



**Kristin Atkinson, MS, LPC, NCC**

Kristin is a Licensed Professional Counselor offering psychotherapy and trauma recovery support in Austin, TX.

## KEY CONCEPTS

### WE HEAL IN THE PRESENT

**Takeaway:** Our brains and bodies need to be grounded in the present moment to integrate important information that leads to change and healing.

*Mindful Presence* is a skill that we can learn to support the process of healing. Mindfulness is the practice of guiding our attention to our present moment internal and external experiences, without judgment.

### WHAT IS HEALING?

*Healing* is a process of resolving difficult experiences that are still impacting you to lessen undue pain and support positive change.

*Processing* describes making sense of an experience, recognizing its impact, and includes working with the body via the nervous system and connecting to emotions.

*Coping* is about managing current stressors and getting through difficult moments.

'*Regulation*' & '*Resourcing*' are therapy specific terms that often describe practices and coping skills that aim to soothe your nervous system or bring it back to it's optimal state.

# HEALING IN THE PRESENT

How difficult experiences impact us and how to use mindful presence to support healing.

## TAKING CARE OF OUR PHYSICAL SELVES

Building a Mindful Lifestyle for Healing

**SAFETY TAKEAWAY: CREATING AND NOTICING SAFETY IS OUR FIRST HEALING GOAL. DANGER (REAL OR IMAGINED) KEEPS US IN SURVIVAL MODE. PRACTICES AND LIFESTYLE CHANGES HELP SHIFT US INTO A SPACE MORE CONDUCTIVE TO HEALING.**

**Practice:** Orienting towards safety: Take a breath. Mindfully notice cues in your environment that indicate you are safe.

**REST TAKEAWAY: REST AND SLEEP ARE DIFFERENT BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT. REST IS THE BRIDGE THAT GETS US TO BETTER SLEEP. QUALITY SLEEP HELPS OUR SYSTEM INTEGRATE PAST AND DAILY LIFE.**

**Action:** Identify rest deficits, incorporate restorative activities, and create a nighttime ritual.

**Practice:** *Comforting Place Meditation*

**Resource:** *Sacred Rest*, Saundra Dalton-Smith, MD

**FOOD TAKEAWAY: MINDFUL EATING CAN HELP US TO FEEL MORE PRESENT, AIDS IN DIGESTION, AND CAN BEGIN TO SHIFT OUR EXPERIENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOOD.**

**Tip:** Use mindfulness practices to work with uncomfortable feelings that might show up when becoming more present.

**Practice:** Mindful eating: slow down, gaze at food, experience the meal with all senses, check in on hunger and fullness.

**SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS TAKEAWAY: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE. OUR SYSTEMS FIND REGULATION AND ALSO LEARN HOW TO REGULATE THROUGH COREGULATION. LEAN ON TRUSTED OTHERS IN HARD MOMENTS.**

**Resource:** *Platonic: How the Science of Attachment can help you Make and Keep Friends*, Marisa Franco, PhD

**Practice:** *Safe Person Meditation*

## REDISCOVERY THERAPY

You can contact Kristin through her website [www.RediscoveryTherapy.com](http://www.RediscoveryTherapy.com)

## BODY: NERVOUS SYSTEM

**TAKEAWAY: HARD EXPERIENCES CHANGE HOW OUR SYSTEM RESPONDS TO STRESS & THREAT. LIFESTYLE CHANGES & DIRECT PRACTICE OFFER IMMEDIATE REGULATION AND WIDEN YOUR WINDOW OF TOLERANCE FOR LONG TERM CHANGE.**

### Regulating Practices & Resources

- Box Breathing or Stretching out inhales/exhales
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Noticing cues of safety
- Self Touch: Right hand over heart, left hand under right armpit, pair with intentional breathing
- Spend Time in Nature
- Sound therapy: Nature & Water Sounds, Binaural Beats

## WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

### HYPERAROUSAL

Fight or Flight, Anxious, Angry, Overwhelmed

### WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Optimal Level of Arousal/Activation

You can manage stress and pressure and return to baseline. Stress and trauma shrink your WOT making it easier to become dysregulated.

### HYPOAROUSAL

Frozen, Numb, Shutdown, Disconnected



## HEART: EMOTIONAL AWARENESS & FEELING OUR FEELINGS

**TAKEAWAY: CONNECTING TO OUR FEELINGS, UNDERSTANDING THEM, AND ACCEPTING THEM IS NECESSARY IN HEALING UNRESOLVED EXPERIENCES AND LIVING FULLY.**

**Feeling/Processing Emotion Steps:** (1) Notice (2) Name (3) Understand (4) Soothe/Move

**Practice:** SEAT, name Sensation, Emotion, Action, Thought

**Resource:** Feelings Wheel, <https://feelingswheel.com/>

### SOOTHE WITH COMPASSION

**Takeaway:** Feeling and understanding our emotions gives us access to self compassion.

**Practice:** Hand on heart, deep breath, say: "This is a hard moment, suffering is a part of life, may I be kind to myself in this moment, may I give myself the compassion I need."

**Resource:** *Self Compassion*, Kristin Neff, PhD, <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>

## BRAIN (MIND): OUR UNCONSCIOUS LEARNINGS

**TAKEAWAY: OUR BRAINS OVERGENERALIZE AND APPLY LEARNINGS TO MANY SITUATIONS. TRAUMA BRINGS US TO THE PAST AND WE VIEW CURRENT MOMENTS FROM PAST LENSES. PRACTICING PRESENCE BRINGS US TO THE NOW AND ALLOWS US TO TAKE IN NEW INFORMATION THAT LEADS TO HEALING AND CHANGE.**

**Action:** Understand your history and patterns. Talk to a trusted family member about early life context.

**Practice:** *I'm in Memory*, Hand on heart, say to self, "This situation reminds me of what I experienced in the past when \_\_\_\_\_." Follow with favorite self compassion statement.