Presence & Awareness Exercise

Presence exercises or contemplative practices help to draw deeper awareness of yourself (emotions and body).

Preparation: You can set a timer for three to five minutes. If you have a voice recorder on your phone, you may wish to record the instructions and play them so it's easier to follow the activity.

Find a comfortable place to sit in a quiet space.

Close your eyes and place your feet flat on the floor. Take a moment to pause and settle yourself in to the present.

Gently become aware of your breath as you breathe in and out. Notice where and how your breath flows in and out. Notice the sensations and movement of your abdomen as you breathe in and out. If you find your mind wanders, just notice where your mind has gone and gently guide your attention back to your breath.

Check in with yourself. How is your body right now? Your body may have information in this moment. How are your emotions? Do you have any thoughts going through your mind? Take a moment to sit with them.

Be aware of your body as it connects to the chair that you are sitting in. Try to describe the feeling of the chair beneath you. Feel your feet as they connect with the ground. Notice if there is any tension in your body right now. What might that be telling you?

Return to your breath and notice your breath as it flows in and out.

Gently wiggle your toes and open your eyes as you return to the present room.

Invite yourself to practice this exercise any time you notice tension rising during your day.