Mind/Body Wellness Practices: Regulate/Re-Energize/Relax/Reflect

Our breathing has the function of helping our body and mind to calm down.
"Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I bring peace into my body.

Calm Brain, Calm Heart Breath: Calm Breath In, Calm Breath Out. Spell out CALM with five fingers
Calm with 5 Senses Take a moment to notice your surroundings and find 5 things you see, 4 things you hear,
3 things you feel, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
Distant Breathing: Focus on something in the distance (e.g. looking out a window), take 3 breaths in/out.

Relaxed Body: “Hands at the ready”
Place palms together
As you exhale, press INTO your palms
Repeat (can be also done press feet into the floor, press your thighs, your chair…etc).

Push Hands (Peter Levine, Ph.D), Push hands on wall or with partner; push/press-hold-release.

Embracing Our Needs
Think of two qualities that help you to cope (acceptance/support/strength/hope/compassion/courage).
Place your right hand on your left shoulder (or arm) and think of one of the qualities
Keep that hand in place and place your left hand on your right shoulder (or arm) and
think of the second quality.
Breathe in. As you breathe out, press your hands on your shoulders or arms.
Take a moment and imagine these qualities as you breathe in and out.
Option: Think of images of a person, place, or thing that helps you cope.
Option: Use slow bilateral tapping of arms or legs (or “butterfly” tapping).

Elephant Breath: For Energizing and Calming! Think about something you want to shower yourself
with. Stand with your feet apart. Link your hands and dangle your arms in front of you like an elephant
truck. Inhale as you raise your arms high above head and lean back. Exhale and swing your arms down
between your legs (if this makes you dizzy, just bring hands down in front of you). Repeat for 3 rounds. On
next round, stay up, arch back, and shower yourself with whatever you need right now to feel energized or to
feel calm. ~Tara Guber and Leah Kalish Yoga Pretzels

Mountain Pose – Stand tall, with feet firmly planted on ground, arms down by side.

Embrace Tiger/Return to Mountain (adapted from Tai Chi)
Breathe in, reach your arms out wide and imagine embracing something very heavy.
Breathe out, pushing your hands down, feel your feet firmly planted.
Imagine you are a large and beautiful mountain ~ steady, solid, and strong

4B’s of Self-Settling (Kornblum, 2003)

BRAKE: Reach up and pull your arms toward your body “catch the energy”
BREATHE: Release and stretch your arms overhead while taking a breath in
BRAIN: Exhale and gently place your hands on your head. Think of a calming, strengthening
peaceful thought (e.g. “I am supported” or imagine anything that helps you feel accepted and at
peace). Repeat.
BODY: Lower your hands and place them over your heart. Feel your body calm down.
Relaxation/Guided Imagery

This is a gift of time you give to yourself, a time for your own self-care.

★ The simple act of breathing changes your physical body. By breathing in peace, calm, and comfort, you release tension, stress and/or worry. This is welcome relief to our bodies.

★ As you focus on your breath, pay attention to how your body relaxes … softens … opens … fills with peace. Notice how you are breathing: fast, slow, deep, shallow…etc.

★ Begin to let your breathing become deeper and slower; Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth (“Releasing breath”-can make a sound or sigh if you feel comfortable)

★ Breathe in slowly with three counts - one … two … three. Breathe out slowly with three counts - one … two … three.

★ Imagine what you’d like to take in for yourself (breathe in) and what you’d like to release (breathe out).
  - Breathe in calm; as you exhale, breathe out stress
  - Breathe in comfort, breathe out tension
  - Breathe in peace, breathe out worry
  - Breathe in acceptance, breathe out stigma (or whatever word applies)

★ Allow your body to soften and relax as you breathe

★ Imagine a soothing person, place, or thing that helps you feel safe and accepted. Breathe in the comfort of this image.

★ Ending the relaxation: Gradually begin to be aware of your surroundings—feel your feet on the ground and, if your eyes are closed, slowly open them. Take a moment to pay attention to how you are feeling in your body and what this time of relaxation and reflection was like for you.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

A voluntary releasing of stress and strain in your body through the process of tensing and relaxing different muscle groups in a progressive manner.

Can also be done all at once (tighten whole body—release)

Option: Use imagery re: tight/loose (e.g. for children-uncooked and cooked spaghetti; freeze/melt).

Peaceful Place (Guided Imagery): Think about an environment in which you feel calm, safe, and peaceful; a place you would most like to be if you could be anywhere you choose, real or imaginary. Take a few moments to imagine yourself in this place.

Option: Use art, writing, movement, drama, or poetry to show or describe your peaceful place.

Mind Jar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=visXRjwnXXA, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sT2WjQxuEnE

FABRIC STRETCH ~ STRETCH-HOLD-RELEASE (with colorful stretchy (Lycra/Spandex) fabric

Can do this in groups, pairs or individually with pieces of fabric (different sizes).

★ Each participant creates a movement with the fabric expressing a quality (e.g. strength, lightness). If done in a group, members can repeat (or mirror) each participant’s movement.

★ Each participant creates a movement that expresses an emotion (e.g. sad, mad, tired, excited)

★ Each participant (or the group as a whole) places a symbolic wish in the center of the fabric (can be represented by a scarf) and the group lifts up the wishes and then wraps the wishes up for safekeeping (effective as a closing ritual in individual and group sessions).

★ Can also be done using the Octoband: https://www.danceforconnection.com/octaband

Apps for Self-Regulation and Calming

iChill Breath2Relax Shine: Calm Anxiety & Stress Calm.com
Insight Timer Headspace Breathe: Meditation & Sleep Insight Timer
Oak Meditation & Breathing Simple Habit Essence
Stop, Breathe & Think Virtual Hope Box Mind Shift (for anxiety)
Breathr (mindfulness) Diary Card (DBT skills) Meditation Studio

Christine Linnehan LCPC, BC-DMT, FT (2020) www.christinelinnehan.com
Reflect: Restoring Resilience after Loss

Exploring the Support System

Resources: Person, Place, Thing

You will never forget a person who came to you in the dark with a torch ~ M. Rose

♥ Who/What is in your inner circle?
♥ Who/What has helped in the past?
♥ Who/What might be helpful now?
♥ What would each of these supports say to you now?

Resources can be portrayed through an image or enacted in movement/drama/story/poetry

Restoring Safety/Hope/Healing

- Name a place you can go that feels comfortable and safe
- Name three things you can do, or three people you can be with, to express your feelings
- Name three things you can do to relieve tension
- Name some things that help you get your mind off of your loss
- List some things (e.g. songs/music; artmaking, writing, movement/exercise…etc.):
  - To help you feel strong and uplifted
  - To help you feel peaceful
  - To help you feel hopeful
  - To promote mind/body wellness

Expressive Writing Methods


- Transactional Letter Writing: a letter of compassion, empathy or gratitude
- Affirmative Message to Yourself

Posttraumatic Growth (PTG): The positive changes of PTG are generally thought to occur in five domains after exposing to trauma, including; new possibilities, relating to others, personal strength, appreciation of life, and spiritual change. ~ Calhoun & Tedeschi (2015). Posttraumatic Growth in Clinical Practice

★ What is it now that you will no longer take for granted?
★ Would you say you have the same or greater appreciation for life since this happened?
★ Do you believe you could be of help to others who have faced a similar situation? What would you say or do?