

TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE PTSD SYMPTOMS

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MOOD REGULATION

Cook's Hookup – *this brief exercise stimulates pertinent acupressure points and adjusts the body's polarity to regulate mood. If you are experiencing anxiety on a regular basis, practice this exercise twice a day for approximately 2 minutes. Also, do it if you feel as though you are about to be flooded with feelings.*

1. Sit on a chair
2. Place left ankle behind right ankle
3. Place right hand on left knee
4. Place left hand on right knee
5. Place tip of tongue where teeth and gum meet
6. Holding these positions, do slow deep breathing for 2 minutes.

Slow, Deep Breathing

Practice doing this daily. No matter where you start, gradually work up to 15 minutes per day. This exercise, done on a daily basis, will lower levels of excessive adrenaline and cortisol in the body. After a couple of weeks, you will feel more centered, more in control, more in touch with what you need. In addition, this exercise will boost your immune system.

1. Sit in a chair with your back straight and supported, your feet flat on the floor or sit in a traditional meditation position
2. *Begin to breathe slowly and deeply by doing the following:
3. Inhale all the way down to your navel. Your ribs will expand
4. Hold your breath for a count of 3.
5. Exhale slowly by blowing through your mouth.
6. When you think you've exhaled all the air, exhale a little more
7. Repeat from *

Note: If you find yourself being distracted by the chatter in your mind, gently bring your attention back to your breathing. After a few days, your mind will get used to this and quiet down on its own. Some people find it helpful to breathe to soothing music. At first, you may only be able to do this for a couple of minutes. Just keep adding to that, little by little.

SLEEP DISTURBANCE

If you experience difficulty falling asleep, try this simple little exercise: as you are lying in bed, use your finger to repeatedly trace an infinity sign in the air. After a few minutes, you will notice your eyelids getting heavy....

Help for Children Who Are about to Tantrum

Demonstrate this technique for children before there is a problem so it does not take them by surprise. Children can also be taught to apply this technique to themselves when they feel like they might “lose it”.

The Head Hug

Place one hand flat and firmly on the forehead. Place the other hand flat and firmly on the back of the head at the occipital lobe (the part that bulges out near the neck). Have the child do slow, deep breathing for a couple of minutes as you maintain this hold.

Things to Remember

You are not going crazy. What you are feeling is a normal reaction to having experienced a very abnormal event. With time and self help, possibly professional help, you will recover.

The exercises here will work well both on children and adults. In the meantime, there are also some other simple steps to take

1. Go easy on yourself and loved ones who are traumatized
2. Take things one day at a time.
3. Remember: everyone has bad days.
4. Make yourself connect with people you care about.
5. Keep your life as simple as possible.
6. Rest when you can.
7. Stay away from alcohol and caffeine to manage moods
8. Try to eat balanced meals
9. Take time to play with your children
10. The week before the anniversary of the hurricane and lost loved ones' birthdays plus major holidays will be more difficult than other days. Plan ahead for how you can make them easier. Expect your children to act out. Give them extra support. This will pass.
11. If you need support, ask for it. Family members and neighbors can take turns supporting one another.
12. Remember: You are not forgotten. The outside world still cares deeply about your plight.

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