



HEALING

PRACTICES

WELCOME TO HEALING PRACTICES!

Brought to you by:
BCEV & The Women's Center

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Healing Practices were a monthly grounding and intentional space for folks to check in and connect with their minds and bodies' back in 2020.

We at BCEV and the Women's Center recognize that folks are trying to navigate work, school, loved ones, amidst multiple pandemics.

We also truly believe in the importance of self-care in communal spaces.



Therefore, we built this accessible document for people to engage with these practices on their own time and within their own communities!

In our chaotic realities, finding and making time to listen and be intentional about our bodies and our attention is essential for our survival.

Gentle Reminder:

The following exercises and prompts have been curated to turn our attention inward in reflexive action.

All of these practices can be modified!

Please engage in what feels good to you.

Any and all questions are welcome!

Please email us @
womenscenterdepaul@gmail.com.



Writing Love Letters to Ourselves

Prompt 1:

Describe your perfect day! What exactly does your body need to feel rested and whole, from morning 'til night?

What's one thing from your 'perfect day' that you can do for yourself today?!

Writing Love Letters
to Ourselves

Writing Love Letters to Ourselves

Prompt 2:

Thinking about your inner child:
what do you want to tell them?

What assurances can you give
them? What support do they need?
What are some loving and positive
things that you can tell them that
would make them smile? What
would your child self love about
you now?

Writing Love Letters
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Prompt 3:

What are some of my favorite
qualities about myself?

What have I been proud of myself
for accomplishing or trying
recently?

What is one thing I would love to
do to celebrate myself?

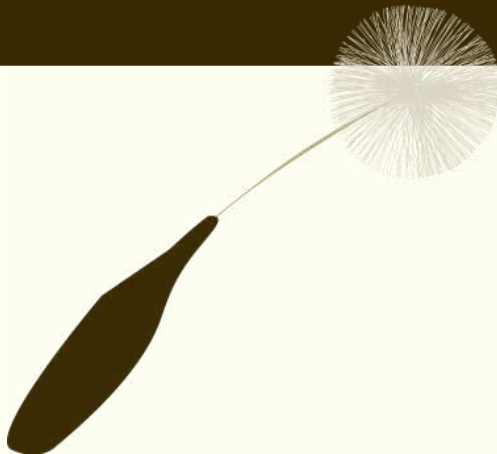
Writing Love Letters
to Ourselves

Affirmations

Fill in these blanks:

I am _____

I deserve _____



Grounding Yourself

I love grounding techniques and practices because they ***allow us to return to the present, back into our bodies and more aware of ourselves and potentially what we may need.***

These exercises can be very helpful when you are feeling disconnected or dissociative, 'checked out', and sometimes, even in moments where you're having a trauma response, like a flashback, etc.



Grounding yourself with an object

Pick a stone or object that is small enough to hold, preferably in one hand.

TIP: I personally try to find something that "feels right in my hand."

What does that mean to you?

Do you like more smooth or more coarse textures?

An object that is slightly bigger or smaller than your palm?

**Begin to name things
you observe about the object!**

What color is it?

What texture?

Shape?

**Without evaluation or judgment
(even positive ones!),
be as descriptive as possible**

You can do so by writing them down, speaking out loud, or in your mind.

Consider the sensations of the object:
temperature? weight?

Breathing Exercises

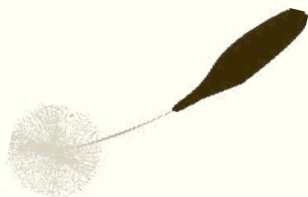
Have you ever noticed your breathing when you are relaxed?

The next time you are relaxed, take a moment to notice how your body feels.

Think about how you breathe when you first wake up in the morning or just before you fall asleep.

Breathing exercises can be effective because they can allow your body to feel like it does when you are already relaxed.

You may find breathing practices to be incredibly useful at times and not the right fit at other times. As with any practice, listen to what works for you and go at your own pace.



Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress because:

- The way you breathe affects your whole body. Breathing exercises are a good way to relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress.
- Breathing exercises are easy to learn.
- You can do them whenever you want
- You don't need any special tools or equipment to do them.
- You can do different exercises to see which work best for you.

Morning Breathing

Try this exercise when you first get up in the morning to relieve muscle stiffness and clear clogged breathing passages.

Then use it throughout the day to relieve back tension.

1. From a standing position, bend forward from the waist with your knees slightly bent, letting your arms dangle close to the floor.
2. As you inhale slowly and deeply, return to a standing position by rolling up slowly, lifting your head last.
3. Hold your breath for just a few seconds in this standing position.
4. Exhale slowly as you return to the original position, bending forward from the waist.
5. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

Belly Breathing

Try this basic exercise anytime you need to relax or relieve stress.

1. Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.
5. Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.
6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

4-7-8 Breathing

This exercise also uses belly breathing to help you relax. You can do this exercise either sitting or lying down.

1. To start, put one hand on your belly and the other on your chest as in the belly breathing exercise.
2. Take a deep, slow breath from your belly, and silently count to 4 as you breathe in.
3. Hold your breath, and silently count from 1 to 7.
4. Breathe out completely as you silently count from 1 to 8. Try to get all the air out of your lungs by the time you count to 8.
5. Repeat 3 to 7 times or until you feel calm.
6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

Roll breathing

Roll breathing helps you to develop full use of your lungs and to focus on the rhythm of your breathing.

You can do it in any position.

But while you are learning, it is best to lie on your back with your knees bent.

CAUTION:

Some people get dizzy the first few times they try roll breathing.

If you begin to breathe too fast or feel lightheaded, slow your breathing.

Get up slowly.

Turn to the next page for the breathing exercise

Roll breathing exercise

- Put your **left hand on your belly** and your **right hand on your chest**. Notice how your hands move as you breathe in and out.
- Practice filling your lower lungs by breathing so that your "belly" (left) hand goes up when you inhale and your "chest" (right) hand remains still.
- Do this 8 to 10 times.

TIP:

Always breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth.

- When you have filled and emptied your lower lungs 8 to 10 times, add the second step to your breathing:
- Inhale first into your lower lungs as before, and then continue inhaling into your upper chest. Breathe slowly and regularly.

As you do so, your right hand will rise and your left hand will fall a little as your belly falls.

Roll breathing contd.

- As you exhale slowly through your mouth, *make a quiet, whooshing sound* as first your left hand and then your right hand fall.

As you exhale, feel the tension leaving your body as you become more and more relaxed.

- Practice breathing in and out in this way for 3 to 5 minutes.

Notice that the movement of your belly and chest rises and falls like the motion of rolling waves.

- Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

Practice roll breathing daily for several weeks until you can do it almost anywhere. You can use it as an instant relaxation tool anytime you need one.

Box Breathing

(4 - 4 - 4 - 4)

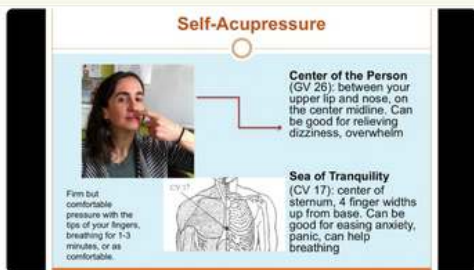
This is a basic breathing exercise to slow you down and regulate your breath.

- Take a slow deep breath in and silently count to 4.
- Once you've gotten to 4, hold that breath in and count to 4 again.
- After you've reached 4, slowly exhale and release your breath while counting to 4.
- At the end of your count, hold again for 4 counts.
- Repeat this pattern 8-12 times or until you begin to feel grounded and relaxed.

GUIDE-ALONG HEALING PRACTICES VIDEOS by Jen Curley



5-Step Self-Holding Exercise (created by Heidi Hanson)



Self-Acupressure



Spiral Breath (3 minutes)



Caring Breath

*Click photograph to
access these incredible videos!*

Made by Jen Curley

Self Care List

I loved to end each Healing Practice session by inviting the group to write down five actions of self care their bodies and minds need today.

This could be anything from drinking more water to reading for pleasure to making time for exercise or a walk.

I invite folks
to pick two-three actions that
can commit to do today:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Grounding

Grounding is a simple skill you can try anywhere, ***which in a literal sense helps to reconnect you with the “ground” and the world around you when emotional distress feels overwhelming.***

Engaging in this technique can help you to mindfully connect to the present moment and create a sense of safety when experiencing difficult memories, flashbacks, or emotional suffering.

Grounding contd.

Try using your five senses to practice these skills at home:

Sight: read a book, attend virtual museums, watch a new television show or movie as a family, observe nature, look at or take new pictures of your family

Smell: bake cookies or a new recipe, light a scented candle, use fabric softener on your bedding, use your favorite lotion or perfume, smell lavender, try deep breathing

Touch: wear comfortable clothing, paint, cuddle your pet, take a bath or shower, use a fidget cube, make your own stress ball with balloons and rice/or sand, go outside and feel the breeze/sunshine

Sound: listen to music, meditate, laugh, play a comedy special, pick up an instrument

Taste: eat your favorite food/dessert in moderation, eat mindfully and focus on texture and taste, try something new, have tea/coffee/hot chocolate

Affirmation Card Practice

By creating our own cards, we make ones that are meaningful to us, with words and images that resonate. The cards can be anything that feels right to you, whether they be grounding, soothing, uplifting, powerful, a reminder of who or what we feel connected to. It's an offering to ourselves, rather than trying to make ourselves feel or think a certain way.

Instructions:

With whatever supplies are available, create cards with words/images that are meaningful to you. They can be as simple as a piece of paper with words written on it, or more elaborately decorated. It can be helpful to have a place to keep them that you can return to—a small box or bowl or bag to carry with you.

Affirmation Cards

cont.

What to write on them? --

Quotes / Parts of poems or songs /
Messages from friends and family /

One or two word intentions /

Reminders to yourself / Anything that
resonates.

Examples: -gentleness (jen), I breathe
in peace (michelle); today I'm going to
believe that showing up is enough
(michelle), "be softer with you./you are
a breathing thing./a memory to
someone. / a home to a life." (nayyirah
waheed)



Healing Holds

*Depicted from Capacitar
International, we demonstrate
various holds that can be useful for
anxiety, emotional or physical pain,
traumatic memories,
insomnia and deep relaxation.*

This practice consists of three energy holds that can be used with oneself or another person.

As the practice is done, hold in mind and heart a sense of peace, light, and spaciousness.

These holds can be done for several minutes each, or as long as feels comfortable. If useful, you can accompany the holds with abdominal breathing.

If sharing the practice with someone else, explain the practice first. Ask if they would like to receive the practice from you (partner holds below) or to try the practice on themselves (self-care holds below).

Always ask and wait for consent during each of the partner holds.

Check in during the practice & make any adjustments needed.

HALO HOLD

Hold palms in the energy field on either side of the head several inches away from the person.

Partner



Self-Care



<http://www.meclarkeconsulting.com>

HEAD HOLD

One hand lightly holds the head high on the forehead; the other hand holds the base of the head. The energy of the hands connects with parts of the brain related with memories and emotions

Partner



Self-Care



CROWN HOLD

Thumbs of both hands together contact crown center at the top of the head. Fingertips lightly hold across the forehead.

Along with deep breathing, this hold is used in different bodywork modalities to promote emotional release.

Partner



Self-Care





Sun

Salutations

Sun Salutation

I rise to meet the sun
(arms up to the sky and stretch back slightly)

I open myself to the possibilities of the day
(open arms out wide to the sides)

I bend with the challenges of the day
(arms back up over head and bend whole
body side to side)

I breathe in peace
(bring hands to heart space or self-hug)

And, I give it to the world [or to us, our
community...] (extend hands out from heart,
offering)

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Practice shared by Gwendolyn Packard
This practice can be done seated or standing & can
be done once or a few times in a row.

Sun Salutation Video by Gwendolyn Packard



[View here](#)
(password: salutation)