

A Resource Guide To Finding Regulation.



Womens Integrative Counseling

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Finding regulation and calming rhythms for your mind, body, and soul.

Practice going from overwhelm to balance in these 3 steps: Aware, Accept, Adjust.

Our nervous system as a whole prompts us to respond in ways that are motivated by unconscious patterns and cause instinctive reactions. What can happen though, whether due to underlying trauma, stress, or another factor, is our system can become dysregulated. We begin to react to things that we normally would not respond to, maybe our reactions are disproportionate to what happened, or maybe we feel nothing at all. With dysregulation we may notice changes in our mood, behavior, thoughts, and physical sensations.

It takes intentional practice to begin shifting our system from dysregulation to regulation, from feeling like we can manage our emotions and reactions and come back to a place of grounding.

The steps below are in no means comprehensive, but simply a place to start practicing what it might look like to increase our awareness of our emotions and reactions and honor what our bodies are telling us. Please feel free to modify, add, or take away whatever you need.

1. Be AWARE of what you are feeling.

Can you try and name what you are feeling physically? Is my heart beating faster? Is my breath deep or shallow, quick or slow? Do I have a pit in my stomach or a restlessness in my legs?

Next, can you try and name what you are feeling emotionally? Am I afraid, tired, angry, hurt? What emotion feels intense or overwhelming? Or maybe it is that you are feeling nothing, and it is a numbness or empty feeling that you identify.

This helps us connect our emotional responses to physical sensations. These connections help with the healing process and further integrate our whole selves. This also helps us take back some sense of control when we can name what is happening.

2. ACCEPT your reaction and feelings.

Your system prompts you to respond in ways that are motivated by unconscious patterns and cause reflexive reactions. So whether your reaction and feelings make sense in the moment or not, you remind yourself that you are responding out of an instinct to keep yourself safe. What you are feeling is valid. What you are feeling is not good or bad but an indication that there is more happening within yourself. You acknowledge and accept the emotional response for what it is.

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3. ADJUST system back into calm and connection.

What do you need right now to feel safe? Maybe you need presence, so you find a loved one and ask for a hug or you call a friend. Maybe you are thirsty and need to get a glass of water to nourish and care for yourself. Maybe you are feeling restless and need to move your body, go for a walk, or dance around to your favorite song.

Or maybe you cannot answer that question right now and it feels difficult to name what you may need. If this is true, then go down to the list of practices for adjusting back into connection and begin there.

Be patient with yourself. It takes time and practice to put these skills to use and feel ourselves go from intense emotions to a calmer and more grounded state.

Practices for adjusting back into connection:

- Bilateral tapping with hands or rocking body (side to side motion)
- Take a double inhale and then a long exhale (one deep inhale, then another quick inhale, then exhale and let it all out)
- Body movement. Walking, shaking, stretching, dancing, or other similar body movements can help get your system back into regulation
- Create a safe place in your mind and use your senses to explore it
- Connect with a friend or loved one
- Start by looking to the right and softening your gaze, then slowly move your head to the left allowing your gaze to slowly glide along with your head movement.
- Splash cold water on your face or briefly hold an ice cube
- Use your 5 senses to ground you in your current environment (what am I smelling, hearing, touching, tasting, and seeing right now?)