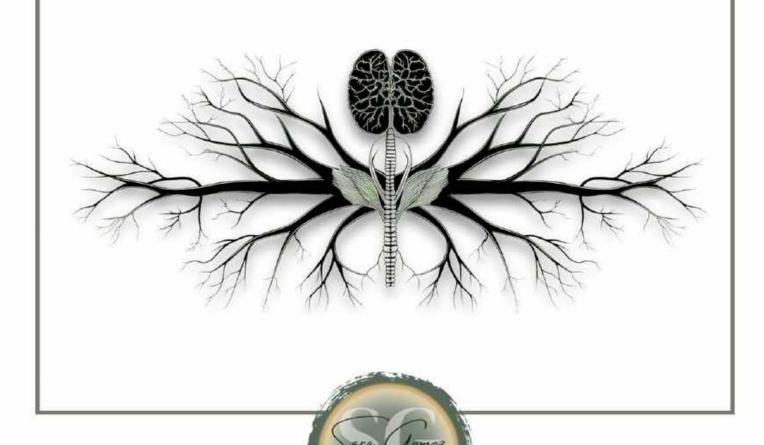
SARA GOMEZ HEALING

21-Day Nervous System Regulation Workbook



Disclaimer

While this workbook will equip you with useful tools to interrupt & change your stress response patterns and regulate your nervous system, it is not counseling. This workbook could be an excellent supplement to counseling, but not a replacement for individualized treatment. If you are in crisis, in a dangerous situation, or if you'd like to benefit from a healing relationship with someone who can give you individualized advice and their perspective - I encourage you to find a therapist/counselor with whom you can work on those needs. You can book a complimentary consultation with me on my website.

The information provided by Sara Gomez is solely intended for informational and entertainment purposes and is not a substitute for advice, diagnosis, or treatment regarding medical or mental health conditions. Always consult your doctor or mental health professional before trying the exercises in this workbook. While they are generally safe and helpful, all change comes with some risk. These exercises are intended to regulate your nervous system, but they may cause discomfort, or for some people, emotional distress, dissociation, or bring back painful memories. This is more likely if you have a history of trauma. Work with your personal providers to learn what is best for you.

This workbook is intended for adults 18 years and up. If you do not understand or agree with these terms please do not continue with the workbook.

Week 1 Grounding & Awareness

Grounding and awareness exercises help you to stay connected to the present moment and reduce anxiety, stress, or dissociation. They promote mindfulness by focusing attention on your body and surroundings, which helps calm overwhelming emotions and enhances emotional regulation.

Day 1: Diaphragmatic Breathing

Day 2: Grounding Through the Senses

Day 3: Progressive Muscle Relaxation (Tension & Release)

Day 4: Pelvic Rocking

Day 5: Cold Exposure

Day 6: Body Scan

Day 7: Reflection on Week 1

Day 1: Diaphragmatic Breathing

Exercise: Practice deep diaphragmatic breathing for 2-3 minutes.

- · Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- · Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly.
- Inhale deeply through your nose, filling your belly with air (your belly should rise, not your chest).
- Exhale slowly through your mouth.

- Has your natural breathing rhythm changed after this exercise?
- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- · Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

What thought	ghts or emotions	came up duri	ng this practi	ce?	
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Day 2: Grounding Through the Senses

Exercise: As you go through your day or morning routine, pause at various times to engage each of the 5 senses. Examples:

- · Touch: the temperature of the water as you take a shower
- Taste: the different flavors you can detect in a bite of food
- · Smell: the smell of coffee brewing
- · Sight: the sun peaking out from the clouds
- · Sound: the sound of the birds chirping

Journal:

- Which sense was the easiest or hardest to focus on?
- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

What thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?

Day 3: Progressive Muscle Relaxation (Tension & Release)

Exercise:

- Start by sitting or lying in a comfortable position.
- · Begin with your feet, tensing the muscles for 5-10 seconds, then releasing them.
- Move through your body, tensing and relaxing your calves, thighs, abdomen, chest, arms, shoulders, and face.
- · Focus on the difference between tension and relaxation as you go.

- What areas of your body felt the most tense? What areas felt good or neutral?
- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

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Day 4: Pelvic Rocking

Exercise:

- · Sit on the edge of a chair with your feet flat on the ground.
- · Slowly rock your pelvis forward and back, tilting your hips forward as you inhale and rolling them back as you exhale.
- · Continue this gentle rocking motion for several breaths, noticing how it feels in your lower body.

- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- How did this affect your mood or energy?

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Day 5: Cold Exposure

Exercise:

Splash cold water on your face or take a brief (10 seconds - 3 minutes) cold shower to activate the parasympathetic nervous system. (Alternatively, you may run your hands & arms under cold water for up to 3 minutes.)

- · How did your body and mind react to the cold exposure?
- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

What thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?

Day 6: Body Scan

Exercise:

- · Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- · Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.
- Starting from the feet, slowly scan upwards through your body. Bring your attention to each part—feet, legs, hips, back, chest, arms, hands, neck, and head.
- · As you focus on each area, consciously relax any tension you notice.
- End the scan by bringing awareness to the entire body as a whole.

Journal:

- What areas held the most tension? How often do you hold tension in these areas?
- What areas of your body felt good or neutral?
- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

· What thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?

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Day 7: Reflection on Week 1

Exercise: Take a few minutes to reflect on your progress so far.

- · What practices felt the most beneficial? How did your body sensations and awareness change

	when trying them?
	What practices were most difficult to try? What was your reaction to any difficulty that arose?
•	What did you learn about yourself, your body sensations, and your ability to connect with your
	senses and ground in the present moment over the past week?
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Week 2 Self-Regulation Tools

These self-regulation tools are designed to help individuals manage stress, anxiety, or overwhelming emotions by encouraging the nervous system to return to a more regulated, balanced state and promoting mental and emotional calm. They are effective tools to use in any moment you feel dysregulated (hyper or hypo-arousal) to help bring you back into balance. Before attempting them in a dysregulated state, however, practice them when you are relatively calm so you learn to use them affectively.

Day 8: Vagal Toning (VU breath)

Day 9: Psychological Sigh

Day 10: Shake It Out

Day 11: Bilateral Stimulation (Butterfly Hug)

Day 12: Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) Tapping

Day 13: Wood Chopper

Day 14: Reflection on Week 2

Day 8: Vagal Toning (VU breath)

Exercise:

- Take a deep inhale through your nose, expand from your belly, not your chest filling your lungs.
- On the exhale, activate the vagus nerve (which promotes relaxation, nervous system regulation)
 by making a VU sound similar to a fog horn.

- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

What thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?	

Day 9: Psychological Sigh

Exercise:

- Take a deep inhale through your nose, expand from your belly, not your chest almost filling your lungs.
- Before exhaling take a second shorter inhale to fully expand your lungs.
- · Exhale slowly and fully making a sigh sound from your mouth.
- · Repeat a few times.

- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

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Day 10: Shake It Out

Exercise:

- Stand up in a comfortable stance with your feet hip-width apart.
- Start by shaking your hands, letting your arms relax and move freely.
- · Gradually shake your arms, shoulders, legs, and whole body, allowing any tension to flow out.
- After a few minutes of shaking, pause and notice how your body feels—lighter, calmer, and more relaxed.

- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

What	t thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?

Day 11: Bilateral Stimulation (Butterfly Hug)

Exercise:

- Cross your arms over your chest, placing your right hand on your left upper arm and your left hand on your right upper arm.
- Slowly tap each hand on the opposite arm in an alternating rhythm (right, left, right, left).
- · Continue for a few minutes, focusing on your breath and the calming sensation of the alternating taps.

- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

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Day 12: Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) Tapping

Exercise: Follow the tapping sequence below while focusing on a specific worry or stressor (something mild, not too overwhelming). Use this gentle affirmation while tapping: "Even though I have this ____ worry/stressor, I deeply and completely love and accept myself.

- · Top of the Head (crown)
- · Eyebrow (beginning of the eyebrow, near the nose)
- Side of the Eye (on the bone beside the outer corner of the eye)
- Under the Eye (on the bone just below the eye)
- Under the Nose (between the nose and upper lip)
- Chin (in the crease between the lower lip and chin)
- · Collarbone (where the collarbone meets the sternum)
- Under the Arm (about 4 inches below the armpit, on the side of the torso)

- What emotion or stressor did you focus on during EFT?
- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

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Day 13: Wood Chopper

Exercise:

- · Standing with feet hip distance apart, clasp your hands in front of you like you are holding an ax.
- On an inhale, imagine swinging the ax in the air raising your clasped hands directly above your head.
- On the exhale, swing the ax down to the ground, bending at the waist and letting your arms and head swing down, as though you are chopping wood.
- Repeat as many times as you like.

Journal:

- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- · Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

What thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?

Day 14: Reflection on Week 2

Exercise: Reflect on your experiences with self-regulation tools this week.

- · When you are dysregulated do you have a tendency to be more hyper-aroused (anxious, angry, overwhelmed) or hypo-aroused (numb, dissociated, depressed)?
- · Which tool do you feel will be most effective in regulating your nervous system? What changes did you notice in your body sensations and emotions when you practiced it?

What	What practices were most difficult to try? What was your reaction to any difficulty that ar What did you learn about yourself when you are in a state of regulation vs disregulation, a ability to bring your nervous system back into balance over the past week?						

Week 3 Mind-Body Integration

Mind-body integration practices are designed to create a harmonious connection between mental awareness and physical sensations, fostering a deeper sense of presence, coherence, and overall well-being. These exercises enhance body awareness, improve emotional regulation, and cultivate a sense of balance.

Day 15: Gratitude Practice

Day 16: Self-Compassion Practice

Day 17: Body-Emotion Mapping

Day 18: Mirror Work

Day 19: Walking Meditation

Day 20: Pendulation (Distress Tolerance Practice)

Day 21: Final Reflection

Day 15: Gratitude Practice

Exercise: Write down three or more things you're grateful for today. Spend a moment reflecting on each one.

- · How did reflecting on gratitude affect your mood or perspective?
- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- · Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

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Day 16: Self-Compassion Practice

Exercise: Write a compassionate letter to yourself as if you are writing to a close friend. You can use these prompt questions and/or any others you think of. Let yourself write as much and for as long you want.

- · What do you admire about this friend?
- · What difficulties have they overcome?
- What are your favorite qualities about them?
- What about them inspires you?
- What do you notice (people, places, things) that lights them up?

Journal:

- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

· What thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?

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Day 17: Body-Emotion Mapping

Exercise:

- · Sit quietly and bring to mind a recent emotion or experience (e.g., stress, joy, sadness).
- As you think about the emotion, scan your body for any associated sensations tightness, warmth, tingling, tension, heaviness, or lightness.
- · Mentally "map" where you feel the emotion in your body.
- Spend a few moments focusing on that area, gently breathing into it, and allowing the sensation to shift or release naturally.

- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

what thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?						

Day 18: Mirror Work

Exercise:

- Stand or sit in front of a mirror and look at your reflection.
- · Observe your posture, facial expressions, and body language without judgment.
- Take slow, deep breaths and notice how your body reacts—whether tension eases or posture shifts.
- · Smile gently and observe the effect on your body and mood.
- Now focus on various parts of your body (cheeks, eyes, arms, hips) and tell them how much you love them unconditionally just the way they are, as though you are a doting parent saying it to your child.
- Spend a few minutes simply connecting with yourself through your reflection, fostering a deeper sense of mind-body integration.

- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

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Day 19: Walking Meditation

Exercise: Spend 10-20 minutes preferably outside in nature.

- Begin walking slowly, focusing on each step.
- Pay attention to the sensation of your feet making contact with the ground—the pressure, the release, and the balance between steps.
- Synchronize your breath with your steps: for example, inhale for four steps and exhale for four steps.
- Bring your awareness to your posture, the movement of your legs, and any sensations in your body as you walk.
- · Now focus on the sights, sounds, and smells around you.
- Let your mind stay in the present, when distractions come up & they will, just bring your awareness back to any of the above.

Journal:

- How easy or difficult was is to return to the present when you got distracted?
- How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

What thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?

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Day 20: Pendulation (Distress Tolerance Practice)

Exercise:

- Think of a moment when you felt calm or regulated. What was happening before, during, and after?
- See if you can recall the sensations you felt in your body during that moment. Can you feel those sensations
 in your body now? Take a moment to let any positive sensations linger for several seconds or minutes.
- · Think of a moment when you felt slightly dysregulated. What was happening before, during, and after?
- See if you can recall the sensations you felt in your body during that moment. Can you feel those sensations
 in your body now? Just let them linger for 5 seconds or so, without letting them overwhelm you.
- Now let your awareness swing (like a pendulum) back to the positive sensations you recalled before.
- Repeat this process 2 or 3 times.

Journal:

- Were you able to recall both a regulated and dysregulated experience and the sensations? Which was easier?
- Did you notice if the difficult sensations were less intense after some repetition? (It's ok if they weren't.)
- · How do you feel now compared to when you started?
- · What sensations did you notice in your body during and after completing this exercise?
- · How did this affect your mood or energy?
- Did you notice any emotional or physical shifts during or after?

What thoughts or emotions came up during this practice?

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Day 21: Final Reflection

Exercise: Reflect on your 21-day journey of nervous system regulation.

- How has your understanding of yourself, your emotions, and your nervous system changed over the past three weeks?
- Which practices will you continue using to maintain nervous system balance?
- What are your biggest takeaways from this journey?

What are you m	ost grateful for t	oday?		
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By practicing these exercises and reflecting on your experiences daily, you have taken important steps toward improving nervous system regulation. The key to lasting change is consistency and self-compassion. Keep these tools close as you continue your journey to greater emotional and physiological balance.

If you would like personal support to deepen your healing journey book a <u>complimentary consultation</u> with Sara Gomez.

