



Strategies for Regulation in a Crisis

The goal of regulation is not to be calm, but rather to learn how to be grounded in the midst of the activation and intensity that you are experiencing. It is to learn how to connect to yourself while feeling the intensity instead of pushing it away, avoiding it or becoming consumed by it.

Regulating your nervous system is one of the most important things you can do for your immune system and well-being during times of stress.

Daily Practice

GROUND YOURSELF – Take your shoes off, place your feet firmly on ground, feel the support of the ground underneath you, and take two really deep breaths

CHECK IN – Take a deep breath and as you do so, check in with yourself – *How is my body feeling right now?* Name it to yourself or out loud

CREATE ROUTINE – Create and maintain a routine throughout your day. (e.g., wake up times, morning routine, movement in your day, work hours, etc.) *Let your weekend still be your weekend!

TURN OFF MEDIA/NEWS – Practice moments of “turning the world off.” Limit exposing yourself to conversation/news regarding the crisis. Consider checking the news only once or twice a day

SET BOUNDARIES – It’s okay to say “No”, speak your limits, and just give yourself a break. Everyone needs “me/alone time” (including you) to ground, take a deep breath, and check-in with yourself

Connect within- the key to regulation!

“In this moment, what does my body need?” Give it to yourself.

MINDFUL BREATHING – Practice balanced rhythmic breathing (deep breath in, deep breath out). When anxious, elongate exhalation. When fatigued, elongate inhalation.

HOLD ONTO YOURSELF – Take your thumb and middle finger and place it on the sides of your nose between your eyes (not pinching, but gently pressing); take your pointer finger and place it on your forehead creating a triangle. Take a deep breath and simultaneously push your feet into the ground. Feel yourself holding onto yourself and notice if you feel safer, less overwhelmed, and centered.

PUSH – Push on yourself and things around you activating proprioceptive input. Squeeze up and down your arms and legs, push against a wall or chair, put pressure on your head by gently squeezing, use a weighted blanket.

MOVEMENT – This one can’t be stressed enough- walk, stretch, exercise, dance, yoga, etc. (*A general rule: if you’re experiencing more fatigue, add stretching, movement and deep breaths.*)

COLD WATER – Splash cold water on your face to help ground your system.. Make cold showers part of your daily routine (for the last minute, turn as cold as you can tolerate and practice mindful breathing). Sip cold water throughout the day.

GARGLE WITH WATER – Gargle to the point where your eyes start to water as this is when you have accessed your Vagus nerve.

LAUGH AND SING/HUM – By yourself or with others (it doesn't matter).

BASIC NEEDS – Sleep, don't skip meals (be aware of sugar as sugar can lead to more overwhelm, anxiety, agitation, depression, etc!), stay hydrated.

Mindset and the Vagus Nerve

SHOULDS – Recognize the expectations you are putting on yourself right now. The more you put pressure on yourself, you increase overwhelm and the odds of shutting down. What you are doing right now is enough- whatever that is! It is ok to not be super-human! Be kind to yourself, you're learning how to orient after a massive disorientation.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS – Write down what you are thankful for. The simple act of bringing gratitude into your physiology helps center it.

REFLECT ON YOUR DAY – Most likely you are helping someone during the day, whether a child, company, partner. At the end of your day, reflect on all the people you served today – who have you helped today? Thank yourself for being of service to others. Celebrate your successes.

COMMUNITY – Find a community where you can come together, discuss, share and borrow each other's grounding. Feel your body and reconnect to yourself in community.