

# Caregiver Support Corner



January 2024

## IT IS A NEW YEAR & YOUR REGULATION IS IMPORTANT TOO!



### Helpful Ways to Regulate

These images are visual to support you in the moment when you feel yourself becoming dysregulated. This can happen for many reasons; we must remember too we are humans, and we will have internal reactions to situations in the classroom. To best support ourselves, the children & co-workers we must regulate ourselves in the moment.

Breathing techniques are great ways in the moment to regulate those intense emotions

**Balloon**  
Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a "pbbppppbb" sound.  
ConsciousDiscipline.com

**Balloon Breath**

**Belly breathing**

**Cold Breath**  
Place tongue on roof of mouth, breath in and out.

**Volcano Breathing**

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## WHAT DO YOU NEED? AFTER WE REGULATE, WE CAN IDENTIFY WHAT WE NEED TO RETURN TO CLASSROOM NEEDS, AND TASKS.

In the Moment

**Break**  
Tap out. Re-center. Re-connect.

**Water**  
Take a sip. Re-connect.

**Breath**  
Stop. Take a Breath. Smile. Re-connect.

**Feelings Check**  
Reflect. Re-connect. Share.

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<h3>Drain</h3> <p>Extend arms out, pretending your arms are faucets. Tighten arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly making a "ssshhh" sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.</p>	<h3>S.T.A.R.</h3> <p><b>S</b>mile. <b>T</b>ake a deep breath <b>A</b>nd <b>R</b>elax. Encourage belly breathing where the tummy goes out when the air goes in, and in when the air goes out. Also help children learn to exhale slower than they inhale.</p>
<h3>Pretzel</h3> <p>Standing up, cross your ankles. Now cross your right wrist over left, turn your hands so your thumbs are facing the floor, put palms together and interlace fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your hands down and toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Relax and breathe.</p>	<h3>Balloon</h3> <p>Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a "pbbppppbb" sound.</p>



## The Science behind Breath as a Coping Skill

Breath is one of our most vital bodily functions. We can survive for days without food and water, yet this is not the case with our breath. Our breath changes in response to our emotional state. Modifying our breath can change both our mood and our autonomic functions.

We have two systems in our autonomic nervous systems that work together to keep us in balance: our parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system can be compared to the gas pedal of a car. It speeds up many functions within our bodies and prepares us for danger. The parasympathetic nervous system is its opposite. This system can be compared to the brakes of a car. It slows down many functions of the body and works to calm our bodies.

When we breathe rapidly, our brain gets signaled to turn on the gas pedal (the sympathetic nervous system). With the gas pedal turned on our heart rate and blood pressure increase and stress hormones are released. In turn we experience muscle tension, sweat production and anxiety. The primal function of the sympathetic nervous system is to signal danger and activate our fight, flight and freeze responses.

Although we are not actually fleeing from a tiger in the wilderness, this same system can be activated when we receive an email from our boss late at night or when we get in an argument with our significant other. It nonetheless signals the gas pedal, releases stress hormones and increases our heart rate. But compared to carrying out a fight, flight or freeze response as we would if we were fleeing from a tiger, this activation tends to stay in our bodies in our current world.

Just as our bodies can make this all happen our bodies have the power to make the reverse happen as well. Focused breathing can induce the parasympathetic nervous system (our brake pedal), which is responsible for rest and digestion functions and can stimulate a state of relaxation. By taking a few moments to breathe, to notice our breath and to actively take deep belly breaths we can change our somatic and emotional responses. Breathing is a tool that is available to us that we can consciously control. During this time of uncertainty, our nervous systems have been hijacked. Taking time to focus on your breath can help reset your nervous system and restore a sense of balance even if only for a moment. That moment of relaxation will help your body and emotional state reset, no matter how temporary it may be.

\*\*\* Consider downloading this free app to help you focus on your breath. You can find it in the app store on android and apple devices. The Breathing App – Eddie Stern and Deepak Chopra have created an app based on resonance breathing (music from Moby) that brings you into a state of calm and simply by guiding your breathing rate. The Breathing App is inspired by resonance, the scientific name that describes what happens when our heart rate, heart rate variability, blood pressure and brainwave function come into a coherent frequency. It occurs spontaneously when we breathe at a rate of five to seven breaths per minute (instead of our usual 15-18). It results in a calm, restful alertness and many other benefits. The effects of resonance support the innate ability of our body, nervous system, and emotions to restore themselves. \*\*\*