

Five-minute Breathing Break

These are ideas for you to try when you need to clear or calm your mind. Each serves to use awareness of the breath to calm both the body and the mind.

These breathing exercises can be done sitting or standing, with the eyes open or closed.

Do these breathing breaks with children, family, or at work with clients or patients as appropriate.

“Count to Calm” Breath or “Count to Feel Better” Breath:

Place your hand on your belly or over your heart. Close your eyes, and breathe into your palm. With each completed breath (a full breath in/full breath out), press one finger against your belly. Count five to ten breaths.



Bee Breath*:

If you start to feel angry or upset, sit quietly with your hands in your lap. Close your eyes and make an angry face. Then take a deep breath in and as you breathe out, hum or buzz that angry bee out. Now make a happy face, breathe in again, and make a happy humming or buzzing sound as you breathe out. Repeat for five breaths or until the angry bee is gone.

Note: Bee breath is a popular breathing technique. Be aware that for some children the buzzing through the lips is an irritating sensation. However, some children are pleased to figure out how to make the buzzing sound in a way that works for them.

Body Bubble Breathing:

Note: This exercise may help to build trust but initially may evoke anxiety because of physical and eye contact. Choose your options thoughtfully.

Sit facing someone. You are each in a safe “body bubble”.

Invite someone into your bubble by any combination of these options:

- a. pressing palms and fingers against your partner’s hands while maintaining eye contact;
- b. looking at each other without pressing hands while listening for each other’s breath;
- c. facing each other, neither looking nor touching, just listening for each other’s breath; and,
- d. sitting back to back and listening to and feeling each other’s breathing.

Slowly, breathe in and out together, three to five times. Any time a person pulls his hands away or looks down, he is back in his safe bubble that the other person cannot enter. Continue to breathe together.