

FIVE MINUTE STRESS BREAK

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Dear Parents. We have been practicing these ideas at school for managing stress and thought you might like to try some at home too. You can do them with your child as a way to help him or her clear or calm the mind. It's a way to use the body, something a child knows how to do, to help them "Just take a deep breath and calm down." These breathing exercises can be done sitting or standing, with the eyes open or closed.

"Count to Calm" Breath or "Count to Feel Better" Breath:

Place your hand on your belly or over your heart. Close your eyes, and breathe into your palm. With each completed breath (a full breath in/full breath out), press one finger against your belly. Count five to ten breaths. (This can help kids go to sleep.)

Bee Breath:

If you start to feel angry or upset, sit quietly with your hands in your lap. Close your eyes and make an angry face. Then take a deep breath in and as you breathe out, hum or buzz that angry bee out. Now make a happy face, breathe in again, and make a happy humming or buzzing sound as you breathe out. Repeat for a few breaths until the angry bee is gone.

Body Bubble Breathing:

Note: This exercise may help to build trust but initially may evoke anxiety because of physical and eye contact. Choose your options thoughtfully.

Sit facing someone. You are each in a safe "body bubble".

Invite someone into your bubble by any combination of these options:

- a. pressing palms and fingers against your partner's hands while maintaining eye contact;
- b. looking at each other without pressing hands while listening for each other's breath;
- c. facing each other, neither looking nor touching, just listening for each other's breath; and,
- d. sitting back to back and listening to and feeling each other's breathing.

Slowly, breathe in and out together, three to five times. Any time a person pulls his hands away or looks down, he is back in his safe bubble that the other person cannot enter.

Continue to breathe together.

The notes I handle no better than many pianists. But the pauses between the notes, Ah, that is where the art resides.

~ Arthur Schnabel

