

Transforming Self to Transform Systems

Focus for today:

Acknowledging the ways that trauma shows up in our school systems

Selecting practices that will support with metabolizing energy in our bodies

Why focus on our bodies?

Notes

Terminology

Compassion Fatigue

Empathic Distress

Secondary Trauma

Impacts of Trauma

Surviving in your work is always placing others first and prioritizing work over self

Thriving in your work is caring for yourself first by metabolizing your energy and then intentionally serving others

Steps to take when trauma occurs

Acknowledge

Process

Why metabolize built-up energy

The Vagus Nerve

Recalibrating our nervous system

From the book My Grandmother's Hands

Humming

Breathe in and out, deeply and slowly, a few times. Feel your belly pull the air all the way down into it.

On the fourth and fifth exhalation, hum a low, even tone.

Inhale naturally and repeat this a few times, varying your pitch with each new exhalation.

(Alternative: select a song and hum along with the melody)

Belly Breathing

Focus your attention on the center of your belly, behind your navel.

Breathe in and out, deeply and slowly, a few times. Pull the air all the way down into your belly.

Keep breathing, deeply and slowly. Follow your breath as it flows in through your nose, down your throat, into and through your lungs and into your belly. Keep following as it flows back out again.

Buzzing

Relax your shoulders. Rest your tongue gently behind the top row of your teeth. Relax your jaw and let your mouth hang open.

Breathe out slowly and firmly. As you exhale, make a buzzing sound, like a bee. Extend the buzz and the exhalation as long as you can without strain or discomfort.

Experiment with different tones, volumes, and vibrations until you find what feels comfortable to you.

Slow Rocking

Slowly rock your body from side to side, or forward and back.

If you like, play or hum a slow soothing tune and rock to the beat.

Feel free to experiment with standing versus sitting, different speeds, a variety of seated positions. Discover what feels best in your body.

(Alternative: Keep your body still, but let your head and neck rock slowly from side to side)

Rubbing Your Belly

Place your palm on the center of your belly, just above your navel. Press in gently. Hold your hand in place for a moment or two.

Slowly rub your belly, in whatever way feels good to your body.

You can do this with or without clothes on, avoid heavy outerwear.

(Alternatives: rub the center of your breastbone, rub your solar plexus - between your breastbone and navel)

20s

Slowly rotate your foot at the ankle 20 times in either direction. If you like, move it one direction; pause for ten seconds, then rotate in the opposite direction.

Do this with each ankle, one at a time, pausing for ten seconds in between each set of rotations.

Then do the same for each knee, your hips, wrists, elbows, shoulders. Continuing to pause for 10 seconds after each set of rotations.

Om-ing

The vibration of the word *om* has a uniquely powerful settling effect on the human body.

Breath in slowly and deeply. As you exhale, for the full duration of your exhalation, very slowly utter the word *om*.

Continue for ten long, slow exhalations.

Singing Aloud to Yourself

Sing a slow, soothing song to yourself - perhaps a lullaby or gospel tune - as you work, walk, drive, or exercise.

Chanting

Repeating a word, phrase or line over and over. Most chants contain a mantra, a prayer, a song, or a scripture passage. Has a settling effect no matter what you chant.

(For example: May I be safe, May I be healthy, May I be happy, May I be at ease. May you be safe, May you be healthy, May you be happy, May you be at ease.)

Breathe, Ground, and Resource

Think of a person, an animal, or a place that makes you feel safe and secure. Then imagine that, right now, this person or animal is beside you, or that you are in that safe place.

Breathe naturally, simply let yourself experience that safety and security for 1-2 minutes.

Afterward, notice how and what you experience in your body. Slowly look around, including directly behind you, and locate yourself in the here and now.

You can do this standing, sitting, or lying down, with your eyes either open or closed.

Other

Closing Reflection

- ❖ What trauma have you been holding from working in school systems?
- ❖ How do you want to acknowledge the trauma?
- ❖ How do you want to begin processing the trauma?