

TAKING CARE OF FUTURE YOU

Simple ways to care for yourself regularly and during hard moments.

By Jaime Bremseth
& Tiffany Braxton

Illustrated by Rebecca DeField



TAKING CARE OF FUTURE YOU

A little note:

Future You is you:
one moment, one day, one month... or many years from now.

"Taking care of Future You" means doing what you can today to stay safe, supported, and connected to the life still ahead of you.

You do not have to build yourself up all at once.

Sometimes caring for Future You means taking one breath, completing one small task, telling someone how you feel, or asking for help.

Think of each small step as a brick.
You can build yourself up one brick at a time.
Every brick counts. 

NEED SUPPORT RIGHT NOW?

There are people who want to help you reach what comes next.

In the U.S.: [Call or text 988](https://988lifeline.org) for free, confidential emotional support. 988lifeline.org

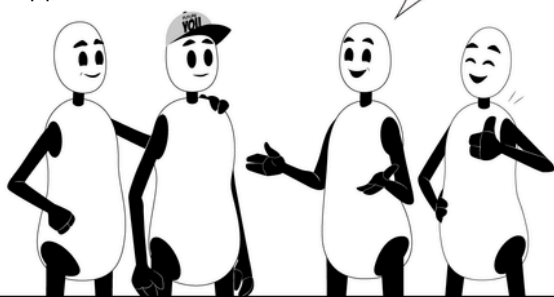
Outside the U.S.: Find support available in your country at findahelpline.com

You are not alone.

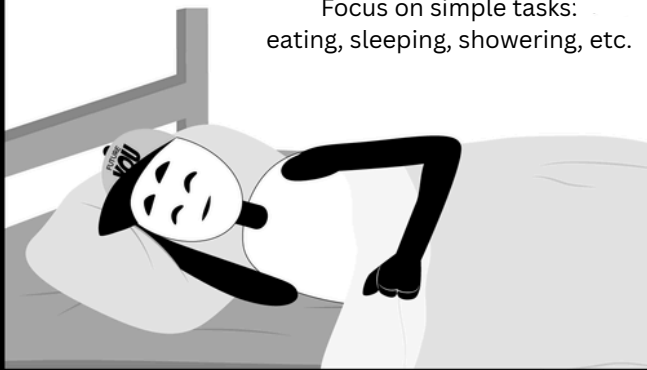


TAKING CARE OF FUTURE YOU

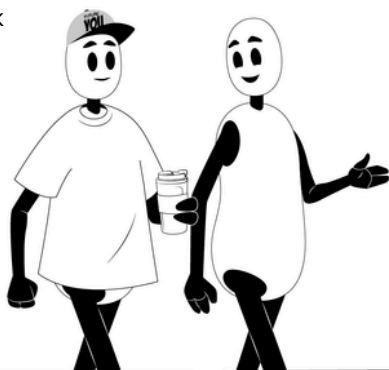
Surround yourself with people who help you feel supported and safe



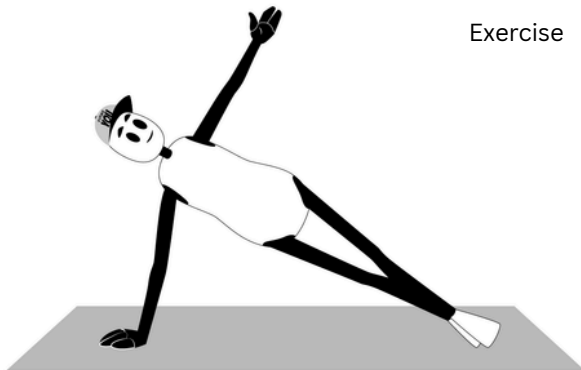
Focus on simple tasks: eating, sleeping, showering, etc.



Go for a walk



Exercise



Watch TV



Listen to music



Color or get creative



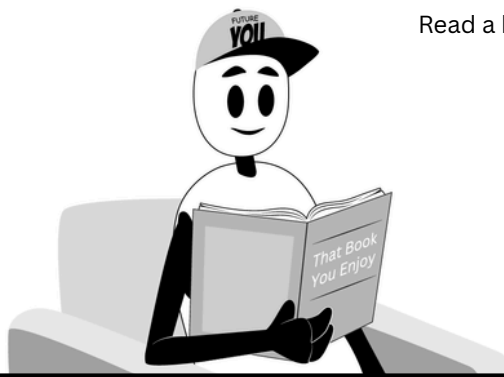
Watch a funny movie



Focus on one day at a time



Read a book

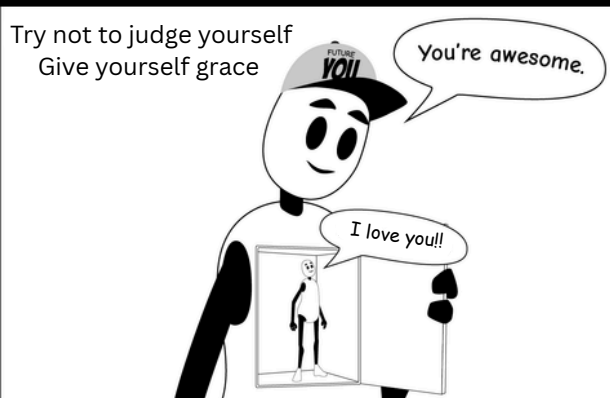


TAKING CARE OF FUTURE YOU

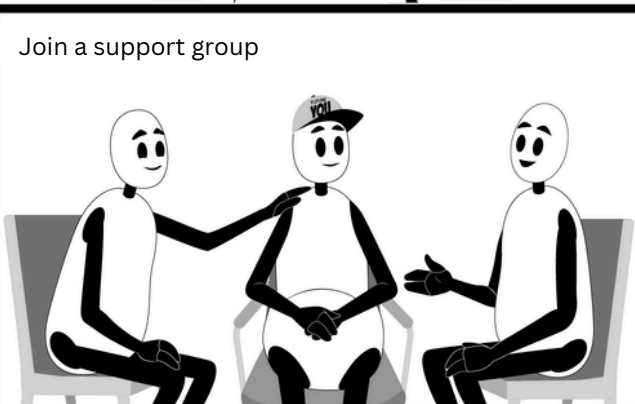
Cry



Try not to judge yourself
Give yourself grace



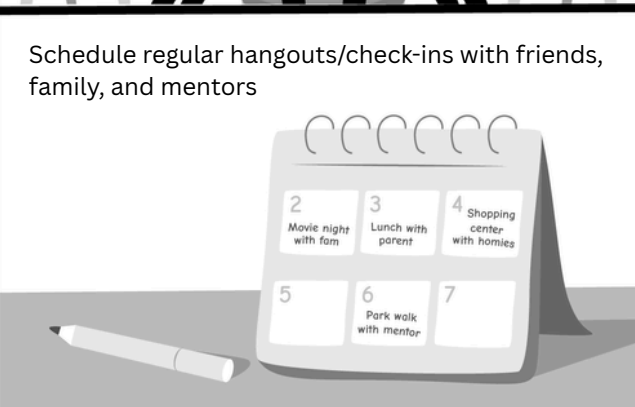
Join a support group



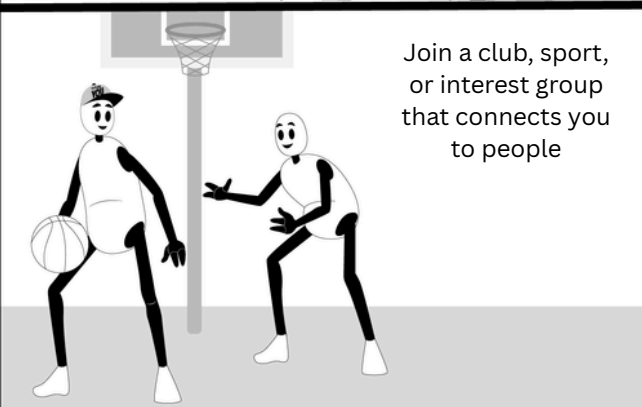
Find a therapist
to help you



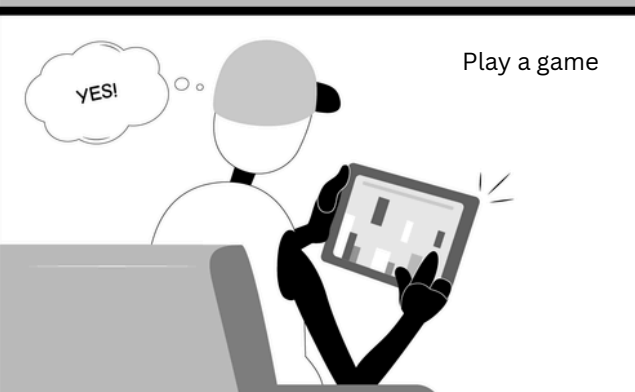
Schedule regular hangouts/check-ins with friends,
family, and mentors



Join a club, sport,
or interest group
that connects you
to people



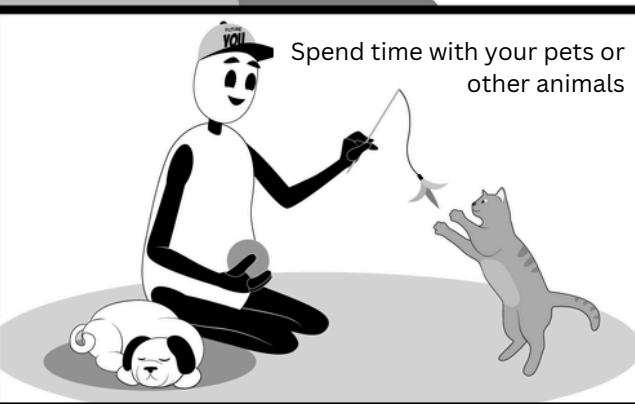
Play a game



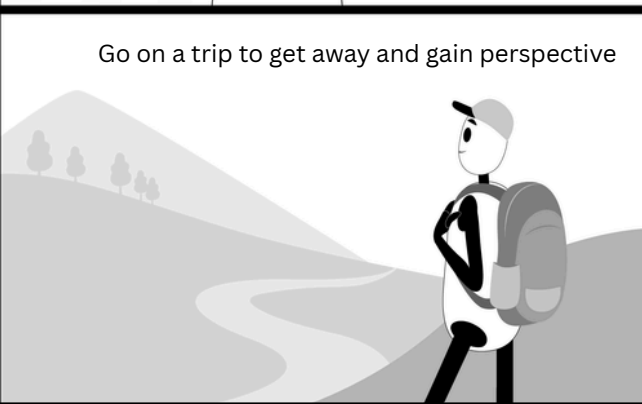
Connect with your higher power
by praying, meditating,
reading, etc.



Spend time with your pets or
other animals



Go on a trip to get away and gain perspective



GROUNDING/MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES

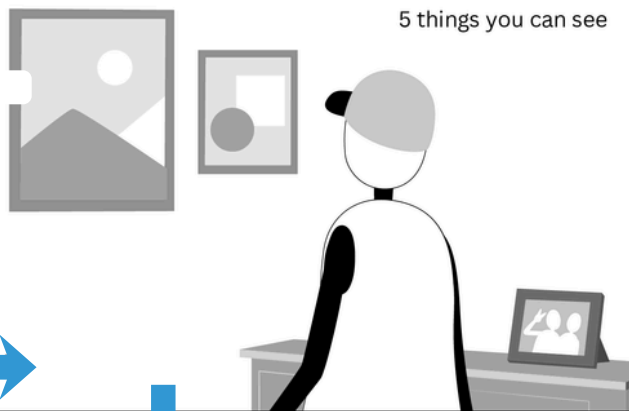
5-4-3-2-1 Method

Use your five senses to ground yourself in the present by noticing what is happening around you. You can do these in any order. The purpose is to get your brain focused on the present instead of the thoughts in your brain.

(Another way is to count objects by color—like all the blue or red things around you).

Look around and find:

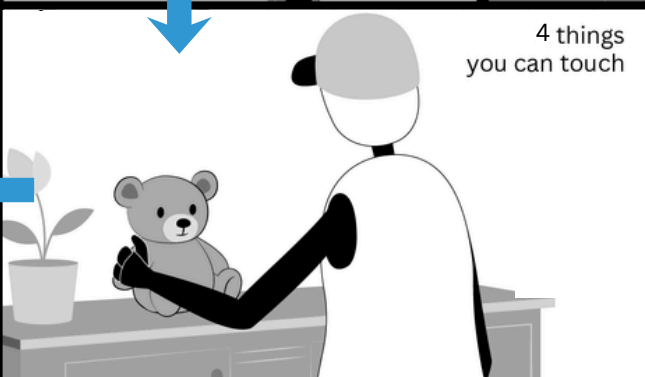
5 things you can see



3 things you can hear



4 things you can touch

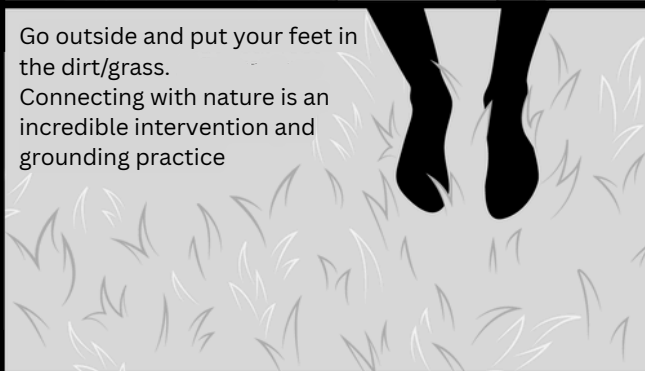


2 things you can smell



1 thing you can taste

Go outside and put your feet in the dirt/grass. Connecting with nature is an incredible intervention and grounding practice



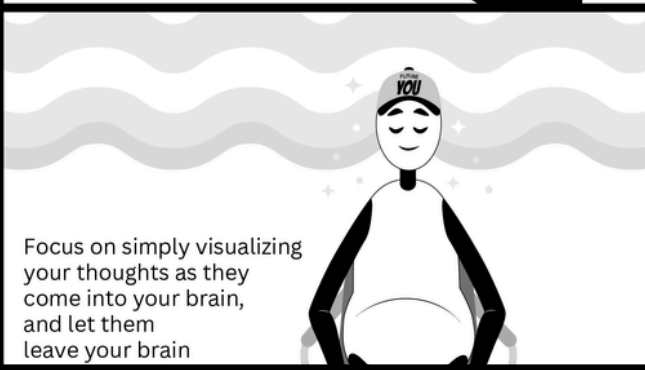
Use sensory stickers (those that are differently textured) or other fidget toys to give your hands input that is calming



Count backwards from 100. Or use the alphabet to distract yourself by creating a list (animals, fruits, cities, etc.) that starts with a certain letter



Focus on simply visualizing your thoughts as they come into your brain, and let them leave your brain

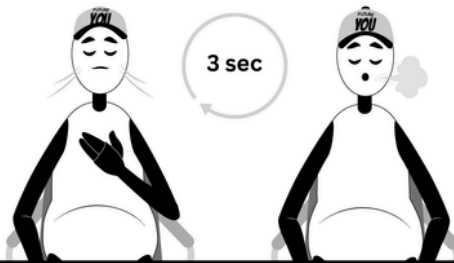


GROUNDING/MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES

Deep Breathing

There are several ways to deep breathe. Here are two.

1. Inhale through the nose, hold for 3 seconds, exhale through your mouth like you are blowing through a straw. Repeat at least 10 times.

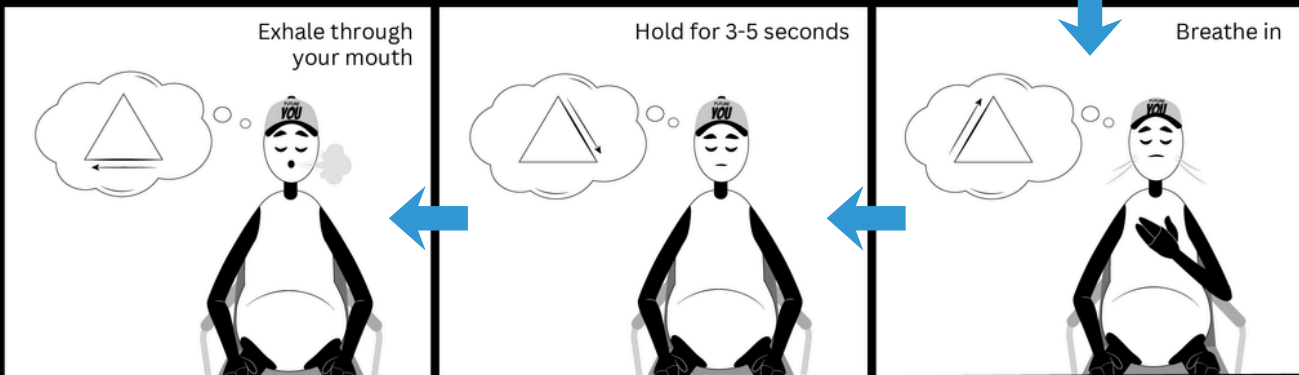


2. Triangle Breathing: Trace your finger over a triangle if this helps or just visualize a triangle.

Breathe in through your nose as you trace one side of the triangle; hold for 3-5 seconds while you trace your finger down the second side; exhale through your mouth slowly for 3-5 seconds while you trace the 3rd side of the triangle.

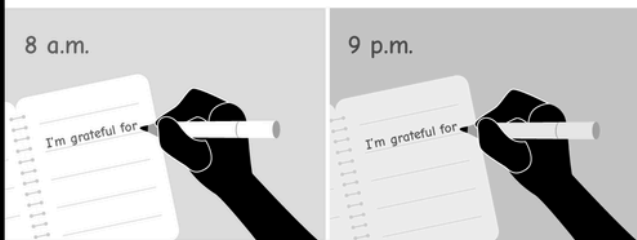
Repeat 5-7 times until you feel more grounded.

(Another option is Square or Box Breathing. Similar to Triangle Breathing, you breathe in, hold, breathe out, and hold, using the four sides of the square or box.)

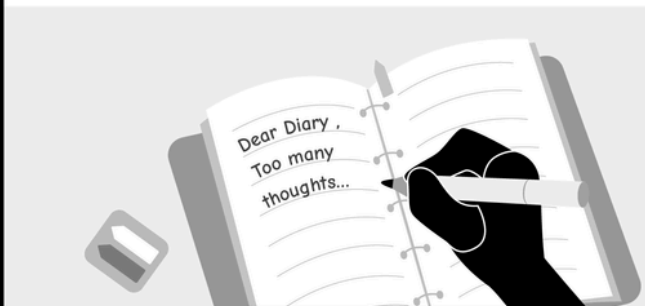


Writing

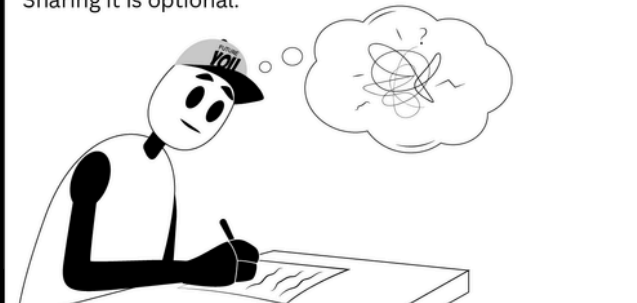
1. Each morning and night, write down one thing you're grateful for.



2. Journal or write down overwhelming thoughts.



3. Write a letter to someone or yourself when overwhelmed. Sharing it is optional.



4. Write down some life goals to motivate you.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Take a slow, deep breath in... and out.

As you go through each area tense for 5 seconds, then relax

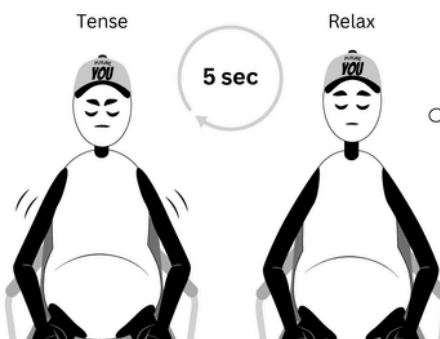
Hands → Clench fists → Release

Shoulders → Lift toward ears → Release

Face → Scrunch face/jaw → Release

Stomach → Tighten muscles → Release

Legs & Feet → Tighten → Release



Now take one more slow breath.

Notice the difference between tension and relaxation.

Closing thought:

"I can let go of what my body no longer needs to carry."

AND THAT'S A WRAP

Take care.

