



Guide for Emotional Self-Help in Times of War and Crisis



Emotional Self-Help for Anxiety and Stress

Intensely burdening emotions as currently experienced by many due to war and fleeing often cannot be calmed down completely by talking about one's experiences.

Different approaches, e.g. reminding oneself that most people around the globe stand behind the Ukrainians, might help you in this situation. Of course, being in contact with empathetic and supportive people can be particularly helpful.

In addition, techniques for emotional self-care derived from trauma-focused and general psychotherapy can significantly reduce emotional impact. They help decrease acute stress – both for those exposed to traumatizing events as well as for emotionally challenged helpers.

Because adverse emotions are felt in the body, body-oriented strategies may be beneficial. Tapping techniques, particularly PEP®, as presented here, have proven to be particularly useful. These techniques might seem odd at first sight, but they have great potential to enable you to care for yourself when facing anxiety or stress.

Just give it a try!

PEP® by Dr. Michael Bohne / www.dr-michael-bohne.de

Translated by: Tonja Roedig / Visual design by Marcus Zimmermann 2022 / www.deluzi.de ©

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For translation requests please contact Marcus Zimmermann (info@deluzi.de).

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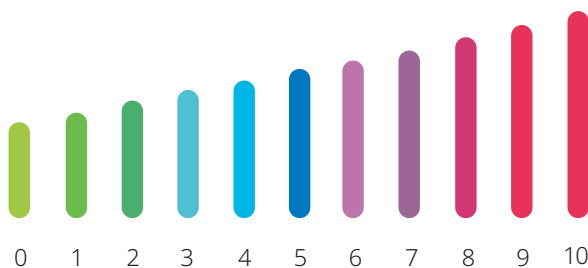
PEP® Scale

The intensity of a stressful emotion can be assessed and visualized on a scale. For example, your anxiety might vary in different situations and depending on your overall state.

TIP: Focus on the stressful emotion. How great is your distress on a scale from 0 to 10?

0 equals no distress

10 equals maximum distress



Repeat this assessment before and after the exercises. This will allow you to visualize changes in your emotional experience and at the same time strengthen your self-efficacy.

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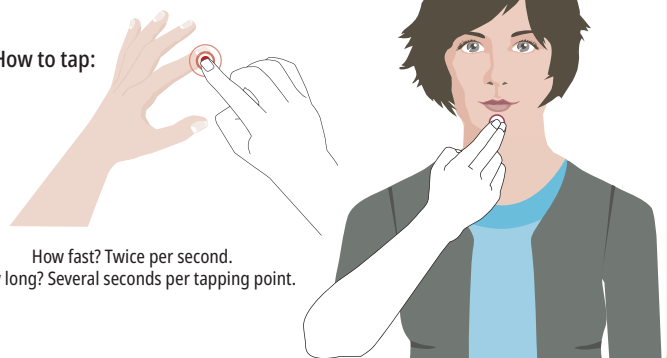
Tapping I

Tapping helps to reduce stress and anxiousness. Just remember to tap in exactly those moments when your nervous system is activated by stress, fear or general high arousal. It's truly a self-care technique for real-life situations.

TIP: Tap while feeling stressed or anxious. Tapping specific points on your body will send soothing neural impulses to the emotion-processing part of your brain and often lead to emotional relief. You can't make any mistakes.

Tap each point approximately twice per second for a period of several seconds, then move on to the next one. If a specific spot feels especially good to you, you can keep tapping it a little longer. You may use the tapping technique repeatedly during the day, maybe even several times per hour, just any time when you need it.

How to tap:

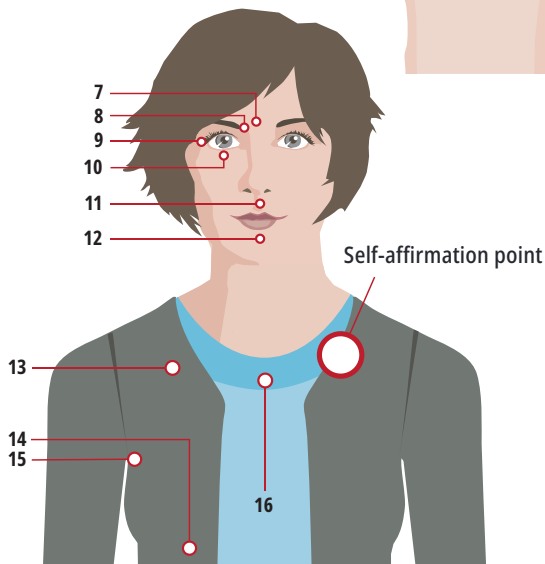
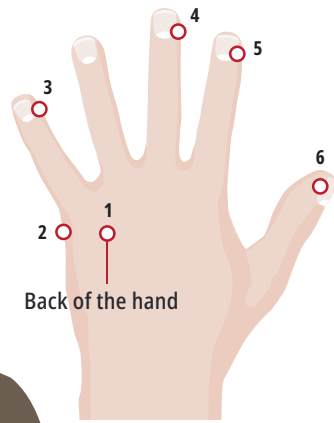


How fast? Twice per second.
How long? Several seconds per tapping point.

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Tapping II

The tapping points



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If tapping alone doesn't help you

To enhance the relieving effect of tapping or when tapping doesn't immediately reduce your adverse emotion, you may add the following exercise: Here you say out loud empowering phrases, each one consisting of two parts.

The first part refers to a difficult situation or topic, for example "Even though I am really scared right now, ..." or "Even though I feel helpless and exposed, ..." or "Even though I am incredibly angry, ...".

The second part connects different resource-oriented perspectives with these problems, offering a possible solution or action like "... I keep things in perspective.", "... I remind myself that I am not alone." or "... I take the space for myself that I need."

Solution-oriented phrases like this refer to our fundamental psychological needs for safety, connection and autonomy.

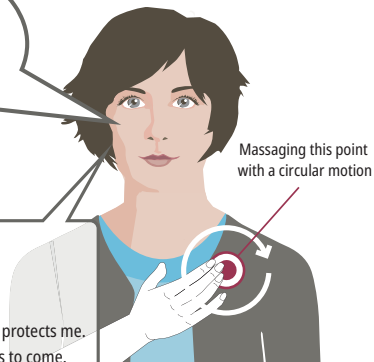
To enhance the effect, you may say the phrase out loud while rubbing the spot below your left collarbone with your right hand by circling your fingers around it in a clockwise direction.

Here is how it works:

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If tapping alone doesn't help

Even though I am totally scared right now, ...



SAFETY

... I keep things in perspective.
 ... I can still choose my actions wisely and care for myself.
 ... I remind myself that God's hand still protects me.
 ... I firmly believe there are better times to come.
 ... there are occasions again and again when I can feel protected.

AUTONOMY

... I make my own decisions.
 ... I will follow my own path.
 ... I will take the space for myself that I need.
 ... we make our own choices about what is right for us.
 ... we still stand up for freedom, humanity and democratic values.

RELATIONSHIP TO SELF AND OTHERS

... I respect and appreciate myself just as I am.
 ... I love and accept myself and my family just as we are.
 ... I stay tuned in to my own feelings and needs.
 ... I completely accept myself, with everything that makes me "me".

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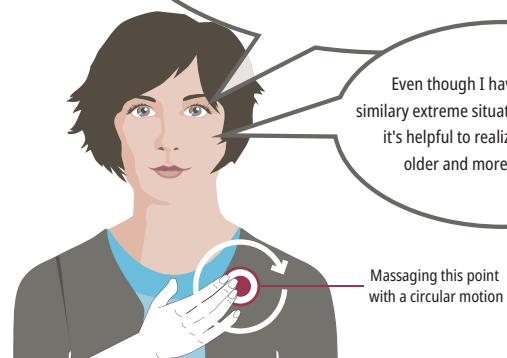
Additional Tip I

Do you sometimes feel younger and smaller than you actually are when facing this burden? Do you sometimes seem to forget how old you are and feel small and helpless like a child?

TIP: Even if you feel this way, remind yourself of your real age and what you have already accomplished in your life. Taking this into consideration can help you to be more optimistic about the future.

Even though I feel like shrinking and becoming much smaller or younger than I actually am, and I literally forget how old I really am, I still decide what is right and beneficial for me (this or an alternative self-affirmation).
 Particularly now I keep my real age in mind, become aware of everything I accomplished in my life already and stay optimistic about what the future holds for me.

Even though I have experienced similar extreme situations when younger, it's helpful to realize that I am now older and more experienced.



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Additional Tip II

Sometimes we feel bad because we blame ourselves for something.

TIP: If this applies to you, try to become aware of what you feel guilty about. When tuning in to your inner self, does it feel like you were not capable of acting differently or rather that you did not want to act differently? Whenever blaming yourself for something you did or did not do, the following phrase might mitigate the negative feelings associated with this self-accusation.

Even if I still blame myself for something that happened in the past, I love and accept myself just as I am, and now I will forgive myself, because I obviously wasn't able or for good reason did not want to act differently - and now I accept and honor that!



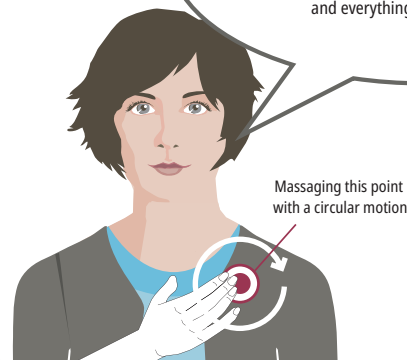
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Additional Tip III

Human beings are emotionally connected to each other. The stronger the emotional connection, the greater our feeling of belonging and our felt obligation to be loyal. When people dear and close to us are unwell, we sometimes hold back positive emotions prevent good things for us to happen or sympathize with them to an extreme extent due to feelings of guilt.

TIP: Of course connection and closeness are valuable in principle. But when they prevent us from essential acts of self-care, they are not nourishing anymore. In these cases you might try the following phrase:

Even though I have lost hope and confidence because people I feel close to are not well, are in great danger or have even died, I keep a clear mind (or an alternative self-affirmation) and I honor them by keeping on fighting for myself and everything good in this world.



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Protective Affirmations I

Have you heard of mantras or affirmations which can enhance your emotional state – which can help you regain energy and hope?

TIP: Look for a phrase that feels supportive and encouraging to you - one that makes you feel better. We are presenting some examples here to give you an impression of how such phrases might sound. Just freely articulate your own affirmation without restraints, be creative and tune in to your inner response.

An affirmation is most helpful when it speaks to your heart and you can feel its empowering effect in your body. To make the best of their potential effect, the chosen phrases should be repeated regularly – the more the better!

I completely accept myself with everything that characterizes who I am.



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Protective Affirmations II

- "It's absolutely normal to be scared right now!"
- "My/our fears are the key to my/our strength!"
- "From now on, I'll tap when I am stressed/scared/insecure!"
- "Tapping can overcome fears and insecurities!"
- "There are always occasions when I can feel protected!"
- "I have the strength / I find it fulfilling to help others and ease their suffering."
- "What I am doing to help others serves a purpose / I do out of love for humanity!"
- "I recognize and enjoy moments that give me energy."
- "I remind myself of something nice or of good times."
- "I structure each day at a time and keep believing better times will come."
- "To prevent myself from despairing I connect with people who are good for my wellbeing."
- "There are a lot of people who support and help me. I am loved."
- "Whatever happens, I stay true to my values."
- "I will always fight for a just and peaceful world!"
- "We show the world what it means to be a strong nation."
- "In the long run, our faith and love will be stronger than the hate and inhumanity of the offenders."
- "Physical distance cannot destroy love."
- "We will continue to call this war what it clearly is: An inhumane attack."
- "From a moral standpoint we have already won - and history books will document our courage and strength for centuries to come."