

## INTRODUCTORY INTERNAL AWARENESS EXERCISES

### \*\*Basic Internal self-scan:

*(Speaking slowly, deliberately. I try to use "we" language to remind the person they are not alone.)*

Let's arrive, here, now, in this moment. Perhaps we can allow our bodies to submit to gravity and settle an inch deeper into our seats. If our eyes are closed, we can rely on our other senses as we (dive, turn, explore, feel) inside (ourselves/ our bodies/ ourselves) in this moment.

Let's notice what it's like to float down inside, without any expectation or agenda, and as soon as we find an area with interesting sensations, stop and feel what happens as we focus friendly attention there.

Maybe there's a felt sense of specific physical sensation?

Maybe an emotional energy arises, as you open your awareness? Is it static, or moving....?

Are there several different energies or emotions you notice?

Maybe beliefs or thoughts arise; see if they can gently wait for a while; we'll get to them later.

Stay, stay, see what happens.....

Now, as we gently bring awareness to the outside as well as the inside, let's notice explicitly that we didn't do this exercise alone. We've both (————) and (Kate) experienced this together. Let's notice what happens inside as we bring awareness to that.....

And before we open our eyes and come back into the room together, let's remind ourselves that we do not do this alone. We are surrounded by a throng of other beings; humans, animals, rivers, hills, trees.... (depending on your own comfort with such ideas!) all working for healing and goodness. We are never alone.

### \*\*\*Experiencing how we are never alone, in our work

*\*(I re-word this for clients to say "in our lives".)*

If you're willing, follow my voice. You can have your eyes closed, like me, or slightly open but with your gaze diffuse.

So now, I'm noticing the feeling of my physical self, supported by my chair, and gently assisted by gravity to relinquish control and settle in.

I'm enjoying the sensation of the firm support the seat gives to my body.

As I tune in to these sensations, I'm allowing the seat back to be a proxy for all the many supportive people and beings who help me (*do my work*) every day: my professional lineage, my teachers, my colleagues, my friends, my family, animals, the land where I live, a tree I love.....

And as I let myself lean back into these helping beings, I recognize that I am never alone. At any time (*when I'm in session*), I can remind myself to "lean back into" the support of

my helping team, and I know I don't have to worry; I have a huge support network who help me do my work and be my best self.

**\*\*Yoga Nidra exercise:**

*(This is a very shortened version of a full "body scan" using Yoga Nidra. See Richard Miller, and others, who have written about this deep relaxation practice)*

*(Speaking very slowly and calmly)*

First, see what it feels like to ground yourself in your seat, with your feet on the floor.

Now, if you're willing allow your tongue to relax on the floor of your mouth. Notice how when that happens, the muscles of jaw and face, scalp and neck, all release as well.

*(Depending on how long you want to take, next you can do a longer scan, inviting your client to touch into sensation in each of the places you name, starting in the mouth... "left side of your tongue, right side of your tongue, upper lip from the inside, lower lip from the inside....")*

Now scan through your body and locate an area large or small where you feel a sensation of (comparative) coolness. If you're willing, stay inside that sensation for a while with friendly curiosity, and notice what specific sensations let you know about "coolness".

Then relinquish that sensation, notice your whole self sitting in your seat, and check out your tongue to see that it's still resting softly on the floor of your mouth.

Now scan through your body, and find a place which feels warm (opposite sensation to the first). Explore that sensation in the same way you explored the cool area, with gentle interest.

Now leave the warm place, and feel into the cool area of your body again. Then leave that sensation, and go back to the warm area.

Now try gently oscillating your attention back and forth between the two sensations, as if they are opposite ends of a slinky you hold in each hand. Back and forth, back and forth.....

Now stop, and see what it's like to hold both awarenesses at once. Notice, as you do so, what happens in the areas of sensation.....

*(This part of the exercise is a very useful practice for pain and anxiety, both physical and emotional; cultivating the capacity to hold dual awareness rather than struggle or yield to aversion builds the kind of "muscle" we are interested in developing in AEDP)*

**\*\*Self at best meditation:** *(With credit to Sandra Ingerman, from whose "True Self Meditation this is adapted.)*

As we begin this exploration, please let my voice remind you that you are not alone; I'm here with you.

Find yourself somewhere in nature in a place you know well; or invent one for yourself that feels comfortable and beautiful.

Now allow yourself to notice some sensory details, near to you and further away, of this place. No need to strive for perfection, just see what images come, if there are sights, sounds, or scents, that make it real. (Some people say they "can't" visualize or imagine. I

just encourage them to pretend they can, or find a small part of them who has some access to an imagined picture and imagined sensations.)

Once you've settled in this private place, invite your Self-at-Best, as you know she/he was born to be, to meet you. Trust this version of yourself to show up; no need for struggle or worry; if intrusive or "unhelpful" thoughts arise, see them as tiny clouds passing over the sun, and kindly return your attention to the present moment, where your Self-at-Best arrives to greet you.

Let yourself imagine how she or he regards you; what might pass between you; what you'd wish from him or her. Remember, she/he/they is your strongest ally.

Now imagine stepping inside your Self-At-Best. It's a perfect fit! You can see the world through the eyes of yourself as you were born to be (welcome here, alive, joyful, strong, etc.)

Notice, throughout, how your emotions, body sensations, and beliefs about yourself arise, shift, and pass.

### \*\*Gestures of Self care:

*(Adapted from work by Ben Lipton)*

(To introduce, demonstrate gestures of self-care: placing one or both hands on heart; wrapping arms around your own body and placing palms of hands on rib cage; place one palm on lower abdomen, and one on heart.....)

If you're willing, see about holding one of those kind gestures while you follow my voice: Imagine yourself in a situation where your feelings were hurt. It could be a recent time, or a moment from long ago. Notice what arises for you as you hold the gesture and remember the painful experience. Now imagine someone you admire or love doing the same gesture along with you; see their kindness to you in their eyes as they do so. Explore the felt sense of being accompanied, seen, comforted....

### \*\*1:2 Ratio breathing:

Exhale completely, through your mouth until your lungs are totally empty.

Hold for the count of two.

Inhale through your nose, to the count of four (4).

Hold (count two)

Exhale through your mouth as if you're blowing a paper boat across a small pond, to the count of eight (8).

Hold for two.

Repeat, from inhale to count of 4.....

### \*\*7 channels of experience:

*(adapted from David Mars)*

Introduction: Here, in the present moment, let's explore all the ways of tuning in to our internal and external experiences:

I'm going to close my own eyes, to help me focus. You're welcome to do so too, but if that doesn't feel right yet, please let your gaze be unfocused.

.....Prompt attention in the participants through all the Channels of experience....

\*\*\*Exploring our Defenses:

Go inside. Imagine yourself in a recent situation that has been emotionally challenging (please choose something about a 5 or 6 out of 10 in intensity!)

Notice the emotion that arises as you re-enter that moment. Check your body to see the ways it shows up there, and how; see if as you do so you feel activation or anxiety in your body.

Now notice all the ways you might find yourself wanting to distract, divert, avoid, or otherwise defend those tender zones in yourself... and thank yourself for being able to protect from pain! Notice that I'm here too. We are doing this together, and can choose to explore a little more. If you're willing, let's turn back to the difficult memory: tune in to body sensations, emotions, thoughts.....stay, explore, see what changes as you stay.....

\*\*\*Tolerating positive affect:

Go to an incident involving your young self in a positive situation (with a friend, on the beach, at a happy family gathering). Regard your young self. See what you'd like to do or say with him/her, and vice versa.

Notice what arises as you allow feelings of warmth and affection to flow from your adult self to your young self. Check for internal felt sense in your body; energy, emotions, specific sensations in specific parts of your body....

\*\*\*Internal secure self-attachment:

Bring to mind your young self, at a moment where she/he is feeling alone (about a subjective distress of 4 to 5 out of 10).

Notice what your adult self is feeling towards your young self, as you regard her from this moment.

If your adult self feels drawn to do so, maybe you can see what it feels like to sit beside her, be company and comfort for her. Notice how that feels for your young self; can she see you? Can he feel your kind presence? Is she/he able to allow comfort from your adult self? How does your adult self feel as you have this experience together? What's it like inside?

*NB: for some people, the here and now self doesn't yet experience warmth towards the young self. We know that for that to happen, the young self has to have an experience of being seen with loving eyes, and appreciated just for being here.*

*In this case, try:*

If it feels right, would you be willing to let me be that adult who cares about you? I'd love to go to your young self..... (now do a Portrayal of offering loving kindness of a personal, specific nature: "I see your little self sitting there, alone, how long he's been waiting to be noticed, and how hard it has been. "I can tell from your young self's face how she longs for some comfort; it's been so lonely and she's been so bravely waiting"...) )

**\*\*\*Experiencing an Admired Self Part:**

Go inside. Choose a Part of yourself who is the holder of a particular skill or gift (eg: plays a musical instrument, is a really good cook, an excellent friend, is exceptionally professionally skilled, has an athletic gift, is a great dreamer.....)

As you bring that Part to your mind, "see" yourself in a specific situation where this Part is "in charge"..... Notice what you are doing; where you are; who else, if anyone, is with you. Expand your awareness of how that part guides you and enhances you, personally and professionally: imagine yourself doing more of the actions or being the way that this Part enables you to be. Allow yourself to feel what happens in your body, as you experience being fully inhabited by this Part..... Notice the emotions that arise, from this Part.....Explore the energy that this Part brings, and see what it inspires you to want to do next, in imagination.....

Finally, see what it's like to let yourself be seen by someone whose opinion really matters to you, as you are fully in this Part. Allow yourself to completely absorb the emotions, sensations, and beliefs that this allows you.....

**\*\*another Meditation for defenses that protect against receiving positive affect:**

Go inside, to where your "internal self guide" is located.

If you're willing, imagine yourself in the presence of a person you trust and respect. (Teacher, good friend, family member,...).

Bring to mind an aspect of yourself, or a memory of your own behavior that has a strong emotional valence for you.

Imagine telling your respected person about this part of yourself.

Notice all the ways of might find yourself divert, avoid, or otherwise defend those tender zones in yourself, and check in with:

- Body sensations and impulses to movement
- Emotions
- Thoughts/ negative beliefs

Then, after you've had a taste of the experience, imagine that admired person bestowing kind and accepting affection upon you, in response to your self disclosure.

Notice what arises as you hear your person say these authentically affectionate and respectful things about you and to you. Savor the experience, physically, emotionally, and with your mind.

