

Resources to introduce to help manage physical symptoms

1. A summary of the fight or flight response can be viewed via the happiness trap video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?edufilter=NULL&v=kv6HkipQcfA>
2. To understand the threat system in more detail, have a look at the below link:
<https://www.psychologytools.com/resource/fight-or-flight-response/>

3. Another way to help manage your anxiety symptoms and become focused on the now is by trying 'controlled breathing'. Some examples are shared below, or you could find different exercises on the internet:



- **Relaxed breathing** – Breath in for three elephants and out for 3 elephants, repeat
- **Coloured breathing** – imagine internal tension is a colour as you breathe out imagine the air being expelled is tinged with this colour. See the coloured air in your mind's eye and watch it float away and get paler as you breathe out the tension. Now imagine a colour which represents calm, soothing feelings. Imagine breathing in this colour from the air around you. Notice what happens to your body as you breathe in relaxed air.
- **Swing breathing** – helpful for someone to read these aloud or to record yourself reading these whilst practising.
 - *Allow your breathing to become slower....and more regular.*
 - *Just focus your attention on your breathe.... on the air flowing in....and out....of your mouth and nose.*
 - *Imagine your breathing finding a steady rhythm, breathing gently from low down in your belly.*
 - *Taking slow steady breaths. Breathing in gently....and slowly and smoothly exhaling....breathing in gently....and slowly and smoothly exhaling.*
 - *And as you continue to breathe slowly and gently....in a rhythm that's comfortable to you...I'd like you to imagine.....and then begin to feel....that you're on a swing. Gently swinging backwards.....and forwards.....backwards....and forwards...finding that you're swinging in rhythm to your breathing....just gently swinging...relaxed and peaceful.*
 - *Pay attention to how it feels to swing gently forwards...and backwards.....peaceful....relaxed....at ease. Just swinging gently....and smoothly....smoothly....and gently.*
 - *And you carry on breathing calmly and gently for as long as you would like. Relaxing into this gently rhythm more and more as time goes by.*

- **Muscle relaxation** is also very helpful - a 15-20-minute exercise tensing and relaxing your body from head to toe. As you practise, you should become less drowsy using it.
4. **Creating a calm/safe place** is also a very helpful mindfulness based tool, further details can be found in the below link:
<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafePlace.pdf>
5. A further grounding technique to focus your attention on the now is the **5,4,3,2,1 technique**. When you are having a flashback or a nightmare (past focus) or are apprehensive about the future (future focus), you are not aware of the present, so the here and now can be diminished. When our bodies feel as if they are fully immersed in the past, using all of our senses at once can be an effective way of bringing ourselves back to the present.
- **Sight** – look around you and use those sights to remind yourself that you are in the present and are safe
 - **Touch** – Carry an object with you that reminds you that you are safe.
 - **Hearing** – Focus on the noises around you in the present moment.
 - **Smell** – Smell is the most powerful of our senses, use a smell which is comforting to you.
 - **Taste** – Strong taste can be helpful to ground you. For those with taste memories it can be helpful to focus upon having no taste.

5 things you can see:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3 things you can hear:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2 things you can smell:

- 1.
- 2.

4 things you can feel/touch:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

1 thing you can taste:

- 1.