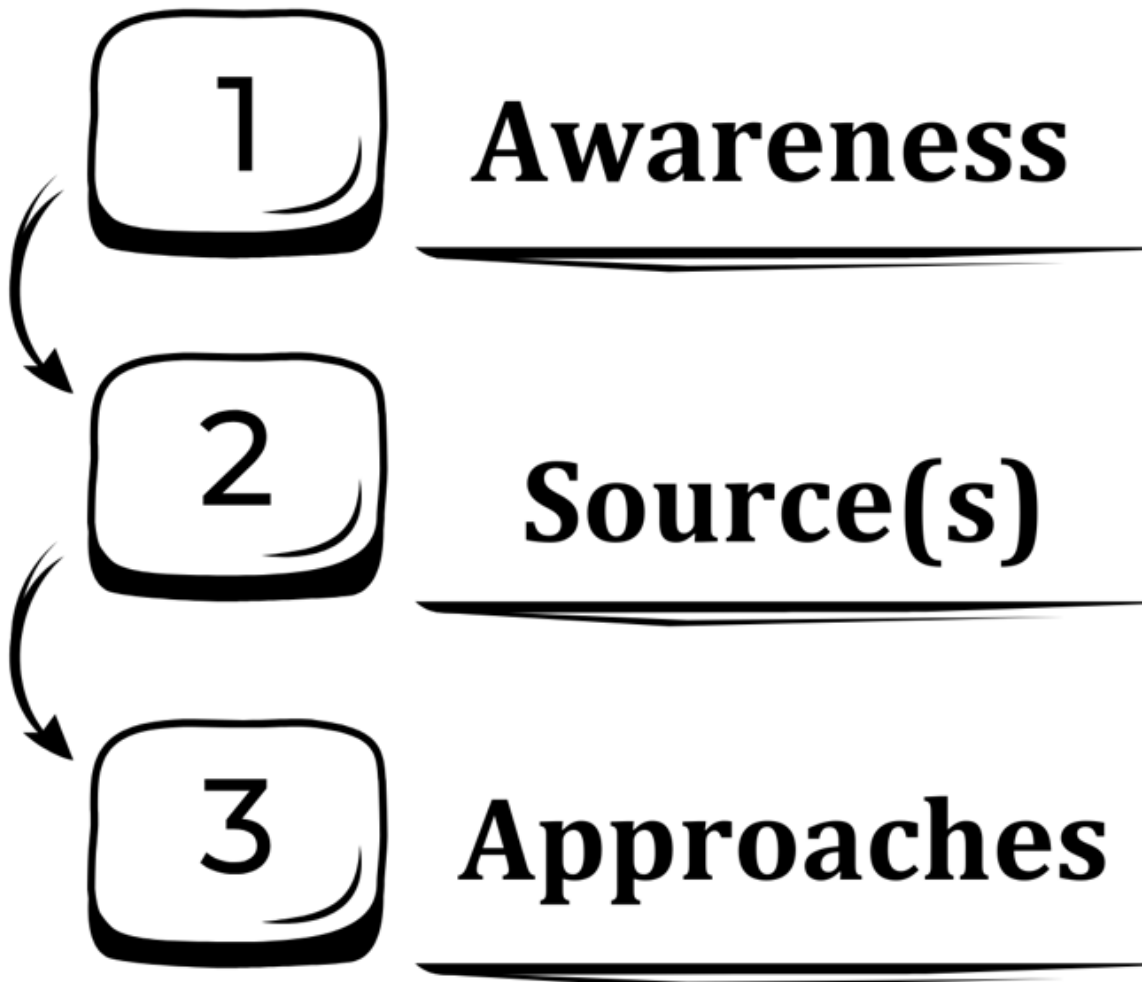


Self-care three-step skill set



Gwendolyn “Gwen” Downing (she/her),
Version 04.24.24

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Opening

Acknowledging lived experience, with all the differing degrees, as we proceed, we keep that in mind.

Description

This video provides an overview of a three-step skill set for self-care of one's body, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. And then, there is an additional segment with some possible approaches for thoughts, mindfulness, grounding, and resetting/relaxing.

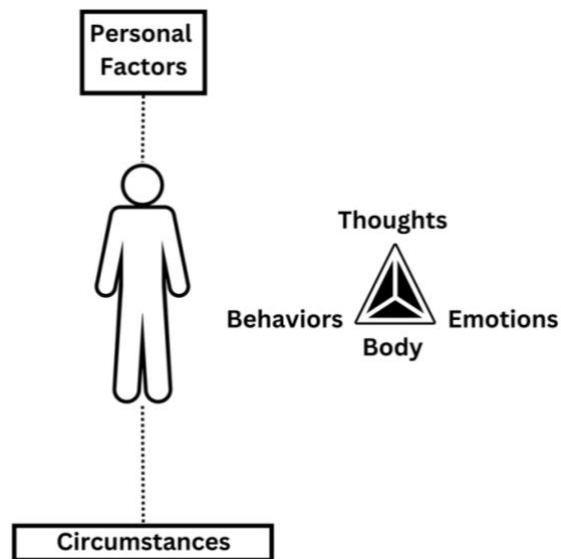
Trainer and contact

Gwendolyn "Gwen" Downing (she/her) Gwen@connectall.online and www.ConnectAll.online

Information, disclaimers, disclosure

- Being done to support the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network's annual Trauma Informed Care conference.
- Usually done as part of other trainings.
- Any sources used are not endorsements of the source.
- As recognized, information is what it is, and may be constantly evolving.
- Provided for informational purposes only.
- I am the originator and director of the Connect All initiative, that has 501c3 fiscal sponsorship through We, the World.

Self-care 3-step skill set



We all have internal and external factors, coming from our personal factors and circumstances, creating responses in our bodies, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions*.

*Regarding emotions: There are situations, such as with alexithymia, where individuals truly aren't going to have/experience/identify emotions the same as others do.

How is our body, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions pyramid interconnected?

We want to know our normal in our bodies, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions; and as part of that, any strengths, needs, or challenges we have in those areas.

3-steps:

1. Have awareness of my body, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions
2. Explore possible sources
3. Explore possible approaches

Awareness of My Body, Behaviors, Thoughts, Emotions

Knowing our normal, we want to stay aware of our body, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. Why is this important? We want to be and do our best, and to do that we have to be aware.

And one way that might help some, is doing routine awareness check-ins.

Example check-in

This can take seconds or as long as needed. You can do the four areas in any order.

Body: What's happening in my body, from the top of my head to my toes? Am I warm, cold; relaxed, tense; numb, stiff, achy; tired, wired; thirsty, hungry; have a headache; and so on?

Behaviors: What are my behaviors? What are my behaviors communicating to myself or/and others about how I'm doing?

Thoughts: What are my thoughts? Am I present? Am I thinking about something I'm excited about, something that is bothering me? Any change from my normal? Are they accurate? Do they line up with my values? So on.

Emotions: What am I feeling? Calm? Happy? Stressed? Furious? Anxious? Need to escape? "Spaced out"? Disconnected? Withdrawn? Bored? Numb? Confident? Proud? Surprised? Embarrassed? Nervous? Indifferent? Envious? Compassionate? So on.

Explore possible sources

- What is the possible source(s) for what I am aware of in my body, behaviors, thoughts, emotions?
 - Do I need any assistance to identify the source?
- Can I identify the source?
 - Is it one or more?
 - What's my best guess, if I can make one?

Personal factors (Internal) examples

- Personality
- Intelligence
- Physical ability
- Preferences
- My choices
- Medical
- Mental health
- A need, e.g., hungry, tired
- Disability



Circumstances (External) examples

- Groups: e.g., peer, work, school
- Societal: globally, nation, state, town, neighborhood, etc
- Physical environment
- Postive stress
- Negative stress
- Trauma
- Medical treatment

Regarding the word “Disability”: I understand the issues regarding the word for some of the areas it is applied to. I use it now and other times, as it is expedient.

What do I not know? Sometimes we may need to learn more to understand the possible sources, e.g., how trauma might impact the four areas.

Explore possible approaches

Explore possible approaches for what I am aware of in my body, behaviors, thoughts, emotions.

- Is there something I can do/try about the source?
- Is there something I can do/try about the response?
- Is there anything else I can do/try?

In situations the source(s) aren't known, while we are trying to determine that, the three questions are still valid.

Sometimes all we can do is try things.

Questions

What was something significant to you while going through the three steps?

How might doing these on a routine basis be helpful to you?

Mindfulness-Other

Possible techniques:

NOTE: Not all techniques work for everyone. And if one works one time, it might not work another time; and vice versa, it might not work then work later.

SBNRR Mindfulness Practice - This can be modified to your needs and time available:

Stop: Stop what you are doing, take the pause, give yourself space. If you need to, use verbal or internal mental cues to do this.

Breathe: Everyone is different. For some, it is helpful to pay attention to your breath and take a moment to breathe in whatever way works for you. For others, you might need a different or combined approach, including skipping and going to Notice. For anyone, you might need to try different approaches at different times.

Notice: Notice what is going on in your body, behaviors, thoughts, emotions. You are not judging yourself, just notice what is going on.

Reflect: Where is this coming from? Why am I thinking/feeling this? Why am I doing this? Any other curious questions that help clarify the source. Remember interaction of body, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions.

Respond: What is the best way to respond to this and move forward? Again, use whatever questions might help you.

5-4-3-2-1 practice - In your mind, out loud, or written:

- 5 things I can see
- 4 things I can touch
- 3 things I can hear
- 2 things I can smell
- 1 thing I can taste

Mental – Physical – Soothing Grounding - Healthline: [30 Grounding Techniques to Quiet Distressing Thoughts](https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques) (<https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques>)

A few examples:

Mental: List as many things in a category as you can. Alphabetically list a category. Do math/number exercises. Go through anchoring facts.

Physical: Touch something. Breathing exercise. Physical activity. Use your 5 senses.

Soothing: Think of a face/voice/thing/place that soothes you. Talk yourself kindly through it. List positive things.

SOS Technique - Developed by Julian Ford:

- Slow down - Slow down or stop; as needed, connect to body, and let mind clear.
- Orient - Pay attention to where you are, what you are doing, who you are with, what's important.
- Self-check - How stressed or calm you are in the moment *and* how in control or dysregulated you are.

30 second body scan meditation:

[This 30-Second Exercise Can Reduce Your Anxiety Significantly \(It's True – We've Tried!\)](https://youaligned.com/body-scan-meditation/)

(<https://youaligned.com/body-scan-meditation/>)

1. Get comfortable
2. Find your breath
3. Become the observer
4. Notice even more
5. Give yourself permission to relax

Example other approaches:

- **Thoughts:** Check for value alignment. Check for accuracy. Replace them. Let go. Think about or do something else. Make a plan. Talk to someone.
- **Do a blend of mindfulness and physical.** While stretching, walking, so on: What's the closest/farthest sound I hear? What's the closest/farthest thing I see? What's the loudest/quietest sound? How relaxed/tense? So on.
- **Physical and empty mind.** Maybe focus on the movement or your breath as needed.
 - These stretches may be good for times like mini breaks: [4 Quick Stretches to Do If You've Been Sitting in the Car for Hours](https://www.self.com/gallery/sos-stretch-long-car-ride) (<https://www.self.com/gallery/sos-stretch-long-car-ride>)
- **Physical and** sing, talk nonsense, recite a poem, so on.
- **Relax physically and mentally.** Slump, stretch out, curl up, let your mind empty, let your mind wander...
- **Total stillness**

Mindful Breathing Exercise: [Mindful Breathing Exercise - YouTube](#)

Possibly helpful apps:

NOTE: Some things to consider when using mental health/wellness apps/online services.

- How do they protect my privacy? Are there steps I can take to protect my privacy?
- Are they ethical in their practices?
- What is the benefit/cost/risk of using them?

PTSD Coach (<https://mobile.va.gov/app/ptsd-coach>): By the Veterans Administration, is for anyone experiencing Post Traumatic Stress, or wanting to know more to help someone else.

WYSA stress: Depression & anxiety therapy chatbot app (has free option).

Moving forward (<https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward/>): By the Veterans Administration, is for anyone coping with stressful problems.

Woebot - Your Self-Care Expert (<https://woebothealth.com/>): Helps with an array; everyday stresses and challenges, symptoms of depression and addiction.

Mindfulness: Headspace, Insight Timer, Mindfulness Coach, 10% Happier

Other: Provider Resilience, ACT coach, Virtual Hope Box, Well Body Coach, CALMapp

Adapted SBNRR Mindfulness Practice

This can be modified to your needs and time available.

Stop: Stop what you are doing, take the pause, give yourself space. If you need to, use verbal or internal mental cues to do this.

Breathe: Everyone is different. For some, it is helpful to pay attention to your breath and take a moment to breathe in whatever way works for you. For others, you might need a different or combined approach, including skipping and going to Notice. For anyone, you might need to try different approaches at different times.

Notice: Notice what is going on with your body, behaviors, thoughts, emotions. You are not judging yourself, just notice what is going on.

Awareness of My Body, Behaviors, Thoughts, Emotions

- **Body:** What's happening in my body, from the top of my head to my toes? Am I warm, cold; relaxed, tense; numb, stiff, achy; tired, wired; thirsty, hungry; have a headache; and so on?
- **Behaviors:** What are my behaviors? What are my behaviors communicating to myself or/and others about how I'm doing?
- **Thoughts:** What are my thoughts? Am I present? Thinking about something I'm excited about, something that is bothering me? Any change from my normal? Are they accurate? Line up with my values? So on.
- **Emotions:** What am I feeling? Calm? Happy? Stressed? Furious? Anxious? Need to escape? "Spaced out"? Disconnected? Withdrawn? Bored? Numb? Confident? Proud? Surprised? Embarrassed? Nervous? Indifferent? Envious? Compassionate? So on.

Reflect: Where is this coming from? Why am I thinking/feeling this? Why am I doing this? Any other curious questions that help clarify the source. Remember interaction of body, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions.

Explore possible sources, for what I am aware of in my body, behaviors, thoughts, emotions

Can I identify the source(s)? What's my best guess, if I can make one?

Personal factors (Internal) examples

- Personality
- Intelligence
- Physical ability
- Preferences
- My choices
- Medical
- Mental health
- A need, e.g., hungry, tired
- Disability



Circumstances (External) examples

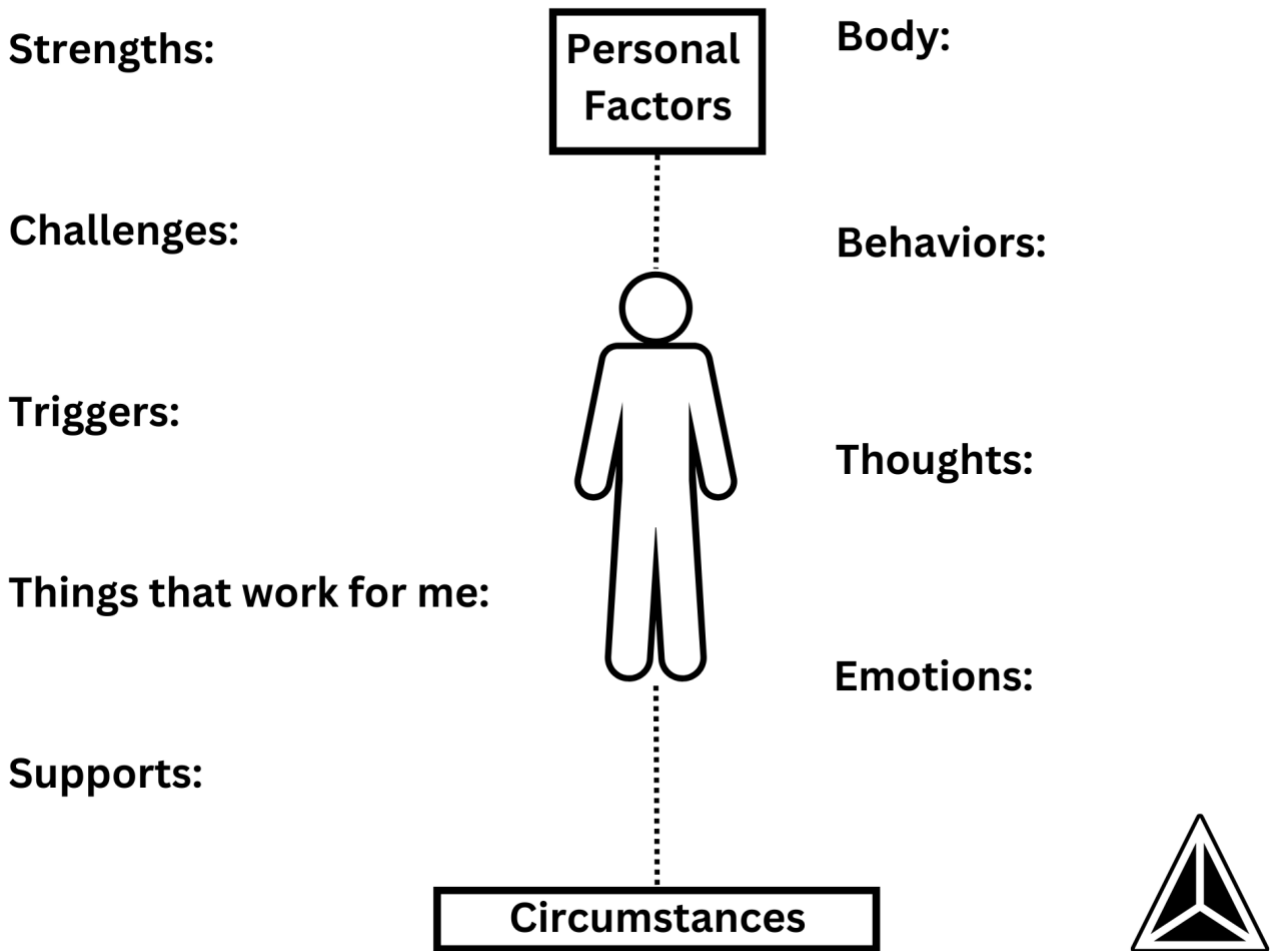
- Groups: e.g., peer, work, school
- Societal: globally, nation, state, town, neighborhood, etc
- Physical environment
- Postive stress
- Negative stress
- Trauma
- Medical treatment

Respond: What is the best way to respond to this and move forward? Again, use whatever questions might help you.

Explore possible approaches for what I am aware of in my body, behaviors, thoughts, emotions

- Is there something I can do/try about the source?
- Is there something I can do/try about the response?
- Is there anything else I can do/try?

Sometimes all we can do is try things.



Appendix A: Additional sources for self-care and secondary traumatic stress

[CalTrin \(California Training Institute\)](https://www.caltrin.org/) (<https://www.caltrin.org/>)

- [CalTrin Self-Paced Courses](#)
 - [Understanding Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Traumatic Stress](#)
 - [Strategies for Addressing Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Traumatic Stress](#)
- [CalTrin Training Archive](#)
 - [Secondary Traumatic Stress and Reflective Practice/Supervision](#)
 - [Trauma, Compassion Fatigue & Secondary Traumatic Stress](#)
 - [Organizational Strategies: Addressing Compassion Fatigue & Secondary Traumatic Stress](#)

[Secondary Traumatic Stress Consortium – free resources](https://www.stsconsortium.com/free-resources) (<https://www.stsconsortium.com/free-resources>)

[Secondary Traumatic Stress: Understanding the Impact on Professionals in Trauma-Exposed Workplaces. National Child Traumatic Stress Network’s learning center](#) (<https://learn.nctsn.org/>)

[Southern Regional Children’s Advocacy Center – Secondary Traumatic Stress Resources](#)
(<https://www.srcac.org/reflect-refuel-reset/>)

[University of Kentucky Center on Trauma and Children’s Secondary Traumatic Stress Innovations and Solutions Center](#) (<https://ctac.uky.edu/projects-and-programs/secondary-traumatic-stress-innovations-and-solutions-center-sts-isc>)

- [Staying Inside the Window of Tolerance: An Advanced Training on Secondary Traumatic Stress and Resiliency](#)

[Using the Secondary Traumatic Stress Core Competencies in Trauma-Informed Supervision - NCTSN](#)
(<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/using-secondary-traumatic-stress-core-competencies-trauma-informed-supervision>)

[Virtual Calming Room - Sacramento City Unified School District](https://calmingroom.scusd.edu/) (<https://calmingroom.scusd.edu/>): Has strategies and tools for students, families, and staff.