

Body Awareness and Emotional Contagion

Simple Body Awareness – Sit in quiet and reflect on the following:

- The temperature and humidity on your skin (warm/dry/cool/moist)?
 - Scan your body and notice where you are tense. Difference between upper body and lower body or right side and left side?
 - How is your breathing? Is it deep or shallow? Smooth or Rigid?
 - How does the expression on your face feel? What is the position of your mouth, eyes, forehead?
 - Can you feel your heart? Is it beating fast or slow?
- Body Awareness With Others

Body Awareness With Others - practicing while interacting with others:

- Place something in your usual line of sight that will remind you to check in.
- Once every 15-20 minutes tune into your body and assess for the temperature of your body, tension, breathing pattern, facial expression and heart rate.
- If you notice an increase in arousal use a grounding exercise to keep yourself regulated while focusing on the person you are supporting. This allows you to be present and to empathize with this person while still keeping your nervous system and emotions separate from them (conscious empathy).

Signs of Arousal:

- Faster/shallow breathing
- Increased heart rate
- Tension in body
- Increased Sweating Cold (clammy) skin
- Digestive issues

Adapted from Rothschild (2006). Helper for the Helper: Self-Care Strategies for Managing Burnout and Stress