

Trauma and self care

This handout provides a brief overview of **self-care strategies** that can be helpful if you are struggling with the impact of psychological trauma.

These can be used alongside, and in preparation for, further professional support and can help you to manage any day-to-day difficulties. We have provided some pointers but you can find further resources on all these techniques in our workshops and online.



Help to soothe your nervous system through deep, controlled breaths. Practice your deep breathing regularly so that it feels more natural and easier to do at times of high stress.



Help your mind stay in the present moment by connecting with your senses. Observe and label the information coming through your sensory organs such as your eyes, ears, nose etc. Try to orient yourself to the present by noting the date, time and your location. Say the words out loud if you need to.



Help your body increase in nervous system activity, this is particularly important if you notice signs of dissociation. Move and engage your body in any way you can – stomp your feet, hug yourself or someone you trust, play catch, play your favourite song and try to dance along.




Take care of your basic health, this can help increase your capacity to cope with difficult feelings or memories. Focus on improving your diet, hydration, exercise and sleep (where possible). Take a look at your lifestyle and life stressors such as alcohol intake, finances, housing and employment. Where you are able, make positive changes to reduce additional stressors in your life.



Following trauma, and at times of high stress, your mind and body requires rest. This can be very hard to do when you are dealing with residual anxiety and hypervigilance. Making rest an intentional practice is advisable – find whatever ways you can to slow your heart rate and release the tension from your body. Some people find hot baths and progressive muscle relaxation practices helpful.



Improve your mind-body connection and soothe your nervous system through gentle exercises such as yoga. Practices such as mindfulness and meditation can also help. Finding trauma-informed classes and practitioners may be advisable.



For more helpful workshops and resources related to mental health and wellbeing, please visit our website www.investinginwellbeing.co.uk.