

## Self-soothing techniques

*Creating the PAUSE, switching to the thinking brain*

- **Breathing exercises**
  - o Square pattern (5-5-5-5)
  - o 4-7-8 pattern
- **Mental exercises**
  - o Solving a math problem
  - o Counting backwards
- **5 senses mindfulness exercise**
  - o Notice 5 things you see, touch 4 things, hear 3 things, smell 2 things and taste 1 thing or notice what you're tasting now
- **Say a mantra, affirmation, a poem or a song lyrics.**

*Takes a few seconds*

- **3-4-5 breathing** – Breath in for 3, hold it for 4, and breath out for 5 counts.
- **Shake your body.**
- **Butterfly hug** - wrap your arms around yourself, so that each hand touches the opposite upper arm or shoulder. Then move your hands like the wings of a butterfly, to tap your arms/shoulders in an alternating rhythm (as an alternative, you might just tap your knees).
- **Self-havening** – similar to butterfly hug but you stroke your arms instead of tapping (<https://youtu.be/rAJLoA4V9SE>).
- **Talk to yourself compassionately.**
- **Close your eyes for a while.**
- **Visualize yourself as a strong tree withstanding a storm.**
- **Muscle contraction and release.**
- **Visualize a happy memory, a favourite place or your favourite colour.**
- **Visualize breathing in positive feelings and the negative energy leaving your body at every exhale.**
- **Visualize putting all your negative uncomfortable feelings into a ballon and let it fly away.**
- **Visualise putting your negative feelings on a leaf and see as a stream takes it away.**
- **Imagine wrapping a blanket of love around you.**
- **Look at something soothing** (family photo, photo of your favourite place or holiday, candle light, plants, freshly cut flowers or trees outside, a beautiful painting, an inspirational quote or mantra framed).
- **Smell soothing smells** (essential oils, scented candles, hand lotion).
- **Mindfulness:** notice 5 things you see, touch 4 things, hear 3 things, smell 2 things and taste 1 thing or notice what you're tasting now).

*Takes a few minutes*

- **Change environment** (go to another room or outside for a few minutes).
- **Stretch for a few minutes** to release the tension in your body.
- **Self-massage** your neck, shoulders, hands, face, head.
- **Relax your body from head to toe.**
- **Let yourself cry** if you feel it coming.
- **Listen to relaxing music.**
- **Listen to white noise, or ASMR videos or nature sound** on YouTube.
- **Drink something warm.**
- **Mindful walk** preferably in nature while noticing things around you (fresh air, breeze, temperature, birds singing, flowers, animals, etc.)
- **Watch something funny or laugh with someone** (call a funny friend).
- **Play with your pet or children.**
- **Doodle, draw, paint or use a colouring book or a colouring app** (eg. Paint by Number).
- **Meditate** (use meditation apps or YouTube).
- **Have a shower or a bath.**
- **Use a weighted blanket.**
- **Write in a journal** about your feelings or **brain dump** everything you think about on paper.

*Takes a bit longer*

- **Make a to-do, a not-to-do, and a delegate lists.**
- **Take some time to do what you love to do – me-time.**
- **Read a good book.**
- **Meet up with your friends, spend quality time with a loved one or your family.**
- **Start or practice a hobby.**
- **Play a game.**
- **Play on an instrument.**
- **Clean or declutter your environment.**
- **Watch a good film.**