

Lesson 1 Self-Soothing

Focused Breathing

Why?

The purpose of this exercise is to calm the body and quiet the mind. Studies have shown that consistent practice of breathwork can change the brain for the better, letting people think rather than react to situations.

How:

1. Sit quietly with your feet flat on the floor, back straight. Place your hands just below your ribcage with thumbs resting on the bottom rib. Put your full attention on your breathing.
2. As you inhale, breathe in slowly through your nose with your mouth closed. Feel your hands rise as you inhale. Exhale slowly through your mouth. Notice your hands moving inward toward the spine as you exhale.
3. Observe your body breathing in, filling the lungs. Then, notice your body breathing out. Notice the subtle movements in the chest and diaphragm.
4. Continue for 10 minutes.

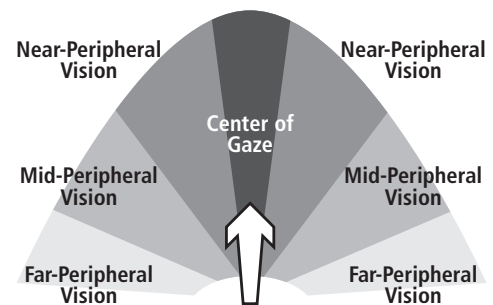
Peripheral Vision

Why?

This quick and easy exercise calms your Vagus Nerve and can be used any time you are experiencing worry and stress. Peripheral vision pays attention to what is happening at the edges of our field of vision. Look at the diagram to better understand.

How:

1. Get comfortable and find a point on the wall that is in front of you and slightly above eye level. Just look at the point in soft focus, noticing everything about that point.
2. Place your hands approximately 12 inches away from your face, palms facing each other, with the index fingers pointing up.
3. Keeping your arms lifted, maintain your gaze on the spot as you gradually move your hands to the far peripheral vision as shown in the diagram until you find a point where you can see the fingers when they are wiggling but not when they are still. This is your far peripheral vision.
4. Now, as your eyes continue to look at the same point, do not move your eyes, and notice what is on either side of that point. Your field of vision can get wider and wider until you are paying attention to what you can see out of the corners of your eyes.
5. Count to ten, and then drop your hands.
6. Now do this again without using your hands.



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5-4-3-2-1 Skill

Why?

The 5-4-3-2-1 Skill is another self-soothing method. It is particularly effective if you are overwhelmed and have lost track of the present.

How:

First, you will direct your attention to 5 objects that you see. Then, listen for 4 different sounds. Next, focus on 3 places where something is touching your body. Then, notice 2 odors you can smell. Finally, focus on 1 taste in your mouth. After completing the exercise, write down what you noticed in each category.

WHAT YOU SEE:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

WHAT YOU HEAR:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

WHAT IS TOUCHING YOUR BODY:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

WHAT YOU SMELL:

1. _____
2. _____

WHAT TASTES YOU EXPERIENCE:

1. _____



Coloring

Coloring is another self-soothing method. Using color pencils or crayons, color the image.



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Lesson 1 PRACTICE PLAN: Self-Soothing

Today we learned four self-soothing techniques that will help dial-down your stress. On the chart below, create a practice plan using one or more of these self-soothing skills. We also talked about learning how to wait, using your cell phone as a practice tool. Just how long are you able to wait before responding to an incoming text message? Practice waiting by finishing what it is you are doing before opening the next incoming text message.

What skills will you practice?	How many times daily?	How many times weekly?	When/where will you practice?	How will you remember to practice?
Focused Breathing				
Peripheral Vision				
5-4-3-2-1				
Coloring				
Cell phone challenge				
Which exercises are you most excited about trying?				
What benefits do you expect?				