

Managing Intense Emotions in the Moment

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>> ALLONNA SCOTT: All right. Welcome, again, everyone. Welcome to "Managing Intense Emotions in the Moment." My name is Allonna Scott. And along with me today are my co-moderators, Amy D'Amico and Melanie Adronez, and we have our guest speaker, Lacey Burch. Lacey is a licensed professional counselor and substance abuse professional. Her diverse experience includes teaching psychology at Lyndon wood University in Belleville, Illinois, and providing intense outpatient care to individuals with substance use concerns. Currently, she works as a Senior EAP Consultant for Magellan's drug-free workplace program and as a private practice therapist specializing in substance use, mood, and personality disorders. So, welcome, Lacey. And we'll turn it over to you.

>> LACEY BURCH: Hi! Good afternoon, everyone. Hope everybody's having a good day so far. Yeah, so, we're here today to talk about managing intense emotions. We're going to talk about how to manage emotions in the moment, and we're also going to talk about ways to manage emotions preemptively so that if things come up, you can kind of balance that before it even happens.

So, first, we're going to talk about the objectives today. So, we're going to define emotional regulation; identify intense emotions and how to manage them in the moment; and discover skills to prepare for intense emotions before they arise.

So, what is emotion regulation? So, essentially, the definition of it is the ability to exert control over one's own emotional state. So, for example, rethinking a challenging situation to reduce anger or anxiety, so kind of reframing something. Hiding visible signs of sadness or fear, so kind of tucking some emotions away when it's not an appropriate situation and revisiting those at a more appropriate time. And then, focusing on reasons to feel happy or calm, which is great. You know, sometimes we have to reframe in that way, too, and just think about positive things that are going on around us. So, essentially, the ability to modulate our emotions and, you know, regulate them requires conscious monitoring using techniques such as learning to view situations differently to manage them better; changing the target of the emotion and the likely way to produce a more positive outcome, being more productive, and recognizing how different behaviors can be used in the service of the given emotional state. Which is, like, explicit emotion regulation. Then there's implicit emotion regulation, which operates without deliberately monitoring it. It modulates the intensity or duration of an emotional response without the need for awareness.

And our emotion regulation typically increases across our lifespan. I don't know how many people in our group today are parents, but I have a 2 1/2-year-old, and his brain is not fully online yet, and so, he has a lot of impulse control issues, right, at that age. He has a lot of emotional kind of breakdowns, right, tantrums, they might call it. He's very much on the verge of what they call a three-nager now. So, watching him have these huge emotional reactions to -- sometimes it's

just not getting the Kuhn he wanted, not getting the snack he wanted. You realize how much we really do -- hopefully, most of us, right -- how much our emotion regulation increases through our life span from that very first age to where we're at now. So, that's probably a good way to remember, too. It's like, you know, how far we all actually have come, and recognizing when maybe we're reverting back to like a former state of mind.

So, let's talk about how to identify our emotions, because I think one of the biggest things we can do, one of the best takeaways is naming the emotion is going to help us determine the intensity of it, how to move past it, how to manage it, how to control it. It's just knowing how we feel. So, naming the feeling.

When you become aware of a feeling, pause for a second. You may first notice the general tone of the emotion, like, is it a positive emotion? Is it a negative emotion? For example, you're feeling vaguely stressed or uncomfortable, but you're not exactly sure why. See if you can gently name the specific emotion present without judgment. "I'm feeling ashamed right now," "I'm feeling stressed and I'm feeling stressed because I'm feeling overwhelmed." I'm feeling excited. I'm feeling delighted. I'm feeling sad. I'm feeling afraid. But first, just noticing the feeling and naming it will give you a lot of ways to determine how to move forward in terms of managing and monitoring that emotion.

Once we know the feeling we're feeling, then we can allow the feeling to be a sensation in our body and kind of get more information from that. So, emotions are called feelings, which, I knew this, but you know, sometimes you forget little pieces of information. The reason that emotions are called feelings is because we feel them in the body. So, seeing if we can mindfully observe the physical sensations without judgment. How do you directly sense a feeling in your body? I do, some people have therapy, how do you feel it, when do you feel it? Encourage the feeling San suasions to ebb and flow, allow them to flow without reducing or trying to escape them. If the feelings are difficult, this requires the courage to stay with a scary or adversive experience, it can help to bring curiosity and openness to whatever arises, to give the body permission to feel what is is present. And during this step in the process, being careful not to get lost in your thoughts. Kind of keep gently bringing attention back to the physical sensations in your body, and that intention is to keep mindfully accepting what you're feeling in the moment and kind of ride that wave for main or two, to try to get into that feeling and get a little more understanding of it.

And then, we're going to do something I call mindfully investigate what's at the heart of your feelings. We can kind of just come from a place of curiosity, right? So, shifting our attention to investigating what's driving the emotion. So, maybe you're facing a loss or something threatening in the future. Having an experience of being unseen or excluded. Hold your thoughts lightly as you kind of inquire and investigate and try to explore them. Remember that your interpretations are colored by your history, so we're all going to be looking at things through our own lens, through our own experiences, so try not to get stuck in the story, analyze, or ruminate about a scene in your head. Keep it simple.

What's at the heart of your pain or joy? And if you notice that you're blaming yourself or others, this is an avoidance

move, so see if you can feel the pain, or the joy, without blame. So, that can be actually good, kind of helpful to have an image of your initial feelings and thoughts as reactive waves on the surface of the water, where we typically resist and splash around. So, the goal is to drop deeper into the more vulnerable waters and figure out what the pain is and the core of that pain, and that will kind of sometimes give you information, even, about where your values reside.

And so, then, finally, in this fourth step, how to identify our emotions, we're going to talk about bringing compassion to our experience. I think for a lot of us, we may struggle with self-empathy and self-compassion more than we do for others, and so, I'll often tell clients, or even sometimes have to tell myself, you know, would I have this same compassion that I'm not giving myself, would I not give it to a friend? Would I not give it to a family member? If the answer is no, you know, I would be much more empathetic, much more kind, and much more compassionate to someone else, then I try to bring that back to myself. So, it's important to bring that kindness to our experience, especially if we're experiencing a painful emotion. We could all be very critical of ourselves, and this step is about cultivating the opposite, bringing compassionate, caring stance to what we're feeling. So, if that's difficult for you to do, just again, thinking about how you would bring empathy to a family member, a friend, your own child. We deserve that same care and compassion.

So, you might say to yourself, you know, "I'm sorry that you're feeling this way. This is difficult" or "I'm with you." You could say that to a loved one. You could say that to yourself, too. And whatever you're feeling, certainly, you're not alone. We all get hurt and disappointed in life. We all want a sense of safety, connection, belonging. And so, when our individual experiences are unique, there is something universal in our desires and pain. So, remembering that I may be the only one feeling this the way I'm feeling it right now, but that this is a shared experience and part of our common humanity, and actively bringing a nurturing stance to that own experience of ourselves. All right. Excuse me. Sorry.

All right. So, I can't remember -- can Allonna or Mel, anybody, can somebody tell me when the first poll question happens? I can't hear, whoever's talking. Hello?

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Can you hear me, Lacey? Here's the poll.

>> LACEY BURCH: Just barely. Are we doing a poll now?

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Yes. You should see it on the screen. There may be a little bit of a lag, but you should be able to see it.

>> LACEY BURCH: Okay, now I can hear you great. I think your mouth may have been away from the mic.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Okay.

>> LACEY BURCH: We're doing a poll question now. So, what are some unhealthy practices people use to cope with emotions? And you can type in your answers and we'll just kind of read some of them and discuss them for a second.

Someone said lashing out, for sure. Drinking heavily. Yes, substance use is definitely a piece of people coping with emotions in a less-healthy way. Shutting down. For sure.

Now, I really like, someone wrote, "overschedule self to avoid." I was actually just talking to a client last night at my private practice about her constant -- she is what she would consider a workaholic, and how she often has two, three

jobs. And that's, I think, been a coping skill for her for a long time. Now she's just been diagnosed with an illness, like a long-term, chronic illness, so she's really struggling with all the down time she's having to take now and how much that is really letting her feel her emotions for the first time in probably decades because she's been avoiding it through overworking and overscheduling herself so much, which I thought was really interesting and something I've even had to address in my own life at different points.

Binge eating, for sure. Overeating. All of that kind of stuff. Definitely, like, overwatching TV, right, one more episode, one more episode kind of stuff. People use that often to kind of avoid dealing with current things like that.

I was looking. There was another one I saw that I wanted to call out. Excessive sleep or lack of sleep, which was very interesting, and very true. Depending the way your mind ruminates, you may try to shut down and sleep excessively, or you might struggle with sleeping. Then, as a mom, I feel like this is a thing that's kind of common in the Zeitgeist for moms, when we talk about the bedtime procrastination, when I feel like the only time I get to myself is after everybody else is asleep. And so, instead of telling myself, you need to get to bed, you're tired, I'll let myself stay up later than I should and watch a little bit more or do a little bit more, because it's easier to do that and get that time to myself than to go to bed and get the sleep that I know that I need. So, even that -- like, they call it revenge bedtime or something, which I thought was interesting, but I've definitely experienced that myself as well.

All right, so, moving on from some unhealthy ways that we cope. Let's talk about managing some emotions. Did we skip a slide? Hold on. I might have accidentally hit something. Nope. I wonder if these are just in a weird order.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: No, 5 is correct.

>> LACEY BURCH: Okay. So, what are some healthy ways we can manage moments in the moment? So, if like an intense emotion is coming at us and ways we can manage it right that second. So, some of these can be done in the moment, when a feeling or emotion arises, and some can be done when you have a little bit longer to work with them. And actually, I just realized I didn't pull something up that I need that's going to give me some tips. Sorry, everyone. Hang on one second. It's got some information. I thought I had all of my documents up.

While we're waiting for this to pull up, though, some other negative ways that people cope with emotions. I know I saw some stuff on there. You know, anything that's kind of substance or process related, so overdoing it with shopping. I think about, you know, this time of year, we're coming up on the holidays, and sometimes people will go a little bit crazy with, like, their shopping, even to try to deal with their emotions. So, some of that can definitely be a challenge, too, for people, in terms of negative ways or less-healthy ways to cope, for sure, would be some of that, too. And something to think about, kind of keep a handle on this time of year.

Sorry, my computer is dragging, dragging, dragging. Okay.

So, deep breathing. How many people here on the webinar, maybe just a show of hands, when we go through these, you can just raise your hand at any time. Deep breathing is definitely a good one. I'm so sorry this is... oh, my gosh. I am beyond right now trying to figure this out. Um... hold on. So sorry,

everyone.

My computer, since we had a new update, has been just slow in every possible sense of the word. (Sighing) Okay, all done. Here we go. Maybe. I think I got it.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Just to kind of ease the moment, someone put in a comment, Lacey, and said, "Real life managing intense emotions, like right now with computer issues."

>> LACEY BURCH: (Laughing) I see that.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: They want you to know you're doing great.

>> LACEY BURCH: Oh, my gosh, technology never works when you need it to.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: This is a perfect example. We appreciate everyone understanding.

>> LACEY BURCH: Oh, my gosh, yes, everyone, thank you so much. So, yeah, everyone can have a hard time kind of regulating their emotions, right, especially -- you know, that's part of being human. And so, some of the things that can help:

Deep breathing. Most of us know what that looks like, right? So, just take in some deep breaths, pause, take a breath. You know, anything like that can be effective, even in that moment, for sure.

Sensory grounding, which, actually here at the end of the presentation, we're going to do an exercise where we're all going to get to participate in a grounding exercise, and we'll kind of walk through that and talk about different ways you can do that, which I think is actually really helpful. And kind of interesting, once you get a really good grounding exercise, where you find -- the one we're going to do, you'll kind of find your own place. Once you have that in your brain, you can kind of go back there anytime you want, which I think is really cool to kind of know that you can always go back to that same place in your mind anytime you need to.

Mindfulness. Probably a lot of you are aware of mindfulness, but I think sometimes people think about it in terms of meditation and things like that, but mindfulness is also just being in the present moment. It doesn't have to be anything big and special. It can be very simple stuff, like -- I'm trying to think -- just, you know, you're washing the dishes and you let yourself feel the soap bubbles and you smell the soap on your hands, and everything like that is, I feel like a really good way to keep yourself in the moment.

Like, one thing I'll do with clients for mindfulness, and another thing that you can do for grounding, is the five, four, three, two, one. So, what are five things you see? What are four things you hear? Three things you smell? Two things you taste? One thing you can touch? Whatever. And you can do that in any order, in any of the senses. But you know, I can see a clock. I can see a pumpkin. I can hear the traffic outside. Kind of bringing you back to the present moment and staying grounded in, like, this is my reality right now. Nothing immediate is happening to me that's bad. And kind of reminding yourself to stay in that moment, which is all part of mindfulness.

Practicing acceptance, which can be hard. A phrase that I teach clients that a lot of them use -- oh, someone wrote "smelling a candle." Great. I love that. I'll even do that with people when they're trying to learn how to meditate, which we'll talk about here in a minute, but I'll have them focus on the flame part of a candle, which can be really helpful in terms of learning how to meditate. In a more specific way.

But practicing acceptance. So, I have a specific phrase I teach clients: This is the moment I find myself in. Right? I don't like this moment. I maybe don't want this moment, but this is the moment I find myself in. And you can repeat that to yourself in any situation, anytime, anywhere. I just feel like it's a good reminder to bring us back into the, this is the moment I find myself in.

One thing I work a lot with people on is teaching radical acceptance, especially when it's a really tough situation or really tough, possibly, like, action that you're experiencing, like some, you know. Of course, nobody wants to be injured, right? You've been injured, and it's like, I can't change it. I just have to roll with what's happening, radically accept it, and move forward, because I can't go back in time and make it not happen. So, definitely practicing acceptance.

Another good one, I feel like, that a lot of people forget is challenging your thoughts. So, when clients tell me a thought that seems kind of askew, I'll say, "Who told you that?" You know, because sometimes it's their own narrative or their own schemas that are kind of saying, like, the world isn't safe or people are not kind or whatever they have maybe ingrained in themselves, that this is how the world works or this is how the world looks. So, when they'll say something to me that maybe confirms one of those or is trying to confirm one of those, I'll ask them who told them that. Because I'm like, I don't -- well, this is just how the world is. I'm like, I don't experience the world that way, so that's interesting to me that you're telling me that's just how it is.

So, I'll say, "Who told you that?" Challenging your thoughts. Asking yourself, like, "Is this real or am I projecting? Am I maximizing thing? Am I minimizing something? Am I letting my mind kind of run off and wander away? And things like that can be really interesting, I think. To kind of just challenge your own thoughts and reframe things.

You know, like, if a friend was coming to you with this problem and they were very upset and emotional, how would you kind of walk them through it and what advice or information would you give them to maybe help challenge their thoughts?

And then, of course, at the end of day, if you're having trouble managing your emotions on a daily basis, seek professional help. Find a trusted therapist or counselor, call your EAP and get your sessions that you have access to and start working with a provider so that you can get some good, like, specific techniques to you to help you work on how to manage your emotions better.

Okay. So, then we're going to talk about proactive emotion regulation. So, these are some ways that you can manage your emotions ahead of time. So, what I call it, essentially, is, like, our maintenance, right? This is the way you're going to do maintenance on yourself frequently -- daily, weekly. Some of these are going to look different, depending, but it's going to be a way that you can actually take yourself and pro actively get into your emotions and kind of prepare yourself in a better way.

So, practicing daily gratitude I feel like is a really good one. You know, even if it's just like the Notes app on your phone, writing down three -- when you wake up in the morning, jotting down three things you're grateful for. And that can be anything tiny, from, like, that first sip of morning coffee, to something big, like I'm going on this amazing trip to Italy in a

month and I'm planning and prepping for that and I'm so excited. So, anything and everything. You know, my kid's healthy. My home is safe and secure today, you know, we have food to eat and warm beds tonight. Being grateful for the small things in your life, the big things in your life, all of that. Practicing gratitude daily is -- it's probably been shown to be one of the most impactful things we can do in terms of managing our emotions and continuing to have, like, a healthier, more positive outlook on life, is just remembering what we do have and what we are grateful for.

Increasing our stress tolerance, which is really an interesting thing. I don't know how many people know much about that, but it's essentially just learning how to tolerate either difficult circumstances. For some people, it's just even the unknown circumstances. They get a lot of anxiety around unguaranteed outcomes and situations. And so, even just -- excuse me -- learning how to -- one second (clearing throat) -- increase our stress tolerance can be really helpful, in terms of managing our emotions. Just being able to tolerate more uncomfortableness.

Learning to meditate. Were you going to say something, Allonna?

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: I was just going to say, and we do have the poll also, to get the feedback on what the audience would think are some good practices.

>> LACEY BURCH: Oh, some good -- yeah, we do have another poll. What self-care practices do you use to help your moods and emotions stay regulated? Everybody can answer while we talk about these last two.

So, learning to meditate. It's easy to find information on how to meditate. Obviously, there's a ton of apps now available, which are great, and I definitely recommend those. But it can be as simple as -- especially if you're at home and you have the time -- just a candle. Any kind of candle available. If you like a certain scent, it's great to use something that kind of opens up your senses a little bit more. But I'll tell people, just light a candle. Stare at the flame. Close your eyes -- you know, once you have the flame really visible in your mind, close your eyes and keep the flame in your brain. And as that flame flickers, if you start to lose it again, close your eyes, open your eyes, open your eyes again, look at the flame. And just kind of do that over and over. It will help give you something concrete to focus on, and for some people, that can be helpful in learning how to start meditation.

You can have some music playing in the background, if you prefer, or just some nature sounds, whatever you like, but that's an easy way to do it at home that you can just do it on your own.

I'm reading some of these answers. And one, I love animals. I don't have any currently, but I'm such a dog person. I saw someone put their furbabies, and I was like, oh, yes. Dogs and cats and all those are such great, like, stress relievers, and great ways to keep your emotion management in check.

Exercise, of course. Jogging, walking, hiking, yoga. Just going on a walk around the block, even if that could be 10, 15 minutes once a day, but it can really help reset you, getting that outside time, getting that vitamin D from the sun. Anything little like that I always think is a great option for, you know, resetting your mood, helping -- that's the kind of daily stuff

you can do to help keep your stress levels down, which ultimately helps keep your emotions at a more manageable rate, right?

Drinking water. Listening to music. Obviously. Always great for our bodies, great for our minds, all that, for sure.

And then, I can't see the last one. Let me see here. Can we move the poll over? I can't see the last thing I'm discussing. Oh, there we go. Sorry. There we go!

Get back to basics. So, some of what you guys were listing there is part of that. So, practicing good self-care. And I think a lot of people think of self-care as, like, going to the spa for the day. I'm going to treat myself to a giant piece of chocolate cake. Sure, that stuff can be part of self-care, but that's not always accessible to us, and that's not always sometimes in our best self-interest, right? That giant piece of chocolate cake is fine for a treat once in a while or fine for an on-occasion thing, but sometimes, treats become habits, which can start to affect our health, right? Even if that's just, like, splurging on, you know, a coffee each day or something. If it starts to go against, like, our financial goals or what have you, we have to really consider, is that treat now not so much a treat but a habit and possibly causing other significant issues in my life in other ways?

So, the basics are really, like, basic, when I say basic. So, getting good sleep, you know, seven to nine hours of sleep a night. Drinking plenty of water. Eating healthy and kind of whatever that means for you, but making sure that you're kind of checking in with your body, eating what you want. Exercising regularly, scheduling regular down time for contemplation and reflection.

And you know, I think, like sometimes when I'm work aing with a client, especially professionally in my private practice, that's one of the first things I talk to them about is how are you eating? How are you sleeping? How are you caring for your body? Because that stuff seems like pretty, you know, yeah, everyone's doing that, right? But sometimes, when our mental health or our emotions are struggling, that's the first stuff that goes is good sleep, good nutrition, getting good water, getting -- and I don't mean you need to be running a marathon, just, again, walking around the block every, you know, morning, every evening, whatever, just some outside time, some fresh air. That stuff could actually be really important, and sometimes we don't give it enough credit for how much those basics really do actually help us in those ways.

So, someone asks if I could talk a little bit more about increasing stress tolerance, and so, I'll circle back to that one for a minute.

So, having good stress tolerance skills. I like to think of it as kind of being, like, poised, having grace under pressure. And some people are really good at that. And for others of us, we might think of someone in our life, or we may know someone in our life, or even in the media that we can think of that's, like, really good under pressure, and that may be an example of, like, oh, okay.

But you can also maybe think of someone who is not so good at those things. Like, you know, when a crisis comes up, they're like the last person you'd want to call because they're going to escalate that crisis, right? They're not going to bring you back down.

I think about my son, when he's having a meltdown, right,

2 1/2, when he's having a tantrum, it's not going to help him manage and regulate his emotions for me to meet him where he's at. I have to keep bringing myself back down, right? So, even I think about how my stress tolerance has increased since becoming a mother, because I've had to learn how to manage my emotions to help him manage his emotions -- they call it co-regulating. So, I think a lot of times, even, like, we're all kind of increasing our stress tolerance in different ways all the time by being in tense situations, by being in hard situations. All those little things, as we build resiliency, as we build the ability to withstand tough situations more, that's all increasing our stress tolerance, which is really interesting.

So, you know, and if you think of a situation like that, who do you want to be? Do you want to be the person that is poised under pressure, grace under pressure, or do you want to be the person who, you know, when things are at a five, they're at a ten? Obviously, most of us want to be the person who's poised under pressure, right?

And so, thinking about, how do I get there, you know, is, I mean, really, it's about just, again, trying to be in those stressful moments and trying to remind yourself, this is the moment I find myself in. Or something I say to myself a lot is "I can tolerate this," whatever that is. I can tolerate -- and I'll say it even in my own head, right? My son's having a meltdown. I'll remind myself, I can tolerate this. I can do this.

Taking a couple of really, even just three real deep, slow in through the nose, out through the mouth breaths. You'd be shocked how much that instantly lowers your blood pressure, which instantly lowers that feeling of, like, anxiety, that feeling of stress. And you can do that anytime, anywhere, right? Three big, good, deep breaths, whether that's in that moment, whether you remove yourself from a situation, go to the restroom for a couple minutes and catch your breath. That stuff is so necessary and helpful, and it's something you can do anytime, anywhere. Three deep breaths are always an option, and that's always going to help you at least bring down the stress level a little bit.

And then, again, I just tell myself in that head space, I just go, "You can tolerate this. You can do this." Whatever it is, you can do it. And the more you can get through situations like that, the more your stress tolerance increases, just automatically.

I like someone just put "this is just a moment in time, not my life." That's right! I mean, that's very true. That little stuff, like mantras. If you come across a mantra, you see something on Instagram or Facebook or whatever, or you find something that resonates with you in a book, just jotting that down, you know. "This is the moment I find myself in. I can tolerate this. This is a moment, this too shall pass." Great, yeah, all very true, right?

I mean, I have a client I was talking to, who she's trying to decide about becoming a mother. And I said, here's the thing -- because she was like, what if it's not for me? What if I'm not good at it? What if I don't like it? I'm like, what if you don't? In the beginning, it's hard, but you have to keep reminding yourself, none of it lasts forever, none of it. Not even the hardest moment in our life. If anyone can reflect on the hardest times we had, those didn't last. Neither do the best moments, right? So, reminding ourselves, like, this is just a

moment that I'm in right now, but it's not going to last forever.

Even sometimes finding a song that really, I don't know, motivates you or reminds you that, like, I can't think. It's a song. I think it's maybe TI, I forgot, but I just remember one of the lines is, like, you know, no pain is forever. And that's a good reminder, you know. Like, whatever I'm going through, good or bad, nothing lasts forever.

All right. So, now we're going to do a grounding exercise. Before we -- I guess, maybe before we do that, do you guys want to do questions first, before the grounding exercise, or do you want to do the grounding exercise first? Asking Mel and Allonna.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: (Off microphone) grounding exercise and we will address questions as time permits at the end.

>> LACEY BURCH: Gotcha, okay. So, if you're driving a car, hopefully, you're not participating in this, if you are. But if you are, don't take your eyes off the road. But if you're able to, sit for a minute and do this, it's kind of like a guided meditation. It's called safe space imagery. So I'm going to ask everyone, if they can, get into a comfortable position, whatever that looks like for you. Close your eyes. And I'm going to read through a way for you to kind of access that place that I was talking about earlier. We're going to help you find your, like, best, safest, most desirable place to take a break. And then, anytime you want to go there, you can just close your eyes and go there again in your mind to help you kind of reconnect with that place.

So, get into a comfortable position. Close your eyes. If you don't feel comfortable having your eyes closed, that's okay. Just find a focal object, so something in the room you can kind of stare at, zone out to. Let your eyes rest there.

So, we're going to begin by noticing our breath. So, we're going to breathe in through our nose, out through our mouth. When you exhale, let that be like a sigh of relief. So, we're going to breathe in again. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Now you may start to notice your breaths can get longer. And as you breathe in, instruct your body with your mind to relax. You may notice outside noises, sounds or voices. Notice that you can be aware of those sounds and just let them go. Let them float away like clouds. You can notice the sounds and just return your focus to your breath. You don't need to be distracted by any noises. Just let them go.

It's the same for any thoughts that may wander into your mind. You find you can just release them and let them go. Return your focus to the breath, breathing in, breathing out, like a sigh of relief. Now, take a moment, if you'd like, to notice anywhere in your body you may be holding tension, and have your mind instruct those muscles to just release and let go.

On your exhale, you may focus on releasing any tension you may be holding. You can just let it go. You might notice how your body is being supported by the surface upon which you're sitting, or lying.

As you continue to breathe comfortably, when you feel ready, you can choose to let your mind travel to a place where you can feel safe and totally protected. If you like, you can allow your imagination to take you to a place, real or imagined, a place from now or from long ago, a place where you've been or a place where you've always wanted to go. There is no right or wrong. You may create a place you may have read about or seen in

a movie, or one your imagination creates just for you. The only rule is that the place be safe, quiet, comfortable, and peaceful.

Notice that this is a magical place. Your mind, your imagination has created it just for you so that you can feel completely safe there. You may add in anything you need to help you feel safe. If you like, take a moment to imagine what you might need in or around your place to provide you with a sense of safety. You can create anything you like that will facilitate that sense of complete safety.

And remember that you can add anything or remove anything at any time. You may see vivid pictures of this place in your head, or you may just get a sense of the place. There's no right or wrong. Anything that you experience is valid and real for you.

Now that you're in your special place, you may wish to notice what you see there. You can take a few minutes to take in all the sights in your safe space. What do you notice? Are you indoors or outdoors? Notice where there's shadow and light. Notice the colors. What do you see in your surroundings? What's around you? Is it day or night? Light or dark? What season is it in your space?

Notice what you feel around you in this safe place. Notice what your body is touching. If you reach out and touch things near you, what do you feel like as you run your fingers and your palms over them? Is the surface smooth or rough, soft or hard? Notice any sensations you feel or hear. What about the temperature in the room? Do you feel warm or cool? Can you feel any air moving on your skin?

Take a moment to notice what it feels like to be in your body in this place. Feeling comfortable and safe. Check to make sure you do feel safe. Remember, you can add or remove anything to ensure a feeling of safety.

And now notice the aromas in your safe space. What do you smell there? What aromas are in your environment? What do you hear in this safe space? What sounds or noises do you notice?

Sometimes, in some places, there may even be something you can taste in the air. In your safe space, is there anything you imagine you can taste?

And now you might want to take several moments to experience being fully present in your safe space, seeing, feeling, smelling, hearing, tasting, and sensing what is there, and knowing you can change, move around, or remove anything in this space. You may change the picture in your mind any way you need to, so the place you are now noticing is the calmest, most peaceful, safest place you have ever experienced.

Now take some time to look around your safe space for a special object, something you may not have noticed before but that you're drawn to or attracted to. Some item that feels special to you. A totem, talisman, or a souvenir, a sacred object that you notice, a keepsake of some kind that will remind you of your special place whenever you think of it or focus on it. If you don't find something, that's fine. There is no right or wrong. Maybe you'll find something, maybe not.

In a few moments, but not quite yet, when you get ready to leave this place, you will be able to take this keepsake with you, if you have found one. You'll be able to take it, even if it's a large object, because of the magic of your safe place. You will find it will magically fit in your pocket or can be stored next to your heart.

Now you can take a final look around to anchor this place in your memory, remembering just how and where it is you can find your way back easily. You can come here anytime you like and as often as you want to. This place is always here for you. It's your very own place, here just for you.

As you get ready to make your way back, you may now take your keepsake object and keep it with you. Remember that it will magically fit. You will find a way to take this gift with you to remind yourself how safe and special this place makes you feel.

You may also find that focusing on your object helps you to get to your place more quickly. Now slowly and gently begin to return to the room and the present time. Come back out the same way you came in, and slowly find your way back. When you're completely ready, you may open your eyes and find yourself back in the now.

So, often when I do this with clients, then we process what it felt like. They'll explain to me and talk to me about what their safe place looked like. And then it's a place that we can go back to, especially if we're processing any big emotions, discussing past trauma, things like that, a place that we can easily get back to at the close of the session to kind of ground them and bring them back to the present. That is our presentation today.

And then, I guess we're open for a couple of questions here at the end now?

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Yes, that's right. But before we get started with the questions, just, first, I thank you for this information, Lacey, and this wonderful presentation.

>> LACEY BURCH: Of course!

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: And thank you all for joining today. Now, we realize you may have some strong reactions related to current events, but please note we will not directly address questions related to the election, since this platform is not the place to address those type of questions.

If the tips Lacey talked about today, if you would like more information about that or other topics, and if that didn't help you today, please call your program for consultation. And your program is a great source to help you work through your intense feelings, okay?

I'd like to remind everyone about that program again. It's not just for you, it's for your and your family members. So, please reach out and contact Magellan, because we are here to help you and your family. And we can help you to be aware of how you're doing and how to improve in areas of your life so that you can thrive and get through daily struggles.

You can contact your program day or night, 365 a year, and by calling the toll-free number or visiting us online.

And if you don't know the company-specific number or website, contact your HR representative for assistance. Okay. So, we do have just a few minutes, Lacey, so if you'd like to peruse the questions and pick out a few that you'd like to address.

>> LACEY BURCH: Yeah. So, I'm trying to see. There was one I just saw that I was like, that would be an interesting one, but I might have missed it. Let's see... Oh, someone said, would a daily practice of visiting your safe place help? I definitely think it would. That could be a great way to meditate, even if it's just five, ten minutes in the morning when you get up or before you go to bed at night. I think just laying calmly in your bed when you first wake up, or again,

right before bedtime, just visiting that safe space, thinking about -- I've got a client who has a place on Cape Cod that she just loves to vacation at. She'll talk about -- I mean, she can smell the ocean, she can hear the waves, she can feel the sand. She'll get so immersed in it. And I think it's been such a very, very positive, helpful thing for her in her life, to go to that safe space in her head and be able to go there anytime she wants, even just laying in bed at night before she goes to sleep. So, I think that's a great option.

Someone said, "This will help me with my anxiety." I hope so. I'm an anxious person. I know how stressful that can be.

Someone said they missed the part about the special object. So, yeah, just when you're closing your eyes and you're in your safe space, you're just going to find something that resonates with you and just take that with you. And it can be anything.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Here's one, one that says, "Are there some personality types that are more prone to regulating their emotions?"

>> LACEY BURCH: More prone to, or not being able to?

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: It says are more prone to regulating.

>> LACEY BURCH: More prone. Yeah, probably, well, you know, that's a good question. I'm not entirely sure. I know there are definitely more personalities prone to the most regulating as well. Anxious people tend to have a harder time regulating emotions. Definitely ADHD spectrum disorder. People can often have a harder time. If you've ever been diagnosed with any type of like emotional diagnosis, like depression, anxiety, things like that, you can definitely maybe have a harder time managing them. So, I think, obviously, more even-cold people in general, people who are kind of unflappable. I have a few people like that in my life. They're usually a little bit better at just kind of rolling with things, going with the flow.

I saw someone post earlier "it is what it is." One of my friends hates that phrase so much. It makes me laugh. But, I mean, he [dpriezs](#) it. It's kind of hilarious. I actually got him a coffee mug that says it, as a joke one year for Christmas. But it is. Sometimes it is what it is, you know? It's the same as "this is the moment I find myself in." It's radical acceptance of, I can't change what's happening. I can only change how I'm going to react to it and what I'm going to do with the information I have and how I'm going to take care of myself while I handle this situation. So, remind yourselves, we only have control over ourselves and our stuff. The bigger picture life sometimes is out of our control, and just doing what we can in our small corner to, you know, do what we can and put as much good out into the world as we can.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Thanks, Lacey.

>> LACEY BURCH: Yeah.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Everyone, we're out of time now. This does conclude the session, but we would love to hear from you and ask that you please rate your overall satisfaction with today's webinar, whether you're very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied.

We also would like any feedback that you would like to share and any topics that you may be interested in. That would be the place to put that down in the poll and let us know how you felt about today's program or any topics that you would like to get more information on.

We also have the Certificate of Completion that you can

download for your records. And then, we still have the handouts available so that you can download to go over the information we had today.

And once again, thank you, Lacey, for a great presentation.

>> LACEY BURCH: Thank you, everyone! Thank you for being here today, everybody.

>> ALLONNA SCOTT: Okay. That does conclude today's session for today.

(Session concluded at 1:48 p.m. CT)

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