

## **Tips and Strategies to Regulate Anxiety and Anger**

### 1) Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR):

By alternating states of tension and relaxation in specific muscle groups, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation – this process resets your nervous system. Practicing this exercise can help you to become aware of anger and anxiety earlier on in your body so that you can respond to these feelings more effectively. Follow the exercises as described below and repeat as needed until you feel an internal shift towards relaxation. Remember to hold the tension for 2-3 seconds and then exhale fully as you release the tension.

**Feet:** Curl your toes and squeeze, then release.

**Lower Legs:** Point your toes and squeeze, then relax.

**Upper Legs:** Squeeze your thighs together, then let them fall to the side naturally.

**Torso:** Suck your belly towards your spine, then release and allow your belly to expand.

**Back:** Pretend you're squeezing a pencil between your shoulder blades, tense, then release them.

**Shoulders/Traps:** Squeeze your shoulders as close to your ears, then let them slide down.

**Arms:** Make tight fists and bring them toward your shoulders, squeeze, then let them fall.

**Hands:** Squeeze your fingers into your palm, then relax your fingers.

**Face:** Try and make your face as small as possible (scrunch it together), then relax.

**Whole Body:** Tense your whole body, then release all tension the tension.

### 2) Belly Breathing with Counting:

Breathing fully while counting your breaths helps to physiologically relax your body and nervous system while also keeping your frontal lobe (part of your brain responsible for conscious awareness and integrating feelings) active. This can help you to process and regulate any difficult feelings you may be experiencing.

Start by breathing in for 4 seconds and exhaling for 6 seconds.

Count each inhale and exhale as 1 breath (i.e., inhale, 1, and now exhale, 1; now I inhale, 2, and exhale, 2).

When you breathe in, aim to expand your belly as much as possible (making your belly stick out). On the exhale, try to bring your belly as close to your spine as possible.

After 3 breaths at that rhythm aim to breathe in for 6 seconds and exhale for 8 for the next 3 breaths. Continue increasing the length of inhale and exhale with your own comfort zone.

Continue breathing in this way until you notice a shift in your internal sense of experience towards more clam, safety, regulation, and relaxation.

### 3) 5 Things:

This strategy can be used in conjunction with the others listed above as an add-on strategy to further regulate anxiety and anger.

When you notice you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or angry, stop what you are doing. Look around you (move your eyes and head) to do a scan around you and say in your head or out loud the name and colour of 5 things you can see or touch. Say or think it from a first-person perspective, for instance, "I see a red cup, I see a blue car" etc.

