



# Practice Self-Regulation™

A Trauma-Informed Approach for Health and Well Being

## Venting 101

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### **All this COVID-19 making you crazy?**

Need to let it rip about every single thing that's on your last nerve?

Feeling like you're coming out of your skin with cabin fever, stress, fear, frustration, irritation, and impatience?

Get in line!

If you ever got messages to keep a stiff upper lip, suck it up, keep it to yourself, or just get over it, forget about those messages right now. This is that time to get it out. Bodies can only hold on to so much stress and pressure before feeling like they are going to explode, take off, or shut down, also known as fight, flight, or freeze. So let's take a few minutes to think about how to perfect the fine art of venting.

When we need to provide an opening, or outlet to give free expression to strong emotions, particularly those that feel volcanic in force, what are the best ways for so doing?

**Keep yourself physically safe.** When your body is feeling a lot of pent-up emotional energy where is it best to expend that energy? Do you want room to move and let it explode out of you? Is dancing, biking, running or walking the answer? Plan to do these types of things in safe spaces or off-road when you are upset and possibly feeling out of control.

Do you prefer a quiet more sedentary experience? Sitting quietly, perhaps doing yoga? Where do you feel safe doing these types of things?

Is it safe for you to be alone, or should others be nearby? Do you want anyone in particular with you? What if they're not available?

**Keep yourself emotionally safe.** When we need to let off both physical and emotional steam it's equally important to feel emotionally safe. If we want to be with others, are we sure they're trustworthy and won't take advantage of any vulnerability we may reveal while we're venting? Can we let our guard down, knowing they've got our back so to speak. Do we want to engage in active conversation, or do we just want them close by to help us feel supported without talking much, if any.

***Be respectful of others.*** If you want to vent with someone, make sure to ask if it's all right with them. Please be very clear by asking something like, "Are you okay if I let it rip for a minute?" If you want to use swear words, ask before doing so, unless you know them very well and know they don't mind. Ask them to let you know right away if you say anything offensive.

***Maximize a multi-sensory experience.*** If you really want beneficial venting experiences set them up for optimal enjoyment. Being in nature has been proven to have greater health benefits than indoor activity, exercise and body movement have greater health benefits than sedentary experiences. Connecting with others promotes mental health and well-being. Conversely, solitude and meditation have multiple benefits too.

So, whether you vent your frustrations alone or with others, in physically active or inactive ways, it's important to express strong emotions in a variety of ways that expend energy and frees you up to go on about your life in calm, competent, and confident ways. It's important that such experiences of venting do not cause harm to self or others. These challenging times, made worse by COVID-19 provide many opportunities to take good care of ourselves and vent strong emotions to expel the negative impact of the virus and very difficult situations resulting from it.