



Flashback Protocol Exercise

When you are struggling with feeling triggered, are having a strong body memory, or distressed at a flashback and you want to support yourself, come back to the present moment and help to resolve unprocessed trauma in your body, try this Flashback Protocol Exercise.

Ways to apply this structured procedure:

- During a flashback to stop or reduce its impact
- As a preparation for a situation you are facing that you anticipate could trigger a flashback
- As a morning ritual, so that it becomes automatic whenever you need it (the way a fire drill in school prepares kids to react safely in the event of a real fire).
- Teach a friend or family member so they can coach you during a flashback.

Tips:

- Record the sequence on your mobile phone or recording device so it is available for you at the push of a button.
- Use your common sense and your mindful gauge to help you edit the protocol so it suits you. Experiment with what works for you.
- If you become distressed when sensing your body, skip the first step and start with the second. You may be able to add it in later when you are feeling more secure. It is not necessary for the protocol to be successful.

Steps

- Say the following sentences, filling in the blank, following the instructions:
 1. "Right now I am sensing in my body _____."
(Describe current bodily sensation in detail. For ex. Heart rate, changes in breathing, dizziness, sweaty palms, shaky legs, cold hands, sick feeling in stomach.)
 2. "And I am feeling _____."
(Name the current emotion, usually fear)
 3. "Because I am remembering _____."
(Name the trauma by title, only - no details. For ex. 'The Assault'.)
 4. "And at the same time, I am looking around where I am now in _____ *(say the day/ month/year)*, here _____ *(name the place where you are)*, and I can see/hear/touch _____." *(Describe some of the things around you right now, in this place).*
 5. *(Assess if you are actually safe right now)*
 - **If safe:** "I know _____ *(Name the trauma again)*, is not happening now/ anymore. It's over. I am safe. I am ok.
 - **If not safe:** Take action and seek safety.

Modified from: Babette Rothschild

Rothschild, B. (2000). *The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*. New York: W. W. Norton