

## Relaxation Exercise

### Grounding through the five senses: Sight, Hearing, Touch, Smell & Taste

This technique helps to calm the body and really appreciate staying in and savouring the moment. It is also a really helpful intervention when you are feeling upset and unable to settle your emotions.

In this exercise, you are encouraged to break your attention free from stressful images, thoughts and feelings by focusing on and connecting with your current external surroundings, through the intentional use of your senses with the goal of reducing upsetting anxious feelings.

This technique will help you appreciate the value of using your sensory skills (sight, touch, smell, hearing, and even taste) to feel safe in the present moment.

**Before you start** make sure you are in a room where you feel safe and comfortable. Have a glass of water or other drink and something you can taste for example a sweet, a savoury cracker or piece of fruit available.

So, let's begin.....

Sit down and make yourself comfortable putting your feet down to 'ground' yourself. This exercise should take at least a few minutes, but you can take as long as you like, in fact the longer the better!

Look around and really experience FIVE things you can SEE.

Listen to FOUR things you can HEAR.

Reach out and feel THREE things you can TOUCH.

Notice TWO things you can SMELL.

Experience ONE thing you can TASTE.



## Hints & Tips

### #2 Learning To...Let...Go

In our modern society most of us feel we 'ought' to be in control of our life, but nothing in life is certain, and we have much less control than we think.

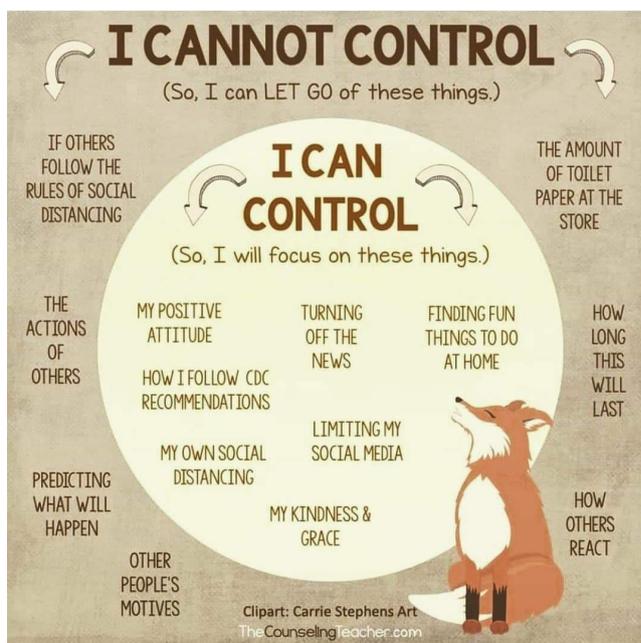
The problem is that the more we believe we can control, the more we try and have safety and order, the less able we are to cope with the unfamiliar, so a vicious circle starts of trying to control as much as we can to ward off the unfamiliar and uncertainty which is part of life.

Learning how to adapt to uncertainty is a real-life skill and one that when practiced will make us much happier and calmer. Yes, we can have control up to a point, but after that point we have to learn to let go because micromanaging every aspect of your life can be exhausting.

*Sometimes you need to let things go*

#### Tips on How to let go:

- Ask yourself "what can I do, not what can I expect from others"?
- Say to yourself "I can only control my behaviour and feelings and not those of others"
- Think how do I adapt myself to the world and not expect the world to adapt to my way of being?
- And finally say "I am learning that my responsibility is to change myself, not others"
- Remember our expectation of others can make their life difficult and rob them of their confidence and happiness
- Throughout the week Imagine what would happen if you let go?



#### Hints & Tips – Next Time:

In the next Care Mail I will be giving ideas on how you can manage those negative thoughts that add no value to our lives, in fact they just bring our mood down. So as a starting point - next time you have one of those pesky pessimistic thoughts ask yourself the following -

Am I having an irrational anxiety inducing thought, or an appropriate concern that is realistic? Start to challenge those negative thoughts, and if they are not helping your mood or to move forward in your life then learning to let them go will be your challenge and growth in these unsettling times.

## Silver Lining

### The gift of time

We now have so much more time on our hands so think about:

- Doing all those jobs you have not managed to get around to
- Learning a new skill
- Spending time talking to and connecting with people your normal schedule gets in the way of

So do try and make the most of the extra time you have. I am going to clear out my shed which has been on my to do list for 2 years!

## Share Space

I always think it's good to share anything that makes us smile and / or gives us hope, so below is an edited version of a piece I found on the Next Door New Barnet Neighbourhood E Mail, written by a teacher in China reflecting on lockdown. Thank you to whoever posted it!

*"We are just finishing our 7th week of E-Learning, seven weeks of being mainly housebound and seven weeks of uncertainty. We are healthy, we are happy, and we are humbled. We are allowed to move around freely now with a green QR code that we show when we get our temperature taken. You get your temperature taken everywhere, and it's just become part of the routine. Most restaurants and shopping centres are now open, and life is coming back to our city. As we watch the rest of the world begin their time inside; here are some of my reflections on the last seven weeks:*

- 1. Accept that you have no control over the situation. Let go of any thoughts of trying to plan too much for the next month or two. Things change so fast. Don't be angry and annoyed at the system. Anxiety goes down, and you make the best of the situation - whatever that might be for you. Accept that this is what it is and things will get easier.*
- 2. Try not to listen to/read/watch too much media. It WILL drive you crazy. There is a thing as too much!*
- 3. The sense of community I have felt during this time is incredible. I could choose who I wanted to spend my energy on – who I wanted to call, message and connect with and found the quality of my relationships has improved.*
- 4. Appreciate this enforced downtime. When do you ever have time like this? I will miss it when we go back to the fast-paced speed of the 'real world'.*
- 5. Time goes fast. I still haven't picked up the ukelele I planned to learn, and there are box set TV shows I haven't watched yet.*
- 6. As a teacher, the relationships I have built with my students have only continued to grow. I have loved seeing how independent they are; filming themselves to respond to tasks while also learning essential life skills such as balance, risk-taking and problem-solving, that even we as adults are still learning.*
- 7. You learn to appreciate the little things; sunshine through the window, flowers blossoming being able to enjoy a coffee in a café"*

