

Flooding and Overwhelm Containment Exercise

Being overwhelmed can also cause challenges with emotional regulation and is commonly caused by significant situational stress or chronic challenges with negative thoughts, feelings, memories, or other difficulties.

This exercise will help set aside information and assists with creating some distance from stressful thoughts, feelings, flooding of memories and body sensations by creating some distance from what is distressing and grounding yourself.

Start with making sure you are comfortable and take some full slow comfortable breaths for a few breathing cycles.

Visualize the best you can all of the things that are too much right now – any thoughts, feelings, memories, body sensations, concerns, etc. and place them in a pile. The pile can be as big as it needs to be.

Once you have everything in the pile, take a marker or piece of chalk and draw a circle around it, you can see the line, make sure to step outside of the circle and notice how everything stays there. Continuing to breath comfortably, deeply, and slowly as you can.

As you face the pile, throw a fine net over all of it and gather it all up, making sure you gather up all the pieces of any overwhelming thoughts, feelings, sensations, images, memories, etc. and tie it closed very securely.

Now create some sort of secure container to your mind's eye, visualize it the best you can. Take some comfortable breaths and just allow it to develop. It happens quickly for some people and more slowly for others. It can be made from whatever seems secure to you. As you breath comfortably, in and out, it can be helpful to focus on the details of the container.

Once your container is there take your net of things and put it in the container and seal it.

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Shrink the container down a bit, you can shrink it down by pressing on the sides or having a strong beam of light shine on it. Shrink it down to the size of a soccer ball or soft ball and place this container in another container and seal it securely.

Once again shrink down the container to the size of a golf ball or hockey puck. If you want to you can write your initials and the date on it or just know it is your container.

Now take the small container and put it into a vault or safe. Close the door and spin the combination or click the lock and put the combination or key, whichever way it locks, into your pocket.

You can take a few more comfortable breaths and bring your attention back to the room, press your feet into the floor, name a few objects, and make sure you are aware of your surroundings.

You can add more containers to the vault (or safe) anytime you need to do so.