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 ...because words are not enough

## Building Resilience in Times of War, Violence, and Other Traumatic Events

Pat Ogden PhD  
 Rebeca Farca PhDc, LMFT

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Concealed within damage often lies great strength. Resilience runs deep but its resources needs to be nurtured. It is like a seed that has been buried in a disaster; it needs tending, attending.... the responsibility for healing the impacts of war is collective. It takes a village and it begins with each of us.

Hans Loewald

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### Trauma Can Include a Variety of Sources

<b>Captivity</b>	<b>Attack</b>	<b>Loss/Death/Survivor's Guilt</b>
Pre- Peri Natal	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	Religious Trauma
<b>Inside Threat</b>	<b>Social Media</b>	Ritual Abuse, <b>Torture</b>
Pandemic	<b>Disaster</b>	Accidents
<b>Moral Injury</b>	Neglect	<b>Medical/Surgical</b>
Climate Change	<b>Asylum Seeking, Refugee status, Immigration</b>	<b>Transgenerational, Historical</b>
Perpetration, Persecution	<b>Vicarious Trauma</b>	<b>Racialized Trauma</b>
Domestic Violence	Colonization, <b>Oppression</b>	<b>Terrorism</b>

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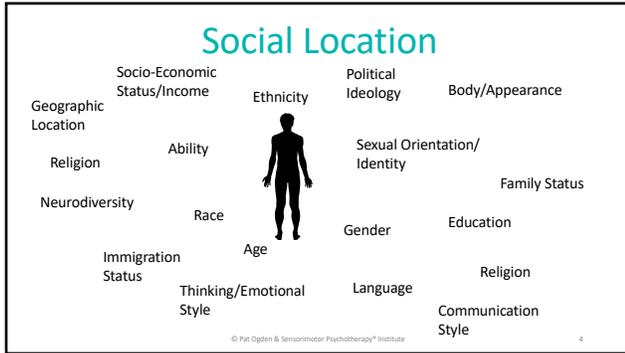
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### Microaggressions are Psychologically Violent and the Effects are Cumulative

- “Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue, 2010, p. 5)
- More likely to take place when there is a power imbalance.

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### Vicarious Trauma

- Even when we are indirectly exposed to trauma, we are being affected by it.
- Our responses, such as tension, rapid heart rate, shallow or fast breathing, numbing along with intrusive images, strong emotions, circular thoughts, are normal and are to be expected
- Such responses might be temporary, but they can accumulate and become chronic.

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## Vicarious Trauma Can Happen To:

- Witnesses of a traumatic event, including witnessing via the media
- Someone who is emotionally close to a victim / survivor
- Someone who can identify with the victim / survivor due to gender, social status, ethnicity
- Someone who experiences similar circumstances as the traumatic circumstance
- Trauma workers, psychotherapists, and victim advocates
- People who identify with or feel compassion for the victims / survivors or even the perpetrators

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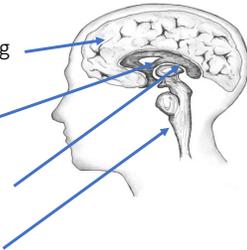
## The Brain under Stress and Trauma

The prefrontal cortex or "thinking brain" is underactive

The amygdala is overactive

The hippocampus is underactive

The survival instincts are active



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## How Trauma is "Remembered"

- Through reliving non-verbal elements of the traumatic event (including hyper- and hypo arousal, emotions, images, and defensive responses) and sometimes through mysterious physical symptoms that seem to have no organic basis.
- They can be "situationally accessible," activated or exacerbated in the present life by both internal reminders of the trauma. (Brewin, 2001)
- The body does not feel safe.

Ogden et al, 2006

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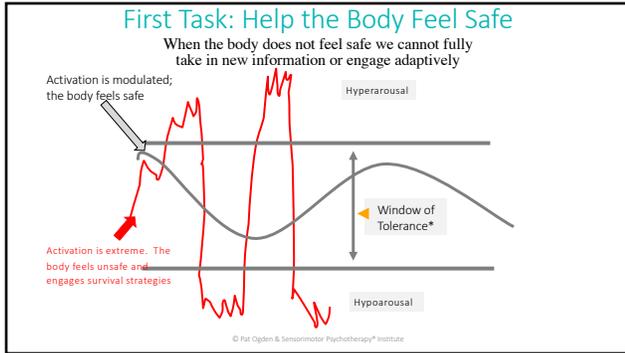
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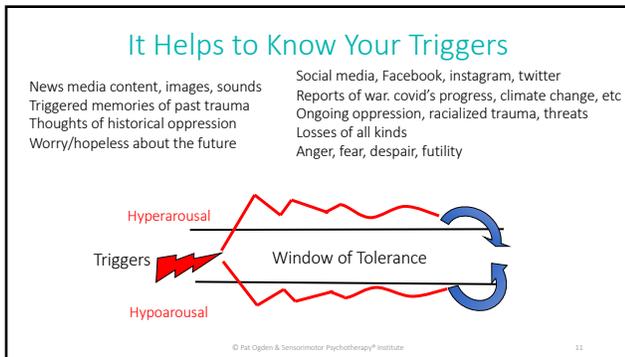
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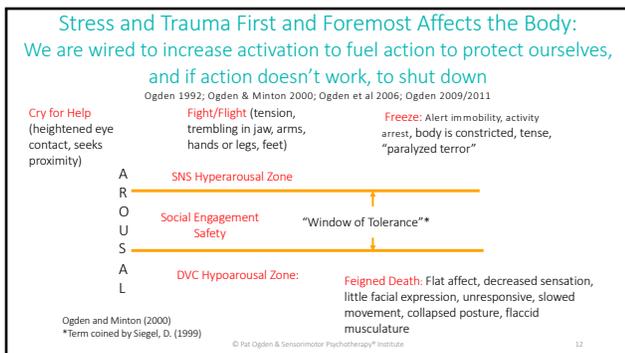
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## SP PEACE Resource Protocol

### 5 Steps to Modulate Activation and Build Resilience

- Pause what you are doing to briefly identify bodily signals of unrest.
- Embody a somatic resource.
- Acknowledge the positive effects of the resource on your body.
- Concentrate your attention to savor the positive effects of the resource for 15 seconds or more.
- Engage in your environment.

Ogden 2022

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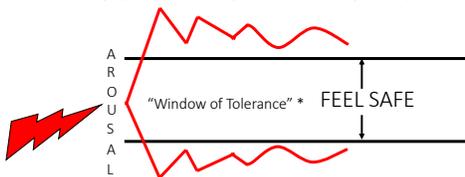
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## 1: Pause and Notice Body Signals

Ogden 1992; Ogden & Minton 2000; Ogden et al 2006; Ogden 2009/2013; Ogden & Fisher 2015

### Hyperarousal Signals

FEEL IN DANGER: Accelerated heart rate, rapid breathing, hyperstartle response (jumpy), trembling, hypervigilant, hyper-defensive, hyperactive, high intensity, circular thinking,



### Hypoarousal Signals:

FEEL THREATENED: Feel numb, weak, low energy, low vitality, little facial expression, passive, "spacey," poor eye contact

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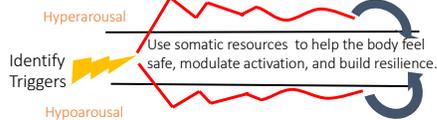
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## 2. Embody a Somatic Resource: Take your time to discover one that feels good in your body.

- |                     |                        |                   |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Ground              | Stand up               | Smile             |
| Self Touch          | Orient to Surroundings | Breathe           |
| Lengthen the Spine  | Walk                   | Hum               |
| Stop Gesture        | Push                   | Move Rhythmically |
| Embody your Culture |                        | Combine Resources |



Ogden 2013/2022; Ogden et al 2006; Ogden & Fisher 20

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## Somatic Resources for Modulating Activation and Building Resilience

1. Breathe: focus on breath, take a deep breath, sigh, long exhale to down regulate activation, inhale to up regulate; bend over slightly if diaphragm is tense, “box breath,” short breath holds on exhale when over-breathing (common when stressed)
2. Ground: sense the support of the ground, the support of the chair, feel the floor, push down against the floor with the feet
3. Orient to Surroundings: slowly look around the room and notice colors, objects, lingering on the colors and objects you like
4. Lengthen the spine: gently sit or stand taller

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Ogden et al 2006; Ogden 2021 236

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## Somatic Resources for Modulating Activation and Building Resilience, 2

5. Walk: stand up, walk around, sense the legs and feet in movement
6. Place Hands on heart, belly, place your hands on your heart, rub your legs, hug yourself
7. Smile – find your own way to smile that feels best
8. Push palms of hands against each other, the wall, or an object like a desk

Ogden et al 2006; Ogden 2022  
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## Somatic Resources for Modulating Activation and Building Resilience, 3

9. Make a “stop” gesture, with palms open, facing outward
10. Move Rhythmically: rock, sway, bounce, swing
11. Hum: find a low pitch you enjoy, sense the vibration
12. Embody your Culture: sense the support of your ancestors, tune in to the traditions of your culture: rituals, food, music, dance

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### 3. Acknowledge the Positive Effects of the Somatic Resource(s)

Ogden 2010

Hyperarousal



More relaxed, energy settles, heart rate slows, breath deepens, eyes soften



More energized, able to move, take action, can feel the body, feel less numb

Hypoarousal

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### 4. Concentrate Attention to Savor the Positive Effects of the Resource.

Ogden 2010

**Directed mindfulness:** paying attention to particular elements of internal experience, in this case to the positive changes in the body that are the results of step 3, Embody a Somatic Resource.

To capitalize on neuroplasticity to build new connections, fortify a balanced state, develop new habits, and build new neural networks, we

- become mindful of the bodily signals of dysregulation and unrest
- practice a new action--a somatic resource
- direct mindful awareness to concentrate on the positive effects of the somatic resource for at least 15 seconds

Ogden et al 2006; Ogden 2021

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### 5. Engage in Your Environment

- Look around and find any pleasant color, shapes or other sights in your environment.
- Notice sounds or smells around you that are neutral or pleasing to you
- Feel the air on your skin
- Connect with someone who can support you, or with a pet
- Drink water
- Slowly eat something you enjoy.

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**SP™ PEACE Resource Protocol**  
5 Steps to Modulate Activation & Build Resilience

**P**ause what you are doing to briefly identify bodily signals of unrest. Notice any feelings, tension, numbness, shakiness, numbness, shallow rapid breathing, fast heart rate.

**E**mbody a somatic resource that feels supportive in your body in this moment. (For examples, see pp. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000)

**A**cknowledge the positive effects of the resource. Notice any sense more relaxation, needed energy, slower heart rate, deeper breaths, softer eyes, less numbness, or more energy and interest.

**C**oncentrate your attention on the positive effects of the resource for 15 seconds or more. Focusing attention on internal signals of sense benefits a resource state & helps reverse your brain.

**E**ngage with your environment. Look around, notice pleasant sights, sounds, & smells, feel the air on your skin, connect with a person or a pet, drink water, taste something you enjoy.

**SOMATIC RESOURCES**  
**• Orient** feet toward center before you are  
**• Laugh** out loud  
**• Ground** sense your feet contact with the earth  
**• Breathe** slowly & lightly through your mouth, use your belly  
**• Push hands** push your hands or feet, or hug yourself  
**• Shake** in a way that feels right to you  
**• Shake a "strong person"** with palms open, facing outward  
**• Stand up** feel your feet contact with the floor  
**• Push palms** of hands against each other, the wall, or an object  
**• Walk** on a new path and sense the vibration  
**• Kick** rhythmically, kick, knee, bounce, swing  
**• Kick** rhythmically, your high moxie  
**• Embody your values, to** conditions, and/or the support of your ancestors

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**SPI Protocol for Clinicians of Victims of War, Violence and Other Traumatic Events**  
Rebeca Farca, PhDc, LMFT & Pat Ogden PhD 2022

**Stabilization:** Fostering skills for modulation

**Processing:** Processing and integrating the trauma response in the body and mind

**Integration:** Applying the effects of Stabilization and/or Processing into the person's daily life to create new habits

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**Stabilization**

- **Orienting to safety:** Discover and focus on a safe haven (a comforting, protected or pleasant place, thing, relationship, fantasy, spiritual connection)
- **Mindfulness:** gently develop a capacity to witness positive internal experience (parts of the body, sensations, movements, sensory perceptions, emotions and thoughts that feel pleasant, calm, relaxed, strong, joyful, empowered, or even neutral, etc.)
  - Farca & Ogden 2022

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## Stabilization, cont.

**Movement:** rhythmic, bilateral action to calm the nervous system (can be done with eyes open or shut; sitting, lying down, standing or walking)

- a) Thigh tapping – place heels of hands on thighs, tap fingers on thighs, alternating hands
- b) Butterfly hug – cross arms in front of body, tap arms with hands, alternating sides
- c) Feet tapping – place heels on surface/floor, tap balls of feet on the surface/floor, alternating feet
- d) March in place –bring right knee up & left hand touches it, left knee up & right hand touches it
- e) Head side to side breathing –face head forward, breathe in, turn head right breathe out, face head forward, breathe in, turn head left, breathe out.

**SP™ PEACE Protocol:** 5 Steps to Modulate Activation and Build Resilience  
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## Processing

- **Mindfulness:** gently develop a capacity to witness negative internal experience (parts of the body, sensations, movements, sensory perceptions, emotions or thoughts that feel activated, tense, anxious, painful, overwhelming, frightening, etc.)
- **Oscillation:** shift attention between the positive effects of resource and negative internal experience
- **RAD (Reinstating Active Defense):** complete Acts of Triumph through executing physical impulses to defend as they emerge (SP technique).
- **MOD (Modulate Overactive Defense):** execute defensive action in slow motion with mindful reporting of internal experience (SP technique)
- **SMS (Sensorimotor Sequencing):** allow body sensations of hyperarousal to unfold or “sequence” through the body until they settle for metabolization of the activation (SP technique)

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## Integration

- **Auto Modulation:** Practice your somatic resources and use them in daily life to meet challenges and maintain arousal within a window of tolerance
- **Interactive Modulation:** Practice reaching out and connecting with a person or a group of people to give and receive support
- **Life Changes:** Challenge limiting beliefs and old physical patterns to support changes in daily routines and activities, thus expanding engagement with the world and improving the quality of life

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“Everything can be taken from a [person] but one thing: the last of human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.” Victor Frankl, 1963

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