

Today I'm going to show you a practice called orienting and it comes out of a training called somatic experiencing developed by Peter Levine which is a trauma training that many therapists train in and it comes out of polyvagal theory so a nervous system aware approach to exploring what does it mean to have a felt sense of safety so our body often does not move into a sense of what we might call being regulated or grounded when we're perceiving or we're picking up on a sense of threat and so the practice I'm showing you even though it involves noticing and mindfulness elements I have it under movement because there's small movements happening in our neck and in our eyes which are really important in helping us be in our environment and pick up on cues of safety of course this isn't going to provide a sense of grounding a regulation if when we look around our environment we're picking up on the fact that we're not safe and so this is a big reason why as people who are holding the classroom space it's important that you're working towards being aware of all kinds of ways that students might be feeling threat due to threats due to systemic oppression or even our own perhaps like nervous system activation so we want to maybe spend time before students arrive connecting to ourselves and even just cultivating a warmth presence that we can invite students into and this practice that Peter names in the training is connected to a response that has been written about regarding animals that animals have an orienting response which is after a threat happens or when they move into a new environment it sounds really simple but it makes and it makes a lot of sense that they look around where they are and notice what's happening so that their body can mobilize so that it can pick up on its desire to respond as needed and sometimes I do this all the time as humans I'm just moving really fast from one space to the next one conversation to the next and sometimes my mind knows oh now I'm at the classroom but sometimes my body hasn't had a chance to transition yet my whole being has not had a chance to pick up on the fact that oh I'm I'm safe and okay in this classroom actually I'm not in a I'm not picking up on a heated debate happening across the hall and my I'm feeling enough mobilized fight-or-flight response oh I'm in a different room and with different people and in this moment I'm safe and okay and so we're simply providing the opportunity for us to slow down enough that we can pick up on any cues of safety that there might be in our spaces and that's step one and I'm going to provide a couple of other steps because sometimes as we're starting to become more aware of our environment we're able to sense ourselves a little more which might be part of the practice where I introduce noticing what our body is letting us know and as we notice different sensations there's a third step where we might respond and that might be with a movement which is really supporting attunement to self and one of the reasons why I really like to start classes I'm also an arthropist so I'll start therapy sessions this way is that it gives a lot of options in terms of regulating and grounding and this is important often there's nothing wrong with this because it does help us support our nervous system like taking deep breaths or closing our eyes but those are often very like we start by feeling into the body right away and that can be actually activating or triggering especially if someone in our classroom maybe has a history of trauma or you know for myself I identify as someone with neurodiversity ADHD and so sometimes starting with like let's slow down and close our eyes since I feel like a bit of a failure like oh man but like I'm having all this energy my body is actually saying something really different right now and so before I move into that I actually need a moment to kind of land in and if I have a lot of energy in my body instead of stopping that and kind of forcing myself to contain I actually need to move that through and that's why I'm going to give choices at the very end where a student or yourself might push down on the chair or shake your hands out because it's not about pushing through it's about supporting and responding and being with what's actually happening in the present moment because what we're doing in this practice is we're coming together in the here and now so that we can learn together in this moment and hopefully what we're picking up on is enough cues of safety that our body is like oh yeah you know what I feel safe enough that I can start taking in some new information here oh and I feel safe enough that I might even kind of creatively be able to think about and be with what

I'm receiving thank you