

SIBAM (Levine, 2015)

The acronym, SIBAM, can be useful reminder in learning to garner inner self-awareness from experiences. Pausing regularly to notice and become aware of the five SIBAM categories related to current situations can allow us access to important information during difficult moments. This awareness then allows us to ultimately allow the body to finish processing the experience to a natural conclusion.

Suggestion: Practice SIBAM at least once a day. Soon after experiencing a moment, pausing to recall the recent experience, and stepping through each of the five categories.

Sensation – these are the interoceptive, physical sensations that arise from within the body, including (from the most conscious to least conscious):

- Kinesthetic — muscle tension patterns
- Proprioceptive — awareness of our position in space
- Vestibular — acceleration and deceleration
- Visceral — sensations from the viscera (guts, heart, and lungs) and blood vessels

Image – refers to the external sense impressions, which include sight, taste, smell, hearing, and touch (tactile sense)

Behavior – these include

- Voluntary gestures
- Emotional / facial expressions
- Posture — the platforms from which intrinsic movement is initiated; typically refers to the spine
- Autonomic signals — includes cardiovascular and respiratory systems. The pulse rate can be measured by the carotid artery
- Visceral behavior — digestive shifts can be “observed” via changing sounds in the gut
- Archetypal behaviors — include involuntary gestures or postural shifts that convey a universal meaning

Affect — refers to the categorical emotions of fear, anger, sadness, joy and disgust, as well as contours of feelings. Contours are the nuanced, sensation-based (felt sense) feelings of attraction and avoidance, of “goodness” and “badness”, that guide us through the day.

Meaning — meanings are the labels (words) we attach to the totality of experience from the combined elements of **S, I, B, & A**. These include trauma-based fixed beliefs. Staying open to forming positive meaning from even moments of discomfort.

Levine, P. (2015). *Trauma & Memory: Brain and body in a search for the living past*. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, CA ISBN: 978-1-58394-994-8

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