Practitioner Safety & De-escalation

One-Pager Blueprint

A field-ready reference for staying grounded, safe, andpresent inevery session.

ASSESS · PIVOT · GROUND · RECOVER

I The 10-Second Assessment

Pre-Session · Check the "Environmental Pulse" before engaging

EXIT STRATEGY

- **PRE-SESSION CHECK**

Am I positioned between the client and the door?

OBJECT CHECK

- **PRE-SESSION CHECK**

Are there heavy or sharp objects on the desk that could be weaponized during an emotional "flood"?

"VIBE" CHECK

- **PRE-SESSION CHECK**

Is the client in their Window of Tolerance, or already displaying Hyper-arousal: pacing, loud tone, clenched jaw?

II The "Ask-Offer-Ask" Safety Pivot

If the room becomes tense — never command, always offer choice

ASK 1

SAY THIS:

"I can see this is getting really heavy for you. Would it be okay if we paused for a second to catch our breath?"

OFFER 2

SAY THIS:

"Sometimes when I feel like this, I find that taking a sip of water or doing a quick grounding exercise helps."

ASK 3

SAY THIS:

"Which of those sounds better to you right now, or do you have a different way you'd like to reset?"

KEY PRINCIPLE: *Never command — always offer choice. Choice lowers the heart rate and restores a sense of control.*

III ImmediateGrounding · The5-4-3-2-1Technique

Use when client begins to dissociate or becomes overwhelmed

5	4	3	2	1
THINGS YOU SEE	THINGS YOU TOUCH	THINGS YOU HEAR	THINGS YOU SMELL	THING YOU TASTE

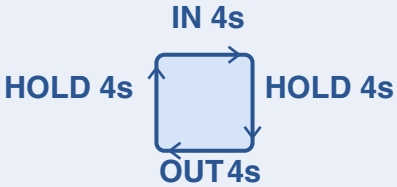
USE WHEN: Client begins to "float away" (dissociate) or becomes overwhelmed. Work through each number together, slowly.

IV The Post-Session Pulse Check

You cannot support a client if you are carrying their weight home

Box Breathing

4 seconds each phase — repeat 2–3 times



The "Doorframe" Ritual

Before leaving the room — every single time

TOUCH Physically touch the doorframe as you leave.

DECLARE Say: "This client's trauma is not mine to carry."

RELEASE Take one deep breath in. Exhale fully.

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