

## The Worry Wars: Equipping our Child Clients to Effectively Fight Their Fears

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## Anxiety:

### The Silent Affliction



## How common is it?

- 1 in 4 people suffer from an anxiety disorder over the course of a lifetime
- Females are twice as likely to have them as males
- 1 in 8 children have diagnosed anxiety disorders



## Anxiety Prevalence Rates

- Anxiety is the most prevalent psychiatric diagnosis in children and adolescents under the age of 16
- About 70% of grade school kids say they worry "every now and then"



## Factors that influence Anxiety

- Genetics/temperament
- Mother/infant attachment pattern
- Presence of parental psychopathology
- Parenting style

## How should we view anxiety?

- From a neurophysiological perspective?
- From a psychoanalytic perspective?
- From a behaviorist perspective?
- From a family systems perspective?
- From a cognitive perspective?

### Long Term Outcomes

- Children with untreated anxiety disorders are at greater risk for developing:
  - Peer relationship difficulties
  - Academic failure
  - Substance abuse
  - Onset of comorbid diagnoses such as major depression, eating disorders, and ADHD

### What are normal developmental fears?

- 90% of children between the ages of 2-14 have one specific fear
- 0-2 years
  - Loud noises, strangers, separation from parents, large objects
- 3-6 years
  - Imaginary figures, supernatural beings, the dark, noises, sleeping alone, thunder, floods
- 7-16 years
  - More realistic fears-physical injury, health, school performance, death, thunderstorms, earthquakes, floods

### The Anxiety Disorders

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- ASD/ PTSD
- Specific Phobia
- Social Phobia
- Agoraphobia
- Panic Disorder
- Selective Mutism
- Separation Anxiety Disorder

### Anxiety vs. Fear

- Fear is a valid, helpful and immediate response to a dangerous situation.
- Fear occurs when the danger is.
- Anxiety occurs when the danger "might be".

-from The Anxiety Cure, pg. 10

### 4 problems that anxious kids face

- It's harder than other children to self-soothe in stressful situations
- They rarely use their creativity when making plans for coping with anxiety-although they often have higher than average creativity
- They tend to give up quickly even when they have a good plan
- They don't recognize their success even when they are making progress

### 4 General treatment Goals

- Helping clients learn and practice self-soothing strategies
- Helping clients use their creativity in developing useful coping strategies
- Helping clients implement the strategies consistently
- Helping clients recognize their successes and build on them

### Set up the Struggle



### Treatment Goal/ Interventions

Assessment of coping and augmentation of positive coping strategies

Coping Tree

Copecakes  
(Detailing components of healthy coping)

Crowning Community

Family Play Genogram

Coping Umbrella

Coping Bubble Wrap

### Copecake Mixer

Helpful coping choices should:

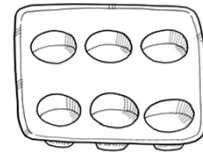
- 1) Be good for you
- 2) Be good for others
- 3) Be easy to do
- 4) Make you feel better



### Copecake Tin

Describe six coping choices that include all 4 ingredients.

Write them in the baking tin and use each of them 2-3 times between sessions.



### Cooling Copecakes

Once you've tried each of the coping choices, decide which ones help you the most.

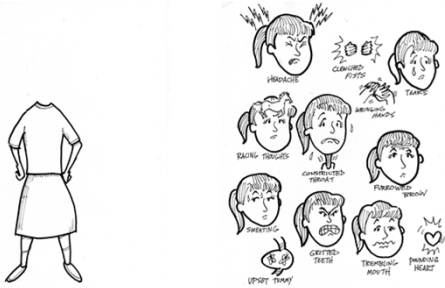
Write these on the copecakes, decorate them and put them somewhere as a reminder of the helpful ways you can cope.



### Gathering a Team



### Physiological Cues



### The physiological alarm



Temperamentally anxious or sensitive children may have physiology that is overly responsive to our normal survival mechanisms.

### Maraca Madness!!!



When children are experiencing maraca madness, they cannot think clearly. Reasoning with them or threatening them can make things worse. So what can you do?

### SOOTHE!!!

- S-soft tone of voice
- O-organize
- O-offer
- T-touch
- H-hear
- E-end



### Action Step/Interventions

Assist client in managing stress reactions through guided imagery, visualization and sensory soothing

Menu of Soothing Strategies  
(Gives clients a sensory palette of soothing sensations to enhance guided imagery)

Safe Place Productions  
(Invites client to construct visual images of safety that can then be internalized)

Chillin' with my iPod

Picture Perfect Postcards

Where's Your Orange?

Sweet Dreams Lotion Potion

Stethoscope

Little Cloud

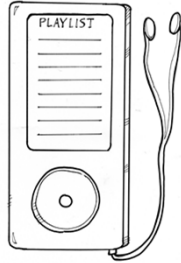
### Keeping "Safe Place" Safe

- Be sure to specify " A place where nothing bad has ever happened"
- Learn to recognize contamination

### Chillin' with my iPod

List three songs that help you feel happy.

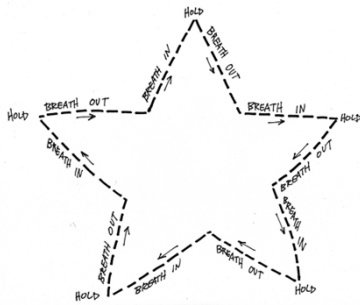
List three songs that help you feel calm.



### Picture Perfect Postcard



### Five Count Breathing



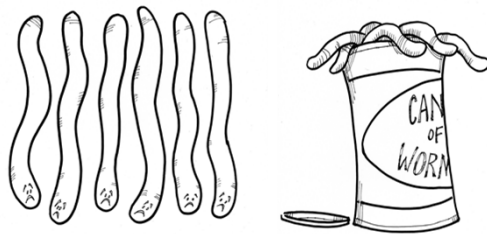
### Personalized Pinwheels

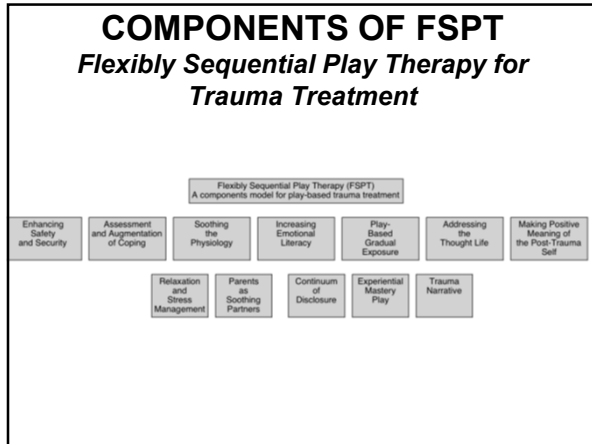


### Action Step/ Intervention

- Assessment of anxiety provoking stimuli
- Worry Worms Hide and Seek
- Can of Worms
- Show me the Worry
- The Worry Wand
- Color Your Heart
- The Worry Sphere

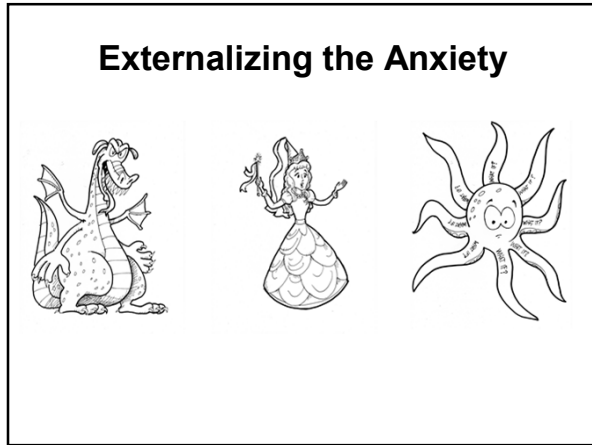
### Can of Worms



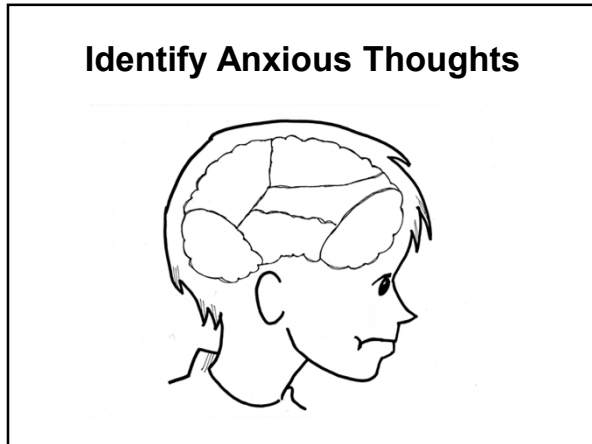


## Continuum of Disclosure

The glimpses that children show us:  
making sense of the snapshots

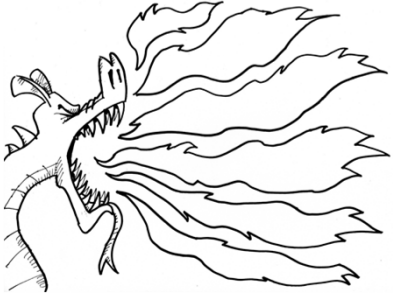


- ### Identifying the Worried Talk
- Choose your metaphor
    - Worried Brain
    - Dragon Flames
    - Princess Wand
    - Octopus with What Ifs



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### Identifying Anxious Thoughts



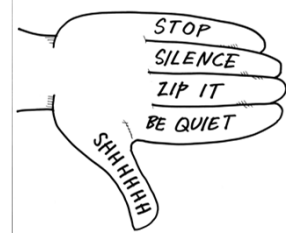
### Identifying Anxious Thoughts



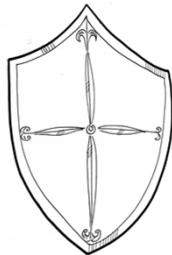
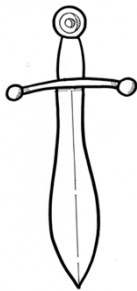
### Creating and Practicing the Boss Back Talk

- Choose your weapon
  - Boss Back Brain
  - Sword/Shield/Fire Extinguisher
  - Wand/Megaphone
  - Bricks

### Thought Stopping



### Crafting Boss Back Talk

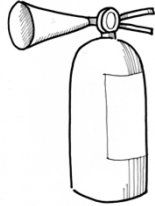


### Crafting Boss Back Talk



### Extinguish the Fear

- Draw a picture of the anxiety producing stimuli
- Talk back to it while squirting it with the fire extinguisher
- Erase it while using some chosen "power words"

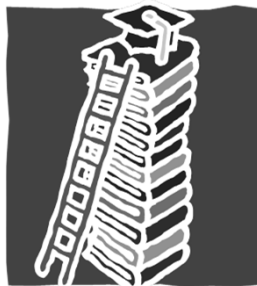


### Exposures

- An exposure is meant to help the child face the anxiety producing situation without avoiding it or performing a ritual to keep the anxiety in check
- The child is likely to experience increased anxiety during the exposure
- Following an exposure all the way to a reduction in anxiety leads to desensitization and habituation

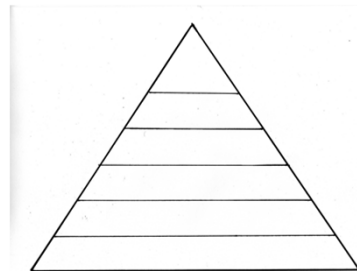
### Graduated Exposures-Building Stepladders by Scenario

- Help the client make a hierarchy of fear inducing stimuli
- Help the client rank these in order of difficulty
- Begin with the easiest task first
- Make the tasks small enough so that the client experiences many successes early on in treatment



-as adapted from Wolpe as described by Shapiro, 1989

### Creating an Exposure Hierarchy



### The SUD Scale

- A 10 point scale that helps people quantify the level of distress or upset that they feel when handling an exposure to a stressful situation or thought
- A useful clinical tool for measuring alleviation of intense emotional reactivity to traumatic events



-as adapted from Wolpe as described by Shapiro, 1989

### SUD Scale activities

Helping clients quantify and track their level of anxiety during exposures

How Bad does it Feel

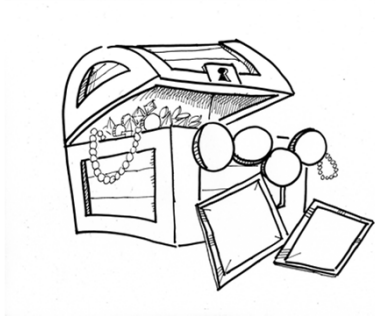
Moving Thermometer

Building Blocks

Balloons



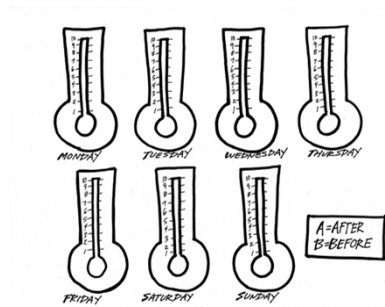
### Positive Reinforcement



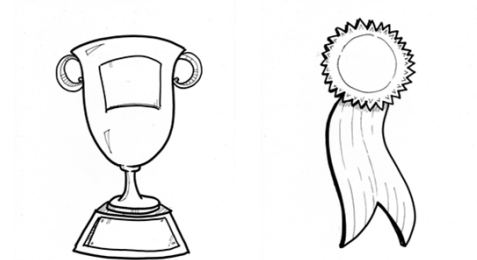
### Treatment Goal/ Interventions

- Graduated exposure
- Step-by-Step    The Learning Lab
- Climbing the Mountain    One-A-Day Thermometers
- The Creature Collection    Make Them Disappear

### One-A-Day Thermometers



### Graduation Celebration



### Selective Mutism/Specific Phobia

- Case Example 1: Katie
  - 6 year old female born at 30 wks, 4pds, developmental milestones were all delayed
  - Slow to warm-up temperament
  - Fear of choking began after a stomach bug two months prior to entering tx
  - Sleeps with parents
  - Saw a child blue from choking at the beginning of the school year

### Selective Mutism/Specific Phobia

- Case Example 1: Katie
  - Session 1: made tea set, read Cat Got Your Tongue, drew picture

### Selective Mutism/Specific Phobia

- Case Example 1: Katie
  - Session 1: made tea set, read Cat Got Your Tongue, drew picture
  - Session 2: had tea party, introduced Jerry the Giraffe, taught him about choking
  - Session 3: introduced telephones, began successive approximation tasks with copycat game

### Selective Mutism/Specific Phobia

- Case Example 1: Katie
  - Session 4: Albert the alligator, copycat-made several sounds

### Selective Mutism/Specific Phobia

- Case Example 1: Katie
  - Session 5: Fear flies, marshmallow game, breakthrough!!!

### Selective Mutism/Specific Phobia

- Case Example 1: Katie
  - Session 6: client made 14 one word verbalizations during play
  - Session 7: avoided eye-contact and verbalizations, was introduced to Talulah the turtle, played cotton ball war game
  - Session 8: copycat, made talking book

### Selective Mutism/Specific Phobia

- Case Example 1: Katie
  - Session 9: brought in talking book-had talked to postal worker, waiter and librarian-much celebration!
  - Session 10: Therapist read Who Moved My Cheese and client drew picture, client spoke to 19 people in the last 3 weeks and gained 6 pounds
  - Follow-up check ins
  - Graduation!!

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

### What is the Parenting Response?

- The Peacekeeper
  - may not experience much fall out from the separation anxiety, because the routines are built around it
- The Negotiator
  - Makes some efforts to help the child with his fears but backs down if he sees intense distress
- The Protector
  - Keeps child from situations that might induce anxiety
- The Evaluator
  - Sees the behavior as manipulative and may become overly confrontive about anxiety issues

### Varying Safety Signals

- Access to safety signals
- Duration of exposure
- Distance from home, place or person
- Familiarity of person, place or situation
- Planning of exposure
- Timing

### 4 types of Safety Signals

- Safe Persons
- Safe Objects
- Safe Actions
- Safe Places

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Case Example 1: Johnny
  - 5 year old Caucasian male with two parent household
  - Afraid to be away from mom in the house
  - Wakes up every morning for pre-school saying he feels sick, cries and begs to stay home
  - Throws up on the way to school or in the parking lot every school morning
  - Wants to stop!

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Case Example 1: Johnny
  - Session 1: Externalizing the anxiety, cft. chose puppet to represent fear, made up power words/chants for fighting the fear, and battled the cockroach with fingerpuppets
  - Session 2: Mountain metaphor, all trials are seen as successes, did the Big One, two brains

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Case Example 1: Johnny
  - Session 3: Read Wemberly Worried and made "Fear" glasses and "Courage" glasses

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Case Example 1: Johnny
  - Session 4: Chain of courage to work on over the holidays

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Case Example 1: Harry
  - Session 5: mom was excited that client went back after 3 week absence without gagging- he cried but used his new skills, celebrated his chain of courage
  - Session 6: Client punched holes in fear while making positive statements and did a set of dot paintings representing the fear getting smaller

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Case Example 1: Harry
  - Session 7: Dad came, talked about problems with morning routine, introduced morning scavenger hunt and "Brave Behavior" chart for morning routine
  - Session 8: client mastered "Brave Behavior" chart

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Case Example 1: Harry
  - Session 9: termination phase, started Memory book
  - Session 10: courage has grown sandtray, 1/2 tray for before and now
  - Session 11: 6 week old baby of close family member dies in her sleep, talked about breathing, death and dying
  - Session 12: session with mom for her grief issues, encouraged closure rituals for the client
  - Session 13 & 14: grief work

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Case Example 1: Harry
  - Session 15: client started book entitled "Getting Over Your Fear"
  - Session 16: another crisis session for mom
  - Session 17: graduation party

### Trauma induced Separation Anxiety

- Case example 2: Betsy
  - 11 year old girl who lived with mom and dad up until a year and a half ago when mom and dad separated
  - Dad first attempted suicide, then assaulted mom
  - Client is terrified to be away from her mom at night-even in the other room

### Treatment highlights

- Case example 2: Betsy
  - Sandtray about dad
  - Safe place sandtray
  - Exposure/response prevention work

“OCD is not about the inability to think rationally; it’s about the anxiety that results from the inability to believe what you know to be true in a given situation.”

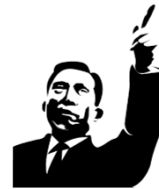
-from Freeing Your Child From Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, by Tamar Chansky (pg. 20)

### Letting the Kid Off the Hook

- Psychoeducation is paramount:
  - Neurophysiology = a hiccup in the brain
  - A stuck doorbell

### Bobby’s Story

Problems That You Have



### How I found out I had OCD

- “We were watching TV and on Dr. Phil this girl had OCD. Some of the things that she had to do were wash your hands many times and flicker on and off the lights 42 times-she was 12 or so. What I was doing was counting and thought that that would be the same thing.



### How I found out I had OCD

- “So I went to my mom and dad and I said “I think I have OCD”. I started saying two pages full of what I had to do. Mom wrote them down. Then we came to see Ms. Paris.



### My symptoms

- Count shoes and parts of shoes
- Right foot day
- Left foot day
- Counting windows
- Counting everything
- Blinking a certain number of times
- Not able to get shoes right
- Soccer cleats
- Jumping rope



### When I met Ms. Paris

- When I met Ms. Paris I was nervous. How she talks to you about OCD is nice and she understands. She doesn't yell at you and she even lets you play with toys for activities. So there was really no reason to be nervous.



### What is OCD?

- It is a time waster. After the walk with my dad talking about it, I went home and my shoes were so uncomfortable that I threw them down on the floor. I pulled out most of my shoes and socks (because socks feel different) and tried them all on. It wasted an hour and thirty minutes. That time I didn't fight back. I hardly even thought about fighting back.



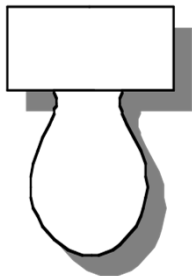
### What is OCD

- OCD is a liar. It keeps coming up all day everyday. It makes you physically exhausted at the end of the day. It tells you "you can't do that" but you really can. He's telling you that you'll be uncomfortable or that something bad will happen.



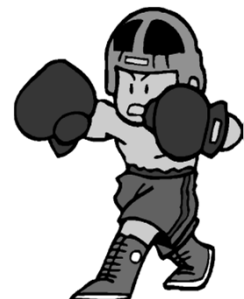
### When I started to learn how to fight back

- I learned that OCD is like a kid knocking on your door so many times and he runs away. At first you go and open it again and again, then you just say "O.K. Stop it." just like you would say to OCD "Stop bothering me." When you learn to fight back what I did was very cool. I made a picture and wrote OCD on it and scribbled all over it and I burned it in the fire and flushed it down the toilet. You can make up your own consequence for OCD.



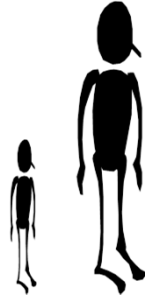
### Turning the Tide

- OCD is not the real you. When you first have it, you don't even know what it is. You just think it's part of you-like it's normal. Ms. Paris told me that OCD is a liar and that I can talk back to it. I drew a picture of a boxing ring. It was me and OCD fighting and OCD seemed so much bigger at the time because before I knew Ms. Paris I didn't know to fight back.



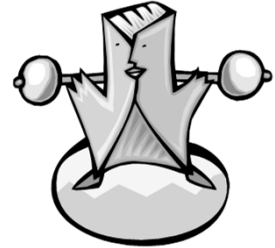
## Getting There

- Before I met Ms. Paris OCD was in charge all the time. When I saw Ms. Paris, I started to get bigger and bigger and he started to get smaller and smaller. I'm not as exhausted and I have more time for fun. I will remember it when I am an adult, but I hope it will be completely gone. If OCD tries to creep up on me again, I'll be ready for it.



## Bossing It Back

- You have to do the uncomfortable thing, no matter what. It will keep talking to you but one by one, it'll eventually go away. It doesn't matter that it keeps talking to you, it matters that you have fun. If you do the uncomfortable thing anyway, you can consider it a win.



## Websites

- [www.selectivemutism.org](http://www.selectivemutism.org)
- [www.childanxiety.net](http://www.childanxiety.net)
- [www.keepkidshealthy.com](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com)
- [mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov)
- [www.adaa.gov](http://www.adaa.gov)
- [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)
- [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- [www.a4pt.org](http://www.a4pt.org)
- [www.selfesteemshop.org](http://www.selfesteemshop.org)

## Books for Kids

- [A Terrible Thing Happened](#) by Margaret Holmes
- [Babar's Yoga for Elephants](#) by Laurent de Brunhoff
- [Brave Bart: A Story for Traumatized and Grieving Children](#) by Caroline Sheppard
- [Cat's Got Your Tongue?: A Story for Children Afraid to Speak](#) by Charles Schaefer
- [Jessica and the Wolf: A Story for Children Who Have Bad Dreams](#) by Ted Lobby
- [Just in Case](#) by Judith Viorst
- [Llama Drama](#) by
- [Maybe Days: A Book for Children in Foster Care](#) by Jennifer Wilgocki

## Books for Kids

- [Mr. Worry: A Story about OCD](#) by Holly L. Niner
- [Shadow Moves](#) by Caroline H. Sheppard
- [Starbright: Meditations for Children](#) by Maureen Garth
- [The Worrywarts](#) by Pamela Duncan Edwards
- [The Kissing Hand](#)
- [Understanding Katie](#) by Elisa Shipon-Blum
- [Up and Down the Worry Hill: A Children's Book about Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and its Treatment](#) by Aureen Pinto Wagner
- [Wemberly Worried](#) by Kevin Henkes
- [Who Moved My Cheese? For Kids](#) by Spencer Johnson
- [You've Got Dragons](#) by Kathryn Cave

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- Eisen, Andrew R. & Engler, Linda B. (2006). [Helping Your Child Overcome Separation Anxiety or School Refusal.](#) New Harbinger Publications: Oakland.
- Kendall, Philip et al. (2003). "Child-Focused Treatment of Anxiety" in [Evidence-Based Psychotherapies for Children and Adolescents](#) (eds. Kazdin, A. & Weisz, J.)

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- McHolm, A. et al. 2005(). Helping Your Child With Selective Mutism: Steps to Overcome a Fear of Speaking. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications.
- Shipon-Blum, Elisa. (2003). The Ideal Classroom Setting for the Selectively Mute Child. Philadelphia: SMART Center.
- Spencer, Elizabeth D. et al. (2003). The Anxiety Cure for Kids: A Guide for Parents. John Wiley & Sons: New Jersey.

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# Let's make a Coping Skills Toolbox!

## What is it?

A Coping Skills Toolbox is a place for you to keep things that calm you down in periods of distress. If you have everything gathered in one place, it's easier to remember to use your coping skills, rather than using negative behaviors.

## Self-Soothing

(Comforting yourself through your five senses)

1. Something to touch  
(ex: stuffed animal, stress ball)
2. Something to hear  
(ex: music, meditation guides)
3. Something to see  
(ex: snowglobe, happy pictures)
4. Something to taste  
(ex: mints, tea, sour candy)
5. Something to smell  
(ex: lotion, candles, perfume)

## Distraction

(Taking your mind off the problem for a while)

### Examples:

**Puzzles, books, artwork, crafts, knitting, crocheting, sewing, crossword puzzles, sudoku, positive websites, music, movies, etc.**

## Opposite Action

(Doing something the opposite of your impulse that's consistent with a more positive emotion)

1. Affirmations and Inspiration  
(ex: looking at or drawing motivational statements or images)
2. Something funny or cheering  
(ex: funny movies / TV / books)

## Emotional Awareness

(Tools for identifying and expressing your feelings)

### Examples:

**A list or chart of emotions, a journal, writing supplies, drawing / art supplies**

## Mindfulness

(Tools for centering and grounding yourself in the present moment)

### Examples:

**Meditation or relaxation recordings, grounding objects (like a rock or paperweight), yoga mat, breathing exercises.**

## Crisis Plan

(Contact info of supports and resources, for when coping skills aren't enough.)

**Family / Friends  
Therapist  
Psychiatrist  
Hotline  
Crisis Team / ER  
911**

## Put it all together!

Once you've gathered all of your items, put them together in a box or other container, decorate it to your heart's content, and put it in a place where you'll remember it. Then **USE IT!**

## BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

*summerofrecovery  
(aka false-spring-queen)*

**Have a kickass  
recovery day!**

A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking, because her trust is not on the branch but on it's own wings.  
Always believe in yourself.

Image by Pinthemall.net

# Fight Or Flight Response

When faced with a life-threatening danger it often makes sense to run away or, if that is not possible, to fight. The *fight or flight response* is an *automatic* survival mechanism which prepares the body to take these actions. All of the body sensations produced are happening for good reasons – to prepare your body to run away or fight – but may be experienced as uncomfortable when you do not know why they are happening.

## Thoughts racing

Quicker thinking helps us to evaluate danger and make rapid decisions. It can be very difficult to concentrate on anything apart from the danger (or escape routes) when the fight or flight response is active

If we don't exercise (e.g. run away or fight) to use up the extra oxygen then we can quickly start to feel dizzy or lightheaded

## Dizzy or lightheaded

## Changes to vision

Vision can become acute so that more attention can be paid to danger. You might notice 'tunnel vision', or vision becoming 'sharper'

## Breathing becomes quicker and shallower

Quicker breathing takes in more oxygen to power the muscles. This makes the body more able to fight or run away

## Dry mouth

The mouth is part of the digestive system. Digestion shuts down during dangerous situations as energy is diverted towards the muscles

## Adrenal glands release adrenaline

The adrenaline quickly signals other parts of the body to get ready to respond to danger

## Heart beats faster

A faster heart beat feeds more blood to the muscles and enhances your ability to run away or fight

## Bladder urgency

Muscles in the bladder sometimes relax in response to extreme stress

## Nausea and 'butterflies' in the stomach

Blood is diverted away from the digestive system which can lead to feelings of nausea or 'butterflies'

## Palms become sweaty

When in danger the body sweats to keep cool. A cool machine is an efficient machine, so sweating makes the body more likely to survive a dangerous event

## Hands get cold

Blood vessels in the skin contract to force blood towards major muscle groups

## Muscles tense

Muscles all over the body tense in order to get you ready to run away or fight. Muscles may also shake or tremble, particularly if you stay still, as a way of staying 'ready for action'

- Inspirational and positive thoughts to share:
  - <http://www.ronitbaras.com/emotional-intelligence/personal-development-c/97-positive-thoughts-for-your-kids/>
  - [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/TM/WS\\_back\\_to\\_school\\_quotes.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/TM/WS_back_to_school_quotes.shtml)
  - <http://www.masterteam.com/students.php>
  - [http://www.positivethinkingforkids.com/Home\\_Page.php](http://www.positivethinkingforkids.com/Home_Page.php)
- Power Naps:
  - <http://on.aol.com/video/4-secrets-to-taking-a-real-power-nap-518007257>
  - <http://www.napsounds.com/>
- Jokes:
  - <http://www.bestfamilyadvice.com/kids-jokes.html>
  - <http://www.funology.com/jokes-and-riddles/>
- Free Coloring Pages:
  - <http://www.coloringpagesforadult.com/>
  - <http://www.clipartandcrafts.com/coloring/design-posters/index.htm>
  - <http://www.coloring-pages-adults.com/>
  - <http://printmandala.com/>
  - <http://www.printablemazes.net/>
  - <http://mazestoprint.com/>
- Guided Imagery :
  - <http://stress.about.com/od/generaltechniques/ht/howtoimagery.htm>
  - <http://www.innerhealthstudio.com/guided-imagery-scripts.html>
- Mindfulness:
  - <http://www.the-guided-meditation-site.com/mindfulness-exercises.html>
  - <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>
  - <http://www.pocketmindfulness.com/6-mindfulness-exercises-you-can-try-today/>
  - <http://www.livingwell.org.au/mindfulness-exercises-3/>

<http://hubpages.com/health/Progressive-Muscle-Relaxation-Script>

Take a Bath



Listen to Music



Take a Nap



Go to a body of water



Watch the clouds



Light a candle



REST your legs up on a wall



Let out a sigh



Fly a Kite



Watch the stars



Write a Letter



Learn something NEW



Listen to a guided relaxation



Read a Book



# 50 Ways to Take a Break

sit in NATURE



2x Move twice as slowly

Take Deep Belly Breaths



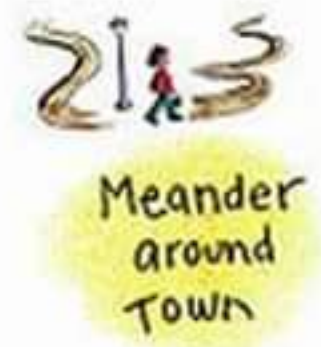
MEDITATE



Call a Friend



Meander around Town



WRITE in a journal



Notice your Body



Buy some Flowers



Find a relaxing scent



Walk Outside



Go for a run



Take a bike ride



Create your own coffee break



View some ART



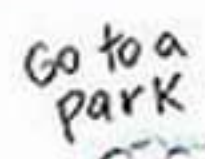
Eat a meal in SILENCE



Turn off all electronics



Go to a park



pet a furry creature



read or watch something FUNNY

Engage in small acts of KINDNESS

Engage in small acts of KINDNESS

Examine an everyday object with Fresh Eyes



Drive somewhere NEW



Go to a Farmer's Market



Forgive Someone



COLOR with Crayons



Make some MUSIC



Climb a Tree



Let go of something



Do some gentle stretches



Paint on a surface other than paper



Write a quick poem



Read poetry

Put on some music and DANCE



Give Thanks



## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Our bodies respond automatically to stressful situations and thoughts by becoming tense. The opposite relationship also works: a good way of relaxing the mind is to deliberately relax the body.

In a progressive muscle relaxation each muscle group is tensed in turn, and the tension is then released. This relaxes the muscles and allows you to notice the contrast between tension and relaxation.

Relaxation should be enjoyable so if any part of the exercise is too difficult skip it for the moment. If you have any injuries you may wish to leave out that part of the exercise.

### Preparation

Lie down flat on your back, on a firm bed, a couch, or on the floor. Support your head and neck with a pillow or cushion. Alternatively sit in a comfortable chair with your head well-supported. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so.

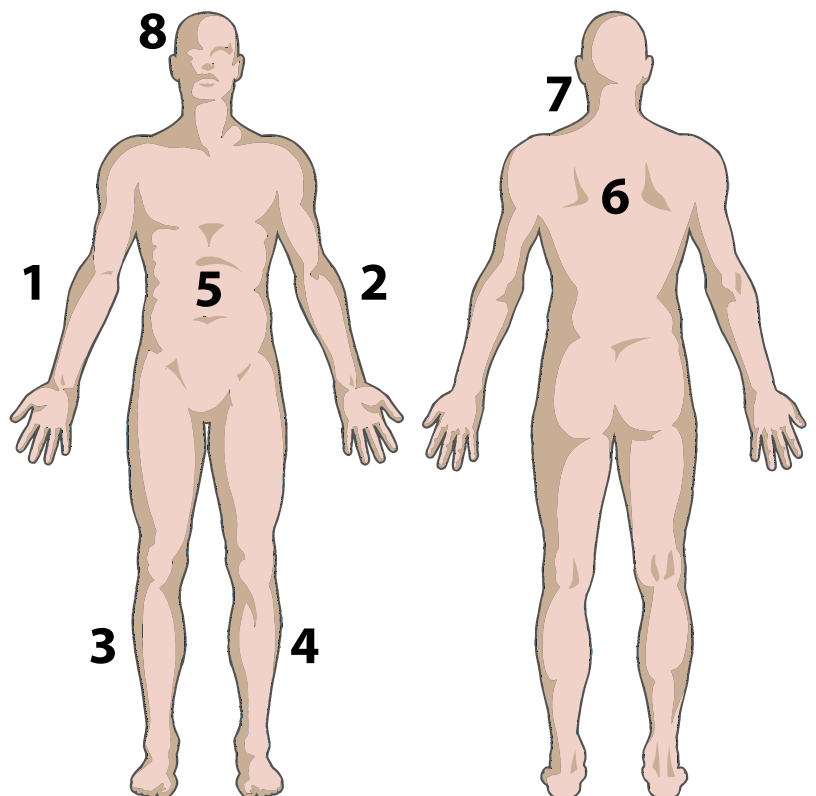
### Instructions

Focus your attention on different parts of your body in sequence. Go through the sequence three times:

- 1) Tense & release: Tense that body part, hold it for a few moments, then relax*
- 2) Lightly tense & release: Tense that body part with just enough tension to notice, then relax*
- 3) Release only: Just pay attention to each muscle group and decide to relax it*

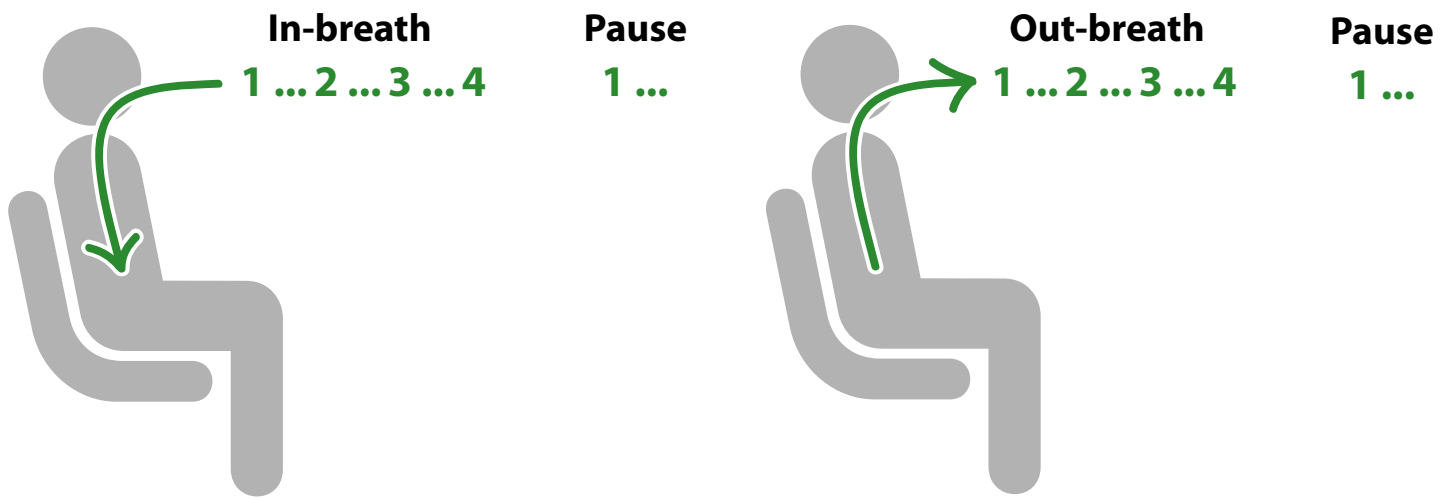
### Recommended sequence

- 1** Right hand & arm  
(clench the fist & tighten the muscles in the arm)
- 2** Left hand & arm
- 3** Right leg  
(tense the leg, lifting the knee slightly)
- 4** Left leg
- 5** Stomach & chest
- 6** Back muscles  
(pull the shoulders back slightly)
- 7** Neck & throat  
(push the head back slightly into the pillow/surface)
- 8** Face  
(scrunch up the muscles in your face)



## Relaxed Breathing

When we are anxious or threatened our breathing speeds up in order to get our body ready for danger. Relaxed breathing (sometimes called abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing) signals the body that it is safe to relax. Relaxed breathing is *slower* and *deeper* than normal breathing, and it happens lower in the body (the belly rather than the chest).



### How to do relaxed breathing

- To practice make sure you are sitting or lying comfortably
- Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so
- Try to breathe through your nose rather than your mouth
- Deliberately slow your breathing down. Breathe in to a count of 4, pause for a moment, then breathe out to a count of four
- Make sure that your breaths are *smooth, steady, and continuous* - not jerky
- Pay particular attention to your out-breath - make sure it is smooth and steady

### Am I doing it right? What should I be paying attention to?

- Relaxed breathing should be low down in the abdomen (belly), and not high in the chest. You can check this by putting one hand on your stomach and one on your chest. Try to keep the top hand still, your breathing should only move the bottom hand
- Focus your attention on your breath - some people find it helpful to count in their head to begin with ("*In ... two ... three ... four ... pause ... Out ... two ... three ... four ... pause ...*")

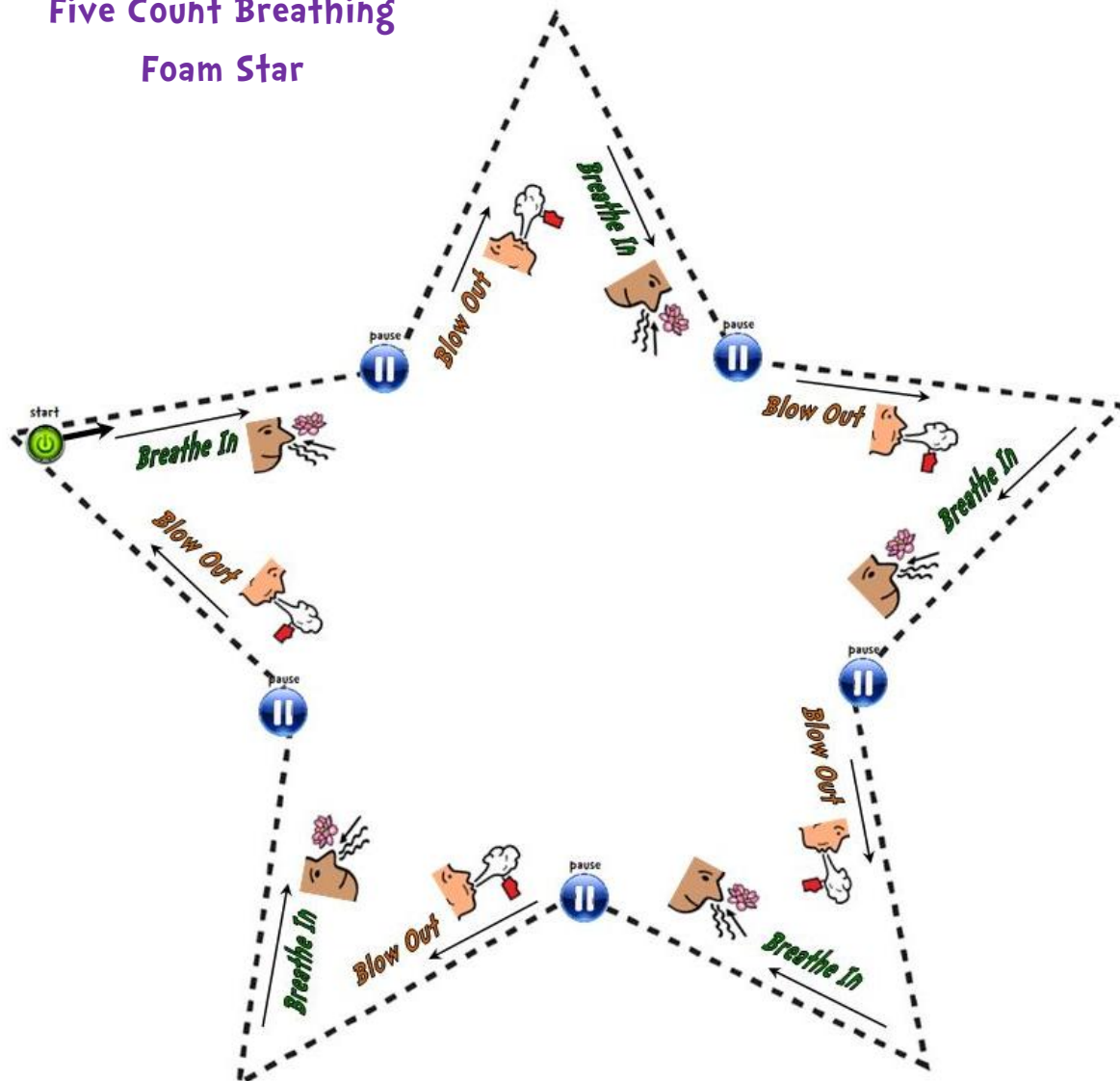
### How long and how often?

- Try breathing in a relaxed way for at least a few minutes at a time - it might take a few minutes for you to notice an effect. If you are comfortable, aim for 5-10 minutes
- Try to practice regularly - perhaps three times a day

### Variations and troubleshooting

- Find a slow breathing rhythm that is comfortable for you. Counting to 4 isn't an absolute rule. Try 3 or 5. The important thing is that the breathing is slow and steady
- Some people find the sensation of relaxing to be unusual or uncomfortable at first but this normally passes with practice. Do persist and keep practising

## Five Count Breathing Foam Star



### How to make:

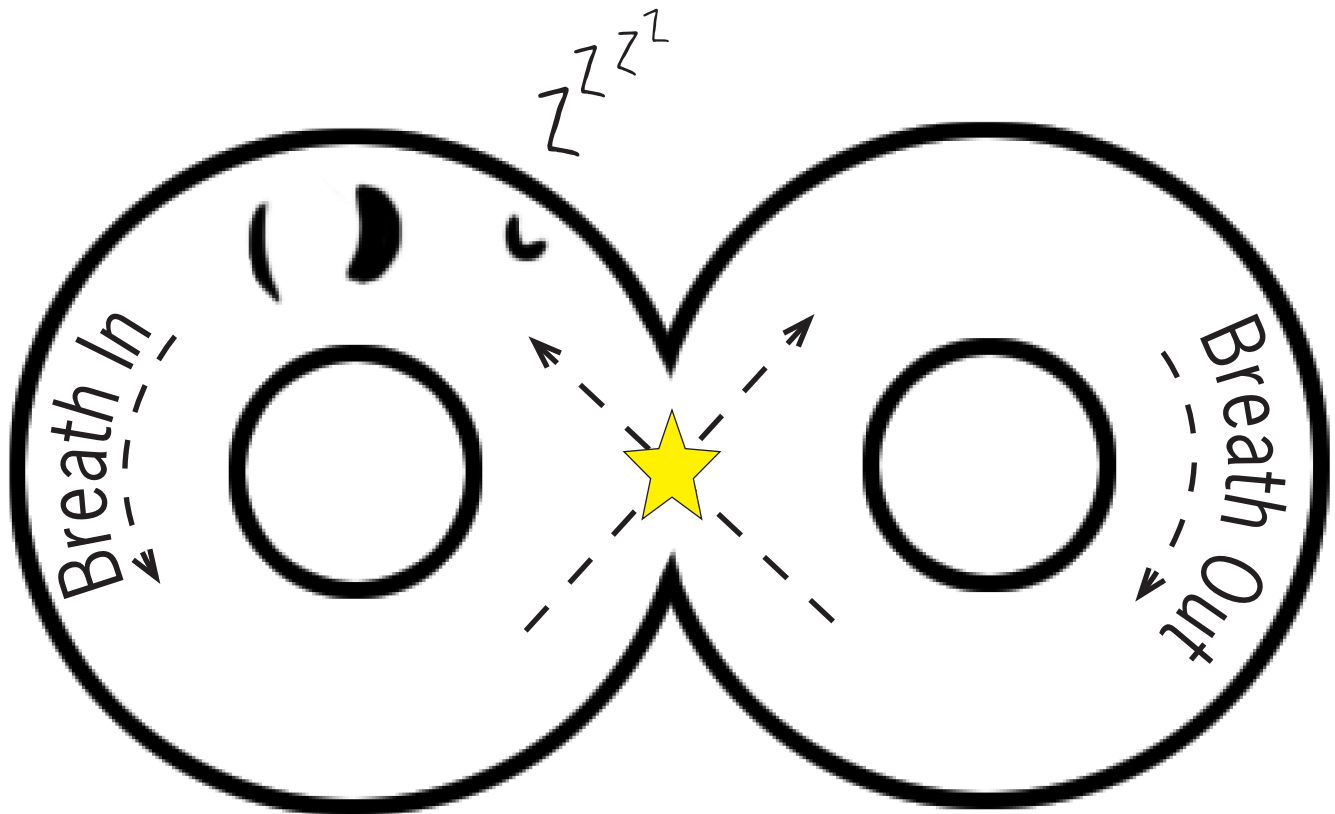
1. Print the star & cut it out leaving a small border of white.
2. Laminate & cut it out again leaving a small border of lamination to help it stay sealed.
3. Attach to foam star with permanent glue runner tape.  
(I tried Superglue, Zots adhesive dots & glue runner tape. Superglue did not work well at all. Zots were difficult to position. The permanent glue runner tape worked well. I outlined the back of the laminated star and then put some in the middle before rubbing it down onto the foam star)
4. Kids can decorate the back of their foam star by drawing a picture of something that is calming to them.

Thanks to [Edna Reinhardt](#) for sparking the idea of mounting them on something so the kids can run their finger along the edges of the star as they practice the breathing. I went with foam stars since they are soft, colorful & precut.

I reconfigured and resized the printable to fit the 6.75" foam stars from Creatology at [Michaels](#). I have seen similar stars at [Walmart](#).



# Lazy 8 Breathing



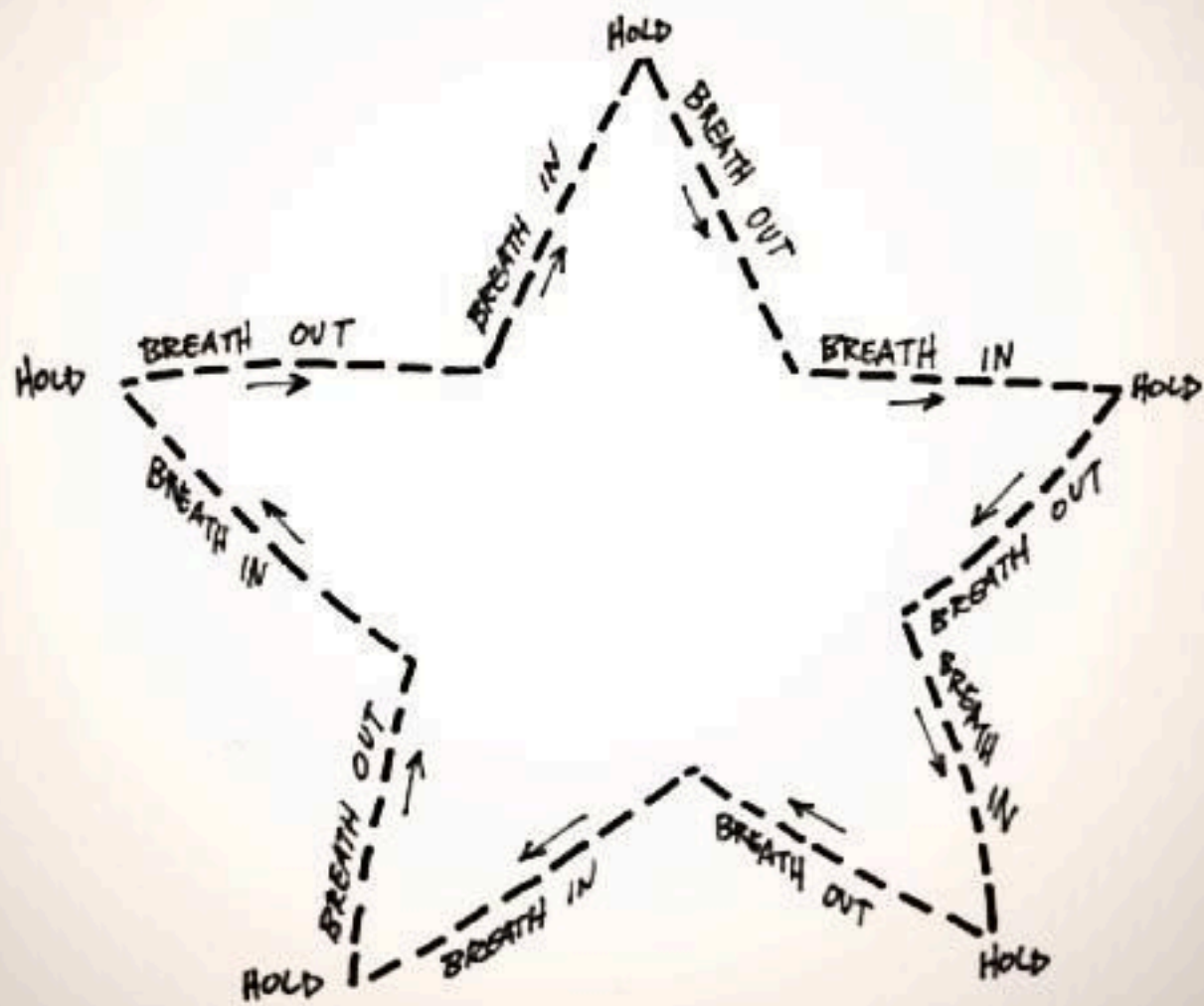
Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.

As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.

Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.



# Five Count Breathing



## What If ... ?

When we say to ourselves "what if ... ?" we are often identifying a potential danger: "what if something terrible happens?" "what if it all goes wrong?"

Each time we do this there are many equally plausible positive possibilities that we are failing to see. If we only see the bad possibilities and not the good ones then we have an unbalanced view of the situation

Try to come up with 3 'glass half full' ways of seeing each 'glass half empty' one.

### Negative "What if ... ?"

*What if Kirsty makes jokes about my weight again?*

*What if I crash the car?*

### Positive "What if ... ?"

*What if we have a nice time?  
What if I'm assertive this time and tell her how she makes me feel?*

*What if I don't?  
What if I'm a very careful driver?  
What if I get there safely like every other time?*

*How does each kind of "what if ... ?" make you feel?  
Which is more likely than the other?*

## What If ... ?

**Negative “What if ... ?”**

**Positive “What if ... ?”**

*What do I know now about my “what if’s” ?*

# Mindfulness Exercises



## Mindfulness Meditation

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Find a place where you can sit quietly and undisturbed for a few moments. To begin, you might want to set a timer for about 10 minutes, but after some experience you should not be too concerned about the length of time you spend meditating.

Begin by bringing your attention to the present moment by noticing your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as it enters and then leaves your body. Before long, your mind will begin to wander, pulling you out of the present moment. That's ok. Notice your thoughts and feelings as if you are an outside observer watching what's happening in your brain. Take note, and allow yourself to return to your breathing.

Sometimes you might feel frustrated or bored. That's fine--these are just a few more feelings to notice. Your mind might start to plan an upcoming weekend, or worry about a responsibility. Notice where your thoughts are going, and accept what's happening.

Whenever you are able to, return your concentration to your breathing. Continue this process until your timer rings, or until you are ready to be done.



## Body Scan

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During the body scan exercise you will pay close attention to physical sensations throughout your body. The goal isn't to change or relax your body, but instead to notice and become more aware of it. Don't worry too much about how long you practice, but do move slowly.

Begin by paying attention to the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations such as warmth, coolness, pressure, pain, or a breeze moving over your skin. Slowly move up your body--to your calves, thighs, pelvis, stomach, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, and finally your head. Spend some time on each of these body parts, just noticing the sensations.

After you travel up your body, begin to move back down, through each body part, until you reach your feet again. Remember: move slowly, and just pay attention.



## Mindful Eating

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Choose a food you would like to practice with (preferably something you can hold in your hand without getting messy). Something as simple as a single raisin will work well. Move slowly through these steps, taking a moment to focus on each one.

Before you pick up your food, notice how it looks on the table in front of you. Notice its color, how the light reflects from its surface, and its size.

# Mindfulness Exercises

Now, pick up the food. Notice the weight, and how the food feels against your skin. Roll the object between your fingers, or roll it in your hand, and notice its texture. Notice if it's smooth, rough, slick, soft, firm or if it has any other properties. Hold the food to your nose, and pay attention to its smell.

Next, place the food in your mouth, on your tongue, but don't eat it. Notice how it feels in your mouth. Does the texture feel the same as on your hand? What do you taste? Roll the food around in your mouth and pay attention to the feeling.

Finally, begin to slowly chew your food. Notice how your teeth sink into it, and how the texture is different inside. Pay close attention to the flavor, and how it spreads across your tongue. Notice how your body changes—does your mouth fill with saliva? Does your tongue feel hot or cold? Continue to chew your food, paying close attention to the many sensations as you finish.

## Five Senses

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Use this exercise to quickly ground yourself in the present when you only have a moment. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses.

**What are 5 things you can see?** Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn't noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knick-knack in the corner of a room.

**What are 4 things you can feel?** Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.

**What are 3 things you can hear?** Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as an air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.

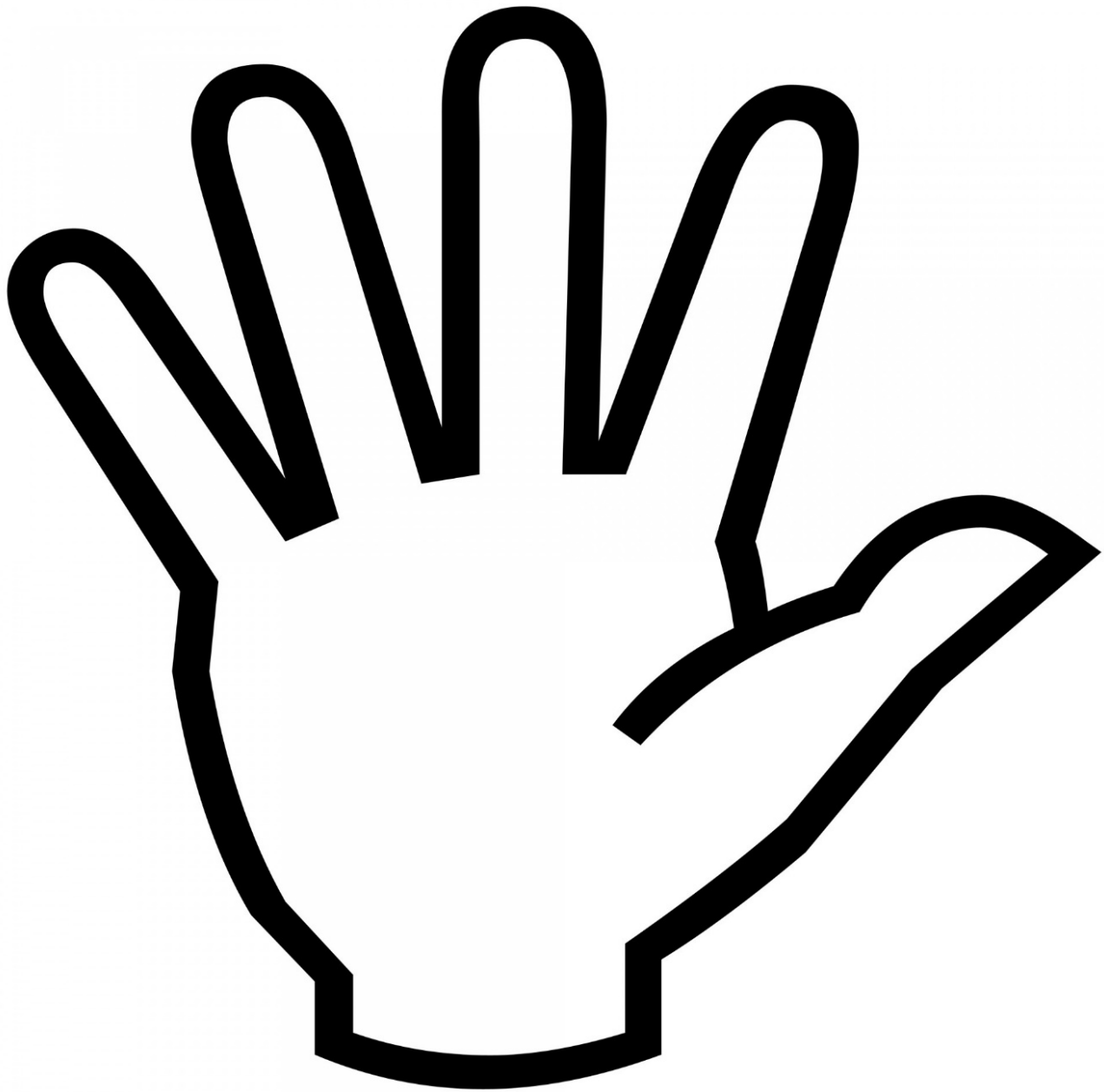
**What are 2 things you can smell?** Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn't have to be a nice smell either: maybe there's an overflowing trash can or sewer.

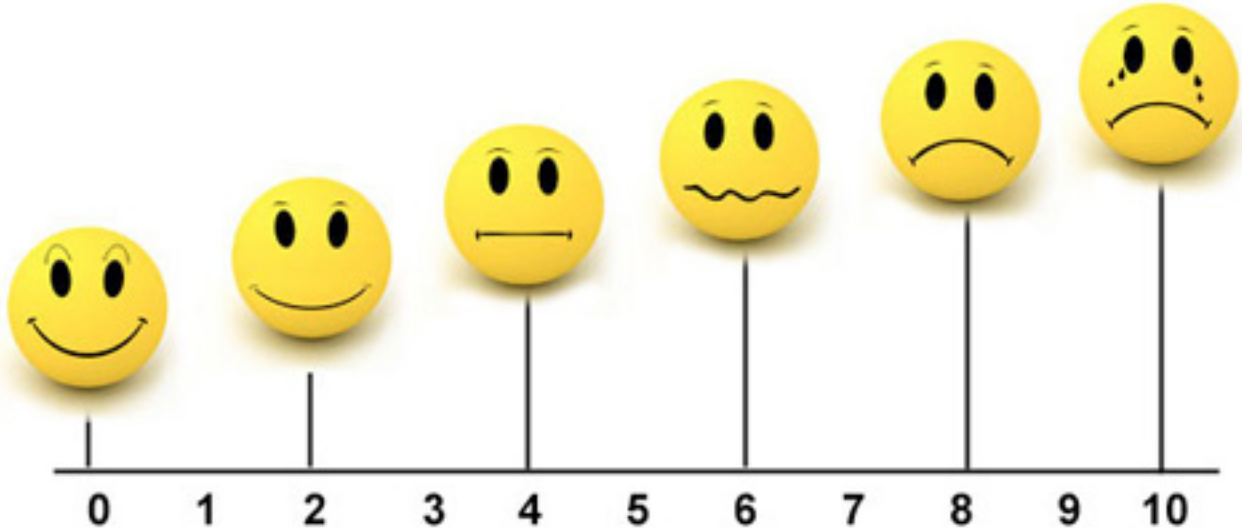
**What is 1 thing you can taste?** Pop a piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. "Taste" the air to see how it feels on your tongue.

The numbers for each sense are only a guideline. Feel free to do more or less of each. Also, try this exercise while doing an activity like washing dishes, listening to music, or going for a walk.

## Happy Place Hand

**Directions:** Think of a place where you feel happy and write it on the palm. Then, on each finger, describe all of the things you see, hear, smell, touch and taste when you are in that place.





No  
Symptoms



Mild  
Symptoms



Moderate  
Symptoms



Severe  
Symptoms