

# Calming Yourself with Mindfulness

*Practice these mindfulness exercises throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in difficult thoughts and feelings. Use these strategies to center and ground yourself and connect with your environment.*

## **Mindful Breathing**

1. Breathe through your nose for a count of four.
2. Hold your breath for a count of four.
3. Exhale for about a count of eight, so your outbreath is about double your in breath.
4. Repeat this cycle four times.

## **Take Ten Breaths**

1. Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until the lungs are completely empty—and then allow them to refill by themselves.
2. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. Notice your rib cage rising and falling. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your shoulders.
3. See if you can let your thoughts come and go as if they're just passing cars, driving past outside your house.
4. Expand your awareness: simultaneously notice your breathing and your body. Then look around the room and notice what you can see, hear, smell, touch, and feel.

## **Drop Anchor**

1. Plant your feet into the floor.
2. Push them down—notice the floor beneath you, supporting you.
3. Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down.
4. Notice your entire body—and the feeling of gravity flowing down through your head, spine, and legs into your feet.
5. Now look around and notice what you can see and hear around you. Notice where you are and what you're doing.

## **Notice Five Things**

1. Pause for a moment
2. Look around and notice five things that you can see.
3. Listen carefully and notice five things that you can hear.
4. Notice five things that you can feel in contact with your body (for example, your watch against your wrist, the air on your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair).
5. Finally, do all of the above simultaneously

## **Mindful Focus**

When you want to take a break from your thoughts/feelings, shift your attention from an internal stimulus to an external stimulus as a way of grounding yourself in your surroundings. With your eyes open, start by taking a few deep breaths, and notice what you see (colors, objects), what you hear (clock ticking, people talking), what you smell (outdoor, fabric softener, etc), what do you taste (maybe something you recently ate), what do you feel (hands in my lap, my back up against the chair supporting me). Next, focus your eyes on an object in the room. Notice its shape and color. Describe the object in detail as if you are noticing it for the very first time.

## **Mindful Vacation**

Go on a mini-vacation with visualization. Think of your favorite place to be; or your “safe space.” Enlist all of your senses: what do you see, smell, hear, taste, feel?