

# STIS Protocol

## Self Treatment for Intense Stress Protocol

The STIS protocol is to be used when suffering with intense stress in cases of crisis or emergency.

### **Step 1 : choose a sensory image**

Think of an image which seems the most disturbing to you right now, the worst one, which generates the most dread and fear.

Choose a fixed image It could be a visual image (like a photo), a sound, a noise or a cry, olfactory (a smell), tactile or physical (a bodily sensation).

The image must not be a moving scene, it must be a snapshot, an instant.

### **Step 2 : measure the SUD, subjective unit of disturbance**

Measure the level of disturbance you feel right now while thinking of this image.

On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is no disturbance at all and 10 is the highest disturbance you can imagine feeling, measure the level of disturbance you feel right now. Make a note of it.

### **Step 3 : carry out self alternate bilateral stimulation (ABS)**

While thinking of this image, perform with a sustained fast rhythm (between 2 and 4 movements per second) using Tapping ABS for one minute (a good 60 seconds)

Tapping : tap alternately on the right and then left, for instance on your knees while sitting, with both feet on the floor, your right hand on your right knee and your left hand on your left knee.

ABS : there are other ways of performing self ABS : standing up, lying down and with eye movements... (watch the video on the AET website: [www.action-EMDR-trauma.org](http://www.action-EMDR-trauma.org) in the publication section.

After a one minute ABS set, take a break, breathe in, breathe out slowly, walk around a little and/or do a few long stretches.

Next think of the image again and start another minute of fast ABS. Repeat this 2 more times, so do 3 sets of ABS in total.

### **Step 4 : Reassess your SUD**

After the third set, measure your disturbance level again (that you're feeling right now when thinking of the image that you chose initially and only this image). Make a note of it.

If your SUD at this stage has decreased by at least 2 points, this is great, stop there. That's enough for now. (The image is maybe less vivid, less colourful, more hazy, less precise).

If your SUD has not changed, first check that you are really thinking only of the image you chose initially.

Repeat steps 2-4

When you carry out step 4 a second time : If your SUD at this stage has decreased by at least 2 points, this is great, stop there. That's enough for now.

If your SUD has not changed, first check that you are really thinking only of the image you chose initially.

If so and nothing has changed, trust your brain. Stop there and go for a brisk walk (for around 30 minutes if possible).

## **Step 5 : Final reassessment of your SUD**

At least two hours later, measure your SUD again in relation to the image you chose initially. Make a note of it.

Whatever your SUD is at this stage, remind yourself that you are equipped with an information processing system which will allow you to digest this image. Your intervention using ABS will be enable this digestion to take place more easily.

We recommend that the STIS protocol should not be used more than once a day. It is not a substitute for a consultation with a professional of your choice.

## **Recommendations**

Take note of your flashbacks and intrusive images and above all, as recommended by the WHO (World Health Organisation) don't take Benzodiazepines in the month that follows this difficult event. Your sleep will settle within a week. Avoid consuming alcohol and being alone. Stay physically active and try to resume your usual activities. Trust in the process, things will get better. It's over now, it's in the past. Remind yourself that, "it was very scary but it's in the past and I'm still alive".

If at step 5, your first image only generates a little or no disturbance (SUD less than 2), you will be able to work on another "IMAGE" the next day.

Do not hesitate to contact us for free help, advice or an intervention by a qualified EMDR practitioner on [www.action-emdr-trauma.org](http://www.action-emdr-trauma.org)

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