

Grounding and Settling

Activity: Breathing Exercises

Purpose: Grounding, settling energy in the room. Helpful for heavy topics (eg trauma, anxiety..)

Time: Can be very brief or longer – up to trainer.

Instructions: Many variations:

Variations:

Becoming Calm Breathing

Breathe in, think or say, “I am.”

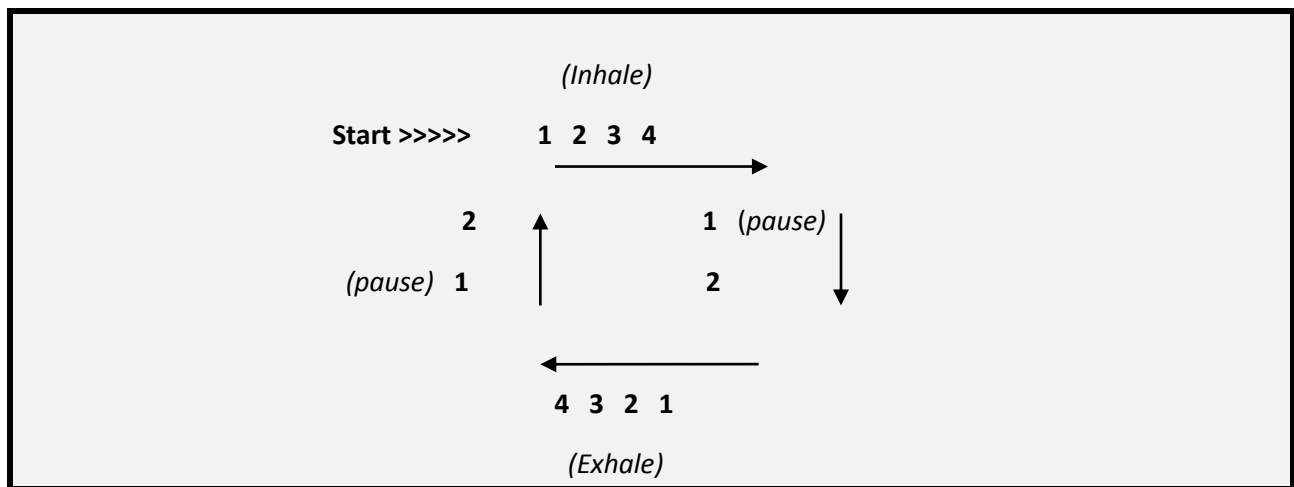
Breathe out, think or say, “becoming calm” or “letting go.”

Use any phrase that promotes relaxation at the time.

Cycle Breathing

Inhale (count to four), hold (count to two)

Exhale (count to four), hold (count to two)



Raised Arm Breathing

Sit with a forearm resting on each leg, palms down.

Breathe in (bend elbows and raise back of hands to shoulders).

Breathe out (return arms to lap).

Walking Breathing

Walk very slowing, synchronizing your breath with your steps: one step for each inhalation, one step for each exhalation.

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Bumble Bee Breathing

This breathing exercise focuses on the exhale and where the sound vibrations resonate within the body. Inhale deeply and exhale with a humming sound similar to the droning of bees.

Flying Bird Breath

Sit with your arms at your sides. Inhale and fly your arms overhead. Exhale and lower the arms to the floor. Raise and lower your arms with each breath as if they were wings of a bird. Repeat a few times. Keeping the arm movements coordinated with the breath, inhale quickly and exhale slowly. Repeat a few times. Next inhale slowly and exhale quickly. Repeat.

Heart & Belly Breathing

Sitting comfortably place one hand on your heart, one on your belly. Close your eyes. Inhale and exhale paying attention to the breath as it moves through your body. Trainer can invite participants to notice and send their breath to different places. Inhale and fill your belly, then your heart, breath up to top of your head, then down to tips of your toes, etc. End by coming back to inhaling to fill a soft belly, and exhale out through warmth in the heart.

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Activity: Guided Visualization

Purpose: Grounding, settling energy in the room. Helpful for heavy topics (eg trauma, anxiety..)

Time: Typically 5 – 10 minutes.

Instructions: Many variations:

Variations:

Caterpillar Visualization Exercise

Imagine a caterpillar. You can watch it crawling about on the tree where it lives. Attaching itself to a branch of the tree, the caterpillar starts to form its cocoon. Gradually it surrounds itself with golden, silken threads until it is totally hidden. Observe the cocoon for a few moments. Now be inside the cocoon...Surrounded by the softness of silk...you rest in the warmth of the golden darkness... You are only dimly aware, so you do not know exactly what is happening to you, but you sense that in this apparent stillness a hidden, transforming intelligence is at work...

At last the cocoon breaks open, and a ray of light penetrates through a chink... As the light touches you, you feel a sudden surge of vitality and realize that you can shed the cocoon. As you feel the cocoon falling away, you discover that with it you have shed the defences and supports of your safety and your past... You are now freer than you ever dreamed you could be; you are a beautiful, multicoloured butterfly... You soon realize that your boundaries have extended infinitely... you can fly... You find yourself dwelling in a totally new realm of colors, of sounds, of open space... You experience yourself flying...being supported by the air, being gently borne up by the breeze, gliding down, flying up again...

Below, you see an immense meadow full of flowers of every kind and color...You settle on one...then on another...then on another still, so gently that the petals are not even disturbed. You experience each flower as a different being with its own color and perfume...its own particular life and quality. Take your time in experiencing the many aspects of your expansion, your freedom and your lightness.

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Activity: Muscle Relaxation Exercise

Purpose: Grounding, settling energy in the room. Helpful for heavy topics (eg trauma, anxiety..)

Time: Typically 5 – 15 minutes.

Instructions:

Invite participants to first connect with their breath or with their feet on the floor for a few moments. Guide participants to focus on different muscle groups one at a time. Inhale and tense each muscle group (hard but not to the point of cramping) for four to ten seconds, then exhale, release fully, and completely relax the muscle group (do not relax it gradually). Give yourself 5 to 10 seconds to relax.

Example guide to muscle groups and how to tense them:

- Hands: Clench them.
- Wrists and forearms: Extend them and bend your hands back at the wrist.
- Biceps and upper arms: Clench your hands into fists, bend your arms at the elbows, and flex your biceps.
- Shoulders: Shrug them.
- Forehead: Wrinkle it into a deep frown.
- Around the eyes and bridge of the nose: Close your eyes as tightly as possible. (Remove contact lenses before beginning the exercise.)
- Cheeks and jaws: Smile as widely as you can.
- Around the mouth: Press your lips together tightly. (Check your facial area for tension.)
- Back of the neck: Gently stretch your head back.
- Front of the neck: Touch your chin to your chest. (Check your neck and head for tension.)
- Chest: Take a deep breath and hold it, then exhale.
- Back: Arch your back backwards.
- Stomach: Suck it into a tight knot. (Check your chest and stomach for tension.)
- Hips and buttocks: Press the buttocks together tightly.
- Thighs: Clench them hard.
- Lower legs: Raise each foot and point and curl it down.

Variations:

Facilitator can begin with feet and work way up the body instead.

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Activity: The Quieter You Become

Purpose: Grounding, settling energy in the room. Mindful connection to senses.

Time: Typically 5 – 15 minutes. Up to trainer.

Materials: Space large enough for people to move around.

Instructions:

Invite people to move around the room as softly as they can, and to be aware of each movement they make—feeling the thigh muscle lift the leg and move it to next position, feeling the foot coming off the floor and setting it back down, feeling their hands and arms in space. They might move faster or more slowly at times. They might focus on their left leg for a few steps, then focus on the right leg. Tell them that if their thoughts begin to wander away from their body and their experience moving, they should note what they were thinking about, and return their attention to a part of their body.

Trainer can shift the activity as it goes along, by changing the imaginary surface. For example, imagine you are walking on a warm beach, then on a delicate glass floor, on soft green grass, on an ice rink, etc...