



COMPLETING THE STRESS ACTIVATION CYCLE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY - MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO TELL YOUR BODY YOU'VE REMOVED IT FROM AN 'UNSAFE PLACE'

- Shake or dance it out!
- Tighten all your muscles for 10 slow counts... then relax

LITTLE BIT OF LOVIN' - LET YOUR BODY RETURN TO A STATE OF SAFETY

- Try a 20 second hug. Support your own weight & breathe. Your heart rate will lower, blood pressure will decrease and your chemistry will switch
- Try a 6 second kiss

FINE MOTOR SKILLS - GIVE YOUR BRAIN A NEW JOB

- Take your thumb and touch each of your fingers in turn while counting. One, two, three, four fingers. And then backwards: four, three, two, one fingers

USE PROPS - ADD THESE TO YOUR BIRTH BAG

- Use warmth! It helps signal that you're safe, protected and the 'sun' is out. Try a hot water bottle or a warm blanket
- Drink and hold a hot cup of tea – this brings heat energy directly into your body
- In a freeze (dorsal vagal)? Use cold running water on your wrists to help bring your focus out of yourself and into the environment through 'orienting'.
- Inhale Lavender (or your favourite scent) to calm the body

VISUALISE - BREATHE IN CALM, EXHALE TENSION

- Think of '5 Things'. 5 things you can see, 4 things you can physically feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste
- Try the 'Dial down method'. Imagine a large dial, with the numbers one to 10 going around the outside. Then take a deep breath in and imagine breathing in calm, and as you exhale, imaging breathing out tension. On the completion of that exhale, see the dial move to the number nine. Again, inhale calm and exhale tension, then see the dial move down to 8. Do this all the way down to 0, and you should notice how much more relaxed your mind and body can feel. When you get to zero you can continue to focus your attention on the breath or imagine relaxing in your favourite place – whatever makes most sense to you.