



Safe and Sound Protocol Information

What conditions does the SSP help?

- Anxiety
- Trauma
- PTSD
- Depressed mood
- Mood dysregulation
- Misophonia
- Sensory/Auditory Processing Disorder
- Emotional regulation difficulties
- Eating and digestive difficulties

How does it help?

The SSP helps increase a client's ability to move into a regulated, safe emotional and physical state, allowing them to feel supported, authentic and engaged. Using the middle ear muscles as a point of entry, the SSP targets the autonomic nervous system, which regulates involuntary body functions such as breathing, blood flow and digestion. The SSP uses musical frequencies to help the middle ear muscles "come back online" if they are shut down or otherwise impaired, as is often the case in trauma, overstimulation or emotional dysregulation. When we have experienced trauma or other impairment, we can get stuck in autonomic defensive states of "fight, flight or freeze" responses which do not allow us to feel safe or act authentically. With the SSP, we can help tone down hypersensitivity to these defensive states and move into a safe, calm, trusting state of "rest and digest". Specifically, for clients with disordered eating, this can create more safe space for the body to ingest and digest food in a way that is not possible when you are stuck in a defensive, activated space.

How does it work?

The SSP is an auditory, somatic (body-based), intervention. The protocol consists of 5 hours of listening to music while wearing headphones, in session with a trained therapist who will help to create a safe, regulated space and help explore changes that arise with the SSP. As the client, your job is to listen to the music, relax and be aware of any body or emotional sensations that arise. The therapist's role is to observe, support and guide you through any transitions that occur.

What are the risks?

The SSP is a gentle intervention using music. Clients experiences may range from feeling no change in the sessions to feeling physically activated or emotionally agitated. The supportive therapist will provide redirection and assist you if you react during the session. If you have a history of seizures, your neurologist should sign off before you use the SSP.

What changes can be expected after the SSP?

Some clients notice immediate change, and for others the results can take up to 8 weeks to fully emerge. Clients report lowered anxiety, depression and feelings of being “stuck”, as well as increases in ability to eat a variety of foods comfortably. Research has shown increase in social engagement, and positive relationships with the SSP. In addition, the SSP lowers hyper-reactivity to light, sound and other stimuli that may provoke fight, flight or freeze responses and may unconsciously be affecting mood and disordered eating behaviors.

Who administers the SSP? How long does it take?

Melissa Elder, LCSW, Founder and Clinical Supervisor of Deeper Roots Therapy. Melissa has extensive training and experience in the treatment of eating disorders utilizing talk therapy and somatic, body-based techniques. These sessions are in addition to your regular therapy sessions and Melissa will coordinate with your therapist around ongoing goals and progress. The protocol typically takes five to ten 30-minute to one hour sessions to complete.

What is the cost?

The SSP requires an equipment rental that clients can keep at home during the protocol. This cost for this is a flat fee of \$100 for the first week and \$75 for subsequent weeks. Sessions with Melissa Elder, LCSW to administer the SSP are billed at our normal therapeutic rate of \$145/hour, or covered by BCBS or CBHA insurance. Depending on how clients progress, some portion of the SSP may be completed at home, at the discretion of the clinician.