# The Secure Base

## Post-Crisis Regulation for Supporters

A guided imagery script for supporters after a BPD crisis. Grounded in Fonagy's secure base concept -- the internalized experience of a reliable, non-abandoning presence. This script helps the supporter's nervous system return to a regulated state and builds an internal resource that can be accessed between crises.

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# Script

***[Instruction] Use this script in the quiet after a crisis has passed -- not during. Wait until your own nervous system has begun to settle. Sit comfortably. This is for you.***

Allow yourself to settle into wherever you are sitting. Feel the chair or surface beneath you -- the actual physical weight of your body being held. You don't have to hold yourself up right now. Let the chair do that.

***[Instruction] Breathe audibly -- two short inhales through the nose, one long exhale through the mouth. Repeat three times.***

Notice that you are here. That the crisis has passed. That you are still intact. Whatever happened, you are still here, still breathing, still capable of sitting quietly in a chair. That is not nothing. That is, in fact, quite a lot.

*[Pause — 10 seconds]*

Now I want you to bring to mind a place -- real or imagined -- where you have felt, or could feel, genuinely safe. Not just physically safe, but settled. A place where your nervous system knows it does not need to be on guard. It might be a room, a landscape, a particular chair in a particular house. It might be somewhere you have never been but can imagine clearly. Take a moment to find that place.

*[Pause — 15 seconds]*

When you have it, begin to notice the details. What do you see when you look around? What is the quality of the light? Is there sound -- water, wind, quiet? What does the air feel like on your skin? What is beneath your feet or beneath you if you are sitting or lying down? Let the place become specific and real.

***[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation***

Now, in this place, I want you to sense a presence. Not a person necessarily -- though it can be. It might be a quality of the place itself, or a feeling that someone who cares about you has been here, or is nearby. What Fonagy called the secure base is not always a person. It is the internalized experience of having been reliably held -- the felt sense that someone, somewhere, is not going to leave.

*[Pause — 10 seconds]*

If a person comes to mind -- someone who has held you reliably, even imperfectly -- allow their presence to be here with you. You do not need to speak to them or explain anything.

Just let them be here. Let yourself be seen by them, without having to perform or manage or protect anyone.

***[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation***

Notice what happens in your body when you allow that. There may be relief. There may be grief -- the grief of how rarely you get to be the one who is held. Both are appropriate. Both are information. Let whatever arises be present without trying to change it.

*[Pause — 20 seconds]*

Now I want to say something directly to you, as someone who has just been through something hard: The work you are doing is not small. Staying present for someone whose nervous system is in full alarm -- someone who may have said things that were not true, or done things that were frightening -- that is not a small thing. It costs something. And the cost is real.

***[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation***

You are allowed to be tired. You are allowed to not be fine. You are allowed to need your own secure base -- your own person, your own place, your own moment of being held without having to hold anyone else. That is not weakness. That is the basic requirement of being a nervous system.

*[Pause — 15 seconds]*

Before you leave this place, I want you to do one thing. Look around it one more time. Notice that it is here. Notice that you built it, or found it, or remembered it. Notice that you can return to it. It is not going anywhere. It will be here the next time you need it -- which may be tomorrow, or tonight, or in an hour. It will be here.

***[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation***

When you are ready, begin to bring yourself back. Notice the weight of your body in the chair. Notice the sounds in the room around you. Take a slow breath in, and a slow breath out. Gently make a fist with both hands, then release. And when you are ready, open your eyes.

***[Instruction] Allow the person to sit quietly for a moment before speaking or moving.***

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