

Somatic Experiencing (SE) Quick Reference

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Core Principles

Principle	Description
Titration	Process trauma in small, manageable doses
Pendulation	Oscillate between activation and resource
Discharge	Allow incomplete survival responses to complete
Resourcing	Build capacity before and during trauma work
Tracking	Follow body sensations moment-to-moment

SIBAM Model

Element	Description	Examples
Sensation	Physical body feelings	Tightness, warmth, tingling, pressure
Image	Visual, auditory, olfactory	Memories, symbols, colors, sounds
Behavior	Movements, gestures, postures	Bracing, reaching, pushing, curling
Affect	Emotions and feelings	Fear, anger, sadness, relief
Meaning	Thoughts, beliefs, interpretations	"I'm safe now," "I survived"

Key Techniques

****Resourcing:**** - Grounding (feet, seat, back) - Safe place imagery - Supportive relationships - Body sensations of calm - Nature, pets, activities ****Tracking Sensations:**** - "What do you notice in your body?" - "Where exactly do you feel that?" - "What's the quality of that sensation?"

****Pendulation:**** - Move between activation and resource - "Now notice somewhere that feels okay" - Prevents overwhelm, builds capacity ****Titration:**** - Small doses of activation - "Just touch into that briefly" - Return to resource frequently

Session Language

****Tracking:**** - "What are you noticing right now?" - "Where in your body do you feel that?" - "What's the shape/size/temperature?" ****Slowing Down:**** - "Let's slow that down" - "Stay with that for a moment" - "What happens as you notice that?"

****Discharge:**** - "Let your body do what it wants to do" - "Notice any impulse to move" - "What does your body want to do?" ****Completing Responses:**** - "What would your hands want to do?" - "If your legs could move freely..." - "Let that movement happen slowly"

Survival Responses

Response	Signs	Completion
Fight	Tension in arms/jaw, heat	Pushing, hitting movements
Flight	Leg tension, restlessness	Running, kicking movements
Freeze	Stillness, cold, numb	Trembling, shaking, warmth
Collapse	Shutdown, dissociation	Gentle activation, orienting

Discharge Signs

Sign	Description
Trembling/shaking	Release of bound energy
Deep breaths/sighs	Autonomic reset
Warmth spreading	Circulation returning
Tears	Emotional release
Yawning	Nervous system settling

Key Principle: Trauma is not in the event—it's in the nervous system. SE helps complete thwarted survival responses and restore self-regulation.