



How to do Soothing Touch for Self Compassion and Emotional Regulation

Scientific Explanation of Soothing Touch for ADHD Women

Soothing Touch is a self-compassion exercise adapted from teachings on self-compassion. It involves self-administered gestures like hugging oneself or placing a hand over the heart to leverage the body's natural responses to touch, providing comfort and emotional regulation. Here's why it is particularly beneficial:

1. **Oxytocin Release:** Touch stimulates the release of oxytocin, sometimes referred to as the "love hormone," which enhances feelings of trust, calm, and connectivity. For women with ADHD, who often experience emotional dysregulation, oxytocin can provide a natural calming effect.
2. **Reduced Cortisol Levels:** Physical touch has been shown to reduce cortisol, the stress hormone, and decrease overall stress. This is crucial for women with ADHD, as they often have heightened responses to stress, which can exacerbate symptoms.
3. **Increased Sense of Security:** Touch can trigger the brain's social engagement system, promoting feelings of safety and reducing anxiety. For women with ADHD, who may struggle with anxiety and insecurity, this can be particularly soothing.
4. **Improved Heart Rate Variability:** Gentle, comforting touch can improve heart rate variability (HRV), an indicator of the body's ability to handle stress. Increased HRV is associated with better emotional and physiological resilience.
5. **Neurological Comfort:** The skin contains a network of nerves that respond to gentle touch. This stimulation can help to calm the nervous system, reducing feelings of overwhelm and helping to manage sensory overload, common in ADHD.





Objective: Learn to use soothing touch to comfort yourself during moments of distress or overwhelm, a practice that can be especially beneficial for women with ADHD. This technique is a form of self-compassion, helping you to be kind and nurturing to yourself in moments of need.

How to Perform Soothing Touch:

- ☐ **Recognize Stress:** When you feel overwhelmed or stressed, pause for a moment.
- ☐ **Breathing:** Take 2-3 deep, slow breaths to center yourself.
- ☐ **Placement:** Place one or both hands over your heart, or another comforting part of your body like your cheek or arms.
 - ☐ Feel the warmth and gentle pressure of your hands.
 - ☐ Optionally, make small circles with your hands to enhance the sensation.
- ☐ **Sensory Awareness:** Pay attention to the natural rise and fall of your chest as you breathe. Notice the texture of your clothes and the subtle warmth of your skin.
- ☐ **Duration:** Maintain this contact for a few moments or as long as it feels comforting.

Alternative Touch Points:

- Hand on your cheek
- Cradling your face in your hands
- Gently stroking your arms
- Crossing your arms for a gentle squeeze
- Gently rubbing your chest in circular motions
- Hand on your abdomen

Reflection Questions:

1. **Initial Comfort:** Did placing your hand in certain areas feel more soothing than others? Why do you think that is?

2. **Emotional Response:** What emotions did you notice during and after the practice? Did any emotions surprise you?
3. **Physical Sensations:** What physical sensations stood out to you during the practice? How did your body react to your touch?
4. **Repetition and Routine:** How could you incorporate soothing touch into your daily routine? What times or situations might benefit most from this practice?
5. **Long-term Observations:** After practicing soothing touch regularly, have you noticed any changes in your stress levels or emotional responses?

Usage:

Print this fact sheet or keep a digital copy handy. Refer to it whenever you need a quick method to self-soothe, especially during times of high stress or emotional turmoil. Regular practice can help make this a reliable tool for emotional regulation and self-compassion.