

7 Steps for Stress & Trauma Release and Emergencies: Managing our Emotions and Reactions

A stressful situation just happened: Is your heart beating fast? Does your breathing get shorter or faster? Is your body trembling? Do you feel confused, disoriented, anxious, panicky or helpless? These are natural reactions in times of stress, trauma or emergencies. They can be calmed and changed on the spot if we take the following steps:

On a scale of 1-10, what is the degree of tension you feel now?

If it is 6 and above - follow all the steps; if it is below 6, go straight to steps 4 to 7

STEP 1

In a safe place or wherever you are

cross your arms and tap alternately with open palms on your arms 25 times; then take a deep breath

STEP 2

Press your feet hard on the ground and feel the support of the ground. Now look around and count ten different objects with the same color, texture or shape.

STEP 3

Look around you and count 10 different textures, such as wood, glass, plastic, etc.; or 10 different shapes; or 10 objects of any one color. Now notice how you feel less agitated

STEP 4

Put one hand on your chest and the other hand on your stomach and follow your breath.

STEP 5

Just pay attention to your inner sensations, such as fast heartbeat or pulse, short breath, tightness or pain in chest, arms, neck, etc. Notice one sensation at a time. Just pay attention and be curious with no judgment or analysis and release – **discharge-** will happen automatically. Signs of release or discharge are deep spontaneous breath, shaking and trembling, yawning; heat wave, warm sweat, goose bumps, gurgling of the stomach

STEP 6

Keep noticing the constricted sensations that come up, one at a time, and release them one at a time, by paying attention and giving time to the discharge, until you have recovered your calm.

STEP 7

In order to strengthen the sense of calm you have achieved, think of something – a resource- that makes you feel stronger, calmer or just happy. Pay attention to the soothing effect the resource has on you. Resources can be internal (faith, inner strength, resilience) and external (friends, family, activities)

Remember, stress is contagious. Our stress affects us and all the people around us, and creates a chain reaction that amplifies reactivity and fear. To prevent this, please use these tools to calm yourself first, and then give support to others. As you experience the effectiveness of these tools, you will know which of these steps to use again when you feel stressed

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