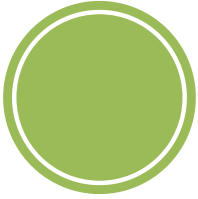


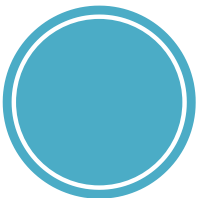
Calming Skills



Breathing

Abdominal Breathing

- This is the one of the most effective ways to relax quickly. By breathing with your diaphragm you will immediately signal your body to relax. Place one hand on your belly and one on your chest. Take some slow, deep breaths into the belly. It's helpful, but not essential, to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. If you are doing abdominal breathing correctly, the lower hand should move as much or more than the hand on your chest. Continue this slow, deep breathing for a couple of minutes, imagining the breath calming your body and clearing your mind.
- Notice how you feel.
- While you are breathing, you can focus on tensing then relaxing each part of your body. Start with your feet and gradually move up through the body.
- Focus on controlling your breathing throughout each day, whenever you become anxious and before stressful events.



Grounding

What is grounding?

Grounding is a set of simple strategies to distract you from emotional pain and to focus on the present- what you are seeing, hearing and feeling right now.

Guidelines

- Can be done anytime, anyplace and no-one has to know
- Use it when you are becoming anxious or stressed, or when you are feeling emotional pain
- Focus on the present, not the past or the future
- Rate your mood before, and after, to test whether it worked for you
- It may take some practice

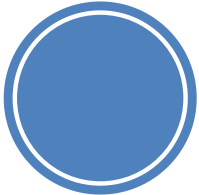
Grounding using your mind

- List the sounds you can hear around you
- Count how many objects you see around you
- Do a maths puzzle in your head
- Count to 10 or say the alphabet very slowly
- Name animals starting with 'a' then 'b' etc.
- Notice how many things of a certain colour you can see around you



Grounding using your senses

- Run cool or warm water over your hands
- Grab tightly onto your chair as hard as you can
- Touch various objects around you
- Dig your heels into the floor
- Carry a grounding object in your pocket (e.g. a stone) to touch
- Jump up and down
- Notice your body breathing
- Trace your hands against the physical outline of your body
- Stretch and feel the effect on your muscles
- Listen to your favourite song



Positive Self Talk

- Make a list of your best qualities, abilities, or other attributes: Are you kind? Are you a hard worker? Are you calm? Are you good fun?
- Write each quality down in a short sentence, starting with "I" and using the present tense. For example "I am warmhearted" "I am generous" "I am a good parent"
- Repeat these statements to yourself throughout the day (either silently or out loud when alone). Use the statements whenever you feel anxious or you start to doubt yourself. Also, notice when negative thoughts start to come into your mind and over-ride them with your positive statements.
- When you are faced with a challenging situation, you can also use positive, strengthening statements such as "I am strong, I can do this".



You can use a combination of the above strategies. Here is an example.

You have an appointment or event that you are anxious about. From the moment you wake that day, practice controlling your breathing. On every breath out say silently to yourself "I can do this". Continue using these strategies right up to the start of the event. Even when the event has started, use the strategies. Also use some grounding strategies- notice the sounds around you, push your feet hard into the floor while sitting. Afterwards, silently congratulate yourself for getting through it.

There are some phone apps available that you may find helpful for breathing and calming activities.

Smiling Mind:
Breathe2Relax:
MyCalmBeat:
Rhythm Free:

Mindfulness exercises for all ages – help with anxiety and stress.
Learn the stress management skill called diaphragmatic breathing.
An app to help you breathe more effectively.

7 Second:

A mindfulness app that allows you to you create reminders towards a more mindful life.

This app is like getting a text from a good friend telling you how much they appreciate you.

