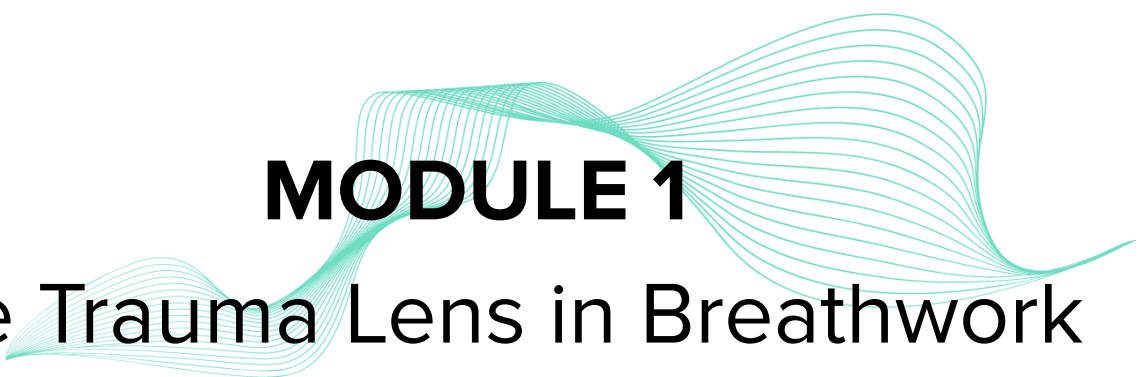




**TRAUMA-INFORMED
BREATHWORK FACILITATION:
Facilitator Workbook**

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MODULE 1

The Trauma Lens in Breathwork

Module 1: The Trauma Lens in Breathwork

Key Concepts

- Trauma is not just about what happened to someone, but how their body responded when safety was missing. It gets stored in the nervous system and shapes how people breathe, connect, and regulate.
- Breathwork directly affects the autonomic nervous system (ANS), which governs survival responses like fight, flight, freeze, and fawn. Facilitators must understand this to avoid inadvertently retraumatizing participants.
- The facilitator's nervous system, tone, and energy matter more than their technique. Trauma-informed work emphasizes presence, pacing, and choice over performance or outcomes.
- Trauma can show up subtly in breathwork settings—as a person who disconnects, gets stuck in a loop, or even tries to please or perform. Awareness of this is key.
- Facilitators don't need to "heal" trauma—they create conditions where healing becomes possible through nervous system safety and relational presence.

Why Trauma-Informed Breathwork Matters

- Breath can either soothe the nervous system or overwhelm it, depending on the state a person is in. Trauma-informed facilitation means learning to recognize and work with these states.
- Facilitators hold the responsibility of creating safer environments where individuals can explore their breath without being pushed into dysregulation.

Three Lenses of Trauma-Informed Breathwork

1. Psychological: Acknowledges the impact of thoughts, emotions, and beliefs, and offers support for integration without analysis or fixing.
2. Relational: Safety and healing happen in connection. The facilitator's presence, tone, and body language all contribute.
3. Nervous System Regulation: Works with physiology to expand capacity and support co-regulation and integration.

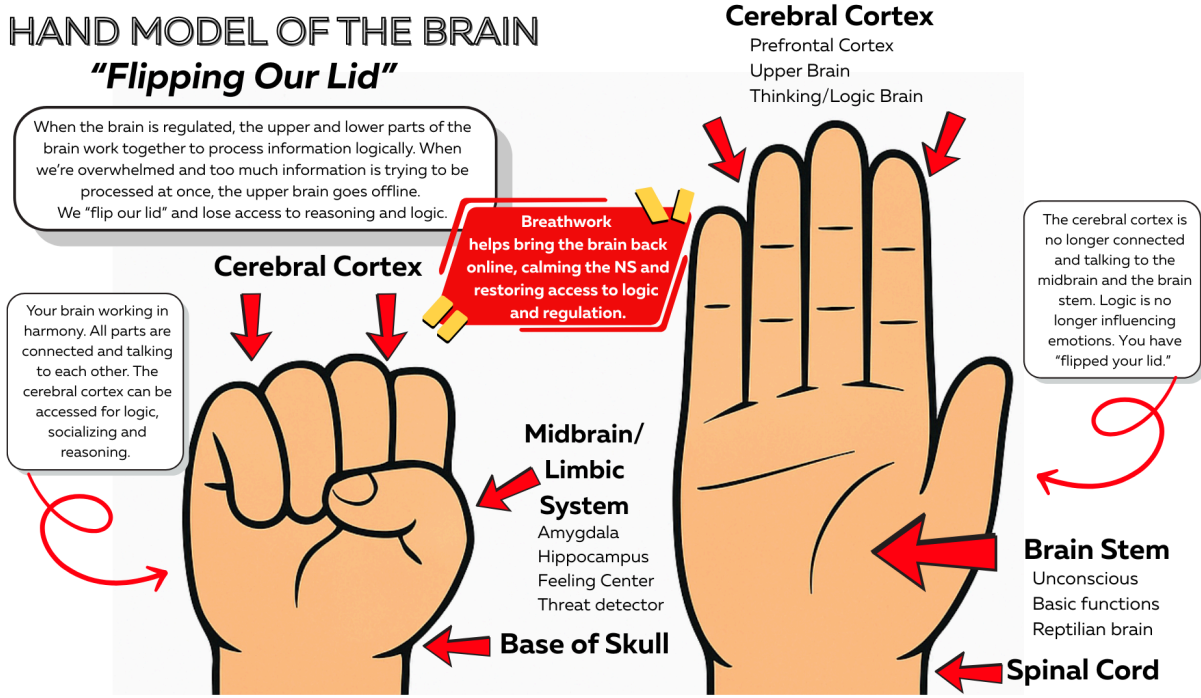
Survival Responses

- Fight/Flight: Activation of energy to escape or defend against danger. This may look like increased movement, agitation, restlessness, or fast breathing.
- Freeze: Collapse, immobilization, or numbness when escape isn't possible. This may look like zoning out, dissociation, shallow breath, or emotional shutdown.
- Fawn: Appeasing behavior to gain safety by prioritizing others' needs over one's own. This can show up as being overly compliant or focused on performing well.

The Brain on Stress (Dan Siegel's Hand Model)

- When stress rises, the thinking brain (prefrontal cortex) disconnects, and the survival brain (amygdala and brainstem) takes control.

- Breathwork can help reintegrate these parts of the brain by calming the nervous system and restoring a sense of presence and awareness.



Core Principles of Trauma-Informed Facilitation

Principle	Breathwork Application
Safety	Clear boundaries, pacing, and choices
Trustworthiness	Transparency and consistency
Choice	Options for breath, pacing, or pausing
Collaboration	Co-create the experience
Empowerment	Teach nervous system literacy and strengths
Cultural Humility	Respect diversity and identities

Key Takeaways

- Prioritize safety over intensity by creating a stable structure, softening expectations, and consistently offering permission to opt in or out.
- Understand that trauma responses are not pathology—they're wisdom. You don't need to label or fix; simply meet what arises with presence.
- Cultivate nervous system awareness in yourself. Track your breath, body, and state throughout sessions to stay grounded and regulated.
- Always provide choice. This means letting participants find their own pace, offering ways to pause, and emphasizing that slowing down is a strength.



Exercises

Nervous System Self-Check: Take a moment to pause, notice, and check in:

- Where in your body do you feel most alive or present right now?
- What sensations cue you into that feeling?
- Where do you feel tension, tightness, or bracing?
- What sensations cue you into that feeling?
- Can you notice these sensations without needing to change anything? Just observe with curiosity and care.

This practice helps you build somatic awareness—the foundation of attunement, safety, and effective facilitation.

Breath Awareness Practice: Lie down for 5 minutes and observe your breath without altering it. Note the rhythm, depth, and where in the body you feel movement. Write down any physical or emotional sensations.

Safety Map: Create a list of 5 physical environments and 5 relational environments where you have felt safe. What elements contributed to that safety? How might you recreate those elements for your clients?

Language Practice: Write or practice aloud how you might introduce trauma-informed safety cues at the beginning of a breathwork session. (e.g., “You’re invited to close your eyes... but you’re also welcome to keep them open.”)



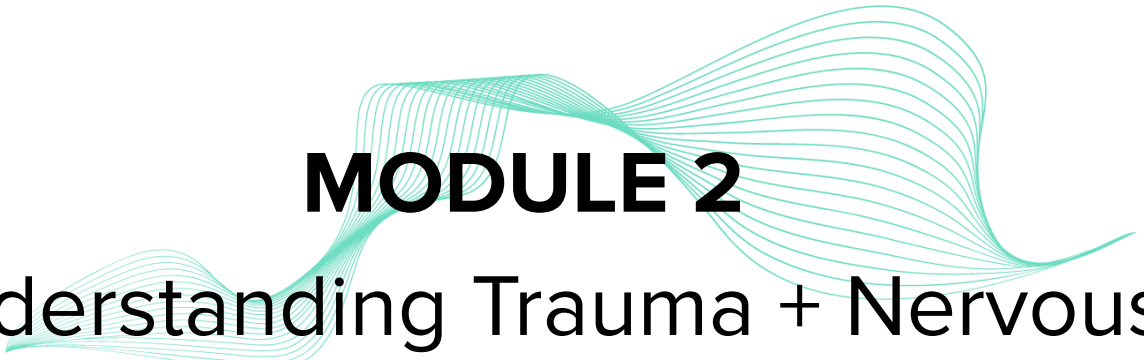
Reflections

Facilitator Presence: How do you want people to feel in your presence? What energy or tone do you want to bring into a space?

Safety in Your Body: What helps you feel safe in your own body? How do you know when you are dysregulated, and what helps you return to balance?

Past Experience Reflection: Recall a group or healing experience where you felt deeply safe and supported. What did the facilitator or spaceholder do (or not do) that helped?

Your Why: Why is it important for you personally to hold space in a trauma-informed way? What kind of facilitator do you want to be?

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MODULE 2

Understanding Trauma + Nervous System Patterns

Module 2: Understanding Trauma + Nervous System Patterns

Key Concepts

- Trauma is not just psychological—it's somatic. It lives in the nervous system and influences how a person responds to present-day experiences.
- The autonomic nervous system (ANS) is shaped by experiences, particularly early ones. It learns patterns of response that can become stuck.
- Breathwork can help regulate or dysregulate the ANS. Understanding capacity is essential to ensure breathwork stays within a window of tolerance.
- CO2 tolerance affects the nervous system's reactivity and resilience. Low tolerance can signal a more easily activated or sensitive system.
- Patterns of trauma can appear as hypervigilance, shutdown, disassociation, or oscillation between extremes. Breath can support integration.

CO2 Tolerance and Nervous System Regulation

CO2 Tolerance Level	Breath Pattern	Nervous System Effect
Low	Fast, shallow, frequent sighing	Heightened reactivity, poor resilience
Medium	Slightly slow, effortful, irregular	Some stability, with effort
High	Slow, smooth, nose breathing	High regulation, greater adaptability

Signs of Dysregulation in Breathwork

- Hyperventilation, gasping, or breath holding
- Emotional flooding or freezing
- Collapse, spacing out, or inability to respond
- Sudden intense movements or vocal expressions without a sense of agency

Key Takeaways

- Learn to recognize the difference between discomfort and dysregulation. One leads to growth, the other can retraumatize.

- Build your ability to read breath and body language. These are nervous system signals that help you track capacity in real time.
- Increase participant safety by inviting breathwork within their capacity, not at the edge of it. Capacity grows through consistency, not intensity.
- CO2 tolerance is trainable. Teach participants to breathe through the nose, slowly and gently, especially outside of sessions.



Exercises

Breath Observation Journal: For three days, track your breath during different activities (e.g., waking, eating, working, exercising). Note when it speeds up, slows down, becomes shallow or deep. Notice what thoughts, emotions, or environmental cues might be influencing these changes.

Body Map Exercise: Draw a simple outline of a body. Use color coding or labels to map sensations:

- Green (Safe/Connected): Where in your body do you feel openness, flow, or ease?
- Yellow (Activated/Anxious): Where do you feel tension, racing, or tightness?
- Red (Overwhelmed/Shut Down): Where do you feel numb, heavy, or frozen?

Label any emotions, sensations, or thoughts that arise. Reflect on what surprises you, which state feels most dominant lately, and what helps shift you toward regulation.

Capacity-Builder Sequence: Guide yourself or a partner through a 3-minute breath practice (nasal, slow, gentle). Afterward, check in:

- Did this feel calming, neutral, or activating?
- What did you notice in your body and mind?
- What's your ideal pace when working with others?



Reflections

Your Breath Patterns - What do you notice about your own breath in times of stress, excitement, or boredom? What might this say about your nervous system?

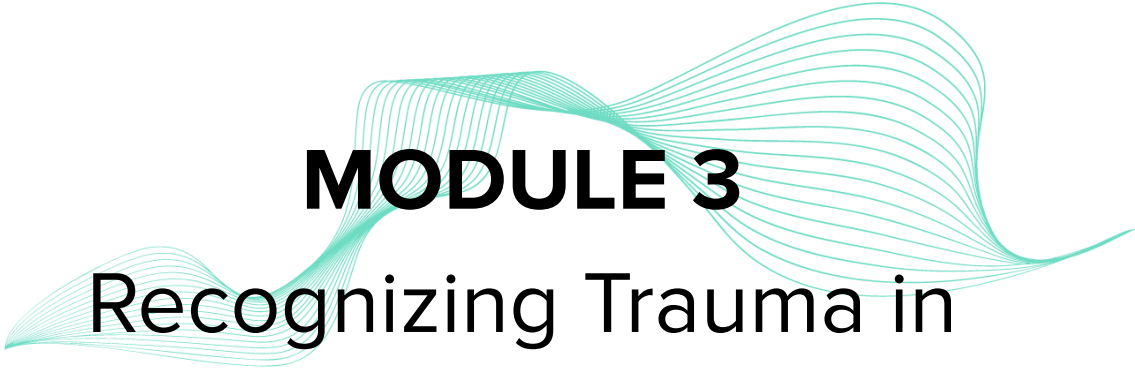
Recognizing Patterns -How do you know when someone in your group is at capacity? What signs do you tend to notice or miss?

Window of Tolerance -Reflect on a time when you were pushed beyond your window of tolerance. What happened in your body? How might that experience influence how you facilitate?

Pause and consider:

- How do you distinguish between activation and dysregulation in your own body?
- What helps you stay attuned to nervous system cues without assuming or over-interpreting?
- What helps you feel grounded in yourself when emotions become intense?
- When do you tend to over-function in response to others' emotions?
- How does your nervous system respond when someone else becomes dysregulated in your presence?

These questions are designed to help you explore your personal relationship with safety, stress, and nervous system literacy. The more you understand your internal cues, the more clearly you'll be able to support others.



MODULE 3
Recognizing Trauma in
Breathwork Spaces

Module 3: Recognizing Trauma in Breathwork Spaces

Key Concepts

- Trauma responses don't always look like panic or distress — they can be subtle, masked, or misinterpreted as “resistance” or “lack of engagement.”
- Recognizing trauma means learning to read the body's language, not just the participant's words. Breath, posture, facial tone, and energy shifts are key indicators.
- A facilitator's ability to spot early signs of dysregulation can prevent overwhelm and support the participant in staying within their window of tolerance.
- The goal isn't to diagnose or label, but to attune to what's happening in the moment and respond with compassion and skill.

Common Signs of Trauma Activation

- Sudden freezing, zoning out, or emotional blunting
- Over-efforting or intense performance to “do it right”
- Rapid, shallow, or inconsistent breath
- Inability to make eye contact, or going silent
- Emotional overwhelm, tears, or abrupt disconnection

Key Takeaways

- Tune into the subtle shifts—breath changes, body tension, tone of voice. These often precede visible signs of distress.
- Let go of the urge to “fix.” Instead, offer grounding and permission (e.g., “You can slow your breath or open your eyes anytime.”)
- Use curiosity over assumption. If something feels off, gently name what you notice and allow space for the participant's experience.
- Recognize your own reactions. If you feel confused, triggered, or responsible for someone's state, pause and ground before taking action.

Exercises

Attunement Practice: Watch a short video of someone sharing emotionally (e.g., a podcast, testimonial, or real-time session). Mute the audio and observe only body language.

- What physical cues do you notice?
- When do energetic or emotional shifts happen?

Micro-Movement Awareness: Spend 10 minutes in silence with a friend or co-facilitator. Take turns observing each other's breathing, posture, and subtle facial expressions or gestures.

Debrief after:

- What did you notice in their body that reflected emotion or nervous system state?
- What shifted in you while observing?

Grounding Script Practice: Write and speak aloud 3 grounding or choice-centered phrases you might use if someone appears overwhelmed. **Examples:**

- "You can always return to a slower pace."
- "You're welcome to open your eyes or come back to the room at any time."
Notice how it feels in your body to speak them out loud.

Signs, Signals, and Support Worksheet

Choose a recent breathwork session you've observed or led. Fill in the following:

A. Behaviors Observed:

- What signs of dysregulation (obvious or subtle) did you notice?
- Any moments you felt unsure of what you were witnessing?

B. Your Response:

- How did you respond?
- Did you feel grounded or activated in the moment?
- What language or tools did you use (or wish you had used)?

C. Reflection & Plan:

- What might you do differently next time?
- What support or preparation would help you feel more steady?

Reflections

Your Triggers: What participant behaviors tend to activate your nervous system (e.g., anger, collapse, defiance)? What's your internal response, and how do you stay grounded?

Comfort with Discomfort: How do you typically respond to intense silence, emotion, or withdrawal during a session? Have you internalized beliefs about "fixing" or "managing" discomfort?

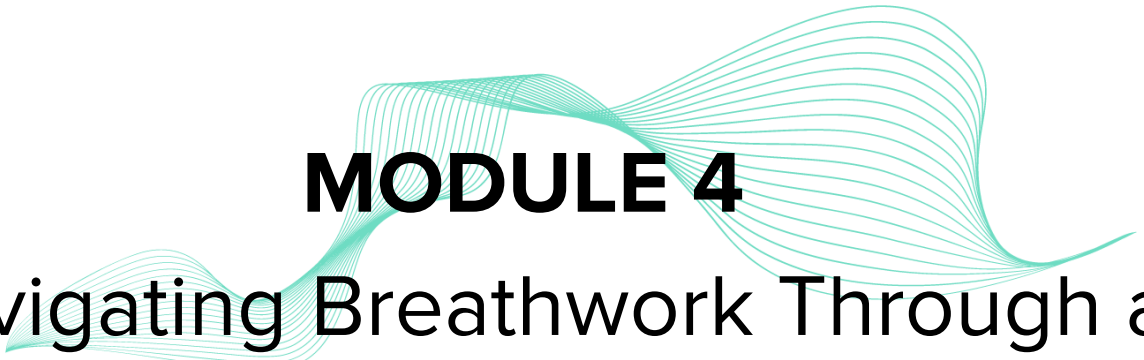
Reading the Room: Have you ever misread a trauma response as a breathwork release—or vice versa? What helped you realize the difference?

Doing vs. Being: When someone is activated, do you tend to "do more" (talk, instruct, adjust) or "slow down" and hold space? How might that impact safety and choice?

Pause and consider:

- Can you recall a time when someone became dysregulated in a healing space?
- What did you notice in their behavior or body language?
- What cues helped you recognize it as dysregulation rather than a typical breathwork response?
- Have you ever mistaken a trauma response for a typical breathwork release or vice versa?
- When someone shows signs of distress, do you tend to lean toward “doing more” or “slowing down”?
- How will you hold space for safety, choice, and trust in your sessions?
- How can you use your voice and presence to guide the individuals as well as the whole class? e.g. “If you're feeling safe you can lean into the breath, if you're meeting your edge trust yourself to maintain or slow down. Remember you have full choice and autonomy in this experience. I'm here to support you.”

These questions invite you to apply what you've learned by examining how trauma responses may look in your breathwork space and how your presence, pace, and perception shape the safety of that space.

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MODULE 4

Navigating Breathwork Through a Capacity-Building

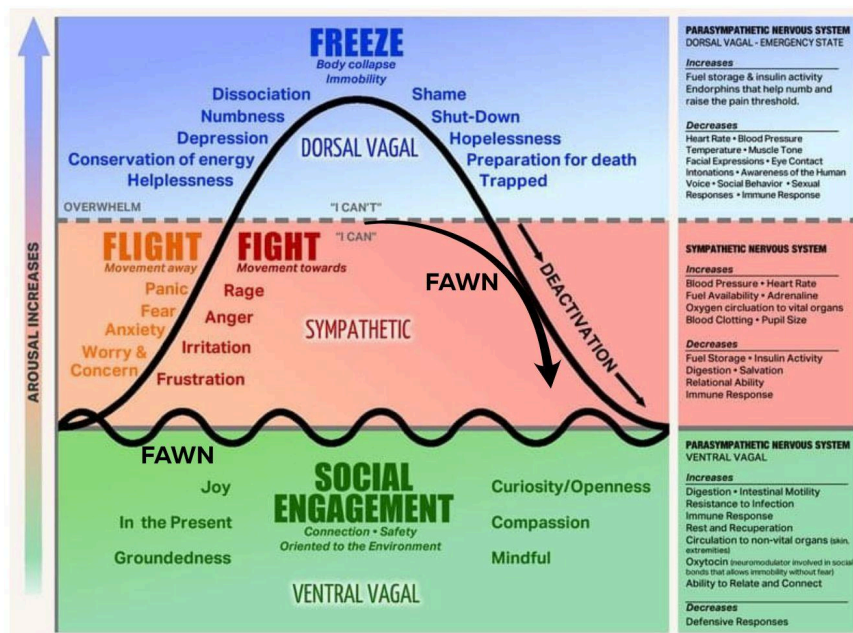
Module 4: Navigating Breathwork Through a Capacity-Building Lens

Key Concepts

- Trauma-informed facilitation isn't about removing challenge—it's about staying within capacity so the system can integrate, not fragment.
- The nervous system grows through resourced challenge—experiences that stretch us just slightly beyond comfort with support and safety.
- Breathwork that is too intense can lead to overwhelm or shutdown. But when paced with intention, it becomes a powerful tool to expand resilience.
- Not all activation is bad. It's about learning to discern productive activation from overload.

Key Takeaways

- Always track the arc of a session—begin with grounding, move into expansion, and end with integration. Too steep a peak can overwhelm the system.
- Observe breath changes and body cues as signs of how much capacity is available. Guide with your voice, tone, and presence to keep the participant connected.
- If you sense someone nearing their edge, offer options: pause, soften, breathe through the nose, or return to baseline. These moments build trust and regulation.
- Facilitation is not just about the breath technique—it's about reading the moment and adjusting in real time.



Exercises

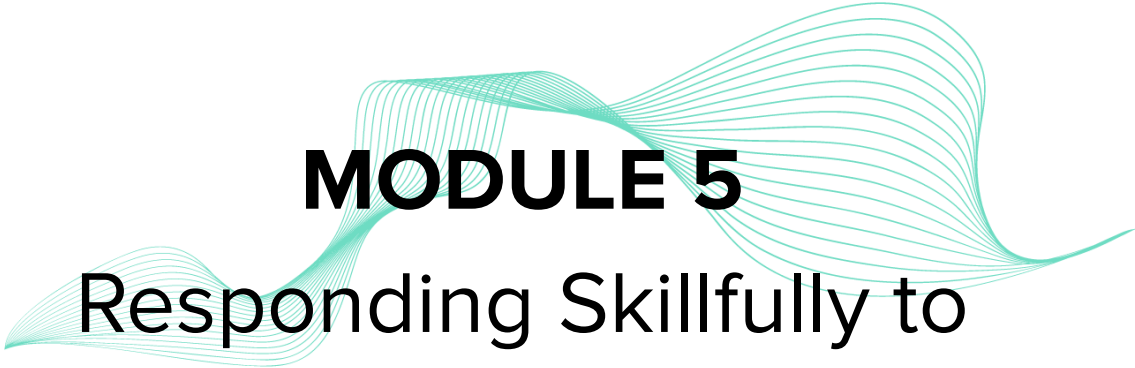
- Pacing Drill: Practice guiding breath at different speeds. Record yourself doing a 1-minute fast pace, 1-minute medium, and 1-minute gentle. Listen back and reflect on how your nervous system responded to each.
- Anchor Points List: Identify at least 3 phrases, sounds, or sensory cues you can offer participants during intense moments to bring them back to their body and breath.

Reflections

Your Window: When have you felt challenged but supported in your own growth journey? What made that experience different from times you felt overwhelmed?

Tendencies as a Facilitator: Do you tend to push people harder or hold back? What informs that instinct—and how does it serve or limit your participants?

Capacity vs Comfort: What's the difference between keeping someone safe and keeping them comfortable? How do you personally define each?



MODULE 5

Responding Skillfully to Dysregulation

Module 5: Responding Skillfully to Dysregulation

Key Concepts

- Dysregulation is not failure — it's information. It tells us that someone's nervous system has hit a limit and needs support.
- The facilitator's job is not to "fix" dysregulation, but to meet it with attunement, grounding, and choice.
- Knowing how to respond when someone is overwhelmed is one of the most important trauma-informed skills a facilitator can build.
- Breath, tone, body language, and presence all influence the space. A regulated facilitator creates a bridge for co-regulation.

Common Responses to Participant Dysregulation

- Freezing or shutting down
- Crying, shaking, or becoming overwhelmed
- Leaving the space or dissociating
- Over-efforting or appearing emotionally numb

Key Takeaways

- Stay regulated yourself. Your grounded presence is more impactful than any words. Breathe slowly, soften your tone, and reduce stimulation.
- Offer grounding options. This might include: slowing the breath, placing a hand on the body, opening the eyes, or moving to a different position.
- Validate and normalize. Remind them they're not doing anything wrong. "You're safe. Your system just needs a pause."
- Know when to step back. If your support is not helping or is activating further, offer space and observe from a distance. Let the person lead when possible.



Exercises

Roleplay Practice: "What Would You Do If...?" Pair with another facilitator and practice responding to common dysregulation scenarios:

- Hyperventilation and crying
- Sudden freeze and blank stare
- Flight response (e.g., trying to leave)

For each scenario, discuss:

- What cues are you noticing in their body or breath?
- What options or choices could you offer to support regulation?

Tracking Exercise: Watch a live or recorded breathwork session. Use a journal or worksheet to:

- List observable signs of both regulation and dysregulation.
- Note the facilitator’s interventions or tone shifts.
- Track your own nervous system responses while watching: Where do you tighten, soften, or feel alert?

Self-Inventory: Your Pattern Under Pressure

Reflect on your typical reaction when someone becomes emotionally activated:

- Do you tend to freeze, over-function, or intellectualize?
- What is your body’s default when a participant cries, dissociates, or shuts down?
- Awareness here allows you to build more choice into your presence.

Soothing Voice Drill: Record yourself saying 3–5 grounding phrases using a slow, soft, present tone.

Examples to try:

- “Feel your feet on the ground.”
 - “There’s nothing you have to do right now. Just noticing is enough.”
 - “You’re here. I’m with you.”
- Listen back and ask:
- Does your tone feel calming or tight?
 - Try again until it feels natural and steady in your body and voice.

Nervous System Anchors List: Create your personal “anchor list” of top 5 grounding tools to use when a session becomes intense. Examples might include:

- A hand on your chest or belly
- Repeating a calming phrase
- Shifting posture
- Making eye contact
- A scent, object, or mantra that brings you back to the moment



Facilitator Language Library (Keep in Workbook)

Use these trauma-informed phrases during moments of activation or emotional overwhelm. Practice them aloud and reflect on how they feel in your body.

Grounding and Orientation

- “Notice your body. Feel the support underneath you.”
- “Feel your feet on the ground.”
- “Look around the room and find three colors you can name.”
- “There’s nothing you have to do right now; just noticing is enough.”

Co-Regulation and Presence

- “You’re here. I’m with you.”
- “Take your time.”
- “You’re not alone right now.”
- “We can slow down together.”

Empowering Choice and Agency

- “You get to choose what feels right moment to moment.”
- “You can slow your breath down or rest whenever you need.”
- “Your body knows what it needs. You can trust yourself here.”
- “Pausing is always allowed and welcomed.”



Reflections

Your Edge: How do you feel when someone becomes dysregulated during a session?

- What’s your instinctual reaction—freeze, fix, retreat, rush in?
- What would it look like to stay present without rescuing?

Regulation in Action: Think of a time someone held powerful space for you.

- What did they do (or not do) that felt calming, affirming, or safe?
- How did their presence, voice, or pacing influence your system?

Redefining Success: What does it mean to you when someone becomes overwhelmed or emotional in your session?

- Do you equate this with failure, progress, or something else?
- How might you reframe these moments as opportunities for regulation, not resolution?



MODULE 6
Creating Safety and
Co-Regulation

Module 6: Creating Safety and Co-Regulation

Key Concepts

- Safety is the foundation of all trauma-informed work. It's not just about avoiding harm — it's about cultivating an environment where healing feels possible.
- Co-regulation happens when the nervous system of one regulated person supports the regulation of another — through presence, tone, breath, and calm.
- Structure and rhythm are essential. When a session is too open-ended or erratic, the nervous system may not feel safe to let go.
- Participants need to feel in control of their experience. Safety increases when facilitators emphasize choice, consent, and collaboration.

Key Takeaways

- Begin every session with grounding — this helps orient the nervous system and sets the tone for co-regulation.
- Use your own body and breath as the anchor. Slow your breath, soften your posture, and make eye contact gently (if appropriate).
- Predictability reduces threat. Let participants know what to expect, what's optional, and how they can opt out at any time.
- The goal isn't to lead a "perfect" session — it's to create a container that feels held, even if emotion or intensity arises.



Exercises

Facilitator Anchoring Routine: Create a 3-minute pre-session grounding routine that you repeat every time you facilitate. Include:

- 3 grounding breaths
 - One intention or mantra (e.g., "I trust the process")
 - A brief body scan (jaw, shoulders, breath, posture)
- Practice it before your next 3 sessions and journal how it affects your regulation and presence.

Voice & Pacing Drill: Record yourself reading 3–4 trauma-informed breath cues aloud:

- "You're invited to slow your breath."
 - "Take your time."
 - "You're in control of your pace."
- Listen back and adjust your tone, pacing, and rhythm to sound grounded, slow, and warm.

Tip: Slow your speech by 10–20%. Repeat until it feels natural in your body.

Posture Awareness Exercise: Stand or sit in your usual facilitation posture. Reflect:

- Are my shoulders tense or soft?
- Is my jaw clenched or relaxed?
- Where is my breath landing?

Adjust your stance to reflect openness, groundedness, and calm.

Internal Check-In During Sessions: During your next session, pause twice to silently ask yourself:

- “How’s my breath?”
- “How’s my body?”
- “Am I connected to myself right now?”

These subtle check-ins help you co-regulate the space without saying a word.



Reflections

Your Experience of Safety: What helps you feel emotionally and physically safe in a group space?

- How might you recreate those conditions for your participants?

Energetic Holding: Think of a facilitator who made you feel deeply “held.”

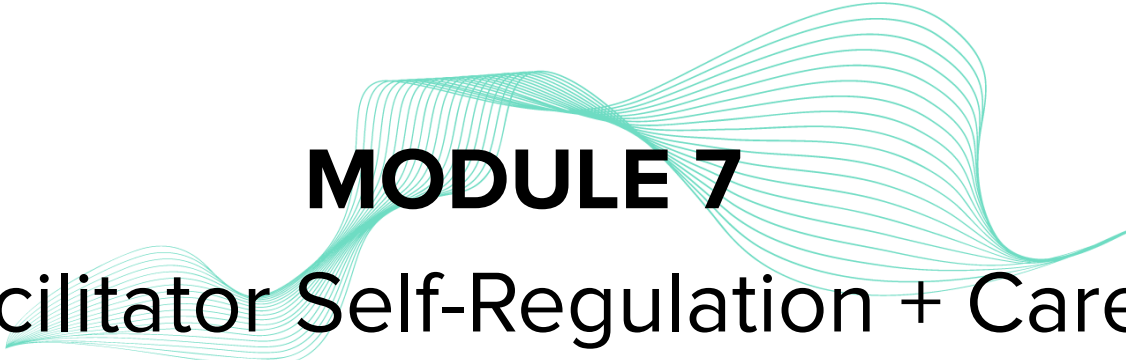
- What did they do (or not do)?
- How did your nervous system respond?

Creating Predictability: What steps can you take to make your sessions feel predictable but not rigid?

- Could you share more about what to expect before breathwork begins?

Silence & Spaciousness: How do you feel about silence in sessions?

- Can you allow space without rushing to fill it?
- What does silence communicate in your presence?

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MODULE 7

Facilitator Self-Regulation + Care

Module 7: Facilitator Self-Regulation + Care

Key Concepts

- The facilitator’s nervous system sets the tone for the entire space. Your regulation becomes a tuning fork for the group.
- Without care, holding space for others can become draining. Burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma are real risks in this work.
- Self-regulation is both moment-to-moment (during a session) and long-term (daily habits that support your baseline).
- You can’t model safety if your own system is in chronic survival mode. Your body cues (breath, posture, tone) always communicate more than your words.

Key Takeaways

- Prep yourself before every session. Take 2–3 minutes to ground, breathe, and check your own emotional state. Don’t skip this step
- Develop daily practices that support your own nervous system — these don’t have to be long, but they do need to be consistent.
- Know your own activation patterns. Learn what dysregulation feels like in your body so you can catch and adjust in real time.
- Remember: holding space is a relational practice. You’re not meant to hold it all alone. Create a support system of peers, mentors, or supervision.



Exercises

Regulation Prep Routine (3x this week): Design a 3–5 minute pre-session ritual that includes:

- A grounding breath (e.g., 4-in / 8-out)
 - One intention or mantra (“I offer presence, not perfection”)
 - A brief nervous system check-in (How’s my breath? Am I grounded?)
- Practice it before three different sessions and journal how it impacts your presence.

Anchor Inventory: List 5 personal anchors that help regulate your system quickly. Include at least one from each category:

- Sensory (e.g., cold water on face, essential oils)
- Movement-based (e.g., shoulder rolls, walking)
- Vagal-toning (e.g., humming, left nostril breathing)
- Emotional (e.g., mantra, photo of a loved one)

- Environmental (e.g., nature, candlelight)
Keep these on a post-it note or your phone.

Boundary Mapping: Write down 3 boundaries that help you stay resourced before, during, and after sessions.

Examples:

- “I turn off notifications 30 minutes before.”
 - “I don't take new client sessions after 7pm.”
 - “I pause and check in with myself if I feel overstretched.”
- Commit to implementing one of these boundaries this week.

Vagal Tone Micro-Practice: Choose one of the following and practice it daily for 3 minutes:

- Humming or chanting “Ommm”
- Left nostril breathing
- Cold water face splash: Note any shifts in your mood, focus, or energy afterward.

Self-Compassion Break (Inspired by Kristin Neff) When you feel pressure or self-doubt arise:

- Place your hand on your chest or belly
- Say internally:
 1. “This is a moment of challenge.”
 2. “Others go through this too.”
 3. “May I be kind to myself right now.”

Repeat as needed before or after sessions.



Reflections

Signs of Dysregulation: What are the earliest signs in your body or behavior that you're slipping into over-efforting or emotional overload?

- Can you commit to noticing them earlier?

Permission to Pause: How do you feel about rest, saying no, or taking space when you need it?

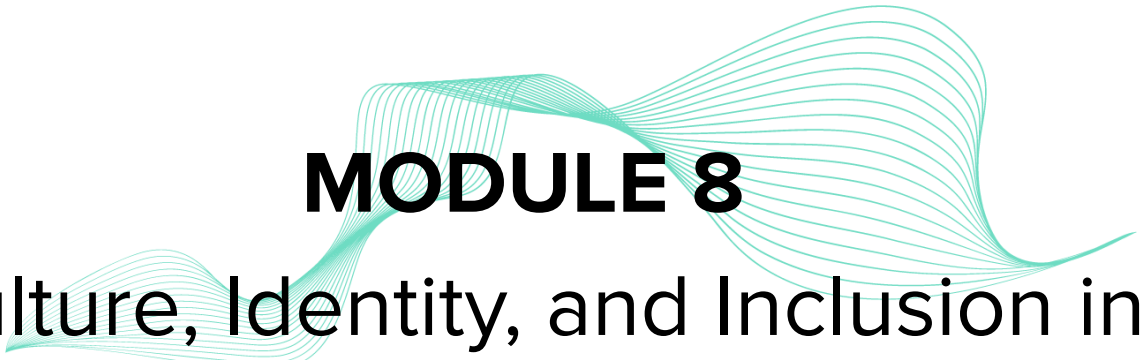
- What cultural or personal stories shape your beliefs around this?

Modeling What You Teach: You encourage clients to ground, breathe, and slow down—are you modeling the same for yourself?

- Where are you living your message?
- Where could you align more deeply?

“You are not a machine delivering breathwork. You are a human being offering your presence and steadiness as a living invitation to safety.”

Taking care of your own nervous system is not a luxury. It's an act of integrity.

A decorative graphic consisting of multiple thin, teal-colored lines that flow and wave across the page, creating a sense of movement and rhythm. The lines are most prominent behind the main title and subtitle.

MODULE 8

Culture, Identity, and Inclusion in Breathwork Spaces

Module 8: Culture, Identity, and Inclusion in Breathwork Spaces

Key Concepts

- Trauma doesn't happen in a vacuum. It is shaped by social location, identity, history, and systemic oppression.
- Breathwork spaces are often unconsciously shaped by dominant cultural norms (e.g., whiteness, able-bodiedness, Western spiritual frameworks).
- Being trauma-informed means practicing cultural humility — recognizing what you don't know, being willing to be corrected, and staying open to feedback.
- Inclusion is not just about who's in the room — it's about how safe people feel to bring their whole selves into the space.

Key Takeaways

- Acknowledge intersectionality. Each person carries multiple identities (race, gender, ability, class, etc.), and these impact how they relate to breath, space, and safety.
- Be willing to unlearn assumptions about what healing “should” look like. Avoid projecting your preferences or norms onto others.
- Practice active inclusion: this might look like changing music choices, offering more access options, or naming power dynamics.
- Repair matters. When harm happens (even unintentionally), the way you respond is more important than being perfect. Be open, accountable, and willing to listen.



Exercises

Identity Map (Revisited): Draw a circle with your name in the center. Around it, write 6–8 identities you hold (e.g., race, gender, class background, ability, age, spiritual path).

- Underline the ones most visible in breathwork spaces.
- Star the ones that feel invisible or misunderstood.
 - Reflect: How do these impact how you show up — and how others may perceive you?

Bias Reflection Journal: Choose one assumption or belief you've held about breathwork (e.g., “breathwork is universal,” “stillness means healing”).

- Where did it come from (teacher, culture, personal experience)?

- Who might this assumption exclude or overlook?

Bonus: Ask someone from a different identity group if they'd like to share their perspective on that same belief.

Inclusive Audit + One Shift: Review your breathwork offerings, music, images, language, and rituals.

Ask:

- What implicit cultural norms are being reinforced?
- Who might not feel fully seen, safe, or invited in?
- What one thing can you shift to create a more inclusive environment? (e.g., add opt-in choice around touch, use trauma-informed language, invite feedback).

Repair Roleplay: Practice with a peer or mirror:

- Someone gives you feedback that you caused harm or missed something culturally important.
- Practice responding from a place of curiosity, openness, and presence. Try:

“Thank you for sharing that. I want to understand better. Would you be open to telling me more so I can learn and do better?”

Reflect: How does it feel in your body to stay open?



Reflections

Cultural Comfort Zones: How have your identities shaped your access to healing spaces?

- Where have you felt welcomed or excluded?
- Where have you felt like an outsider or insider?

Being Called In: How do you typically respond when someone says, “That didn’t feel okay”?

- What stories, sensations, or impulses arise in your system?
- How can you stay rooted in curiosity and commitment rather than defense?

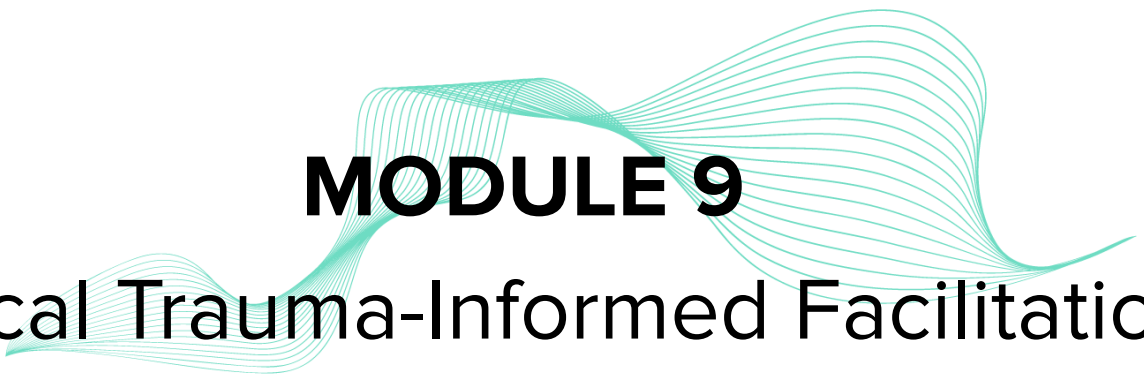
Holding Space for Difference: What are 3 ways you can make your space safer for people who move through the world differently than you?

- Do they include co-creating agreements, inviting feedback, or changing the music/rituals you default to?

Decentering Yourself: Are there moments where your own comfort or identity is taking up more space than is supportive?

- What helps you pause, reorient, and shift the spotlight?

What Are You Willing to Change?: Based on this module, what is one tangible shift you're ready to commit to in your next breathwork experience?



MODULE 9

Ethical Trauma-Informed Facilitation

Module 9: Ethical Trauma-Informed Facilitation

Key Concepts

- Ethical facilitation means knowing your scope, respecting your participants' autonomy, and working within the limits of your training.
- Trauma-informed practice is not a license to treat trauma. It is a lens of care — not a clinical intervention.
- Facilitators must learn to recognize when someone needs referral or external support and should never try to diagnose or process deep trauma beyond their capacity.
- Your presence, your boundaries, and your humility are what make you ethical — not your ability to “fix” someone.

Key Takeaways

- **Scope of Practice:** Know what your training prepares you for — and what it doesn't. Refer out when deeper therapeutic work is needed.
- **Consent is ongoing.** Trauma-informed consent isn't a one-time checkbox — it's a continuous process. Participants should always feel empowered to opt out or pause.
- **Power dynamics exist.** As a facilitator, you hold power. Acknowledge it, soften it, and never misuse it.
- **Be willing to receive feedback and stay open to learning, even when it's uncomfortable.** That's part of ethical growth.



Exercises

Scope Mapping Statement: Write a 2–3 sentence statement that clearly defines your scope of practice as a breathwork facilitator. Include:

- What your role does include (e.g., guiding safe breath experiences, offering somatic awareness, creating space for self-discovery).
- What your role does not include (e.g., diagnosing, treating trauma, providing therapy or medical advice).

Now practice saying this out loud in under one minute. Try it in different tones — grounding, confident, relational.

Ethics Roleplay Scenarios:

With a partner or peer, roleplay responding to the following situations:

- A participant begins confiding deep trauma stories after class.
- Someone becomes emotionally dependent on your sessions for stability.

- A participant asks for advice on a topic you're not trained in (e.g., medication, trauma therapy, relationships).

After each one, debrief:

- What boundary needed to be clarified?
- What support or referral could have been offered instead?
- How did it feel in your body to hold the boundary with care?

Consent Revisit Audit: Pull up your intake forms, onboarding materials, or spoken session intros. Look for opportunities to add or revise:

- Explicit permission: "You may opt in or out of..."
- Choice language: "If it feels safe, you can..."
- Informed risks: Is there clarity on the nature of breathwork, emotional releases, or physical responses?

Write down any changes you're ready to implement to strengthen consent and autonomy.

Reflections

Staying in Your Lane: Have you ever been tempted to give advice, interpret someone's experience, or take on a role outside your training (e.g., therapist, healer, spiritual guide)?

- What made you feel pulled?
- How could you anchor more deeply into your actual scope next time?

Power & Responsibility: Describe a time when you held power (explicit or implicit) in a session — through your words, knowledge, energy, or authority.

- What dynamics were at play?
- How did you respond or adjust in the moment?
- What did you learn about power and humility?

Being Teachable: How do you respond to feedback — especially if someone points out a blind spot, misstep, or harm you didn't intend?

- What happens in your body when you feel "called in"?
- How can you build a stronger relationship with repair and learning?



Integration Prompts

After your next session, journal:

- How clearly did I state my scope and set expectations?
- Did any boundary feel challenged — internally or externally?

- What support systems or referrals can I prepare for next time?

Then answer:

- What one phrase can I practice for moments when someone goes beyond my scope?
e.g., “That’s really important, and outside my area of expertise. Would you be open to exploring support options together?”
- How will I continue growing my ethical clarity and collaboration circle?



MODULE 10

Integration, Closure & Supporting the Long-Term Healing Journey

Module 10: Integration, Closure & Supporting the Long-Term Healing Journey

Key Concepts

- Integration is the healing. What happens after the breathwork session determines whether the experience becomes embodied or just a momentary release.
Trauma healing is a long-term, nonlinear process. Breathwork can open powerful doors — but lasting change requires continued support and nervous system nourishment.
- Closure is part of nervous system regulation. Without it, participants may feel open, exposed, or emotionally raw after sessions.
- Facilitators play a key role in resourcing participants with tools, practices, and perspectives that help them ground and digest their experience.

Key Takeaways

- Always build in time for integration and closure. This can include grounding breath, movement, journaling, or group sharing.
- Normalize the post-session experience — emotional releases, insights, fatigue, or feeling “off” are all valid. Provide psychoeducation to support understanding.
- Encourage participants to develop their own regulation toolkit: breath, movement, nature, voice, connection, journaling, etc.
- Integration doesn’t require analysis. Let participants make meaning on their own timeline. You are there to support, not interpret.



Exercises

Integration Toolkit: Create a list of six practices you personally use to integrate after intense emotional experiences (e.g., walking, journaling, calling a friend, dancing, grounding breath, time in nature).

- Circle your top 3.
- Invite your clients to create their own list post-session.

Closure Script Practice: Write or record a 2–3 minute closure script for your breathwork sessions. Include:

- Grounding cues
- Permission to be in process
- An invitation to integrate with kindness and curiosity

- A reminder that integration unfolds over time

Follow-Up Plan: Draft a follow-up message or email template you can send to participants 1–2 days after a session. Include:

- Grounding reminders
- Integration resources (e.g., journaling prompts, movement practices, breath tracks)
- Open-ended questions (e.g., “What’s been present for you since our session?”)

Final Facilitator Reflection: Reflect in writing or audio:

- What shifted for me during this training?
- What part of the content felt most challenging? Most affirming?
- What will I now do differently as a facilitator?
- What helps me stay regulated, curious, and grounded?
- What kind of support do I need to sustain this work in my body, business, and nervous system?



Reflections

Integration in Your Life: Do you allow space after transformational moments or rush into the next thing?

Resourcing Others: What tools or resources have supported your long-term healing that you now share with others?

Closure and Completion: How do you personally complete a breathwork session? What signals your system that the experience is done?

Optional Continuing Practice

Ongoing Support & Development

- Identify: Who is your peer support network, mentor, or supervisor?
- What topics are you drawn to next for deeper learning? (e.g., somatic experiencing, systems of power, grief work)
- Create a self-care commitment: One thing you’ll practice weekly to support your nervous system as a facilitator.

Integrating Your Breathwork Experience: Gentle Aftercare Suggestions

Breathwork can stir deep emotional, somatic, and energetic shifts. Support your nervous system in the hours and days after:

Right After Your Session

- Hydrate: Drink water to support detox and regulation.
- Rest: Give yourself downtime to reset.
- Journal: Reflect gently—what emotions or images came up?
- Move: Gentle walking or stretching helps discharge energy.
- Ground: Name 5 things you see, feel your feet on the ground, or take 3 slow breaths.

The Next Day

- Observe: Notice mood, dreams, or body sensations.
- Be Gentle: Limit overwhelm.
- Support Your Nervous System: Nature, calming music, soft breathwork.

In the Days to Follow

- Trust the Process: Insights may continue to emerge.
- Reach Out if Needed: A friend, therapist, or your facilitator can support you.
- Let it Land: Integration isn't always instant. Let your body lead.

You are your own best guide. Trust what you need. Honor what arises.