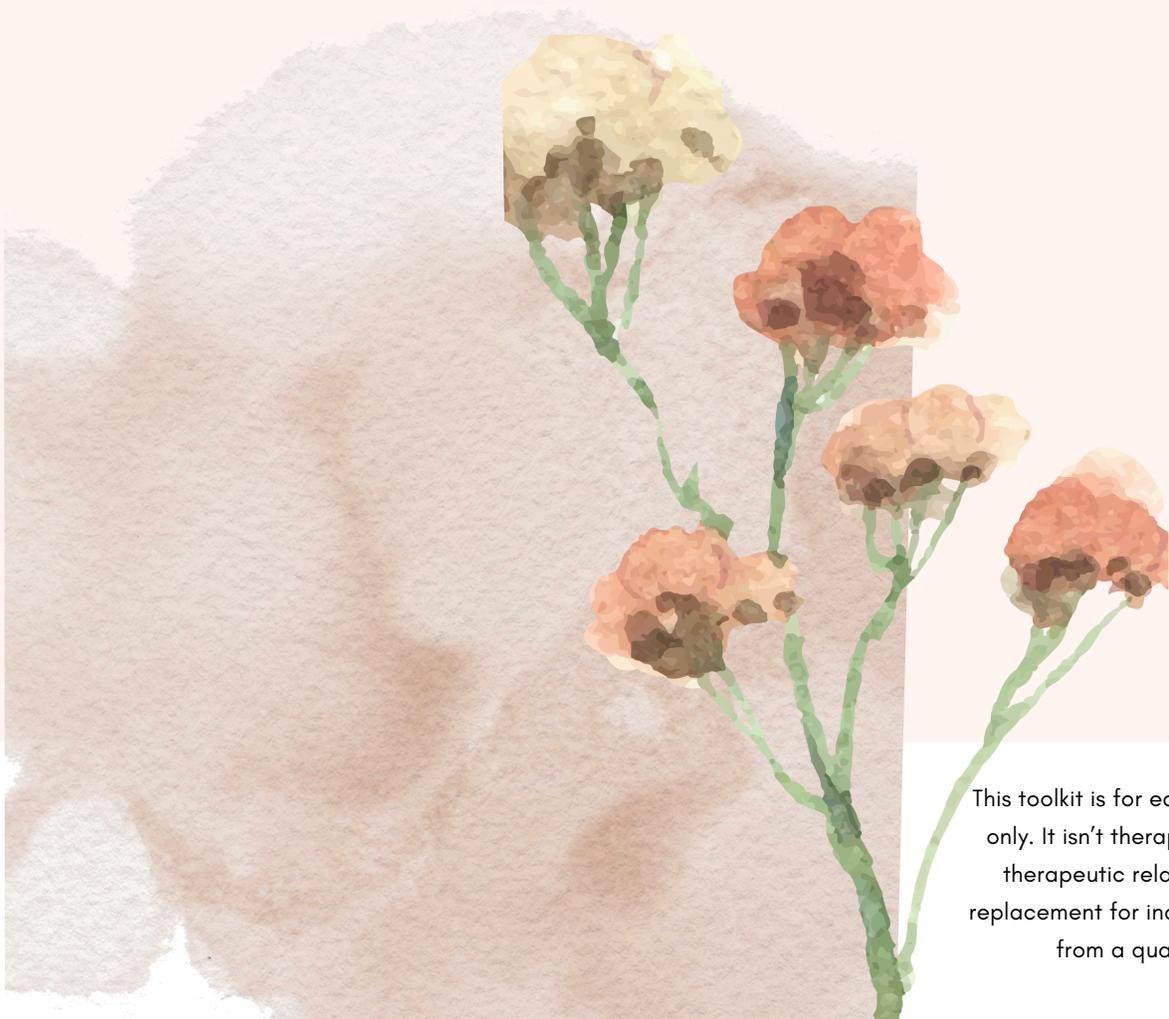


THE EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION STARTER KIT

Tools for Staying Steady in Hard Moments

BY CARRIE EVERETT

EVERETT COUNSELLING SERVICES



This toolkit is for educational purposes only. It isn't therapy, doesn't create a therapeutic relationship, and isn't a replacement for individualized support from a qualified mental health professional.

Welcome

TO EVERETT COUNSELLING SERVICES AND THE EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION STARTER KIT.



Being with our feelings can sometimes feel overwhelming, shaky, or confusing. Many people describe moments where emotions surge and they're left feeling unskilled, regretful, or ashamed – this often leads to the negative inner voice getting louder and harsher.

Emotional regulation is a foundational skill set, yet it's one that many of us never had the chance to fully develop when we were little. There are countless reasons for this: family patterns, cultural expectations, trauma, or simply not having models of healthy emotional expression. We can hold compassion for these gaps while also honouring our responsibility, as adults, to learn how to care for our emotional lives.

Skills can be learned. Patterns can shift. And with practice, we can respond to our emotions in ways that support our well-being and our relationships. Emotional self-regulation is also harm prevention.

I created this toolkit to share some of my favourite, go-to grounding and regulation tools – ones I return to again and again in myself, and with clients navigating the range of human emotions. I extend heartfelt appreciation to the original developers of these tools.

Emotional regulation is a cornerstone of healthy relationships, with ourselves and with others. It's also what helps us cope with challenges, recover from stressful events, and keep moving toward a grounded, resilient life.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL REGULATION?

Emotional regulation is the ability to notice what we're feeling, understand how those feelings show up in our bodies, and respond in ways that support wellbeing. It's not about suppressing emotions or "getting rid" of them. It's about:

- Recognizing what's happening inside us
- Understanding our internal cues
- Choosing responses that don't harm us or the people around us

Why it Matters

Emotional intensity is a normal part of being human. Our nervous systems are built to rise and fall, to react when something matters, and to settle again when we feel safe. Big feelings don't mean something is wrong with you; they mean your system is responding.

Learning to self-regulate helps us spend more time in what's often called our window of tolerance – the zone where we can think clearly, stay connected to ourselves, and respond rather than react. When we're outside that window, we might feel shut down, overwhelmed, agitated, or numb. Self-regulation doesn't prevent these shifts, but it does help us notice what's happening sooner and find our way back to internal steadiness.

Self-regulation is a practice. It's something we build gradually through repetition, curiosity, and compassion for ourselves. No one stays perfectly regulated all the time. The goal is to widen our window, strengthen our capacity to return to steadiness, and move through the world with a little more personal control.



“You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.”

– Jon Kabat-Zinn

Internal &

EXTERNAL SUPPORTS

Internal: these are practices you can draw on from within yourself.

- Breathing techniques
- Positive self-talk
- Grounding exercises
- Movement
- Other practices:

External: these are the resources outside of yourself that help you to settle.

- Supportive people & pets
- Nature or specific outdoor spaces
- Music, movies or arts
- Professional supports
- Other supports:



Both internal and external supports matter. Regulation is not meant to be done alone.

Check off the strategies you already use and add your own that aren't listed. Circle the ones you want to strengthen.

This toolkit is a start. There are many more free resources online.

In this toolkit

SELF-REGULATION TOOLS

Below is an overview of the tools I'll present in this kit. They are reliable and accessible tools for grounding your body and steadying your emotions when you are outside of your window of tolerance. Each one supports a different part of the nervous system, and all of them can be practiced in varying lengths of time to suit your in-the-moment needs.



1

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding



2

RAIN (Simplified)



3

Body Shake-Out



4

The Voo Breath

The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Tool

A sensory-based grounding exercise that helps bring your attention out of ruminating thoughts and back into your body in the present moment. It uses your five senses to interrupt overwhelming thoughts and reconnect you with your environment.

HOW



5: Notice five things you can see and name the item and its colour.

4: Notice four things you can feel through touch.

3: Notice three things you can hear.

2: Notice two things you can smell.

1: Notice one thing you can taste.

WHEN



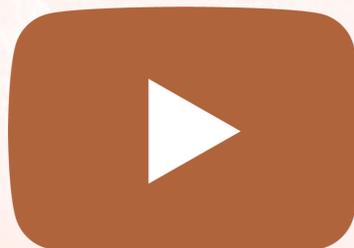
- When you notice yourself ruminating
- When emotions feel overwhelming or “too much”
- When your mind feels scattered or untethered

WHY



When you orient to your environment and connect with your sense, your nervous system receives cues of safety, which helps reduce anxiety and re-engage the thinking part of the brain.

Instruction Video
(Click the Link)



RAIN (Simplified)

Recognize. Allow. Investigate. Nurture.

A gentle self-compassion practice that helps you slow down, name what's happening inside, and respond with care. This simplified version keeps it accessible and body-based.

HOW



- Place a hand on your heart or another comforting place
- Name the sensation you feel in your body
- Name the emotion connected to that sensation
- Identify one need you can support in this moment (comfort, connection, rest, movement, etc.)

WHEN



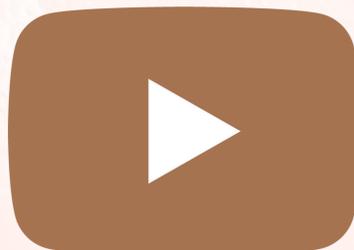
- When you feel emotionally activated
- When shame, fear, or self-criticism shows up
- When you need a compassionate pause

WHY



RAIN helps shift the nervous system from reactivity to awareness. Naming sensations and emotions reduces their intensity, and identifying a need activates self-support rather than self-criticism. This strengthens emotional literacy and internal safety.

Instruction Video
(Click the Link)



Body Shake-Out

Just like animals shake after a stressful experience, humans also benefit from shaking to release big emotional energy. This tool helps move emotions like anger, fear, and anxiety through the body instead of letting them build up. There are many variations to this approach.

HOW



- Stand with your feet rooted and gently rock side to side.
- Name what you're ready to let go of.
- Let your arms hang loose as you rotate your torso, letting them swing freely.
- Shake out each leg, then each arm.
- Trust your body's impulses.
- Emotion may rise.

WHEN



- When your body feels tight, buzzy, or full of adrenaline
- When anger or fear feels stuck
- After a stressful interaction or conflict

WHY



Shaking helps discharge excess stress hormones and resets the nervous system. Movement signals to the body that the threat has passed, allowing you to return to a more regulated state.

Instruction Video
(Click the Link)



The Voo Breath

A low-frequency vocalized breath that stimulates the vagus nerve and gently wakes up the body. It's especially supportive when you feel shut down, numb, foggy, or frozen.

HOW



- Sit in a comfortable position.
- Inhale and exhale slowly making the sound “voo” with a deep tone until you release the breath.
- Repeat this as many times as needed.

WHEN



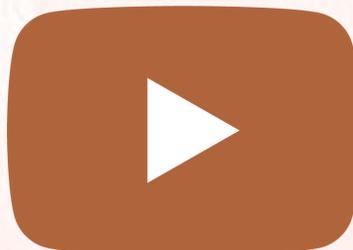
- When you're in a freeze or collapse state
- When you feel disconnected from your body
- When your energy feels low

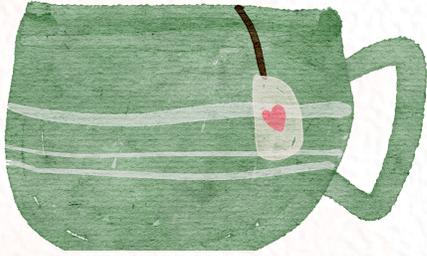
WHY



The long exhale and vibration of the “voo” sound activate the parasympathetic nervous system. This helps shift the body out of shutdown and into a more grounded, present state.

Instruction Video
(Click the Link)





Practice &

REFLECTION

Thinking about and understanding the tools in theory is not the same as practicing them. Emotional regulation is a skill that strengthens through repetition – particularly when your distress is low. Practicing these tools during calmer moments builds the “muscles” of regulation so that when life becomes more challenging, your body already knows what to do.

1

What did you notice in your body after trying one of these tools?

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.....
.....

2

Which tool felt most accessible or natural?

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.....
.....

3

Which one might you practice once a day for the next week?

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.....
.....

About CARRIE

I am a therapist in British Columbia, Canada, offering individual psychotherapy to adults navigating relational pain and emotional overwhelm.

If you've found these practices helpful and you'd like support applying them to your own life, or relationships, I'd be honoured to walk alongside you. Often having a steady, compassionate space to explore what's coming up in real time can make all the difference.

You're welcome to book a free 15-minute consultation. It's simply a chance to meet, ask questions, and get a sense of whether my approach feels like a good fit for you — no pressure, no commitment.

I look forward to connecting when and if you feel ready.



WANT TO
CONNECT?

SCHEDULE A FREE
CONSULTATION



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