



## A CONTAINMENT EXERCISE FOR TIMES OF STRESS



This sequence helps people struggling with anxiety or disorientation to re-establish a sense of connection to their inner resources. It includes: mindful grounding, spontaneous art making, naming (bringing back cognitions) and mindful movement to anchor the experience in an integrated expressive pose.

This combination of activities helps build a web of connections between the instinctual part of the brain and the emotional and thinking parts of the brain.

**Time required:** 20 min to 1 hour (depending how long you spend making art, and anchoring).

**Materials needed:** A4 paper, markers, crayons and any art supply you want to use.

If possible, have a skilled therapist guide and accompany this activity. If you want to do it yourself and don't have a therapist to guide you, have a friend or family member guide you. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, stop and use the “reset\*” exercise (below).

### Sequence

1. **Grounding.** Follow the [link to listen](#) to a guided visualization (begins at 2:20).
2. **Expressing.** Portray the safe space of the grounding stage with an artistic creation (minimum of 15 min).
3. **Naming.** Give a name (one word) to the safe space.
4. **Anchoring.** Stand in whatever way is comfortable. Feel where in your body the name you chose for “safe space” resonates:
  - Take a few breaths, and let the word move around your body.
  - Pay attention to how your body wants to move, whether a tiny movement or a large gesture, and respond in a way that facilitates expansion (you will notice it is easier to breath and feel a sense of inner flow). Notice that some movements will bring contraction instead of expansion. This is valuable info to note for future use; for now, simply move in a different direction until you find a sense of expansion.
  - Once you have found a position where you feel comfortable and experience expansion, anchor the sensation of safe space in your body (by imaging that you are extending a strong anchor from that part of your body deep into the ground).
  - Take a few breaths and remember the sense of expansion in their body.
  - Take a few moments to reflect, write down whatever comes up.



#### \*Reset Exercise:

Jump up and down (as fast as you can) 10 times.

Sit down (preferably leaning back on something) and breathe in (2-3-4). Hold (2-3-4-5) and then breathe out. Make an s-s-s or hm-m-m-m sound on the out breath and notice how the sound changes during the out breath.

Repeat the deep breathing part 5 more times.