



Pause, Reset, Nourish:

Diaphragmatic Breathing

WHEN TO USE

- *Outline when/how/ where this practice could be delivered, embedded etc.in both personal and professional roles*

CATEGORY

Breath, body based strategy

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THIS PRACTICE

Diaphragmatic breathing works by interrupting your sympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for our response to stress. When we feel frightened or distressed, our stress response is activated, and our breathing becomes more rapid and shallow. Rapid breathing often leads to more stress or fear because it signals the brain that something is wrong.

In contrast, breathing more slowly and deeply will trigger the parasympathetic nervous system, which produces a relaxing effect. Diaphragmatic breathing helps to slow heart rate, relax muscles, lower blood pressure, and increase feelings of peacefulness.

OVERVIEW

Diaphragmatic breathing, also known as belly or deep breathing, is technique that allows you to feel **calmer**. It is an effective and evidence-based way to reduce stress and anxiety.

WHAT IS NEEDED	Ability to notice when you breathe rate has increased or is rapid.	
PAUSE	Take a full, deep breath allowing your attention to focus inward. Noticing what is here for you now in thoughts, emotions and body sensations. Are you noticing signs of anxiety, anger, restlessness, etc. or signs of apathy, detachment, numbing, etc.? If you are familiar with the Mental Health Continuum, is your internal experience reflective of the green, yellow, orange, or red zone?	
RESET		1) Sit or stand in a good posture. If it feels comfortable, gently close your eyes. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Take a few breaths and follow the natural rhythm of your breathing.

		<p>2) Slowly breathe in through your nose for about 3-4 seconds and gradually expand your belly with air.</p> <p>Imagine your belly as an expanding balloon, and feel your hand on your belly rise. The hand on your chest should feel still.</p>
	<p>...</p>	<p>3) Hold your breath for 1-2 seconds.</p>
		<p>4) Slowly breathe out through the mouth for about 3-4 seconds.</p> <p>Imagine your belly as a balloon deflating, and feel your belly button sink into the spine.</p>
		<p>5) Pause for 1-2 seconds before taking the next breath.</p>
	<p>Repeat this sequence for approximately 5 breaths. Remember that it is important to pause in between breaths so you are not hyperventilating.</p>	
<p>NOURISH</p>	<p>Notice once again what is here for you now with curiosity and without judgement. Take time to acknowledge the important work that you are doing and that you took a moment to reset and replenish yourself. This is good for you. This is good for others.</p>	

NOTES/SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:

If further support is needed please reach out to a trusted colleague, your manager, Resilience Support Team Member, The Peer Support Line, or EAP services.