

## Appendix

# DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING EXERCISES

## Level 1

**i** Until 6 years old



Pass out small stuffed animals or beanie babies (or any item) and ask each child to lean back in their seats and place the stuffed animal on their bellies—not their chests. Instruct children on how to properly do « deep breathing » in order to calm their bodies down.

It may be helpful to have children turn their chairs away from one another to decrease self-consciousness.

« Place your little animal on your belly and lean back in your seat comfortably [or have them lie on the ground if appropriate for room and setting]. We are going to practice taking nice deep breaths all the way into our bellies, slowly lifting our animals up on our bellies as we fill it with air and then watching them go down as we breathe out all our air, nice and slowly. Watch me first and notice my stuffed animal as I breathe.

Deep belly breath in [animal rises] and slowly out [animal goes down with belly]. Now let's all follow my words together. Nice deep breath in – animals rise—and out—animals slowly down. Deep belly breath in—nice job—and out—bellies down. And breathe in—fill up your belly—and out animals back down. Great job, everyone! »

Helpful hint : to ensure that children are slowly exhaling as well as inhaling, it can be helpful to describe the exhale as how one would blow on their soup to cool it off. You have to breathe out slowly so all the soup doesn't fly off the spoon. Also be sure that your instructions take up the amount of time you want the inhalation and exhalation to last—something like a slow.

« Breathe in-1-2-3 and breathe out 1-2-3 » or « Belly breath in, animals rise and slow breath out, animals fall. »

## Appendix DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING EXERCISES

### Level 2

**i** 6-9 years old



Sit up tall in your chair. Place one hand on your belly. Make sure your hand is on your belly, not your chest. Now we are going to practice taking nice deep breaths all the way into our bellies, slowly lifting our hands as we fill our bellies with air, and then watching them go down as we breathe out all the air, nice and slowly.

Watch me first and notice how my hand lifts as I take a nice deep breath in, and slowly out. Now let's all follow my words together :

Nice deep breath in-1-2-3 and now breathe out slowly-1-2-3

Now again - deep breath in-1-2-3 and breathe out slowly-1-2-3

And again – slow deep breath in – nice job – and out slowly as your hand lowers.

### Level 3

**i** 9 years old or older



Close your eyes, let's begin with a breathing technique that involves breathing in through your nose to the count of four. 1-2-3-4. An then slowly breathing out to the count of eight, pursing your lips as if you were gently blowing out a candle or blowing a bubble.

Inhale through your nose to the count of four. 1-2-3-4.

Now exhale through your mouth

to the count of eight. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8. Do it again.

Inhale through your nose to the count

of four. 1-2-3-4. Now exhale through your mouth

to the count of eight. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.

Make sure that the air is going to your stomach, not the chest. Let's do it again.

Inhale through your nose to the count of four. 1-2-3-4. Now exhale through your mouth

to the count of eight. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.

Repeat it as many time as you need to feel totally calm.