

# Safe While Seen Toolkit for Fearful Avoidants

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**For fearful avoidants, connection can register as threat—even in safe relationships.**

The *Safe While Seen Toolkit* blends simple somatic practices with scripts matched to survival responses and attachment styles—so regulation and connection can happen simultaneously.

## Solo Somatic Practices for Fearful Avoidants by Nervous System State

Gentle reminder: you don't have to wait until you're in an active survival response to explore these solo somatic practices. Instead, slowly build your nervous system's capacity outside of overwhelm.

### Your Body's In: Fight

**You experience:** A surge of adrenaline, muscles tense, your nervous system prepares to defend you either through confrontation or control.

**You feel:** Agitated, irritable, hyper-defensive, critical, compelled to *do something, ANYTHING*, to discharge your tension and overwhelm.

**Your somatic need:** To move excess energy through your body, then create a sense of your body as a safe container.

**Your practice/s:** Noisy sighs until you involuntarily sigh or yawn – that's a sign your nervous system has begun to shift down a gear. Next, press your palms against a wall or the floor and push with steady pressure to remind yourself that your body's strong, controlled and safe.

## Your Body's In: Flight

**You experience:** Restlessness, mobilisation, your nervous system wants to create as much distance as possible between you and the source of your emotional or relational overwhelm.

**You feel:** Anxious, unable to settle, overthinking, upper-chest shallow breath, eyeballing the exit.

**Your somatic need:** Slow and low breath – get your belly involved – slow down your movements, then create inner safety.

**Your practice/s:** Long, counted exhales – 4 in, 6–8 out. Repeat 5–10 times – to lower your cortisol and adrenaline, slow your heart rate and even slow your brain waves. Next, lie on the floor with a weighted blanket or stack of pillows on your chest/abdomen, their weight and pressure acts as a cue of safety.

## Your Body's In: Fawn (aka People Pleasing)

**You experience:** Softened posture – slightly slumped shoulders, either avoiding or over-doing eye contact, polite smile, hands held close to the body – to signal submission and avoid rejection or conflict.

**You feel:** Over-accommodating, self-abandoning, hyper-focused on others' needs.

**Your somatic need:** Reclaim space, boundaries, and internal agency.

**Your practice/s:** Establish your energetic boundaries by stretching your arms out in front of you, then sweeping your arms to the sides of your body, behind, above, below, all while saying things like 'This is mine. I choose what I give', 'What's mine is mine, what's yours is yours', and 'I don't have to disappear to be loved.'

## Your Body's In: Functional Freeze

**You experience:** Outer calm combined with inner chaos. While to the outside world it's business as usual, your nervous system has disconnected from sensation and emotion in order to survive perceived danger without fleeing.

**You feel:** Numb, robotic, disengaged, performing but not feeling.

**Your somatic need:** Slowly, gently, safely increase internal awareness and awaken the body. Go easy! A body in functional freeze doesn't need more pressure.

**Your practice/s:** Safely engage your senses by holding something warm in one hand and something cool in the other. Next, practice micro-movements like wiggling your toes, circling your wrists and stretching your fingers – remember, it's a delicate dance between a dash more activation without tipping into overwhelm.

## Your Body's In: Dissociate

**You experience:** Spacey, floaty, a sense of having left your body. The mind detaches to protect from overwhelm.

**You feel:** Detached, unreal, emotionally disconnected.

**Your somatic need:** To come back into your body through sensory input.

**Your practice/s:** A splash of cold water on your face or holding an ice cube helps regulate sensory input and calm the nervous system. Too chilly for your liking? Instead, stand or sit with bare feet on the earth, floor or a textured mat. Feel the weight and pressure subtly shift with each breath.

## Your Body's In: Collapse

**You experience:** Deep fatigue, low muscle tone and a sense of physical and emotional powerlessness.

**You feel:** Hopeless, helpless, low-energy, deeply withdrawn or self-deprecating.

**Your somatic need:** Gentle energy building and reconnection.

**Your practice/s:** Wrap yourself in a blanket like a human burrito and, if possible, sit in natural light. Gently rock from side to side. If you feel your body can tolerate a little more, hum softly with closed lips to stimulate your vagus nerve.

## Your Body's In: Ventral Vagal (Regulated)

**You experience:** Steady breath, relaxed muscles, open posture.

**You feel:** Safe, calm, grounded, connected, curious.

**Your somatic need:** Savouring the felt sense of safety and connection.

**Your practice/s:** Place one hand on your heart and the other on your cheek and say (out loud or to yourself): 'This is what calm feels like' and 'This is what coming home to my body feels like'. Stay with the sensation for 30–60 seconds.

## Co-Regulation Practices for Fearful Avoidants (With a Partner or Safe Person)

Gentle reminder: Somatic co-regulation helps your body feel safe while letting yourself be seen—which may have *subconsciously felt dangerous* in the past. Start small; the kindest way to teach your nervous system safety is to be gentle and steady with yourself.

## Co-Regulating Practices with a Secure Partner

**Goal:** Experience safe co-regulation and connection without overwhelm.

### **Practice #1: 5-Second Touch and Release**

**What to do:** Hold hands or place a hand on each other's hearts for just 5 seconds. Then release. Repeat only if comfortable.

**Why:** Short, attuned physical contact lets the body associate touch with safety—not overwhelm.

### **Practice #2: Sit and Breathe Together**

**What to do:** Sit quietly together and match your breathing for 1–2 minutes. Keep eyes open or closed - whatever feels safer.

**Why:** Breathing in sync activates the social engagement system and softens the sense of separation.

## Co-Regulating Practices with an Anxious Preoccupied Partner

**Goal:** Regulate without absorbing your partner's activation.

### **Practice #1: Sound Together**

**What to do:** Put on calming music (like instrumental or binaural tones) and simply listen together—no talking.

**Why:** Music regulates vagal tone and creates co-regulated quiet space. This is especially helpful for anxious partners who often feel an overwhelming need to feel a need to do something and resolve conflict immediately.

### **Practice #2: Back-to-Back Anchoring**

**What to do:** Sit back-to-back and lean gently into each other for a few minutes.

**Why:** Physical connection with spatial boundary helps regulate without overstimulating.

## Co-Regulating Practices with a Dismissive Avoidant Partner

**Goal:** Stay embodied and regulated without expecting too much emotional engagement.

### **Practice #1: Parallel Activity**

**What to do:** Do a quiet task side by side—like stretching, drawing, or doing dishes. No need for talking.

**Why:** Helps the fearful avoidant feel connected without triggering the dismissive partner's need for distance.

### **Practice #2: Name-Notice-Navigate**

**What to do:** Share only if your both feel safe doing so. Take turns name a sensation (e.g., tightness in chest), noticing where it is, and choosing a regulating response (breath, movement, shift position).

**Why:** Helps you stay in your body instead of spiralling into your respective stories.

## Co-Regulating Practices with a Fearful Avoidant Partner

**Goal:** Build safety in parallel regulation without relying on one another to 'fix' or 'heal'.

### **Practice #1: 60-Second Sit**

**What to do:** Agree to sit in silence together for 60 seconds without needing to fix or talk. Eyes open or closed.

**Why:** Creates structure for stillness and co-regulation without pressure to perform.

### **Practice #2: Mirror Movement (No Eye Contact Needed)**

**What to do:** One person leads slow, simple movements (like rolling shoulders, stretching arms); the other mirrors. Switch roles after a few minutes.

**Why:** Builds connection and playfulness while staying within somatic windows of tolerance.

## Scripts to Help the Fearful Avoidant Stay Connected to a Partner

### Scripts to Help the Fearful Avoidant Stay Connected to a Securely Attached Partner

**Fight:** *'I notice I'm getting sharp and reactive right now, right? My system feels really agitated. I care about us and don't want to push you away. Can I take 10 minutes to regulate and come back to talk calmly?'*

**Flight:** *'My body is telling me to run away right now, but that's not really what I want. I care about you and just need a little space to breathe and come back into my body. Would it be okay if I check in with you in about 30 minutes?'*

**Fawn:** *'I notice I'm slipping into trying to make everything OK so you won't leave me. That's an old pattern of mine, not the truth of how I want to show up in our relationship. I want to stay connected AND be authentic. Can we slow this down together?'*

**Functional Freeze:** *'I'm here, but I feel frozen inside—like I'm going through the motions. I don't want to disconnect from you. Can we do something really low-stakes together, like sit quietly or go for a walk, while I come back online?'*

**Collapse:** *'I'm feeling like everything's too much and like I want to disappear. It's not you -it's my system shutting down. I don't want to lose our connection, even if I can't talk much right now. Could you just be here with me, quietly, for a little while?'*

**Dissociate:** *'I'm here with you, but I feel really far away—like I'm watching everything from underwater. I know I go quiet when this happens, but I don't want to lose our connection. Can we just sit together quietly while I try to come back into my body?'*

**Ventral Vagal (Regulated):** *'I feel grounded and connected right now, and I want to share that with you. I really value how safe it feels with you.'*

## Scripts to Help the Fearful Avoidant Stay Connected to an Anxious Preoccupied Partner

**Fight:** *'I know I just snapped and got defensive - I'm feeling agitated but I still want to be close. I need a little space to come down so I don't say things I'll regret. Can I take 10 minutes?'*

**Flight:** *'I'm feeling overwhelmed and like I want to escape—but that doesn't mean I want to lose you. I need a breather to regulate, and I promise I'll reach back out in an hour. You're important to me.'*

**Fawn:** *'I notice I'm trying to avoid making you anxious or upset with me. I care about you, but I want to be honest about where I'm at too. Can we take a walk and talk in a way where we both feel safe to be real?'*

**Functional Freeze:** *'I feel frozen inside but I don't want to shut you out. It helps when you can just sit with me and not need me to be 'on.' Can we be quiet together for a bit while I come back into myself?'*

**Collapse:** *'Everything feels like too much and I feel like my body is folding in on itself. I know that might trigger your anxiety, and I care about that. I'm not leaving - I just need some time to slowly come back online.'*

**Dissociate:** *'I feel really checked out right now - it's like I'm not in my body. I know that can make you feel like I'm pulling away, but it's not about you. I just need to take a beat. I promise I'll let you know when I feel a bit more present.'*

**Ventral Vagal (Regulated):** *'I'm feeling really connected right now. I really appreciate how emotionally tuned-in you are without either of us needing to fix or chase anything.'*

## Scripts to Help the Fearful Avoidant Stay Connected to a Dismissive Avoidant Partner

**Fight:** *'I'm feeling activated and edgy, and part of me wants to push for a reaction from you. I don't want to create distance between us. I'm going to take some time to self-regulate so we can reconnect more calmly later.'*

**Flight:** *'My system is telling me to bolt, but I don't want to run from this connection. I know space matters to you, so I'll take some quiet time too—and I'd love to check in later when we both have more capacity.'*

**Fawn:** *'I notice I'm trying to accommodate you so I don't get rejected or shut out. I want to stay connected without losing myself. I'm working on being more real with you, even if it's scary.'*

**Functional Freeze:** *"I feel shut down but I still care about us. I know we both tend to go inward when things feel hard. Maybe we don't have to talk much right now, but could we just sit near each other for a bit?"*

**Collapse:** *'I'm feeling emotionally collapsed and disconnected from myself. I don't need you to fix it or do anything—I just want to be near you, even in silence, so I know we're still okay.'*

**Dissociate:** *'I'm feeling really spaced out and disconnected. I know we both tend to go inward, but I don't want us to drift too far apart. Can we share quiet space without needing to talk or explain much right now?'*

**Ventral Vagal (Regulated):** *I'm feeling really calm and connected. Let's just hang out together - no pressure, no big conversation, just easy.'*

## Scripts to Help the Fearful Avoidant Stay Connected to a Fearful Avoidant Partner

**Fight:** *'I can feel myself getting reactive and I don't want that to spark a push-pull spiral between us. I care about you and need a short break to regulate so we can reconnect without being overly defensive.'*

**Flight:** *'Part of me wants to disappear right now, and I imagine you might feel the same. I'd like us to stay in pressure-free connection - even if it's a short message or voice note later - so we don't both vanish.'*

**Fawn:** *'I notice I'm slipping into fawning to keep the peace, but I want to be honest instead of shape-shifting. Can we both agree to be messy and imperfect together for a moment?'*

**Functional Freeze:** *'I feel frozen and I imagine you might too. What if we could just name it, not fix it? Or if talking's too much right now, we could just stay in the same room or send each other a grounding text to feel less alone in it. What do you think?'*

**Collapse:** *'I feel shut down and unworthy—and I know you know what that's like. Maybe we can agree not to make big decisions from this place. I still want us to feel safe, even if it's quiet and messy.'*

**Dissociate:** *'I'm super out of my body right now, how about you? I don't want to disappear completely. What if we just agreed to stay nearby—even without words—until we feel more present?'*

**Ventral Vagal (Regulated):** *'I feel connected and grounded right now, and our relationship is a big part of that. We both know how hard it is to feel safe, so thank you.'*

## Final Thoughts + Strategy Call

Stay gentle. Stay steady. The safest relationships are built one regulated moment at a time.

If you'd like to explore how to integrate these tools with personalised support, book a strategy call here: <https://thisbeinghuman.as.me/>