



Pause, Reset, Nourish:

Regulating the Nervous System with Breath

WHEN TO USE

- This practice is helpful to rebalance our nervous system

CATEGORY

Body based grounding, breathing and settling the body.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THIS PRACTICE

The autonomic nervous system has two components: the sympathetic branch, which is energizing, and the parasympathetic branch, which is relaxing. When we breathe in, we activate the sympathetic nervous system, or energy. When we breathe out, we activate the parasympathetic nervous system, or rest/relaxation.

OVERVIEW

In any given moment we can use the breath to balance the nervous system simply by checking in if we are more agitated/overly activated or feeling more shut down. We can then adjust our breathing accordingly.

WHAT IS NEEDED	This can be done in a few seconds whenever we notice we need to rebalance.
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	If you notice you feel depleted and need to boost your energy, breathe in deeply with the inhale count being longer than the exhale. Repeat several times. If you are noticing that you are over-energized, take a few longer exhales than inhales. This is also referred to as straw breathing where you breathe in as usual and then breathe out through pursed lips as if you were breathing out through a straw. This automatically slows the out breath and calms the nervous system. (see the science box for more information)
NOURISH	Notice once again what is here for you now with curiosity and without judgement. You may wish to repeat the practice if you are still feeling overly agitated or lethargic. 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.

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.