



# MIND & BODY CONNECTION

## NEWCOMER WELLBEING WORKSHOP SERIES

**Session Overview:** This session focuses on the mind and body connection to understanding mental wellbeing. Participants will learn 5 somatic resourcing techniques, to manage stress. Participants will be greater attuned to their bodies and know how to identify changes. They will also learn how their body is a source of strength in difficult moments of emotional overwhelm.

### Objectives

- Strengthen knowledge on how identify stress in the body
- Learn the impacts of stress on their mental health
- Practice 5 self and co-regulating techniques - S.C.O.P.E. approach
- Empower participants to make informed choices regarding their mental wellbeing
- Engage with others to share wisdom existing coping strategies to mitigate stress



# SESSION OVERVIEW

<p><b>Welcome</b> 5 min.</p>	<p>Welcome participants to program space. Conduct attendance. Participants are introduced to space space, facilitators, and each other. Refreshments served.</p>
<p><b>Group Guidelines</b> 5 min.</p>	<p><b>Conduct group guidelines</b> using “pictorial group guidelines”.</p> <p><b>How can we create a safe, trusting, and secure space?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidentiality, Respecting Identities, Boundaries and Communication, Try Something New, Ask Questions, Connect &amp; Get support, Be Curious</li> <li>• Provide overview on mental health, mental wellbeing and mental health issues</li> <li>• Address potential misinformation or stigma about mental health</li> </ul>
<p><b>Check-In Activity</b> 10 min.</p>	<p><b>Dance Ribbons: Fast and Slow</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give each participant two dance ribbons</li> <li>• Participants arrange in a large circle and wave their ribbons slowly.</li> <li>• Guide participants to walk inward towards the center and wave their ribbons quickly</li> <li>• Guide the participants to move outward and inward, changing the pace of waving accordingly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learn</b> 10 min.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Question:</b> How does your body feel when you are stressed? (Ex. Tension, sleep changes, appetite changes, nausea, headaches, heart rate changes)</p> <p>Our mind and body is deeply connected; when we feel stress in our mind, it manifests in our body. This can take many forms.</p> <p><b>1. Window of Tolerance:</b> When we are within our window of tolerance, our bodies are in an optimal state, we are able to access our emotions and reason, and are mentally engaged. This is the ideal state to be in.</p> <p><b>2. Leaving Window of Tolerance:</b> Experiences of stress or triggering can take us out of this window of tolerance, leading to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hyperarousal</b> aka Too Fast: Can't calm down. Overactive, unclear thought, emotional distress.</li> <li>• <b>Hypoarousal</b> aka Too Slow: Shutting down. Depressed, lethargic, numb, unmotivated.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Returning to Window of Tolerance:</b> Since our mind and body are connected, <u>we can use our body to regulate our mind</u>. The strategies used depends on the bodily reactions experienced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If experiencing hyperarousal</b> --&gt; Use Breathing, Grounding, Orient to your surroundings, Self-touch, Smile</li> <li>• <b>If experiencing hypoarousal</b> --&gt; Use Lengthen the spine, Move, Smile, Defensive Action</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b> 20 min.</p>	<p>Practice SOMATIC techniques as a group. Categorize each technique as an appropriate response to hyperarousal or hypoarousal or both.</p> <p><b>Breathing:</b> Inhale to the count of 5, exhale to the count of 10, focusing on slow, intentional breaths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate for hyperarousal aka too fast</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Activity</b> 20 min.</p>	<p><b>Body Scan:</b> Cross your arms and ankles, tuck hands under armpits and give yourself a squeeze. Lower head and sway if that feels good for you. Breathe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity is one way to give ourselves comfort. Just like we hold and swaddle crying babies or hug our distressed friends and family, we can give ourselves a hug.</li> <li>• Appropriate for hyperarousal</li> </ul> <p><b>Grounding:</b> Focus on your feet, feeling them firmly planted on the ground, anchoring yourself in the present moment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity can also be done through grounding meditation with a theme of rooting yourself down like a tree, stable against the changing winds</li> <li>• Appropriate for hyperarousal</li> </ul> <p><b>Lengthen the spine:</b> Straighten your posture, lengthening your spine, and relaxing your shoulders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity can begin with inviting participants to sit slumped and looking down. How does this make you feel? Then sitting up straight and lengthening the spine.</li> <li>• Appropriate for hypoarousal</li> </ul> <p><b>Move:</b> Engage in a movement that brings you relief or joy, such as walking, dancing, or swimming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate for hyperarousal and hypoarousal</li> </ul> <p><b>Orient to Your Surroundings:</b> Look around slowly, taking in colors and shapes, and focus on something pleasant or comforting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity can be done with upbeat music to get people energized</li> <li>• Appropriate for hyperarousal</li> </ul> <p><b>Self-Touch:</b> Place your hand over your heart or another comforting area, providing a sense of reassurance and connection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity can be paired with affirmations. Ex. I am safe. I am strong.</li> <li>• Appropriate for hyperarousal</li> </ul> <p><b>Smile:</b> Smile softly, even if just with your eyes, to activate positive emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity can be paired with frowning at one another, and then smiling at one another</li> <li>• Appropriate for both hyperarousal and hypoarousal</li> </ul> <p><b>Defensive action:</b> Punch the air around you, releasing pent-up energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity can be done with upbeat music to get people energized</li> <li>• Appropriate for hypoarousal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflect &amp; Discuss</b> 5 min.</p>	<p><b>Discussion Question:</b> What was your favourite technique for hyperarousal? Hypoarousal? <b>Discussion Question:</b> How does it relate to the way stress shows up in your body?</p>
<p><b>Check-Out Activity</b> 5 min.</p>	<p><b>Melodies of Mood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play a melody reflecting how you feel on the tong drum</li> <li>• Pass the tong drum around the room and invite participants to play their own melody of how they are feeling</li> </ul>