

# PRETZEL BREATHING

This is a strategy for calming and containing excess energy and can be particularly useful for reducing anxiety in the moment, for calming overwhelming feelings, and for re-establishing a sense of peace after nightmares.

To practice it, sit and extend your arms. Allow the backs of your palms to touch each other with your pinkies to the sky and thumbs pointed at the ground. Then, put one hand over the other so that the palms are now touching (with the pinkies still pointed to the sky and thumbs to the ground). Interlace the fingers and then pull your interlaced hands into your chest, allowing your hands to rest on your heart. Then, cross your ankles (preferably with the same ankle and same hand is on top)

Sit and breathe. With each inhale, allow your tongue to press to the roof of your mouth. On the exhale, allow the tongue to drop to the bottom of your mouth. Sit and breathe for one to two minutes.... or as long as you need!

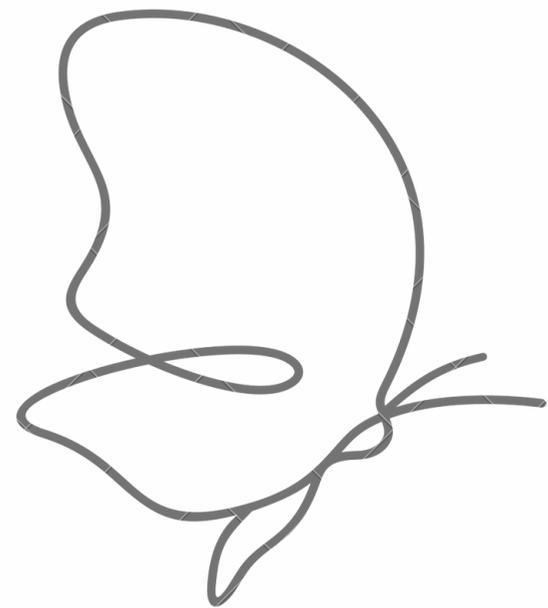


# BUTTERFLY TAPPING

Cross your arms comfortably over your chest and allow the hands to rest on each opposite upper arm.

Begin gently tapping, alternating each tap with the whole hand, or using just one to two fingers. If tapping is uncomfortable, use gentle, alternate squeezes.

Use 4 extended exhales breathing in the nose and out the mouth through pursed lips to extend the exhale. Close eyes or soften gaze then breathe normal for 2 minutes.



# CHAIR PULLS & WALL PUSHES

To Reset your Nervous System in 30 seconds:  
Find a way to position so you are able to tense and hold your large muscles isometrically for 30 seconds.

Some suggestions are:

Push your back against a wall, face a wall and push against the wall with your hands, bracing your legs, sit on a chair and grip the bottom of it with your hands.

Set a stopwatch for 33 seconds (the additional 3 sec gives you time to assume your position), position your body and exert as much energy into your large muscles as you can and hold it for 30 seconds. You may find yourself wanting to release before then, but hang in there for the full 30 to give your body enough time to reset. Try to tighten and sustain as many of your large muscles as you can, your limbs, abs, gluts, etc. When the timer goes off, allow yourself some time to simply enjoy relaxing. Ahhhh...!



## 4-8 BREATH

This is a counted breathing technique specifically for self-calming stress or anxiety. It's easy to learn and remember, but still will become more effective with practice.

Count in a steady rhythm to yourself as you do this:

Count slowly to 4 as you inhale.

Count slowly to 8\* as you exhale.

Repeat as many times as you wish until you feel more calm.

Stretch the inhales and exhales out over the entire count for each. Pace your counting so that you're breathing more slowly than normal but still comfortable, getting plenty of oxygen.

\*Count only to 6 or 7 on the exhale if 8 is uncomfortable.

Effectiveness increases with practice, even just a few times a day. Before sleep is a great time for this practice.

# BUTTERFLY HUG

Place one palm over the center of your chest. Place other palm on top of first, pressing gently into the chest for more contact. Thumbs will be close to each other. If comfortable, touch thumbprints lightly together. Fingers will be pointing diagonally up toward collarbone, out toward shoulder, perhaps forming a butterfly shape with your hands. Feel the warm pressure of the palms as you breathe gently, comfortably deeply. You could imagine with each inhale, breathing warmth and calming or caring through the hands into your heart or into your whole body. Feel the firm pressure of your fingers against the chest in sort of a mini-hug.

Experiment with:

- holding the fingers still
- giving yourself a gentle massage with your fingers, palms remaining in place
- gently tapping right fingers, then left fingers, right, left, about 1 tap per second
- ignoring fingers, keeping focus on the warm contact of your palms on the chest



## SENSING IN

As you go through your day, Intentionally look around you for any sensory input that is pleasing to you as you see, smell, touch, taste or hear it.

Pause when you notice it, focus on it and physically experience it with the sense or senses that are appropriate.

Breathe in through your nose slowly and calmly as you notice it, with an intention of absorbing its pleasant qualities, as if you could breathe them in with the air you're inhaling, and simultaneously imagine sort of pulling them in through your skin, as if you were a sponge.

On the slow exhale, let those qualities settle into your body in a comforting, calming way.

Even one slow breath cycle of noticing and absorbing can shift the nervous system from stressed (sympathetic nervous system dominance) to calm (parasympathetic nervous system dominance) . If you can do two or three breaths before moving on (15-30 seconds), the benefits can be strengthened, and the memory will tend to be more clear.

# BODY SCAN MEDITATION

Take a few deep breaths. Let your breathing slow down, and start breathing from your belly instead of from your chest, letting your abdomen expand and contract with each breath. If you find your shoulders rising and falling with each breath, focus more on breathing from your belly, as though a balloon is inflating and deflating in your abdomen with each breath.

Now slowly bring your attention down to your feet. Begin observing sensations in your feet. If you notice pain, acknowledge it and any thoughts or emotions that accompany it, and gently breathe through it. Breathe into the tension. Visualize the tension leaving your body through your breath and evaporating into the air.

Move on when you feel ready. Scan your entire body. Continue this practice with each area of your body, gradually moving up through your feet until you reach the top of your head. Notice how you feel and where you're holding your stress.



# 4-3-2-1

Four things you see:

I see \_\_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_\_

Four things you hear:

I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_\_

Four things you feel (that your body is touching right now):

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_

(Repeat) Three things you see:

I see \_\_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_ I see \_\_\_\_\_

Three things you hear:

I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_ I hear \_\_\_\_\_

Three things you feel (that your body is touching right now):

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_\_

(Repeat) Two things you see:

(Repeat) One thing you see:

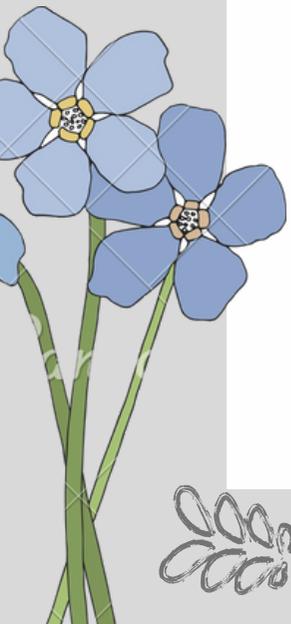
## RESOURCING & CONNECTING

Tap into a positive memory of someone who has been a resource for you for a few seconds. Take 1 minute to reach out to them. If you're unable to reach out to this person, reach out to someone else. It can be someone you have a close connection with or someone you haven't seen in years.



## ONE MINUTE SIT & REFLECT

Take one minute to sit in silence & reflect in silence.



# RESOURCE FOR RESILIENCY

## RAPID RESET

- **Take A Sip**- Take a long, full sip of a drink. Think about the physical sensations.
- **Tap Side to Side**- Also known as bilateral stimulation. Cross your hands and tap your shoulders for 60 seconds.
- **Ground**- Notice the physical sensations that support you.
- **Push Up Against A Wall**- Notice the physical sensations.
- **Take a Walk**- Notice the sensations of walking. Get fresh air, if possible.
- **Sing/ Hum**- Notice the sensations in your face, chest and your breathing.
- **Do Heavy Work**- Notice the pressure and sensations in your muscles.
- **Orient**- Look around the room and bring focus to the details of something that catches your eye (A variation of this includes looking for something specific, such as things that are a certain color)

# DONUT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Rather than an empty space, invert the hole to be the CORE- the main task or responsibility you have. It's what is actually yours to do, own, be concerned with. Notice the boundary circle containing it.

Now, look at the space between that circle and the outer circle and boundary line of the donut itself- that's the yummy part, where you have creativity and opportunity in the task/role beyond the basics. But also be careful not to load on too much glaze and sprinkles or consume it all too quickly as this is also the dangerous area that can sometimes be irresistible and make us overloaded and sick. This is where you DO have control over how little or much you want to consume.

Lastly, look at the space beyond the outer boundary of the donut. That's not yours- that's the stuff on the plate that is not yours to take responsibility for, blame for, stress over or be overwhelmed about.



NOT MINE TO DO NOT MY RESPONSIBILITY

Adapted from  
Charles Handy,  
The Empty Raincoat 1994

## USING THE SENSE OF SMELL

One way to build resilience in our brains and bodies is to be proactive and intentional about using the sense of smell to manage emotions and memories.

The sense of smell can also help us be more intentional about breathing. Taking a deep breath to inhale all those scent molecules into your limbic system also brings fresh oxygen into your body and creates a brief moment of mindfulness that you can incorporate very easily into your daily life! You can wear diffuser jewelry (a necklace or bracelet that absorbs essential oils or perfumes), so you have preferred scents with you all the time.

Set a goal for today: seek out a scent that you know brings up a positive response in your body that calls up happy feelings and memories for you. Spend a minute taking that deep breath, sending the scent into your limbic system and the oxygen into your lungs in your bloodstream, and give your body and your mind a boost.

# SENSES OF THE SEASONS

Let's start with Winter. Think of the tastes that remind you of Winter. What does Winter smell like? What do you hear in Winter – is it the shush of snow? What does Winter feel like? What do you see when you think of Winter?

Now let's move into Spring. What tastes like Spring? What are the scents of Spring? What do you hear in Spring? What does your skin feel in Spring?

What about the senses of Summer? Do you hear and see children playing in the sprinkler or splashing in the pool? What does summer smell like?

Last is Fall. What does Fall taste like? What smells remind you of Fall? What do you hear and touch in Fall? And what does Fall look like? What colors do you see?

Now I invite you to take a few more seconds to place yourself in the season that feels most comfortable to you right in this moment. Take a deep breath and release it.



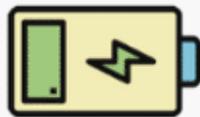
# TYPES OF SELF CARE

## Physical



Sleep  
Stretching  
Walking  
Exercise  
Nutrition  
Yoga

## Emotional



Stress Management  
Coping Skills  
Compassion  
Therapy  
Journaling

## Social



Boundaries  
Support System  
Positive  
Social Media  
Communication  
Friends

## Spiritual



Time Alone  
Meditation  
Prayer  
Nature  
Sacred Space

## Personal



Hobbies  
Creativity  
Goals  
Identity  
Authenticity

## Space



Safety  
Healthy  
Environment  
Stability  
Clean Space

## Financial



Saving  
Budgeting  
Money  
Management  
Paying Bills  
Boundaries

## Work



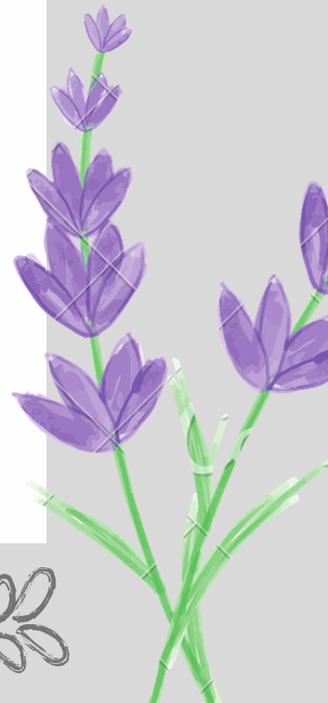
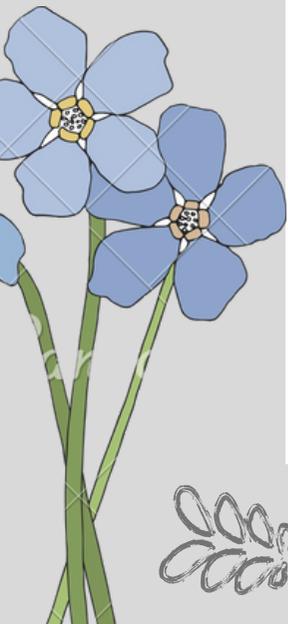
Time Management  
Work  
Boundaries  
Breaks

BlessingManifesting

# EMOTIONAL WELLNESS TOOLKIT

Link to this resource: <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL CONNECTIONS  
BRIGHTEN YOUR OUTLOOK  
GET QUALITY SLEEP  
RESILIENCY SKILL  
COPE WITH LOSS  
BE MINDFUL



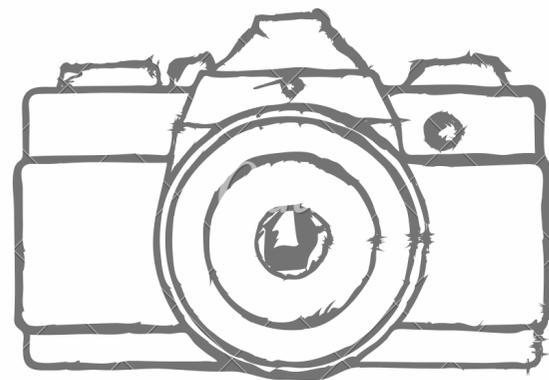
# 5 POINT SCALE

|   | How I feel  | What I can do  |
|---|---|--|
| 5 |  <p>I need some help!</p>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use theraputty<br><input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here]<br><input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths                            |
| 4 |  <p>I'm really upset.</p>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use theraputty<br><input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here]<br><input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths                            |
| 3 |  <p>I've got a problem.</p>      | <input type="checkbox"/> Let a teacher know that you have a problem and need some help<br><input type="checkbox"/> Play with your squishy thing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here]<br><input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths |
| 2 |  <p>Things are pretty good.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Play with my squishy thing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Think of my favorite things<br><input type="checkbox"/> Say "I'm going to be O.K." to yourself<br><input type="checkbox"/> Take 3 or 4 deep breaths  |
| 1 |  <p>Feeling Great!</p>          | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy the feeling!<br><input type="checkbox"/> Have fun   |

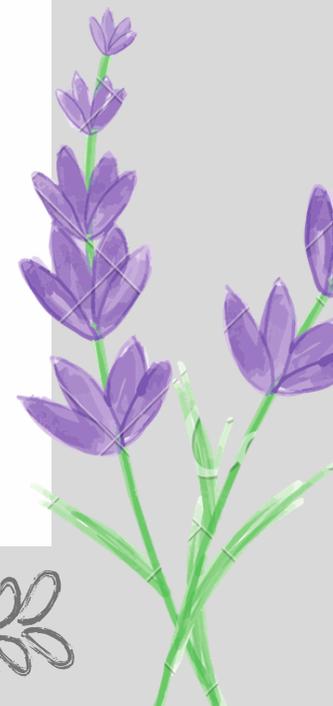
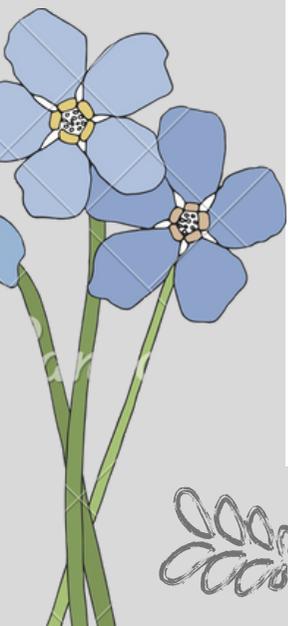
# PICTURE A MOMENT

Closing your eyes, remember a time you were filled with joy. Picture a calming place in your mind. Maybe it was a moment in time that you were the happiest. Maybe it's a place where you felt at peace. Picture the details.

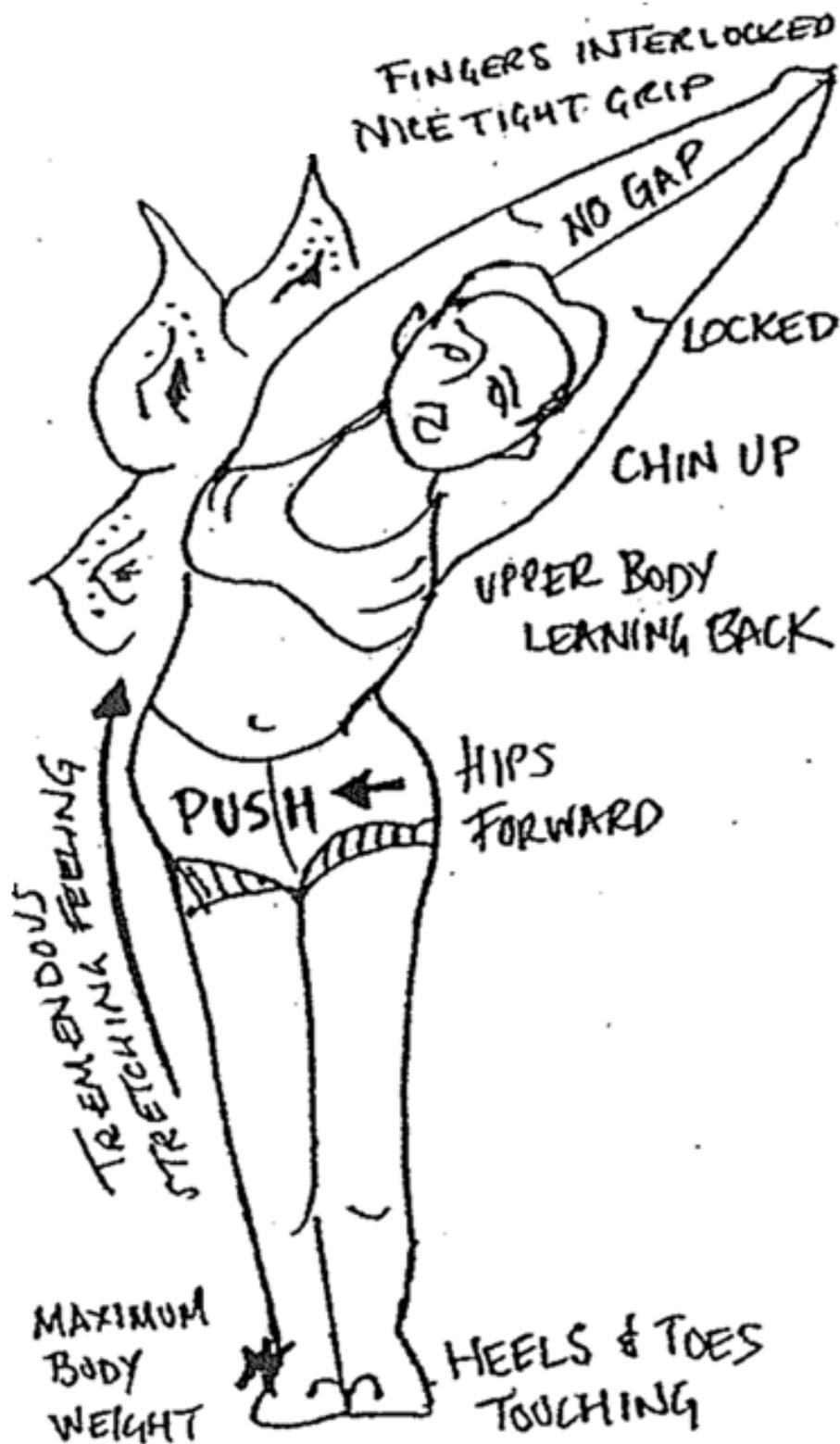
Where were you?  
What can you see?  
What can you feel?  
What do you hear?  
What can you taste?  
What can you smell?  
Who were you with?



Take a few slow breaths as you soak in this memory. By picturing it in your mind, you have made this memory stronger. When you are worried or stressed, pull up this memory for a moment of joy.



# HALF MOON POSE



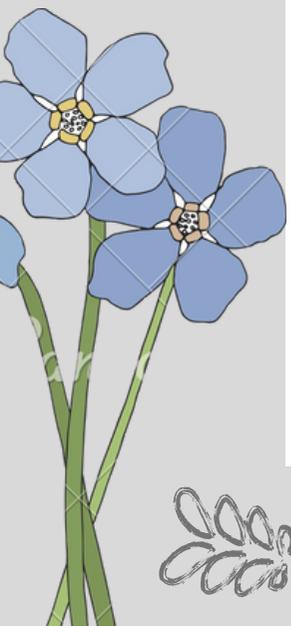
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUvo5RXkgrk>

# RESILIENCE KITS: MOVEMENT

Sometimes moving our body helps to reset our brain when we are full of emotion. You may have experienced the feeling of wanting to hit something when upset.

For a safer option, and to help keep your emotions steady, release some of that nervous energy on a regular basis.

Go for a walk or run, push up against a wall, pull against something (like a rubber band), squeeze a stress ball, or pop bubble wrap. Throwing something (like confetti!) might even help!



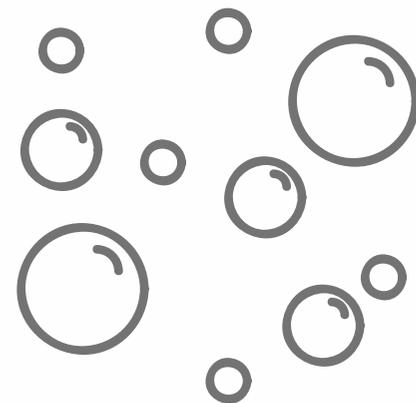
# RESILIENCE KITS: BREATHE

The simplest and easiest way to calm the brain and begin to relax is through slow, deep breathing.

Slowly inhale through your nose, filling your belly with air, pause, exhale through your mouth even more slowly.

Focus on making your exhale longer with each slow breath.

Sometimes it's helpful to imagine smelling a favorite scent, blowing out birthday candles, or blowing bubbles.



# RESILIENCE KIT: TASTE

When we are stressed or upset, sometimes just a simple sip of water can help reset our brain. Try a taste sensations as you take a moment for a deep breath and to be mindful of your sense of taste.

Place a morsel in your mouth, just let it sit there on your tongue without biting for a moment. Notice the texture and temperature. Now, deliberately and slowly, really taste it. What do you notice?



# **GROUNDING MOVEMENTS**

## **Feet on the Floor/Ground**

Stand comfortably. Notice the pressure on the bottoms of your feet in contact with what's beneath them. You might enhance the sensation by pressing down with one foot, then the other, or with different parts of your feet.

## **Sitting**

Sit in a sturdy chair. Breathe gently and comfortably. Pull your focus inside and notice the places where your body makes contact with that chair.

## **Leaning**

Lean your hip (perhaps part of your upper torso if it's high enough) against something sturdy so that it is supporting some of your weight. Breathe comfortably and notice from inside your body the sensations at the points of contact.

## **Pushing**

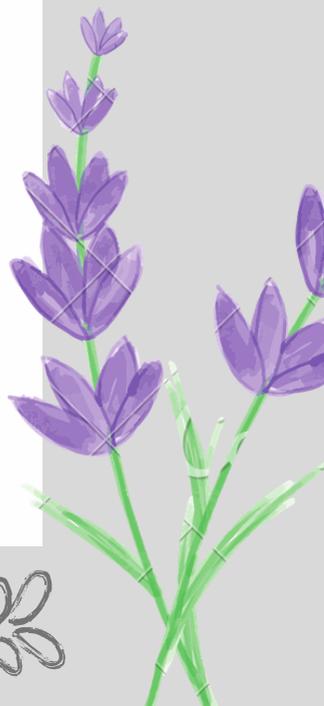
Push against a wall or a sturdy door. Try leaning & pushing. Try pushing harder if you're comfortable, and notice the pressure of your palms against the wall, and the way that pressure feels up through your arms and shoulders, in your back and torso, in your legs.

# RESILIENCE KIT: TENSE & RELAX

Make a fist, directing all your energy into squeezing your hand with as much intensity as you can. Squeeze so tightly that you activate the muscles in your arms and shoulders up towards your ears.

Tighten the muscles in your face, wrinkling your forehead, nose, and mouth, gritting your teeth. Hold everything tight for a moment and take a slow breathe in.

As you exhale, loosen all these tense muscles, letting go of the tension slowly. Notice how you feel more relaxed.



# CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE: STAR, BALLOON & DRAIN



## Drain

Extend arms out, pretending your arms are faucets. Tighten arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly making a "sssshhh" sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.



## S.T.A.R.

**S**mile, **T**ake a deep breath **A**nd **R**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.



## Pretzel

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.



## 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 "pbpbpbpb" sound.

# RESILIENCE KIT: WRITE/ DRAW

One proven way to deal with stress is to write about it. Just recording on paper helps many people sort out their feelings and begin to manage their response.

Drawing and coloring are helpful as well, providing a repetitive, soothing activity for calming.

## ONE WORD EMOTIONS

In one word, describe how you feel. Try to challenge yourself by thinking of new adjectives.

