



Preconditions for Experiences Becoming Traumatic

- Lack of predictability
- Immobility
- Loss of connection
- Numbing out and spacing out
- Loss of sense of time and sequences
- Loss of safety
- Loss of sense of purpose

Predictability

Your Job:

- Create schedules
- What do you look forward to?
- Create a daily and weekly calendar of connections and activities

Immobility



Your Job:

- Need to take action
- We have stress hormones to move, protect, and take care of ourselves.
- We are meant to cook meals together, build houses, gather food, go to work, and to take care of babies, children, partners, friends and neighbors.
- We need to be able to stand up for ourselves and say, “one step further and!”



Self-Regulation

Your Job:

- Learn to control our emotions, behavior, and thoughts.
- Yoga, meditation, mindfulness.
- Breathing
- Keep a journal: allow yourself to observe and know what you know!

For resources, see www.besselvanderkolk.com
or my Facebook blog [The Body Keeps The Score](#)

**Our common cultural solutions: drugs and alcohol
Sets the stage for family violence, illness, and crime**

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Connection

- We are collective creatures. We don't exist as individuals.
- Interaction with other minds and bodies - being in synchronicity with others fundamentally shapes who we are.
- When we cry, we're supposed to get a response. When we laugh, somebody is supposed to laugh with us. Those are the rhythms of life by which we develop and sustain ourselves.
- Sounds, facial movements, and the synchrony and the rhythms between faces and voices keep us feeling alive.

Your Job:

- Family meals, games, dress-up, story telling, music making, virtual contacts
- Use Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, Google, etc. and stay in regular touch.
- Take time to connect!!

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Numbing Out vs. Mindfulness

- Numbing out is a way of walling off pain and terror. (Ex: Watching TV, excessive use of media)
- How do you restore a body and brain so you can be in sync with others?
- To feel your body safely is an essential for being in touch with yourself and in sync with others.
- The first order of business is learning to notice yourself. (Yoga, meditation)
- As long as you don't notice yourself, you are like a chicken with his head cut off. You just run around like an automatic creature that responds to any input automatically- with anger, fear, irritation.
- Once you can observe what's going on with you, you start being able to make choices.
- This is easier done if there's somebody out there who can help you to notice and to name things, as in: "this is what is happening to me".
- The issue is not mindfulness alone, it's rather *mindfulness with self-compassion*.
- Observe those angry and self-destructive parts of yourself and acknowledge what they have done for you to survive. See that they started off as ways of managing unbearable threat.



Loss of Sense of Time vs. Having a Future

- When you're traumatized, time stops, and you feel like it will last forever.
- When you meditate you notice uncomfortable sensations, uncomfortable thoughts, and you go back to your breathing. Then you notice that your thought has shifted to something else.
- If you feel a cramp you notice it, and something else happens. We live in continuously evolving organisms.
- A very important part of dealing with potential trauma is to live with an inner sense that every moment is different from the next.
- Again: yoga, tai chi, chi qong, meditation
- See Licia Sky's videos on <https://www.besselvanderkolk.com/blog/licia-sky-on-coming-to-your-senses>

Safety



- Touch, cuddling
- Privacy- Everybody needs a place to which they can withdraw
- Traumatized people feel unsafe inside their bodies. They are constantly bombarded by visceral warning signs, and, in an attempt to control these processes, they often become experts at ignoring their gut feelings and in numbing awareness. They learn to hide from their selves.
- Dramatic increase in domestic violence during quarantine
- If you are a victim, don't wait for it to get worse. Call: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit <https://www.thehotline.org/help/>



Purpose, Skills & Goals

- What are you good at? Music, drawing, handicrafts, cooking, working, heavy lifting, math, gardening, puzzles? Practice and indulge!!
- Help other people. Cook and bring meals, read to kids, sing, make masks, offer your gifts to the world
- Set up webcasts of whatever you have to offer
- Stay in touch with your culture, religion, professional identity