

The SCOPE for Self-Care: Strategies for Stress Management in Time of Crisis
PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY BULLETIN

SingHealth Duke-NUS Institute for Patient Safety and Quality (IPSQ), Singapore

The SCOPE for Self-Care: Strategies for Stress Management in Time of Crisis

The **Somatic Experiencing™ (SE™) Crisis Stabilization “SCOPE”** toolkit is designed to help healthcare workers cope with stress response and to build resiliency. It is a useful tool packed with 5 minutes of interventions to reduce stress. Take a few minutes to practice SCOPE during a break, in between patients or on the daily commute.

by Dian Handayani

Healthcare workers are at the forefront of the battle against the pandemic. We face stress from a tiring work schedule, working long hour as well as the fear of being exposed to virus daily. Despite these risks and the condition we are in, we continue to give our best to the patients and others. When faced with a stressful situation at work, it can be hard to stop and practice self-care. However, *a regular self-care practice is vital for mental health, well-being, and patient safety.*

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With some preparation, “art-viewing” can also be used to aid SCOPE – Orienting practice. Here are some useful tips on art viewing to promote stress reduction:

- ❖ Collect pleasant or comforting images such as nature photography or landscape painting on your phone or computer.
- ❖ Slowly look at the image, noticing its colour or shapes.
- ❖ Allow your gaze to rest on something comforting.
- ❖ These can be the shape of the tree or the soothing colour of the artwork.
- ❖ Notice and name the pleasant sensation that occurs in your body as your eyes take a “brief visual vacation.”

Integrating these little practices to the work routine may improve well-being and protect mental health during this difficult time. If these are challenging to do, do seek out other self-care strategies or seek out support from family, friends and the following resources^{1, 2}.

SE™ CRISIS STABILIZATION AND SAFETY AID

The SCOPE Safety Aid stabilizes physiological stress response and helps build resilience to get through crisis. This can be an effective tool for frontline workers, first responders, and people dealing with intense pressure.

SLOW DOWN
Take 10 steps very slowly, noticing any sensations on the bottom of your feet.

CONNECT TO BODY
Cross your arms and ankles, tuck hands under armpits, lower head, and breathe.

ORIENT
Slowly look around, noticing colors and shapes. Let your gaze rest on something pleasant or comforting, like a brief visual vacation.

PENDULATE
Notice a place of ease in the body and a place of tension. Slowly shift attention between ease - tension - ease.

ENGAGE
Engage socially. Connect with someone who can support you.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SIGNALS FROM OUR NERVOUS SYSTEM:

- Accelerated heart rate
- Shallow breathing
- Social avoidance
- Erratic thoughts
- Muscle tension
- Heavy fatigue
- Rapid speech
- Numbness
- Insomnia

HIGH ACTIVATION OF THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM MAY RESULT IN:

- Fight/Flight/Hypertension Response (Sympathetic)
- Freeze/Immobility/Helplessness (Parasympathetic)

WALK THRU IT WITH OTHERS OR FIND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: traumahealing.org/scope

Somatic Experiencing™
TRAUMA INSTITUTE

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1. For more information on mindfulness and self-care, please visit <https://www.singhealthdukenus.com.sg/ipsq/ithrive>

2. For more information on SCOPE, please visit <https://traumahealing.org/scope/#:~:text=SCOPE%20is%20the%20handy%20use,thru%20the%20various%20exercises.>