



Signs of Tension & Composure: WORKSHEET 1a

Situation _____ Initials _____ Date _____

GENERAL SIGNS OF TENSION

Feeling

- ☐ Feeling tense (wound up)
- ☐ Muscle tension
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Aches and pains
- ☐ Feeling irritable
- ☐ Tightening of the chest
- ☐ Heart rate is up
- ☐ Faster breathing
- ☐ Feel hot and sweaty
- ☐ Feeling nervous or worried
- ☐ Feeling frustrated or angry
- ☐ Restlessness and agitation
- ☐ Feeling nauseous (upset stomach)
- ☐ Feeling tired

Thinking

- ☐ Poor concentration
- ☐ Forgetting things
- ☐ Can't stop thinking/ can't switch off
- ☐ Impatience with yourself and others
- ☐ Negative and self-critical thinking

Flow on effects

- ☐ Tense body language
- ☐ Tense facial expressions
- ☐ Jumping in to fix things without forethought
- ☐ Attention wandering off-task
- ☐ Avoid having to sit with uncomfortable situations
- ☐ Difficulty just being still and NOT REACTING to triggers

Tension plays out differently for different people. The signs of tension overlap with other signs of the body reacting to things - including signs of stress, anxiety and frustration.

GENERAL SIGNS OF COMPOSURE

Feeling

- ☐ A relaxed feeling in the body
- ☐ Heart rate at a comfortable level
- ☐ Breathing comfortably
- ☐ Feeling awake and alert
- ☐ A sense of calm
- ☐ A sense of patience
- ☐ Positive emotions

Thinking

- ☐ A sense of good concentration
- ☐ A sense of positive, constructive thoughts
- ☐ A sense of being centred and present
- ☐ A sense of being well-paced
- ☐ A sense of self-control over one's actions
- ☐ Ability to zoom out and take perspective

Flow on effects

- ☐ Composed body language
- ☐ Composed facial expressions
- ☐ Ability to just observe without fixing
- ☐ Staying on task or returning to task
- ☐ Ability to sit with uncomfortable situations
- ☐ Ability to be still and NOT REACT to triggers

HOW (AND WHERE) DO YOU NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TENSION & COMPOSURE in your body and mind?

Some assumptions we make

While everyone is different...

- We all want to feel good (calm, composed, content etc)
- Yet a full and meaningful life includes effort, work, demands, hassles and challenges
- The experience of tension (and stress) is real, is normal, is human and is part of a motivation-protection-mechanism
- Unidentified, unrelenting or unmanaged tension has an impact on people's health and productivity, not matter how smart, tough, old or experienced you are
- People discover ways to compose and cope, and most of these are healthy
- Tactical composure draws out the common human experiences and well-researched techniques to bring to you on a 'platter'
- Once people have a positive experience of composure tactics, with a real effect, they're likely to keep practicing it, forming habits, and then longer-term composure and resilience

The meaning we make of our experience of tension (including thoughts and sensations) has a further impact on how we feel and what we do about it.

For example:

- if we see tension as a normal sign that our body is tackling something, as manageable, as socially appropriate to mention, we might feel comfortable to talk about it, take time to put a tactic in place and do some self-care, all the while being patient and understanding with our self.
- if we see tension as abnormal (for me), a sign of something wrong, a sign of weakness, we might feel too embarrassed to talk about it, try to ignore it and push on, perhaps also feeling impatient and self-critical, as the pressure-cooker continues.

A tip for you:

When you experience unfamiliar or uncomfortable thoughts, sensations and/or feelings try to see these as....

- human,
- a signal to pay attention,
- a normal way the body responds to pressures
- a chance to be patient with yourself
- an opportunity to learn about what's happening, as for advice and/or make a change in your life (if needed).