

Crisis Survival Skills: Distract with “Wise Mind ACCEPTS”

- Activities** ***Do something.*** Call, e-mail, text, or visit a friend; watch a favorite movie or TV show; play your instrument or sing; play videogames; draw, cook, or bake; write in a journal; clean your room; go for a walk or exercise; read a book; listen to your iPod, go online and download music, apps; play a game with yourself or others.
- Contributing** ***Contribute to (do something nice for) someone.*** Help a friend or sibling with homework; make something nice for someone else; donate things you don't need; surprise someone with a hug, a note, or a favor; volunteer.
- Comparisons** ***Compare yourself*** to those less fortunate. Compare how you are feeling now to a time when you were doing worse. Think about others who are coping the same or less well than you.
- Emotions** ***Create different emotions.*** Watch a funny TV show or emotional movie; listen to soothing or upbeat music; get active when you are sad; go to a store and read funny greeting cards or joke books.
- Pushing away** ***Push the painful situation out of your mind temporarily.*** Leave the situation mentally by moving your attention and thoughts away; build an imaginary wall between you and the situation. Put the pain in a box and on a shelf for a while.
- Thoughts** ***Replace your thoughts.*** Read; do word or number puzzles; count numbers, colors in a poster, tiles on a wall, anything; repeat the words to a song in your mind.
- Sensations** ***Intensify other sensations.*** Hold or chew ice; listen to loud music; take a warm or cold shower; squeeze a stress ball; do sit-ups and push-ups; pet your dog or cat.

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Crisis Survival Skills: Self-Soothe with Six Senses

VISION **HEARING**
SMELL **TASTE**
TOUCH **MOVEMENT**

- Vision** Go to your favorite place and take in all the sights; look at a photo album; zone out to a poster/picture; notice colors in a sunset; people watch.
- Hearing** Listen to your favorite music and play it over and over again; pay attention to sounds in nature (birds, rain, thunder, traffic); play an instrument or sing; listen to a sound machine.
- Smell** Put on your favorite lotion; use a scented aftershave or body wash; make cookies or popcorn; smell freshly brewed coffee; go to the park and "smell the roses."
- Taste** Eat some of your favorite foods; drink your favorite nonalcoholic beverage; have your favorite flavor of ice cream; really notice the food you eat; eat one thing mindfully; don't overdo it!
- Touch** Take a long bath or shower; pet your dog or cat; get a massage; brush your hair; hug or be hugged; put a cold cloth on your head; change into your most comfortable clothes.
- Movement** Rock yourself gently; stretch; go for a run; do yoga; dance!



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SELF-SOOTHING STRATEGIES

A way to remember these strategies is to think about soothing or comforting yourself through each of your

FIVE SENSES:

Sight	Go outside and look at nature, look at some of your favourite pictures, watch videos or look at pictures of animals, nature, or art, or watch dance or musical performances.	Your Ideas:
Hearing	Listen to your favourite music, play an instrument (guitar, drums), go outside and pay attention to the sounds around you (birds, rain, rustling of leaves), hum or sing your favourite song, listen to recordings of nature sounds (waterfalls, raindrops, etc.)	Your Ideas:
Smell	Put on your favourite perfume, cologne, or body lotion, light a scented candle, burn incense, smell essential oils (e.g. lavender). Make a cup of herbal tea and smell it. Go outside and mindfully breathe in the smells of nature.	Your Ideas:
Taste	Eat some of your favorite foods, have a soothing or delicious drink (tea or hot chocolate), treat yourself to a yummy dessert, suck on a candy, or chew gum. Really taste the food you eat; eat or drink slowly and mindfully (really noticing and paying attention to what it tastes like).	Your Ideas:
Touch	Sink into a really comfortable chair, hug someone, put on a favorite comfy sweatshirt, play with sand, slowly brush or play with your hair, lightly rub the backs of your hands and arms, ask someone to give you a neck or back massage.	Your Ideas:

*STRATEGIES BASED ON M. LINEHAN'S DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS.

Crisis Survival Skills: IMPROVE the Moment

IMPROVE the Moment with:

Imagery Imagine very relaxing scenes of a calming, safe place. Imagine things going well; imagine coping well. Imagine painful emotions draining out of you like water out of a pipe.

Meaning Find or create some purpose, meaning, or value in the pain. Make lemonade out of lemons.

Prayer Open your heart to a supreme being, greater wisdom, or your own Wise Mind. Ask for strength to bear the pain in this moment.

Relaxation Try to relax your muscles by tensing and relaxing each large muscle group, starting with the forehead and working down. Download a relaxation audio or video; stretch; take a bath or get a massage.

One thing in the Moment Focus your entire attention on what you are doing right now. Keep your mind in the present moment. Be aware of body movements or sensations while you're walking, cleaning, eating.

Vacation Give yourself a brief vacation. Get outside, take a short walk, go get your favorite coffee drink or smoothie, read a magazine or newspaper; surf the web; take a 1-hour breather from hard work that must be done. Unplug from all electronic devices.

Encouragement Cheerlead yourself. Repeat over and over: "I can stand it," "It won't last forever," "I will make it out of this," "I'm doing the best I can."



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CALMING STRATEGIES - cont.

ACTIVITY	INSTRUCTIONS	RESOURCES	EXTRA NOTES
<p>Deep Abdominal Breathing (or “belly breathing”)</p>	<p>In deep breathing, the focus is on breathing <i>from your diaphragm</i>. Abdominal breathing can sometimes give you more energy, as it introduces nutrient rich oxygen to the blood. This is a technique practiced by singers and actors to improve performance.</p> <p>Students can first practice while lying on their backs (with a pillow under their knees, if possible). Invite them to put one hand on their ‘tummy’ or abdomen, and one hand on chest. “As you breathe, make sure the hand on your stomach is moving up and down rather than one on your chest. If the hand on your stomach is moving, you are breathing more deeply.”</p> <p>Once students get the hang of it while lying down, they can try it from seated position (hand positions are the same).</p>	<p>Youtube video of a Physiotherapist reviewing abdominal breathing from lying down position, and transitioning to seated position (~3 min) - for educator reference only*</p> <p>PsychCentral article on more details about the physiology and benefits of deep abdominal breathing - for educators reference only*</p>	<p>You can introduce visual prompts to help, such as imagining blowing up a balloon in the belly, to ensure that the diaphragm is doing the work. For immediate visual feedback, you could also have students place a beanbag or small stones (or similar) on their bellies while lying down, and have students focus on the object moving up and down as they breath.</p>

Square Breathing

For Mindfulness & Relaxation

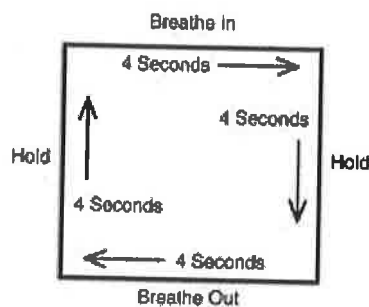
Step 1: Inhale for 4 counts

Step 2: Hold breath for 4 counts

Step 3: Exhale for 4 counts

Step 4: Repeat steps one through three 4 times

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	PROS	CONS
Acting on Crisis Urges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros of acting on impulsive urges: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cons of acting on impulsive urges:
Resisting Crisis Urges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros of resisting impulsive urges: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cons of resisting impulsive urges:

1. Consider both short-term and long-term PROS and CONS

2. Before distress hits: write out your PROS and CONS and carry them with you.

3. When distress hits – review your PROS and CONS and imagine the positive consequences of acting skillfully. Remember past negative consequences of giving in to the crisis urge and acting impulsively.

Crisis Survival Skills: TIPP Skills for Managing Extreme Emotions

When emotional arousal is very HIGH!!!!!!!

- You are completely caught in Emotion Mind.
- Your brain is not processing information.
- You are emotionally overwhelmed.

“TIPP” your body chemistry to reduce extreme Emotion Mind quickly with:

Temperature

- **Tip the temperature of your face with cold water to calm down fast.** Holding your breath, put your face in a bowl of cold water; keep water above 50° F. Or, hold a cold pack or ziplock bag with ice water on your eyes and cheeks, or splash cold water on your face. Hold for 30 seconds.

Caution: Ice water decreases your heart rate rapidly. Intense exercise will increase heart rate. If you have a heart or medical condition, lowered base heart rate due to medications, take a beta blocker, or have an eating disorder, consult your health care provider before using these skills. Avoid ice water if allergic to the cold.



Intense Exercise

- **To calm down your body when it is revved up by emotion.** Engage in intense aerobic exercise, if only for a short while (10–15 minutes). Expend your body’s stored-up physical energy by running, walking fast, jumping rope or jumping jacks, playing basketball, weight lifting, putting on music and dancing. *Don’t* overdo it!

(continued)

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Paced Breathing

- **Slow your pace of breathing way down** (to about 5–7 in and out breaths per minute). Breathe deeply from the abdomen. Breathe *out* more slowly than you breathe *in* (e.g., 4 seconds in and 6 seconds out). Do this for 1–2 minutes to bring down your arousal.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- **Tense and relax each muscle group**, head to toe, one muscle group at a time. *Tense* (5 seconds), then let go; *relax* each muscle all the way. *Notice* the tension; *notice* the difference when relaxed.

CALMING STRATEGIES - cont.

ACTIVITY	INSTRUCTIONS	RESOURCES	EXTRA NOTES
<p>Muscle Tense Release (Progressive Muscle Relaxation)</p>	<p>During this exercise you will be focusing on one muscle group at a time, squeezing and then contracting it for about 10 seconds, and then totally letting go of the muscle until it's loose and relaxed. The most important part of the exercise is noticing the difference between the feeling of tension and relaxation. You can either lie down, or recline in a comfortable chair where your head is supported.</p>	<p>AnxietyBC - <u>Script for full instructions of body tense and release exercise</u> (long and short version). Also check out MindShift app for an audio recording. <u>Youtube video of guided progressive muscle relaxation instructions, with nature shots</u> (~6 minutes)</p>	<p>Additional instructions for students: Take care not to hurt yourself while tensing your muscles. You should never feel intense or shooting pain while completing this exercise. Make the muscle tension deliberate, yet gentle. Isolating muscle groups can be tricky at first (e.g. not tensing up shoulders when you are focusing on tensing hands). But this will become easier with practice.</p>



How to do Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This exercise will help your child learn how to relax when he or she is feeling anxious or stressed. It can also help reduce physical problems such as stomachaches and headaches, as well as improve sleep. The technique involves tensing and then relaxing different muscles in the body. This can help your child learn the difference between being tense and feeling relaxed.

Helpful Hints:

- Set aside 15 to 20 minutes to complete this exercise.
- Find a place where you and your child can complete this exercise without being disturbed.
- Teens may prefer to do this exercise on their own. Encourage them to find a quiet place to practice.
- When reading the instructions, speak slowly and use a calm and soothing voice. Pause after each instruction to allow your child time to carry it out.
- You can also record the instructions on a tape or CD. This can be helpful for teens who may want to do this on their own.
- For teens, change some of the wording. Use “stomach” instead of “tummy.”
- Make sure your child is not tensing too hard. He or she should feel tightness in the muscles, but not pain. Ask your child to tense each muscle for 5 seconds before relaxing the muscle.

Getting ready

Have your child find a comfortable place to sit or lie down, close his or her eyes, and let the body go loose.



Instructions

Once your child is sitting comfortably with eyes closed, slowly read the following instructions:

“Take a deep breath in through your nose...hold your breath for a few seconds...and now breathe out...good...take another deep breath through your nose...imagine your tummy is a big balloon filling up with air...hold your breath...now breathe out and imagine that the air in the balloon is slowly escaping...Now I want you to pay attention to your body and how your it feels....

Let’s start with your legs...I want you to stretch out your legs in front of you and point your toes...squeeze the muscles in the top of your legs...now squeeze the muscles in the bottom of your legs...hold it...now relax...let your legs go limp...imagine that your legs are floppy cooked spaghetti noodles...relax all the muscles in your legs...notice how heavy your legs feel... now take a deep breath and hold...and breathe out...

Now, make a fist with your left hand and squeeze...imagine that you are holding an orange and you are squeezing all the juice out of the orange...feel the tightness in your hand and arm... hold it tight...and now relax your hand... notice how your muscles feel when they are relaxed...now make a fist with your right hand and squeeze tight...imagine that your holding a lemon and squeeze all the juice out...feel the tightness in your hand and arm...hold it...and now relax your hand... enjoy feeling relaxed... now take a deep breath and hold...and breathe out...

Let’s focus on your arms...stretch your arms out in front of you like you are reaching out to something...keep stretching...hold it...and now relax...let your arms drop to your sides... imagine your arms are cooked spaghetti noodles that are dangling at your sides...notice how relaxed your arms feel...relax your arms...now stretch your arms up above your head...try to reach for the clouds with your finger tips...hold...keep reaching above your head...now let your arms drop to your sides...relax you arms...let your arms go very floppy...notice how calm you feel... now take a deep breath and hold...and breathe out...

Let’s move to your shoulder... pull your shoulders up to your ears...hold...keep holding... now relax... notice how relaxed you feel... now take a deep breath and hold...and breathe out...

Now, pull in your tummy muscles...imagine that an elephant has just stepped on your tummy...suck in all the muscles in your tummy...hold it...good...now relax...let your stomach out...relax all the muscles in your tummy...notice how your muscles feel when you relax them... now take a deep breath and hold...and breathe out...



Finally, wrinkle up your faces as much as you can... wrinkle your nose... mouth... eyes... forehead... cheeks... and push your lips together... Notice how tight the muscles in your face feel... hold it... good... now relax... let all the muscles in your face go limp... notice how relaxed you feel... now take a deep breath and hold... and breathe out...

Now relax your whole body... imagine you're a rag doll and try and relax all the muscles in your body. Notice how good you feel... so relaxed... so calm... now take a deep breath and hold it... and breathe out... you've done very well! When you are ready, you can slowly open your eyes."

Quick Tense & Relax!

- After your child has had some time to practice the full version of the muscle relaxation exercise, introduce the *quick tense and relax* strategy.
- In this approach, your child learns how to tense all the muscle groups (for 5 seconds) and then to relax all the muscles in his or her body at one time.
- Your child can do this by taking a big breath, lifting up the shoulders, pushing out the chest and wrinkling up the face. Then, silently saying the word "relax" and letting the whole body go limp like a rag doll. Over time, your child can start to practice this strategy in more stressful situations (for example, in the playground or while in the car).

Quick Relax!

- Once your child has learned to tense and relax the whole body, the next step is to practice relaxing without tensing so that your child can easily use this strategy in a wide range of situations.
- Ask your child to take a deep breath, then slowly let out the breath while silently saying the word "relax" and letting the whole body go limp like a rag doll. If the child wishes, he or she can go through several breaths, each time letting the body become looser and more relaxed after each breath.
- The goal is to help your child develop a quick strategy to help him or her relax in any situation.

Helpful Hints:

- **Practice!** When your child is first learning these strategies, encourage him or her practice
- **Do it together!** It can also be helpful to do the exercise along with your child or have the whole family participate. Make it a family project! However, some teens may prefer to do it on their own, so you might want to ask how much help they want.
- **Break it up!** If your child is very young, break up the exercises into two parts and take a break in between.



Fight Or Flight Response

When faced with a life-threatening danger it often makes sense to run away or, if that is not possible, to fight. The *fight or flight response* is an *automatic* survival mechanism which prepares the body to take these actions. All of the body sensations produced are happening for good reasons – to prepare your body to run away or fight – but may be experienced as uncomfortable when you do not know why they are happening.

Thoughts racing

Quicker thinking helps us to evaluate danger and make rapid decisions. It can be very difficult to concentrate on anything apart from the danger (or escape routes) when the fight or flight response is active

If we don't exercise (e.g. run away or fight) to use up the extra oxygen then we can quickly start to feel dizzy or lightheaded
Dizzy or lightheaded

Changes to vision

Vision can become acute so that more attention can be paid to danger. You might notice 'tunnel vision', or vision becoming 'sharper'

Breathing becomes quicker and shallower

Quicker breathing takes in more oxygen to power the muscles. This makes the body more able to fight or run away

Dry mouth

The mouth is part of the digestive system. Digestion shuts down during dangerous situations as energy is diverted towards the muscles

Adrenal glands release adrenaline

The adrenaline quickly signals other parts of the body to get ready to respond to danger

Heart beats faster

A faster heart beat feeds more blood to the muscles and enhances your ability to run away or fight

Bladder urgency

Muscles in the bladder sometimes relax in response to extreme stress

Nausea and 'butterflies' in the stomach

Blood is diverted away from the digestive system which can lead to feelings of nausea or 'butterflies'

Palms become sweaty

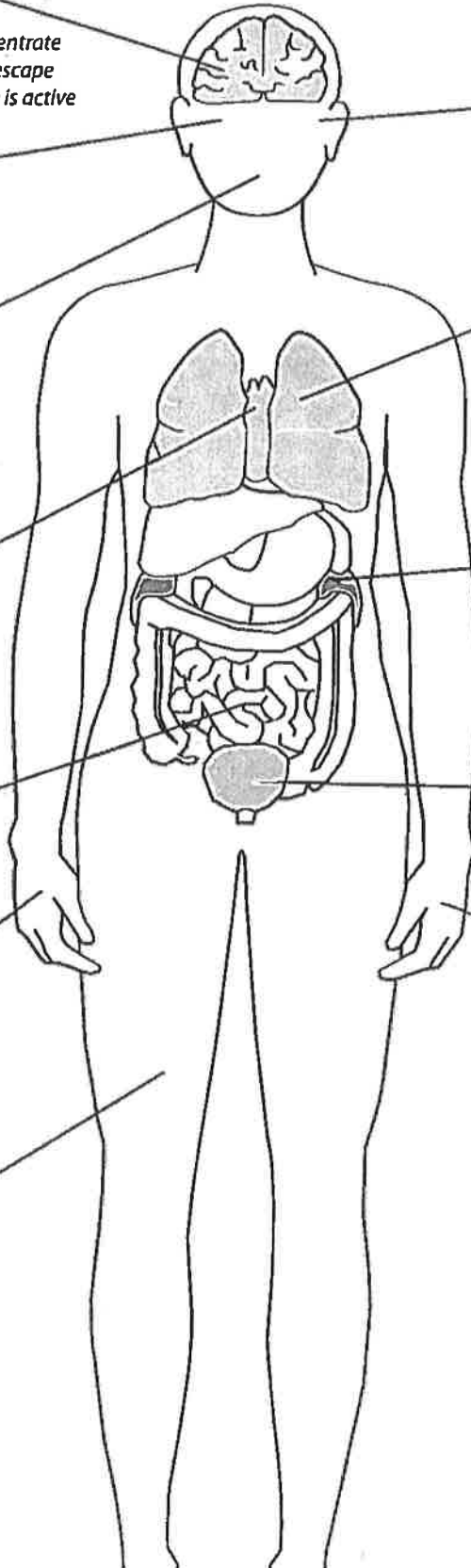
When in danger the body sweats to keep cool. A cool machine is an efficient machine, so sweating makes the body more likely to survive a dangerous event

Hands get cold

Blood vessels in the skin contract to force blood towards major muscle groups

Muscles tense

Muscles all over the body tense in order to get you ready to run away or fight. Muscles may also shake or tremble, particularly if you stay still, as a way of staying 'ready for action'



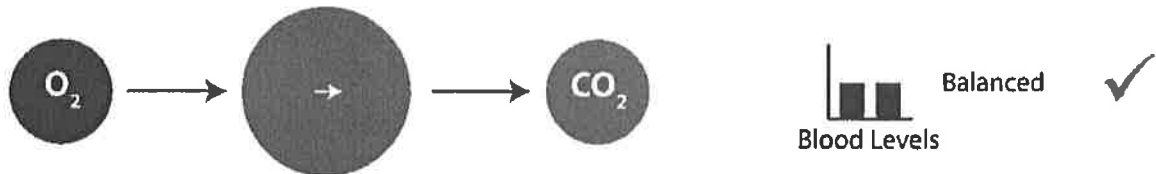
How Breathing Affects Feelings



The way we breathe is strongly linked to the way we feel. When we are relaxed we breathe slowly, and when we are anxious we breathe more quickly.

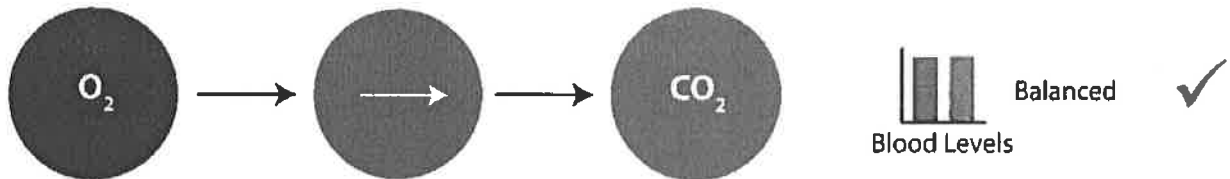
Normal breathing

When we breathe we take in oxygen (O_2) that is used by the body. This process creates carbon dioxide (CO_2), a waste product that we breathe out. When our breathing is relaxed the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide are balanced - this allows our body to function efficiently.



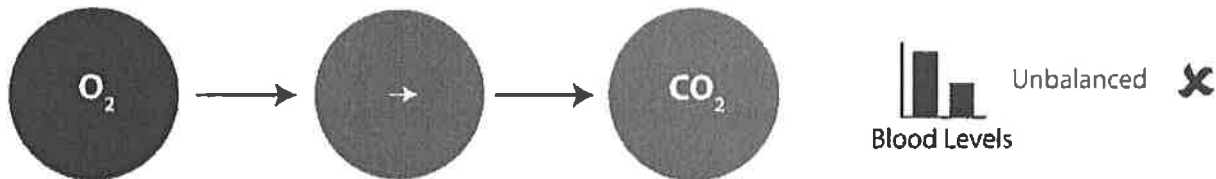
Exercise breathing

Our breathing rate increases during exercise to take in more oxygen. The body uses the extra oxygen to fuel the muscles and so produces more carbon dioxide. The increased breathing rate leads to more carbon dioxide being expelled. This means that the balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide levels is maintained.



Anxious breathing

When we are anxious our breathing rate increases: we take in more oxygen and breathe out more carbon dioxide than usual. However, because the body is not working any harder than normal it is not using up any extra oxygen, and so it is not producing any extra carbon dioxide. Because carbon dioxide is being expelled faster than it is being produced its concentration in the blood goes down (leading to a temporary change in the pH of the blood called respiratory alkalosis). This change in CO_2 blood concentration can lead us to feeling unpleasantly light-headed, tingly in our fingers and toes, clammy, and sweaty.



When our breathing returns to its usual rate the levels of carbon dioxide in the blood return to normal, and the symptoms resolve. You can deliberately relax your breathing to feel better.

Relaxed breathing instructions

- 1) Sit or lie down comfortably. Close your eyes if you would like to
- 2) Breathe *slowly* and *steadily* in through your nose for a count of 4
- 3) Hold your breath for a count of 2
- 4) Breathe out *slowly* and *steadily* for a count of 4