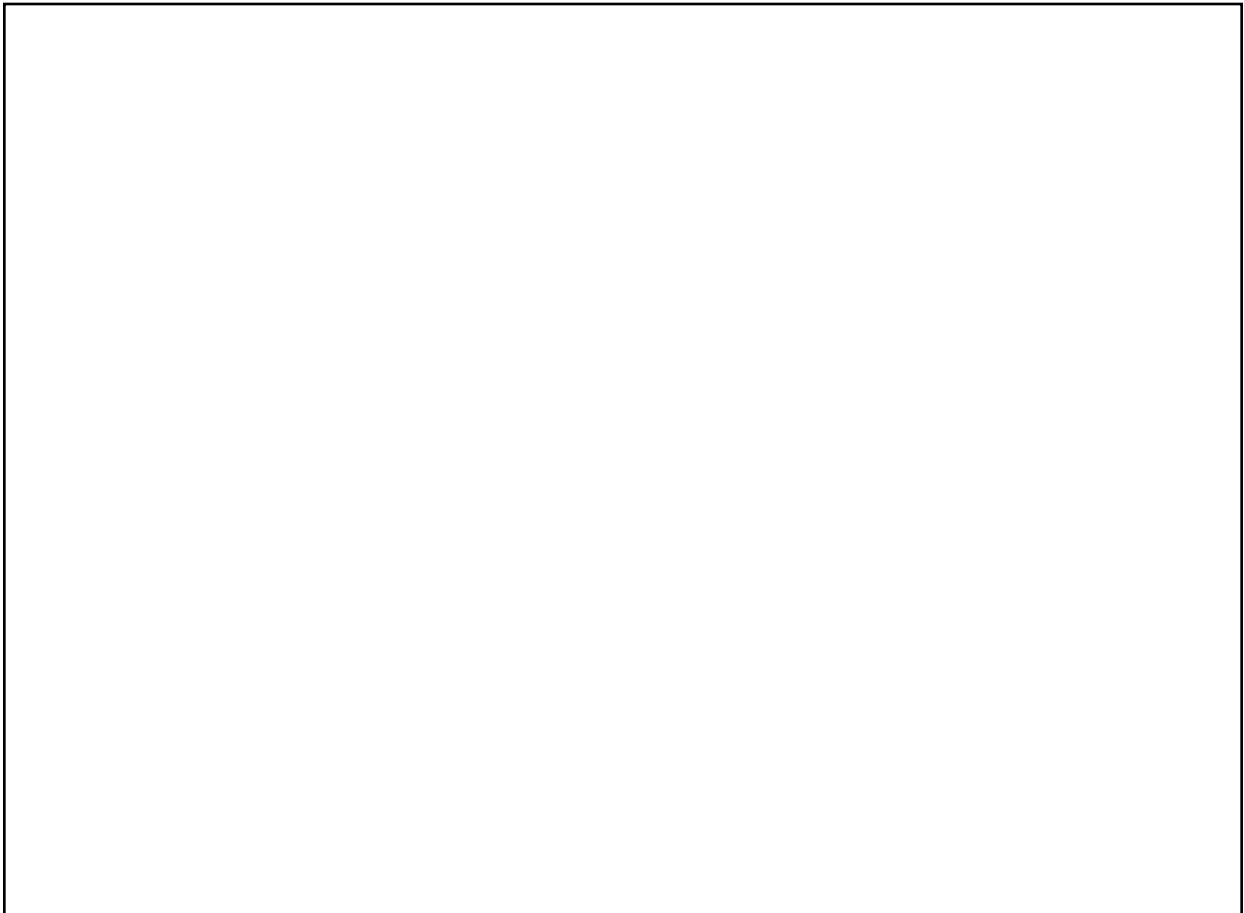
Body Drawing

PURPOSE

Body drawing is a way to express and assess where you are internally. The key is to not overthink the drawing, but to allow the body wisdom to come through directly.

INSTRUCTIONS

- You can use colored markers or pens for this exercise.
- Where are you right now? Make a quick drawing. Don't think; just draw what comes to mind first.



Look at your drawing and title it. Use the first phrase that comes into your mind. Write it below.

- Now, look at an aspect of your drawing and then pick out a color, shape or something interesting and draw that piece again. Think of it as magnifying an aspect of your first drawing.



- Take a look at the new drawing. Title it, using the first phrase or words that come up.

- With the two drawings and titles, take a moment and reflect quietly on what this means to you right now. What are you discovering?

You can journal your response or express it in a final drawing.

Corridor of Sound

PURPOSE

The voice can hold tension. Freeing the voice is another pathway into the somatic experience of the body. This exercise is a way to experiment using the voice as access to the body.

See what you “hold” in your voice or the expression of your voice. Notice what themes and emotions come up as you experiment with the voice. This exercise brings an element of play. Encourage experimenting and “making mistakes.”

INSTRUCTIONS

- Examine how you view using your voice.

My voice is: _____

I believe that my voice or my sounds are: _____

- Close your eyes and imagine that your voice is on a slow elevator ride. Explore what it is like to express the up and down motion of this elevator through your voice.
- Start by going down in your voice, lowering the range. Then go up in your voice into a higher range. Do this up and down two to three times.
- Become mindful and notice your body and breath. How do you feel about your sound?

My sound is: _____

My voice feels: _____

I want to express: _____

- Repeat the up and down scale of your voice. See if you can free yourself from the “right way” of doing this and experiment with how the voice can travel up and down the scale of your own range. Can you bring some fun and play into it?

Reflection:

- If your voice had a color, what would that be?
- If your voice had a shape, what would that be?
- What does your voice want to express?
- What have you been holding back?
- Before the sounding I feel _____ about my voice.

- After the sounding I feel _____ about my voice.
- Add a few comments about what you discover in your voice.

client worksheet

Tracking Your Own Nervous System

PURPOSE

This tool allows you to learn about how and what you can do to increase your sense of safety, get connected, and learn to calm or to engage with activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

Use the chart below to track and learn about your client’s nervous system. By engaging your nervous system, you can teach it to help you to become more engaged, calm or active.

- The Social Engagement System is activated by talking to a trusted friend, spending time with a beloved pet, or doing activities that make you feel safe.
- The Sympathetic System engages when you are playful and active, such as moving your body to music, playing sports, journaling your thoughts, or stretching your body.
- The Parasympathetic System activates when you listen to soothing music, practice conscious breathing, receive a nourishing touch, hear a pleasant voice, etc.

Social Engagement	Sympathetic	Parasympathetic
What makes you feel connected?	What makes you feel active?	What makes you feel calm?
How do you reach out? What works?	How do you support your engagement with others?	How can you create healthy habits to train your calm state?

Expanded Window of Tolerance Chart

PURPOSE

The Window of Tolerance Chart is a visual aid to help the client identify when they are in aroused zones and when they are in resilient zones.

There are three main zones: Hyper-arousal, Optimum Arousal Zone (OAZ), and Hypo-arousal.

The optimum zone of arousal is where the client can experience stress and is able to handle it with ordinary coping strategies.

When the stress becomes unmanageable, the client might spike into the hyper-arousal zone or drop into the hypo-arousal zone. In these arousal zones, the client is using coping mechanisms that are based more on survival, such as fleeing, fighting or freezing. Hyper-arousal can be subtle at first, such as irritation. A hyper-aroused response indicates they are up on the chart and outside what is optimum. The same is true if the client becomes withdrawn and stiff, indicating the beginning of hypo-arousal and potentially going towards a freezing response.

Once the client goes outside the OAZ, responses become reactions, the polyvagal system becomes activated, and resiliency will be compromised. This can result in having negative stress reactions, triggered memories, and trauma symptoms.

INSTRUCTIONS

Use the colored graph to psycho-educate your client on the different zones. You want to highlight that the Optimum Arousal Zone is the preferred zone to heal stress and trauma symptoms. You want to stay in the OAZ when working to heal symptoms, and work towards that zone when dealing with symptoms. Highlight that the OAZ is a fluid zone, that the fluctuations are the building of a resilient nervous system.

Use general terms to describe the zones with this approach: "You might find when you are in the hyper-arousal zone that you experience anxiety, fear, worry, irritability and anger. What have you found?" Ask the client to fill in their experience. Or when talking about the hypo-arousal zone you can say: "You may have noticed feelings of depression, numbness, frozenness, and being withdrawn. How do you experience this zone?"

Teach your client to be aware of how they travel to the different zones. This will help them start to become cognizant of what their triggers are. When triggers are identified, it will be easier to work towards what needs to heal.

The expanded zone is the region of the impulses that are triggered under stress, but can be changed or influenced with mindfulness, breath and body awareness.

Below are some inquiry questions you can utilize to help your client gain more awareness and also learn when to apply tools for changing their level of arousal.

Reflection:

Chart the zones in your own words:

In the hypo-arousal zone:

I am aware that: _____

I notice in my body: _____

My thoughts are: _____

My impulses are: _____

I want to instinctively do/be: _____

When stressed, I : _____

In the expanded zone, I can use (technique/tool) _____ to change my triggers.

In the hyper-arousal zone:

I am aware that: _____

I notice in my body: _____

My thoughts are: _____

My impulses are: _____

I want to instinctively do/be: _____

When stressed, I : _____

In the expanded zone, I can use (technique/tool) _____ to change my triggers.

In the zone of optimum arousal:

I am aware that: _____

When I experience stress, I notice: _____

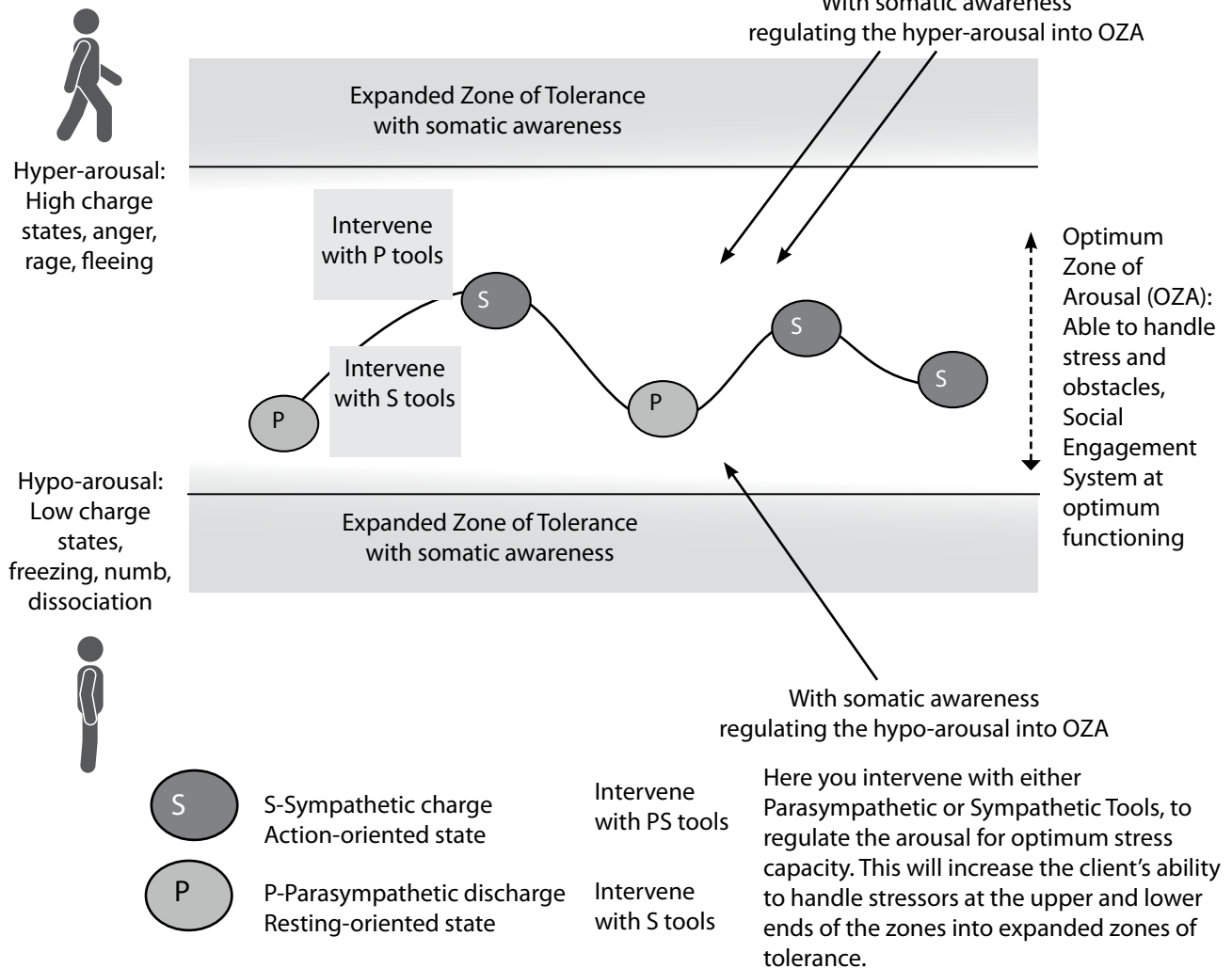
My body feels: _____

My impulses are: _____

My strength is: _____

I am able to: _____

EXPANDED WINDOW OF TOLERANCE
with Somatic and Mindfulness Practice



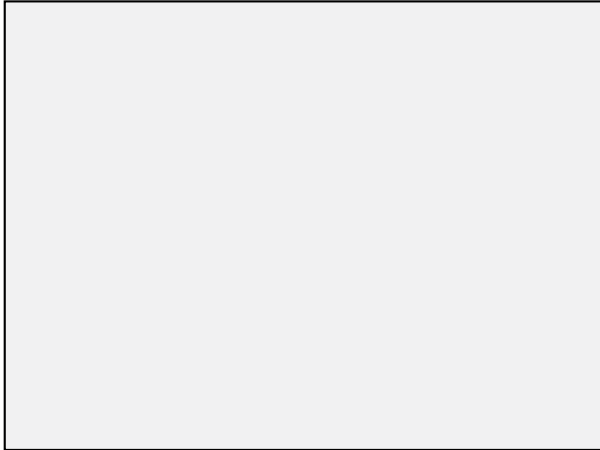
How Can I Resource Myself?

Use the instructions on the previous page to fill out the following charts. Use an "O" for each resource and a "X" for each trigger. Once you marked them all, take a moment and sit back and reflect on the O's and X's on your chart. Then draw a connecting line between them and reflect on how you can get from a trigger to a resource. What helps you transform the triggers?

EXAMPLE: I am aware that: I freeze when I am yelled at.

<p>Hyper-arousal Zone (HyperZ)</p>	<p>X—Person Yelling</p> <p>↓</p> <p>O—Breathing calmly into my belly</p>	<p>My Triggers are: Angry person yelling on phone</p> <p>My resources are: Disengage with the person and belly breathe</p> <p>I get there by: Remembering to breathe and not taking the angry person personally</p>
<p>Optimum Zone of Arousal (OZA)</p>	<p>I feel in my power, connected with myself and able to handle stuff</p>	<p>My Triggers are: Work stress that is not too much</p> <p>My resources are: Planning ahead and anticipating the tense work environment. Communicate better with the "angry" people at work, so they don't ambush me.</p> <p>I get there by: Write clear emails, don't procrastinate and wait for them to blow up at me.</p>
<p>Hypo-Arousal Zone (HypoZ)</p>	<p>X— I wait and procrastinate</p> <p>↓</p> <p>O—I get lethargic and hopeless</p>	<p>My Triggers are: Angry person that is not expressing it, but I can feel it, and it makes me freeze up. Walk on egg shells around them.</p> <p>My resources are: My family and friends that love me. I remember them in that moment.</p> <p>I get there by: I look and turn my head towards the pictures that are my resources. I counter the fear moment with calling up my family and friends that love me. Makes me breathe easier.</p>

Hyper-arousal Zone (HyperZ)

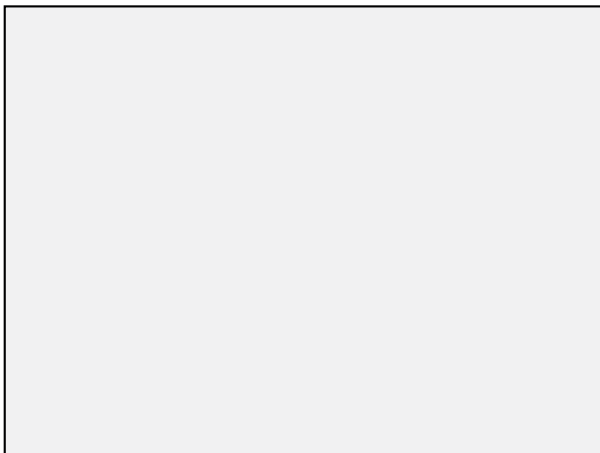


My Triggers are:

My resources are:

I get there by:

Optimum Zone of Arousal (OZA)

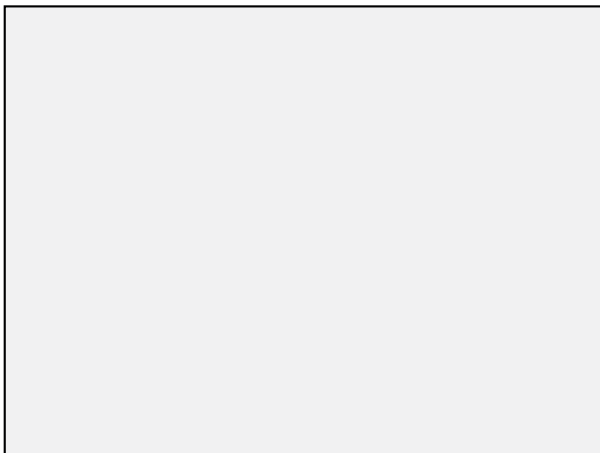


Triggers I can handle are:

My resources that work are:

I get there by:

Hypo-Arousal Zone (HypoZ)



My Triggers are:

My resources are:

I get there by:

REFLECTION

How did you get from an activated place to your resource?

Next step is to make a mindful and conscious effort to reacting the resources that work. List the three top resources that are your go to:

NOTING MY ACTIVATION TRIGGERS

Note what your external vs. internal triggers are. This will help you identify what comes from external stimuli and what you can possibly do to work with that. For example, avoid or anticipate? What are your internal triggers? Do you have repetitive thoughts, images? Can you bring other internal resources to soothe the inner triggers?

External events that triggered me today:

Inner experiences that triggered me today?

External trigger helpers:

Internal trigger helpers

Scanning Towards Safety

PURPOSE

This tool will help you learn how to move towards internalized safety.

Instinctively, we use our eyes to scan for safety. When entering a new situation, we search for visual cues to confirm that we are safe or that we need to somehow tend to safety. Being safe is primal and fundamental to thriving. By consciously using the scanning by our eyes, we can begin to create an embodied sense of safety—we are actively taking care of making the situation safe.

Stress and trauma experiences can compromise the natural sense of safety and put us on high alert. Being aware of looking with intention and scanning provides a way to start slowing down the activations in the body. Look for cues such as calming of the breath, curiosity about the surroundings, or an overall sense of ease as you scan. You want to work to reduce any vigilance and increase the sense of safety in the body.

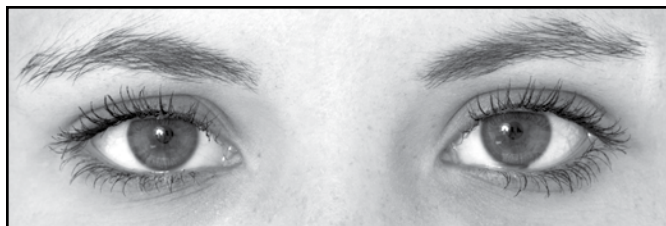
INSTRUCTIONS

Use the chart below to track your eye movements and record your body sensations. It is important to slow down the eye movement and chart every time there is a sensation in the body. Move back and forth between scanning the eyes across the room, noticing the sensations in the body, and charting. Make sure you look up for scanning the room and then chart.

Scan the room;
move your eyes.



Rest your eyes on one point and notice your
body. Write down what you sense and feel.



#1 Scan -----> I sense: _____

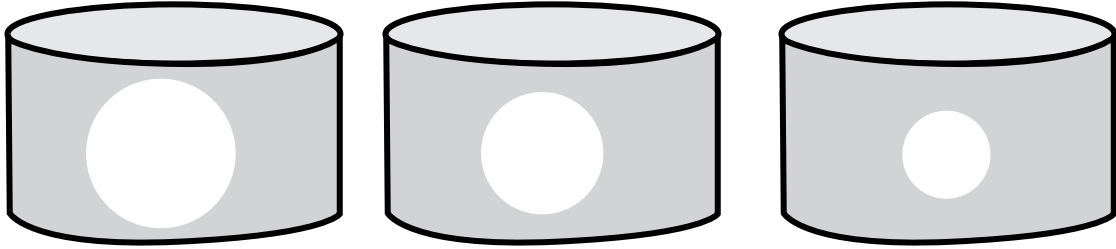
#2 Scan -----> I feel in my body: _____

#3 Scan -----> I notice a change in: _____

What changes in your body and your sense of safety?

client worksheet

The Container Metaphor Beliefs

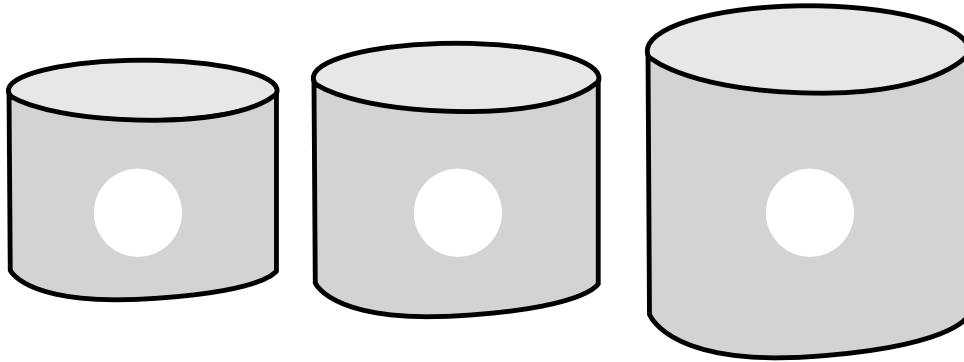


WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT YOUR TRAUMA EXPERIENCE?

I believe... _____

client
worksheet

The Container Metaphor Resources



My resources are... _____



I will develop... _____

client worksheet

Tracking Triggers Chart

PURPOSE & INSTRUCTIONS

Triggers can be related to a set of unpleasant experiences. Triggers are the early alarm system of the body. The ability to chart them can aid you in understanding what your body is trying to tell you. Keep a weekly chart of triggers you observe. Allow yourself to document the triggers in the most neutral way. Be curious and stay open to what the triggers are teaching you. Chart the triggers and use this chart to discuss them in sessions with your therapist.

What kind of trigger?	When? (Day/Time)	What happened? (Event)	How intense? 1-10 Scale (10 = most intense)	Where in the body? Familiar?	What did you do at that moment?	What did you learn? Anything you did to prompt the trigger?	Notes



Trauma Stressor Timeline

Name of Client: _____

DOB: _____

Date Treatment Started: _____

Timeline Completed: _____

In year segments, please list the traumas and stressors your client has experienced.

Age	Trauma Event	Main Issues Unresolved
Prenatal		
0-5		
6-10		
11-15		
16-20		
21-25		
26-30		
31-35		
36-40		
41-45		
46-50		
51-60		
61-70		
70+		

Calling Your Experience by Its True Name

PURPOSE

This tool helps you gain awareness and clarity of your experience. Learning to name what is happening is the first step towards making a change. Naming the present moment is an excellent tool when you feel hypo-aroused. This helps you ground, become more present and less activated. Use your perceptions to feel and sense.

INSTRUCTIONS

Learning how to differentiate between what has activated you and what is actually happening is useful when learning to distance and regulate your feelings. This worksheet can be used in the session or as homework after a session.

Right now I am feeling _____ (emotion) **and I am sensing in my body** _____, _____, _____ (at least 3 body sensations), **because I am remembering** _____ (name the trauma by title only, no details!).

At the same time, I am looking around where I am now in _____ (name your surrounding, such as "my living room," etc.).

I am looking around and I see _____ (the place where I am at in this moment; turn your head and take in the details of what you see).

What I mostly notice is _____ (describe some of the things you see now in this place).

And in this moment I know _____ (title of trauma only) **is not happening now/anymore.**

I am here!

Make a statement that declares your present-moment state:

I am/feel _____

client
worksheet

Embodied Self-Awareness and Resourcing

PURPOSE

This tool helps you start building your own repertoire of what works for you. Resource tools are an invitation to take charge of what helps you best. This chart helps you reflect on your challenges and your particular remedies. Think about your qualities and traits and what you can do to train towards embodiment.

INSTRUCTIONS

Using the chart on page 243, reflect on your traits and challenges. What practices can help you deepen the qualities of reliance and growth? What works?

Traits and Challenges

client
worksheet

Challenge	Qualities	Traits	What mindfulness or embodiment practice helps you here?	What do I need to practice more? How can I get support here?
The body carries tension, anxiety, depression	Curious about exploring embodiment and self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to feel and sense experience "as is" Ability to be with emotional pain and not suppress View of learning and growth 		
Body memories; strong emotions	Trusting in the body's intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to feel pleasure and tolerate positive emotions Open to negative feelings and inquiring into origin of them Basic trust in one's goodness Perceiving the body as an ally 		
Overwhelming emotions; complicated relationship stories; no easy solutions	Tolerating grey zones of experiences and relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to ask for help Thinking clearly and accessing body sensations as self-awareness Ability to feel self-compassion and kindness Able to make choices that are supportive 		
Challenging life phases, crises, stuck places; faced with obstacles	Open to "being" aspect of experience in the flow of process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to see one's emotional life as transitory Ability to put challenge into perspective Able to forgive self and others Ability to see a spiritual or growth aspect of life's challenges Seeing self as an unfolding process 		

Reflect on Your Own Somatic Coherence

PURPOSE

Learn to rate yourself what you mean by somatic coherence. Somatic coherence is how you feel at your best and when most in tune with your body, heart and mind. How do you know when you are feeling emotionally aligned with your intentions? What are the tell-tale signs you know when you feel at your best?

This tool helps you rate yourself on what you consider High, Balanced or Low Somatic Coherence.

INSTRUCTIONS

Identify what helps you get there and what gets in the way. What derails you from feeling well and coherent? Spend some time reflecting on the inner derailers, such as negative self-talk or triggers that interfere with your somatic coherence. Derailers are internal negative voices that will impact your self-esteem and your body confidence. These can be voices of doubt, worry or anxiety that stifle your curiosity and creativity.

“High Coherence” means you are feeling energetic—full of creative potential, energy and the ability to handle stressors without being compromised. “Balanced” is being in harmony with yourself. “Low Coherence” is being able to cope, but not performing at your best. This is a self-assessment based on what you know about your own body.

10	High Coherence
9	
8	
7	Balanced
6	
5	Low Coherence
4	
3	
2	
1	

Part 1

High Somatic Coherence for me means I am _____

Balanced Somatic Coherence for me means I am _____

Low Somatic Coherence for me means I am _____

What restores my somatic coherence? _____

Reflection:

Take a moment and reflect on what stands in the way of your optimum somatic coherence? What internal negative voice? What are the worries or anxieties that hold you back?

My inner derailers are:

My inner derailers need:

Part 2

Rate yourself on the Somatic Coherence Scale. If you are on the High Coherence level, take a moment and read over what derails you. How can you relate to your derailers when you are in High Somatic Coherence? Compare this to a time when you are in Low Somatic Coherence and your relationship with your inner derailers at that time. Any differences?

Write to your inner derailers when you are in High Somatic Coherence:

I understand that:

I like you to know:

Next time when I am in Low Coherence, I want you to help me to do:

Tracking Your Client from Body Activation to Somatic Coherence

PURPOSE

This tool will help you track what body-wisdom tools work for your client. Start tracking the key areas such as breath, attention, eye movement, posture, body movement, and ability to be mindful. By charting these body cues, you will gain a more comprehensive understanding of what somatic cues belong to the trauma and stress assessment. This tool should be used in addition to any other clinical assessment tools you are using. Although it can be confusing and difficult to track the body and what it means, this chart will help you to keep noticing and inquiring.

In addition, look for somatic coherence. Learn to understand when your client is in balance and what that feels and looks like for them. Each client will have a different baseline of what they consider “coherent;” therefore, it’s important to notice what your client considers to be “somatic coherence” so you can learn and understand their internal experience.

INSTRUCTIONS

The following chart lists key areas of the body to track for activation. This can include what you track in any given session and what is self-reported. This chart can be used to help you track a client’s body patterns and behaviors over time, in order to aid how you use the somatic tools in this book. Track the tools you are using and what does and doesn’t work. This will help you make sure you are being most effective. Please use your professional discretion and training to make the right interventions.

Somatic Cues	Notes/Observations	Body Wisdom Tools	Worked Well	Needs Adjusting	Somatic Coherence Cues
Breath Region					
Upper Chest					
Mid-Chest					
Lower Chest					
Breath Quality					
Fast					
Rapid					
Held					
Frozen					
Fear/Anxiety mixed with breath					

Somatic Cues	Notes/Observations	Body Wisdom Tools	Worked Well	Needs Adjusting	Somatic Coherence Cues
Staccato					
Breath Awareness					
Able to focus on breath					
Easily distracted					
Avoids breath awareness					
Fearful of breath awareness					
Attention					
Able to focus					
Over-focused, tunnel vision					
Distracted, with anxiety					
Distracted, with anger					
Distracted, with somatic complaints					
Easily interrupted and distracted					
Eyes					
Scanning, with vigilance					
Scanning, with fear/terror					
Side glancing					
Vacant stare: under-focused					
Intent stare: over-focused					
Posture					
Stiff and held					
Upright, non-moving					
Tight muscles					
Braced posture					

Somatic Cues	Notes/Observations	Body Wisdom Tools	Worked Well	Needs Adjusting	Somatic Coherence Cues
Slacked posture					
Movement					
Twitching, legs					
Twitching, arms					
Twitching, hands					
Shaking, spine					
Shaking, legs					
Shaking, arms/ hands					
Shaking, whole body					
Repetitive movements (any part of the body)					
Hands, wringing/ clutching					
Hands, sitting on/ tucked under					
Feet, moving/ shuffling					
Feet, stacked or tucked under					
Arms, crossed					
Mindful Capacity					
Can't become mindful at all					
Jumps out of mindfulness					
Racing mind/ thoughts					
Spaces out					
Inner world absorbed					
Experiences inner world as threat					
Other Body Cues					

Outing the Shame Monster

PURPOSE

Shame is an involuntary response. By “outing” the shame and making it conscious, it will lose its power and secrecy. This exercise is designed to help you become comfortable with your shame monsters and make them less powerful. It’s important to stay mindful and slow with this exercise.

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete the following statements/questions.

1. *“I remember being ashamed of...”* Study the response in your body first! Then write down the first thing that comes to your mind.

2. *“I remember my body feeling the shame. It felt like...”*

3. *“I now remember the shame of the past, and I feel...”*

4. *“My ‘shame name’ for this monster is...”*

5. If you could draw this shame monster, what would it look like? Draw it now on a separate piece of paper.

6. Come back to your body now; breathe and feel. What do you notice in this moment?


 therapist
exercise

Identifying and Reframing Shame Attacks

PURPOSE

Shame is a natural response of the body. But it is also an involuntary response that can cause secondary stress as it can feel intense sudden and overwhelming. Shame can arise when we engage with a behavior that is morally, ethically or cultural incongruent. You can feel a sense of failure to protect yourself or being conflicted inside. Shame can also arise by being a witness or bystander to an act of violation that is beyond one's control and forces to witness. Or a behavior one is engaged in without consciousness at the time and soon reflection brings feelings of shame. Shame is a response of the body, that comes and goes like a flash. Yet the effect of shame can linger and secondary responses can arise such as wanting to cover up the feelings, being defensive, aggression toward the person that notices or wanting to retreat emotionally and physically.

As a therapist working with shame you need to be sensitive and considerate of the person's experience. The pull towards wanting to cover up the shame moment is great. It does not feel comfortable in the present moment. Knowing that the moment will pass is crucial, because then you can work with the shame moment and help the client out of the stuck place. Shame reinforces shame over time if it's not understood or worked with.

Part one is for the therapist to work with shame themselves when they notice they got stuck or triggered in their own shame. Part two you can use with your client when the shame has just happened. There is an ideal window once the shame has dissipated a little bit that you might find a receptivity to work with the shame directly. If the shame is too far in memory it's not alive enough for the client. If you address it right away while it's happening you might further activate the shame. Being ashamed of the shame is a common experience. Make sure you are well resourced as the therapist and be VERY kind with your client. You want to see the "goodness" of shame and not add to the shame experience.

Shame is a fleeting moment but an important one. So you want to have the courage to work with it. It is easy to let that moment pass, but I encourage you to work with it. Shame wants to be known, there is a deeper meaning underneath. If you are kind, open and receptive and truly stay with the client's body experience you will see that a whole new possibility can open up. The client might be able to learn what has gotten them ashamed in the first place. Shame is like an inner moral compass that wants to be known. Don't be thrown off by the strong somatic manifestation. Remember it is a fleeting moment, it won't last.

Important Tip:

Avoid calling it "shame" in the moment of a shame attack. Try naming it by describing it in a round-about way and wait for the client to name it shame. This is an important self-empowering step! Here some ways to name the intensity of the shame attack:

- "I see you having a strong response."
- "Looks like this is tough for you right there, huh?"
- "Your body is responding right now, what are you aware of?"
- "Seems it's hard to put into words what your body is expressing."
- "Not easy to grasp what is happening right now."
- "Notice how your body is responding and see if you can get curious about what this is."
- "Lot's of conflicting emotions and sensations right there."

INSTRUCTIONS

Know your own shame responses. Do your own shame homework. Inquire into the following questions. Especially when you are noticing being triggered by a client who has a shame response.

Self-reflection questions:

- What happened to you when your client got shame activated?

- Tune into the moment of the shame attack and somatically tune into your body of what that felt like. Note the body cues and your thoughts.

- Where in your body do you notice shame? Any familiar places?

- Note the body cues that indicate a shame attack next time and reframe it into a personal alarm system. The alarm is supposed to help you redirect this moment into a positive action towards resourcing yourself. My body's shame alarm is:

- Now list and note the places in the body that can help you next time when this happens. My body resources are:

- List one positive rename of shame for yourself. What if shame had a positive message for you? What would it say?

Reflection:

How does shame make me small? _____

Identifying Shame Attacks and Preventing Shame Spirals

INSTRUCTIONS

Work with the client on their shame attack and how to prevent a negative emotional spiral. Remember, ideally the intensity of the shame attack has passed, the client has named it as shame, or you are exploring what this strong response is right after.

Step 1 - Identify

1. Make a kind observation
 - *"That was an intense response, huh?"*
2. Invite curiosity and non-judgment
 - *"Care to get curious about what just happened?"*
3. Explore the body response without any charge
 - *"Let's stay with what you are noticing right now in your body. Explore a little what this is like."*
4. Name, reflect and contextualize the experience
 - *"See if you can label this place in your body, or name this experience you just had. What would you call this?"*

Step 2 - Name and reflect

Now that you have more information. See if you can label and name this experience.

Make a very quick drawing or name this. Don't think, but rather trust your first response.

First response drawing:

Look at the name for drawing and reflect on this right now.

What does it sound or look like?

What is familiar?

When does this shame attack happen?

What are some of the triggers you know?

Step 3-Reframe the Shame Attack

Take one aspect of this shame attack drawing, naming or reflection that stands out to you. For example you can take a word and then work on the next step with just that word. If you had a word like "hide," then you would ask: What does "hide" have to teach me? If "hide" has a message what would it say? If "hide" was brilliant and intelligent what would "hide" mean?

What does _____ have to teach me?

If _____ had a message what would it say?

If _____ was brilliant and intelligent what would _____ mean?

Now make a new statement of the shame attack with this information you just discovered.

My shame attack in the moment means that I am...

Any other insights?

Sun Rays into Your Body

PURPOSE

This exercise is the counterweight to the shame experience. Shame makes the body feel small and contracted. To “thaw” the body open, you can invite the body back in a gentle and progressive way. Visualize the sun’s rays meeting your belly and warming you up gradually.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Imagine a safe space in nature. Perhaps you are laying on a smooth rock, the earth or a cozy bench.
- Place your hand on your belly button.
- Imagine that the sun is just right: Warming, bright and inviting.
- Begin to breathe slowly into the belly button area underneath your hand.
- Now imagine the warm sun radiating into that belly button and warming you up. Can you feel the sun’s rays in your body? Concentrate on the image.
- What happens when you feel the warmth? See if you can go with the sensations in the body and savor them; see what comes up. Track your body and breath. Does the breath slow down? What becomes available as you do this?
- Observe the shifting and how your body returns to the calm state.
- Notice how the bright glare of the shame has been replaced with the warm glow of the sun.

Reflection:

- How does shame make me small? _____

• What triggers my shame attack? _____

• What is helpful when I am in it? _____

• What resources within me counteract the shame? _____

• What do I need to remind myself of afterwards? _____
