What is Presence?

Presence: The act of being more engaged with the present. It does not mean always being 100% in the present.

Centering: Drawing our mental & physical attention back to our "center" i.e. our body-mind.

Mindfulness: Being more fully & completely in this one moment, without judgment.

Benefits of Presence

Reduces Stressors:	**Access Mental Skills:**	**Aids Attunement:**	**Improve Metabolism:**
Alleviate symptoms	Improve self-awareness	Release self-compassion	Enhance healing
Manage emotions	Practice intention	Lower judgment	Lower inflammation
Lower dissociation	Identify needs	Allow adaptability	Aid digestion
Regulate spoons	Make decisions	Assist intention	Regulate immune function
Improve memory			

Presence Practices

Like many skills, presence is a practice that we can always improve on. Here's some ways that folks who have trouble connecting with their body can practice presence techniques.

In The Here & Now

Getting more into this one very moment. Narrowing our temporal awareness. Use time & place to emphasize presence, or the current situation. Tune in to one's sensory surroundings, one sense at a time.

Describing

Pick something in the environment and describe it in detail: details, reflections, shadows, texture, placement, angle.

Noticing

What is around you? What y'all are doing, holding, touching? How are y'all interacting with, affecting your environment? How do these interactions with environment happen? How do they feel?

Pattern Tracing

Pick a pattern (visual, spacial or tactile stim): tiles, window blinds, textile, trim & borders, building fascade, yantra, mandala, or labyrinth. Notice shapes, colors, patterns, empty or white space, breaks in the patterns, or zoom in & out.

Music: Attentive Listening

Choose a complex or pleasant piece of music. Tune audially into overall composition, repeated themes, beat, rhythm, syncopation, tempo & tempo changes, pauses, lyrics.

Critter Watching

Be curious about a nearby critter. Study its movement, breathing. How does it look? What colors, textures does it have? What sounds does it make? If it's your own pet, you may also play or interact with it.

Inner World Awareness

Leverage inner world as a presence tool: practice earthing techniques internally. Be present to internal events, objects. Comfort & soothe one another with permission. Access safe(r) spaces, internally. Practice containment (holodeck, etc.).

"Three Inches to the Left" (of our body)

Connect with your body, like operating a vehicle. Being in the room with or having control of your body. Be mindful of the body & senses, even while not fully in it. Cautiously experiment with how close you can get to being "in" your body.

What works for you/y'all?

Different headmates are likely to have different needs, triggers, sensitivities… Feel free to develop your& own techniques. Add menus of ideas to safety plans or system management documents. Welcome anyone who wishes to participate. Allow anyone who doesn't to bow out.

Practitioner Tips

Here are some tips for any type of practitioners regarding potential issues with body-based techniques:

Body-Based Technique Issues

These techniques may ignite a trauma response especially for folks with physical or sexual trauma, many pending body-memories to process, somatic triggers, chronic pain & disabilities, or gender/body dysphoria.

Trigger History

Some terminology may have been used in power/control dynamics. There may also be situational issues for survivors around being told what to do with their body, or feeling "posed" or silenced.

Alternative Directions

Ask questions rather than give directions i.e. "Would you like to…?"

Note: it may help to use or offer eyes-open techniques when working with dissociative folks.

Prescribing/Controlling

Invite system members to participate or remain out of any potential exercises, at will/as needed. Inquire as to past experiences with body-based techniques and modify accordingly.