Ways To Calm Down Your Nervous System and to Recover Well:

Deliberate Breathing:

E.g., Inhale through one nostril, exhale through the other (as many times as you can).

Bilateral Body Movements:

Move your body’s left and right sides in an alternating fashion, e.g., tap your right and then your left foot, right, left, right left,... (50 repetitions).

Light exercise:

Take a brief walk; run a flight of stairs.

Communication

-Take breaks from talking about this difficult topic (especially early in the morning and after 8 p.m. at night);

-As much as it is in your control, choose the time for communication with others about emotionally difficult subjects as conducive to your schedule and energy levels. If you are the one needing to propose a different time for the conversation, promptly let the person know which time will work for you (and then take the lead to initiate the conversation during the time you proposed).

(Online) Support:

Talk to (and possibly share) people who are sensitive to your current needs. If you are dealing with an addiction (or an addiction in a loved one), consider a 12 step community for education and support. E.g. 24 hours online support: <https://www.intherooms.com/> or look up an in-person 12 step meeting by googling “12 Step meeting locator”.

Resting/Sleep:

-If you cannot fall asleep, see your time as time of resting instead. Resting helps your body relax and replenish. Listen to the “Resting” script <https://sexualhealthoc.com/rest/> instead of trying to fall asleep.

-Look up and listen to Youtube “EMDR Bilateral Stimulation Music”. Listen to that music using your phone’s headset- the rhythm sent to your ears in an alternating fashion will calm down your brain.

Thought and Emotion Stopping Strategies:

“The Three Second Rule”:

-Second 1: I feel *something* / have recurring thoughts that I cannot slow down

-Second 2: Interrupt and ask yourself: What is my strategy?

-Second 3: Pick and apply one of the above strategies

“Bathroom Break”:

Step away from what you are doing by going to the bathroom (or another place with running water) to wash your hands. This will move your body’s sensations to a more calm state.

“Ice Cube Break”

Step away from what you are doing by getting some ice (e.g., vending machine, ice cube tray) and hold the ice in your hands. Notice the cool sensation. The cool sensation can help you gently shift your behavior and/or feelings.

Heart Beat Strategy:

Download an app with heart beat sounds. Take a break from what you are doing, grab a jacket, towel, sheet, or blanket, and listen to the heart beat (5 min or longer as you wish). It will gently activate your nervous system that calms down your body.

“Unfreeze/Thawing Down”

Our mind/emotions/body can feel like going into “freeze” or “collapse” if we experience a longer period of stress. If you feel you are slowed down (e.g., feel your brain is foggy, feel you cannot move, feel too heavy to get out of bed), seek some (therapeutic) support to gently release the stress response of your body. All of the above strategies can help you to move from feeling stuck or “frozen” to alive and pursuing YOUR *true* mission.