

Post-Session Self-Care and Integration

by Nicola Usher

Taking care of yourself after a session allows for integration by supporting you to get the most out of your experience as you bring conscious engagement to the rest of the day, evening and into the next week. Honour what is available to you as you notice what is happening and allow for a self-compassionate response.

***You may be feeling social engagement availability if you find yourself:** talking easily to others; feeling relaxed with energy available if needed; able to take in new information; enjoying a playful mood; feeling connected to yourself and others. In this state your nervous system has a sense of regulation and ease. Notice and enjoy this relational state that may feel open, resilient, connected and expansive.

***You may be feeling a bit quieter and needing to slow down by:** having some time alone; engaging with a hobby you love; resting; hanging out with your pet or someone you feel relaxed with; journaling or reading; anything that supports you to be just as you are. In this state your nervous system may have a sense of regulation and ease that is contemplative or if you are feeling overwhelmed there may be a need to decrease stimulus. Notice and honour this state that is a bit more interior and requires you to listen within to guide your response to what you need.

***You may feel energy and the need to move:** walking, dancing, singing or some kind of movement practice like yoga. It is important to be careful here and get the **“just right”** amount of action to mobilize the energy without taking you into overwhelm which may then lead to fight, flight or collapse. One way to explore this energy is to play a song you love to dance to or just listen to and then fine tune the volume to the perfect level. This may guide you in how much energy to express remembering to adjust at any time if it changes along the way.

Orientation to pleasure (mindfulness of good things)

When experiencing stress and difficulty the nervous system responds as if we are in survival mode. During a session we may come into contact with these nervous system states which when done slowly is part of freeing them from our body. In order to feel more at ease, we need to give our body the message that we are ok - this will further deepen and integrate the work done during a session. This may be as simple as sitting with a cup of tea and noticing what we enjoy about the taste and the comfort of sitting for a while; it could be going for a walk and noticing the beauty in nature; it could be enjoying time with our pet - anything that helps us to connect with ease, safety, pleasure, and nourishment.

Self-care kidney / adrenal Support

Each day to help nourish yourself and calm the effect of stress on your kidneys and adrenals you can use a hot water bottle around the level of the lower ribs; wrap a piece of polar fleece or a scarf around your waist to bring support; or notice the positive affect on your kidneys (mid-low back area) of doing things that support a sense of peace.