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PSYCHOTHERAPY & COACHING

COPING SKILLS: TRACKING...Your Thoughts, Emotions, Sensations



Being in the entertainment industry for a few years, Ilona realized, that her passion for mindful living began amidst the chaos of being a publicist for high profile celebrities and brands. The constant pressure, urgency, and balance of image and identity fascinated her, but she knew it was not meant long-term for her sensitive and introspective soul. This way of life was then followed by a second career in the healing arts doing energy work and therapeutic massage. While hands on healing was a wonderful modality, her passion for words, stories and meaning making gave her the desire to go back to grad school, and obtain the 3000 hours required for licensure as a psychotherapist. Ilona believes in synchronicity and the flow of life, and is now grateful to draw upon her past careers to inform her current private practice.

Ilona draws on the experiences of her past to inform her work. Being a dancer in her early years, she is very aware of the importance of body posture, breath work, and movement. Emotions and memories are stored in our bodies, affecting how we show up in the world on a daily basis. It is vital to learn about how you express yourself, how you experience your feelings, and how that impacts your behavior/relationships. How can you create change unless you first take a non-judgmental look at yourself, learn about why you do what you do, and then decide what you would rather be/do/have?

How we show up in our minds, bodies and relationships has a huge impact on our emotional wellbeing.



HELPING YOU "TRACK"

One of the most valuable coping skills is that of "TRACKING." Not only can you track your progress, emotions, triggers, beliefs, thought patterns, actions, consequences, etc. You can also track the sensation of emotions in your body.

In trauma informed psychotherapy, it is crucial to create awareness around body sensations and embodied experiences. This gives us a sense of presence, power, awareness, connection, and helps foster a sense of security in our bodies.

Did you know that much of our emotions are stored in our body, and have a direct impact on shaping our bodies, experiences, actions and our brains?

That's right, our body holds memories of what has happened in our lives, how we felt, the meanings that we created around those situations, and more.

This worksheet is designed to help you utilize THE SKILL OF TRACKING 101!

HOW TO TRACK:

Use the following image and worksheet to explore bodily sensations and get to know your own experience a bit more. This is useful in grounding and getting present in the moment. It will hopefully help you connect to your body, learn about your reactions, responses, and overall how you hold onto emotion in your body.

TIPS:

*When tracking an experience in the body, pay attention to sensations that you notice.

EXAMPLE: tingling, numbness, disconnection, pressure, buzzing, shaking, relaxation, openness, tightness, constriction, pleasant, unpleasant, etc.

*This is meant to be a NON-judgmental process of open awareness and curiosity. JUST NOTICE.

*Notice how the sensations move or stay still as you bring awareness to them.

*Identify if they are pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Label them.

*Know that awareness of sensations actually helps regulate your nervous system, which in turn helps you get back in the driver's seat of your wellness.

*Start noticing your BREATH (are you holding your breath or breathing deeply?).

*Notice your HEART RATE (is it fast or slow?).

*Notice TENSION in your body (where is it shoulders, hips, back?).

*Notice your POSTURE (are you curled up in a ball, or standing tall and open).

*Ask yourself what you are needing to attend to the sensations that you are noticing. Do you need to stretch? Take a deeper breath? Place your hand on your racing heart? Etc.

Overall, tracking helps you create a connection to and awareness of your nervous system and physical experience. This is important so you don't get overwhelmed by your experiences, or act-out in unhealthy or damaging ways.

Tracking brings you into the PRESENT moment and can help create space for change.

This "tuning into awareness" creates synchronicity, balance and empowerment, so that you can begin to shift into a more pleasant experience (if that is what you wish to accomplish).

****BEGINNERS TIP:**

Practice tracking when you are in a more calm and peaceful state to begin with, so that you can start to notice sensations without being over stimulated.

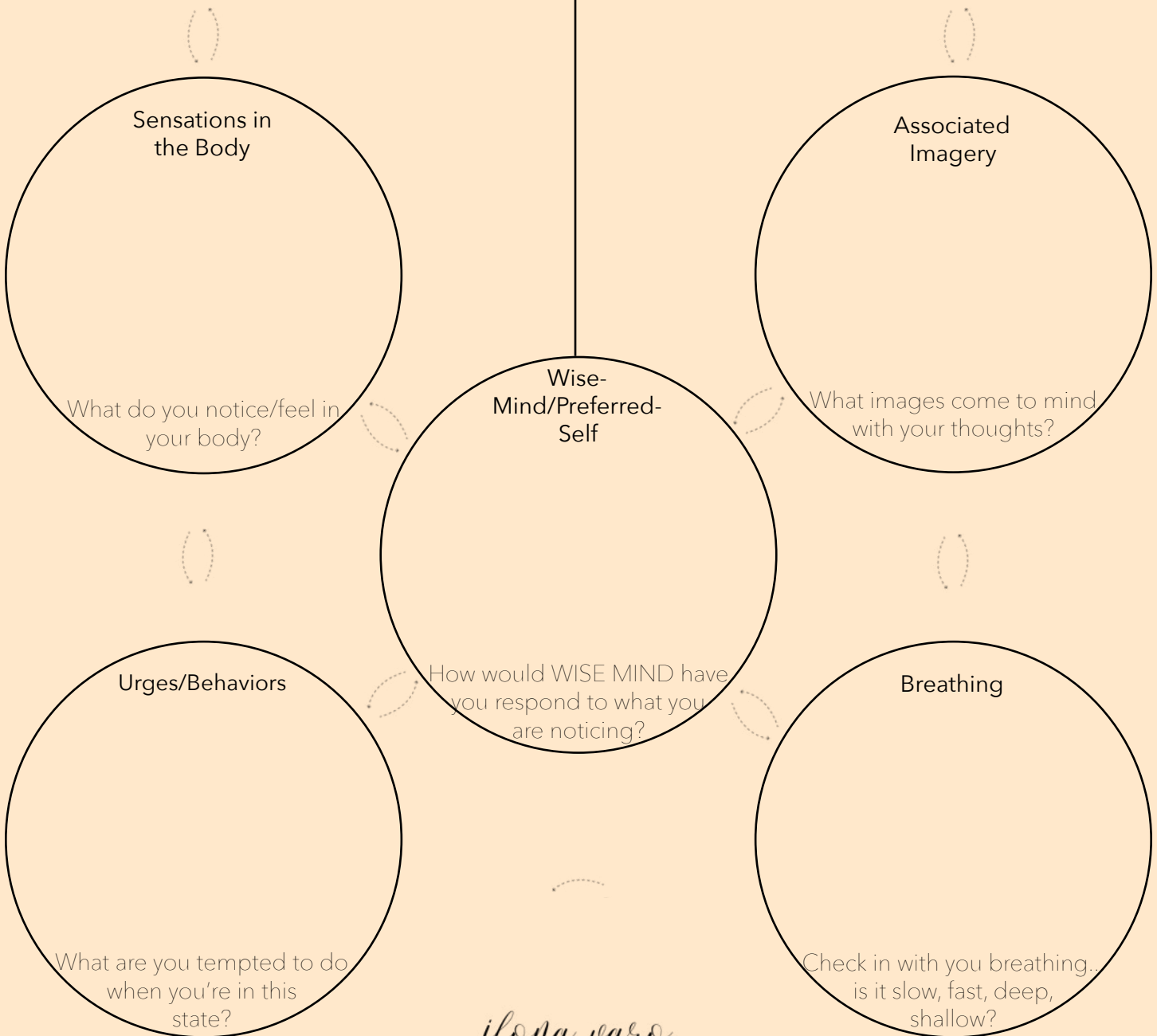
This will also help you have a frame of reference to recreate that sense of calm when you are in a more activated or escalated state.



Starting Emotions:

Associated Thoughts:

What do these emotions make you think?



Tracking Sensations in the Body:

Our bodies are hardwired to respond to danger (whether real or perceived). It is helpful to understand and make sense of the sensations happening in our bodies, so that we can better identify/label distress, become familiar with tolerating sensations, and make wiser decisions based on triggers. Below are some experiences in the body to familiarize yourself with, and practice tolerating. Know that these responses are natural, often automatic, and necessary to be aware of.

Thoughts

Notice what thoughts come to mind. Don't judge, just notice!

Vision

Take a look around your surroundings and see what you notice. Close your eyes and notice what you see in your mind's-eye.

Breathing

Notice your breathing: Is it slow, quick, shallow, deep, forced, easy, are you holding your breath?

Heartbeat

Pay attention to your heartbeat. What do you notice? Is it slow, fast, racing, are you out of breath?

Stomach

Can you sense into your stomach area? Does it feel full, empty, tight, nauseated, twisted, calm, relaxed?

Muscles

Notice your general musculature. Is it tense, sore, relaxed, pulsing, exhausted, energized, etc.

Dizzy or lightheaded

Tune into what sensations you notice in your head. Is there tension, pain, dizziness, etc. See if you can move the muscles in your face and just notice the sensation.

Mouth

Notice if your mouth is open, closed, tightly sealed, tension in your jaw, clenched teeth, etc. See if you can smile and see what you notice. Create a sad-face and what you notice.

Posture

Notice and attend to your posture. Are you standing tall? Are you hunched over? Curled in a ball? Crossed arms? Etc.

Palms

Notice if your palms are clammy, sweaty, dry, itchy?

Hands

Notice if your hands are clenched, relaxed, anxiously twisting or tapping, are they tight in a fist, what are they trying to say?

