

Self-Soothing Touch



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The Self-Soothing Touch technique is used within Somatic Experiencing (SE®) by trained therapists to monitor sensations, patterns of actions and soothing behaviors experienced in clients' bodies.

The aim is to regulate their body responses and avert overriding the nervous system, by purposefully concentrating in self-soothing behaviors. These are behaviors the client might already engage in to induce comfort in the midst of anxiety.

The following technique can help people learn how to soothe themselves and calm the nervous system by drawing upon their own resources. In this case, this technique is about using touch to create physical and emotional soothing and calmness.

Be gentle with yourself. If you find yourself experiencing distress or feeling uncomfortable while doing this exercise, you can take a few moments to take a break and let everything settle.

Steps:

1. Find a comfortable and quiet space to sit in a chair or lie down on the floor.
2. Place one hand below the opposite armpit and place the other hand on top of the opposite arm, between the elbow and the shoulder, hugging yourself.
3. Draw your attention to the sensation of being contained.
4. You might want to imagine as if you are hugging yourself.
5. Pay attention to the physical sensations in your body around the areas you are touching.
6. Explore the sensations on the hand under the armpit, like temperature and pressure.
7. Explore the sensations on the skin and muscles of the arm being hugged by the other hand.
8. Explore the sensations of feeling your arms across the chest.
9. Connect to the emotional experience this creates within you, maybe you feel safe and contained.
10. Keep exploring your physical and emotional experience, connecting to the pleasant sensations that arise.

