

RAAVE Tool - How to Shift from Distress to Presence

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To rave: *To speak or write about something or someone with great enthusiasm or admiration. Use this method with enthusiasm and with great admiration for your ability to survive.*

Recognize your reactions and do not pathologize them

- Try to state your reaction. It may be a cognitive reaction, an emotional reaction, or a body sensation.
- Try to make no judgments about these reactions; just notice and state them.

Examples:

- Emotional reactions
 - I am scared, I am sad, I feel out of place, I feel alone, I feel as if I don't belong, I feel like I am being attacked, I feel ashamed, etc...
- Cognitive reactions
 - I think I did something wrong, I think everyone hates me, I think people are going to take things from me, I think I am all alone, I think I am bad, etc...
- Body sensations
 - My heart is racing, my palms are sweaty, my muscles are tight, my head is aching, my breath is shallow, etc...

Assess for threat, present or past

- Try to connect to what threat you are responding to. Is it a past threat or a present threat? If it is a present threat, does it remind you of your past threat? If it is a past threat, remind yourself it is from the past and not happening now.

Acknowledge your coping skills

- Try to connect to how you learned to protect yourself from threats.
- Try not to talk to yourself in a negative way about your past coping skills.

Validate your coping skills as adaptive

- Try to thank yourself for coping in the only way you knew how.

Evaluate if they are still adaptive

- Ask yourself whether or not this coping skill is still working for you or whether it is causing distress. If it causes distress, give yourself permission to release it and explore new protective options that lead to more presence and are more aligned with your present day stressors.

Do not feel as if you have to rush through these steps. You may be at step "R" for a while. Move through the steps at your own pace and with support.