

Self-soothing Strategies

Following a major loss, it is helpful to have the tools to deal with the overwhelming thoughts and emotions that arise. There are a number of helpful strategies that you can use to calm yourself and ease the intensity of emotion. The following are a few examples. If you find them helpful, put them to use. If you need more ideas, give us a call at _____.

Square Breathing

When dealing with loss and trauma, people tend to hold their breath. It is one way of staying in control, but it ultimately adds to the stress.

Find your sitting bones. Next, find your pelvic bones. Now envision the formation of a cubic square connecting these. Breathe into that square. Tip: If you need some help breathing that deeply, place your hands on the back of your head.

Light Stream

What color do you associate with healing?

- Envision a light stream of that color in the sky above you.
- Mentally position the light stream directly above you.
- Have it gradually move down around you surrounding you externally and filling you internally.
- Allow it to move around you and through you, relaxing all stress, and calming you completely.
- Stay with the vision of this colored light stream, breathing deeply, allowing it to soothe you completely.

3-2-1

This can help bring you into the here and now. Use it when your mind is racing, you cannot get certain thoughts out of your mind, or when you are overwhelmed with emotion.

Name 3 different things in the room above eye level.

Name 3 sounds you hear.

Touch and describe 3 different textures.

Name 2 new things in the room above eye level.

Name 2 new sounds.

Touch and describe 2 new textures.

Name 1 new thing above eye level.

Name 1 new sound.

Touch and describe 1 new texture.



Safe Place

Major loss can cause you to feel vulnerable. Sometimes it is helpful to imagine a place where you have felt particularly safe and protected. Here are some basic instructions to guide you:

Recall a time and/or place in your life when you felt safe. If you cannot remember such a place or time, use your imagination to create a safe place, where no harm can come to you. Take time to imagine all of the sights of your safe place; the sounds; the smells; the tastes; the feelings, etc. Breathe the sense of safety deep inside you, letting it fill you.

Progressive Relaxation

This is a technique to help you relax your body, or parts of your body where you hold a lot of stress. If practiced, it can help you to better recognize when you are tensing your body, so that you can learn to let go.

Using large muscle groups (such as the head, neck, shoulders, arms and hands) tighten these muscles as hard as you can. Hold it. Try to go even tighter. Hold it for at least 10 seconds, longer if possible. Release and let it go. Take a moment to memorize the difference between the tightness and the letting go. Go to the next large muscle group. Repeat. Continue until entire body has tightened and released.



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