PAULINE O'BRIEN, RP / CLIENT GUIDE

Starting a Somatic IFS practice

Somatic Internal Family Systems (IFS) brings body awareness into parts work. "Parts" are different sides of you that may feel, respond, or need different things. One part might want to speak up while another wants to wait. This practice gives you a moment to notice what's there.

A two-minute sensory check-in

Try this at a time when you feel steady enough. Sit, stand, or move in a way that works for you. Keep your eyes open if you like. You can stop at any time.

1. Choose one sense to connect with the room. Notice a colour or shape, a sound nearby, the texture of your sleeve, a familiar scent, or the taste of a sip of water. Choose whichever is accessible and comfortable.

2. Check whether it feels okay to turn inward. Ask yourself, "Is it okay to notice what's happening inside for a moment?" If you feel unsure or a part of you wants to stop, you can stay with your surroundings and finish there.

3. Briefly notice one sensation. You might notice warmth in your hands or mild tension in your jaw. Try "I notice tension" or "A part of me might be bracing." It's okay if you notice very little or if the sensation has no clear meaning.

4. Return to the room. Come back to the same colour, sound, or texture. Notice how it feels to shift your attention back. You might say, "That's enough for now."

> **When to pause**
> If you start to feel overwhelmed, far away, or less aware of the room, end the inward check-in. Name a few things you can see or hear, or rejoin a familiar activity. If this happens often or it's hard to feel present again, try the practice with your therapist. Save exploring painful memories for sessions together.

Optional reflection What helped me stay connected to the room? What told me it was time to pause?

Guided recordings

Choose a recording that feels manageable today. You can listen to just the opening, keep your eyes open, or pause and return to something you see or feel in the room. You can also try a recording together in session.

Somatic IFS embodiment meditation with Susan McConnell
YouTube
Susan McConnell guides a Somatic IFS practice focused on presence, connection, and Self energy.

IFS bedtime meditation: A gentle check-in with your parts
Insight Timer · 7:14
Lucy Orton offers an IFS-informed bedtime check-in that welcomes people navigating ADHD.

Meet your masking parts
Insight Timer · 19:44
Jess Pearce invites you to get curious about a part that helps you navigate a situation where masking matters.

Loving kindness for our queer selves
Insight Timer
Armel Law Wraight guides a companion self-compassion practice tailored to LGBTQIA2S+ listeners.

References

Law Wraight, A. (n.d.). Loving kindness for our queer selves [Guided meditation]. Insight Timer.

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The One Inside. (2024, August 1). Somatic IFS embodiment meditation with Susan McConnell [Video]. YouTube.