

21 Ways to Help Someone with PTSD

Handle a Triggering Appointment

Things to Say:

1. **Place.** Remind them where they are.
2. **Date.** Remind them what the date is.
3. **Safe.** Remind them that they are safe now.
4. **Differences.** Remind them how this procedure differs from the one that harmed them.

Things to Do:

5. **Breathe.** Remind them to breathe deeply and to feel the breath in the nostrils. Breathe with them.
6. **Connecting Touch.** Rest your hand gently on the person's shoulder, arm or knee. Do it with the intent of connecting as a support. Ask permission beforehand.
7. **Ground-Gravity.** Remind them to sense their feet on the floor, their body on the bed or chair. "Sense the pressure where your body touches the chair."
8. **Ground-5 Senses.** Ask them to name something for each of the 5 senses - something they can see, hear, smell, touch, taste (or recently tasted).
9. **Ground-Pressure.** Press down on their lap, feet or shoulders to help them feel grounded. Use your feet to gently but firmly press on their feet.
10. **Self-Hug.** Suggest they hug themselves tightly for a while; suggest they sense where their edges are.
11. **Self-Holding Exercise.** Suggest that they put one hand on their heart and one hand on their belly and describe all the different sensations they feel in the places the hands make contact with the body (one and then the other).
12. **Heart Stroking.** Have them put their fingers above the center of the chest an inch below the collar bone and gently move them straight down about four inches going over the breast bone. Repeat. It's like stroking a cat gently on the head.

Things to Give - Grounding Kit that you bring:

13. **Tactile Objects.** Give them strange feeling or textured objects to feel. Examples: silly putty or "therapeutic putty," seed pods, stones or other things from nature, toys, a bean bag, a soft blanket. Tell them to feel, squish or squeeze the object, focus all their attention on how it feels, and describe out loud what it feels like to them.
14. **Cold Water.** Give them cold water to drink or to put their fingers in. Tell them to focus on the cold sensation.
15. **Cold Washcloth.** Give them a cold wet washcloth to manipulate with their hands or put on their arms, forehead or face.
16. **Ice Cubes.** Give them ice cubes to feel with their hands.
17. **Grounding Pillow or Blanket.** Give them a grounding pillow, grounding blanket or just a bag of rice/beans. Rest it on their lap or feet; let them squish it in their hands.
18. **Stuffed Animal.** If they have a stuffed animal they associate with feeling comforted, holding it may help.
19. **Music.** Bring some music/nature sounds that is calming and offer it to them.
20. **Medication / Supplement / Tea.** If they have a medication, supplement, herbal tea, etc. they have experienced to be effective for anxiety in the past it may help them get through the appointment with more ease.

To Consider...

21. **Service Dog.** If all of the above doesn't work that well after repeated attempts, you may want to consider whether the person would be an appropriate candidate for a service dog.

This resource
can be used by:

The Treating Professional

Friend, Partner, Family
Member Accompanying
Them

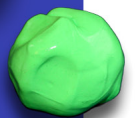
The Patient



teddy bear



cold water



putty



seed pods



ice pack

cold washcloth

textured rock



grounding pillow