

BE OK NOT BEING OK

"I'm fine!" Maybe you don't notice the stress is getting to you but pay attention to the clues. Is your hair is falling out, do you feel tired all the time, suffer digestive problems, get irritable, feel a sudden lack of interest in the things that used to give you joy or motivation? If so, talk to yourself as you would to your best friend, with compassion and lack of judgement.

ROAD TEST YOURSELF

Check in with your body to feel where it is tight, where you can release. Track your thoughts as if they were clouds in the sky - let them drift in and let them drift out. Whenever you experience a whoosh of strong emotion tell yourself, "It's just a feeling, it's just a feeling." Learning how to notice (or "mindfulness") is a practice.

SELF SOOTHE

Our parents and caregivers are supposed to teach us how to self-soothe - babies are not born with that capacity. Some of us got lucky: We were wrapped in a warm blanket, we were rocked, we were stroked, someone tapped gently on our back, or we were sung to. These are still good strategies for calming the nervous system. Think about what has helped you in the past. You are the expert at regulating your own nervous system.

HOW TO SURVIVE TRAUMA REMINDERS



GET ACTIVE

Powerlessness reminds us of the lack of power and control experienced during the traumatic event. It is a huge trigger for trauma survivors. It's time for us to get active, take to the streets, petition our lawmakers, educate our sons, and challenge social norms. It is a lie that we are powerless. We are mighty and we will prevail.

CELEBRATE RESILIENCE

It's good to recognize and celebrate our adaptations to toxic stress and trauma that have kept us alive. We should also recognize that these adaptations have the potential to derail us and no longer be life-serving once the danger is passed. For example, a biting wit can deflect verbal abuse but also destroy current supportive relationships. .

SEEK COMMUNITY

That can be harder than it sounds - particularly if life has taught you that other human beings may not trustworthy - but human beings are wired for cooperation and connection; it is how we've survived as a species. Safe, stable, nurturing relationships are the key - and they don't have to be with a romantic partner or family member who has lost the right to your trust.