



Shake'n Breath!

Thank you for letting me support you.

Here are some resources and information about the normalcy of grief and trauma.

These are science based to support us mammals after big and little events.

The exercises are meant to be done **everyday** to support your system to:

- manage stress,
- improve mindset
- repattern old beliefs
- optimize performance.

This allows you to have more availability to be in emotional states whether they are deemed a positive or negative emotion. (Descartes really messed up medicine 500 years ago when he separated mind from body and said they were not related).

When should you do this?

Daily and...

When you notice your thoughts becoming critical of yourself or another that is not helpful.

When your breath is shortened.

When you have an emotion that arises that feels too big.

Shaking:

neurogenic shaking is a natural way mammals, yes, you too are a mammal, use to disperse energy, hormones and tension after an event they've experienced that is big, sudden, or surprising. Tremors or big uncontrollable shaking is a natural way your body reorganizes to come out of a freeze or sympathetic state back into parasympathetic or rest and digest.

*Impala recovering from a near death experience (**warning**-may trigger you but the event resolves well and impala lives, not sure about the lion & if it goes hungry :)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QgglTik6G4>

Exercise-30 seconds shaking:

Allow yourself to stand, shake your knees, hips, torso, shoulders, arms and head to what feels comfortable for you.

Add a deep exhale (haaaaaaa)

Add a deep vocal sound (grrrrrr) or what feels comfortable.

If shaking is not available, tense your fists or quad muscles & release.

Do this incrementally to support your system to go into fight and out of fight response, at your choice.

Tense fists and forearms, release. Tense fists, forearms, torso, neck and head, release.



Increase to 10% tension 5 seconds, then 30% tension for 15 seconds etc.

Notice, does your breath change? What happens? What do you have sensation or awareness of that was different before you did this exercise?

Breath:

Halted breath is usually the first response physiologically when we move into a more sympathetic aka a concerned or uneasy emotional state (heart rate, BP and hormones follow closely).

Using your breath allows you to have control of a sympathetic state.

You get to control how much and how long you do this; begin to notice the beginning, the middle and the end of a sensation of breath holding release and holding.

Lots of breath options out there, here's one I like and use:

Breath Exercise:

Inhale and let your chest get big, expand and hold hold hold hold until the exhale wants to come.

Enjoy and delight in the 2-3 seconds of exhale then...

Exhale until it becomes **work again** as you squeeze out all the air, feel your abdominal and pelvic muscles, quads get tight to really squeeze out all of the air from your lungs.

Wait for the inhale and relish in the breath that occurs.

Repeat 3-5 times & as many times a day you would like.

This is free!!!

Alternatively:

Breath of 4 counts in, 8-12 counts out and exhale through gentle pursed lips to "flicker a flame" across the room.

If feeling frozen or shut down, take 3-4 quick inhales-this increases your heart rate out of freeze state.

(HR increases with every inhale and decreases with every exhale). Use your breath to increase your heartrate.

Remember, these can be fleeting physiologic reactions or they can last minutes to hours to days)

Lucas Rockwood explains in much more detail about breath and leads breathwork you can follow:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rJvWLN8rtE>

Cold plunge:

Cold plunges are believed to support more resilience, less anxiety and help during periods of grief. 90 seconds is most helpful for a total of 12 min a week.

Can be done in the shower, bath tub, or put hand or foot in cold ice water.



<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/20/well/mind/cold-water-plunge-mental-health.html>

Sleep hygiene:

The 10-3-2-1-0 sleep rule is made up of five separate steps:

- 10-hours before bedtime – no more caffeine
- 3 hours before bedtime – no more alcohol or food
- 2 hours before bedtime – no more work
- 1 hour before bedtime – no more screen time
- 0 times you hit the snooze button in the morning

Sugar:

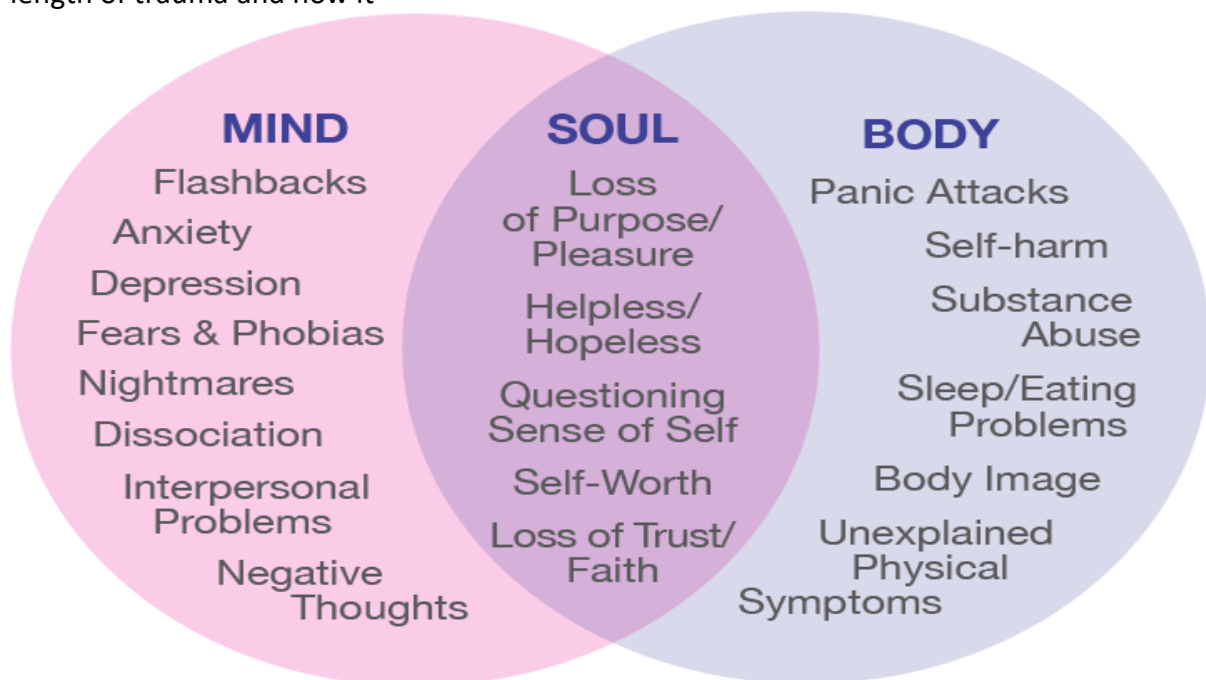
why you might want to rethink your sugar intake to support better sleep, physical pain and health.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmebvEWotzl>

Information about trauma:

Trauma is defined as “Anything that our system can’t handle or respond to” Peter Levine.

Responses to grief can be all over the map, they are **normal** and may take 4-6 weeks to resolve from the acute stage to less disruptive. Be aware that threat physiology can be very subtle...they can also last up to a year. There is no definitive time for anyone about the length of trauma and how it





Permission to spend only a certain amount of time thinking about the event: allow yourself to orient to pleasure.

What have you done in the past to support a less activated state. (axe throwing, dancing, listening to music, reading, watching movies etc)

Bring back your best/worst Dad joke or Pun pun bring them on.

Reach out to a friend or family-remember you can state how you would like them to support you. Maybe it's just sitting with you, sitting while you get angry or cry or say nothing and they don't have to say or do anything, just be there with you. You can also say, I have had enough talking about this event and need to talk about something else.

Recognize if your thought patterns and behaviours are concerning. Also, ask your co-workers how they are and be prepared to hear them; trust your intuition that their words are congruent with their behaviours.

When your response or the person your asking about responds with "I'm good or I'm fine". Give it a moment and ask what is under the "I'm fine or I'm good" and let them have space to talk.

Caveat to listening and responding.

It can be easy to want to tell your story from beginning to end but this can retraumatize you and the other person. We are conditioned & mandated to tell our story this way but it neurologically rewires the brain into the story including all the hormones, physiology and lets the brain solidify the event. We want to take a bite or just dip our toes into it and step out and allow the experience to be processed in a healthier way.

Do not let yourself or another person verbally vomit their story. It is okay to take a pause for yourself and say, whoa, I think this is too much. If you as the listener is feeling your system getting flooded, you can bet the storyteller is also flooded.

IT IS OKAY TO SAY TO SOMEONE, I THINK THIS IS A LOT, WOULD IT BE OKAY TO STOP HERE AND I CAN SUPPORT YOU WITH WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD ME?

OR, I THINK IT WOULD BE REALLY HELPFUL TO TALK TO SOMEONE, LIKE A THERAPIST TO SORT MORE OF THIS OUT BUT I AM SO GLAD YOU SHARED WHAT YOU DID WITH ME.

Respond: allow yourself to connect to others and for others to connect to you. Listen actively. You are not required to fix or make better, listening and hearing, validating what they feel is the magic.

Resource: check in with yourself or to another person in 2-7 days. What do you need (Sleep? Healthy food? Social engagement? Exercise? Activity to blow off steam?).

Do you need to seek further help from a therapist or your medical practitioner?



Reach out to a therapist. Done in a space where you can share confidential thoughts and feelings and have someone hold the container and witness your emotions.

It's okay to allow yourself to take breaks mentally and physically from remembering the event.

Avoid alcohol or large amounts, it exacerbates emotions and does not support restful states or sleep.

Be kind to yourself and don't allow negative thoughts to overwhelm you. Ask the thoughts to pull back their energy but you do notice them and state you will come back to attend to them.

Here are some resources to support you:

Lisa Wimberger -physical and mental exercises and has helpful meditations for purchase.
<https://www.neurosculpting.com/>

David Kessler grief and loss therapist- lots of free resources and groups you can pay to attend that are confidential.
<https://grief.com/>

Paul Denniston yoga to support grief states <https://www.pauldennistontraining.com/>

Yoga from Lucas Rockwood (I call man yoga) <https://www.yogabody.com/>

Never Leave the Playground: games to relearn reflexes and feel young and free! Really.
<https://neverleavetheplayground.com/>

Catherine Allen, RTC, SEP reach out if you need help

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, (1-800-SUICIDE), or call your local crisis centre

BC crisis support: 1-800-784-2433
<https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/get-help/>

Alberta crisis support: 1-877-303-2642
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/Service.aspx?id=6810&serviceAtFacilityID=1047134>