

# GENERAL ANXIETY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

*Many techniques exist to balance feelings of anxiety, as well as to bring the self back to a neutral state from a state of heightened emotions. The strategies can be used by adults, children, and youth.*



**Stop**  
**Take a breath**  
**Observe emotions**  
**Proceed**



**Balloon Breathing:** Empty your lungs, and inhale slowly and deeply, feeling air up to your diaphragm. Imagine your lungs like a big balloon being inflated and deflated.



**Butterfly Hug Exercise:** Place hands in a butterfly position on your chest and alternate tapping on each side. Experiment with the speed and pressure of the taps until it feels right.



**The Container Exercise:** Picture any container that is big and strong enough to hold an object. Picture an object that symbolizes what is being remembered or felt right now. Place this object into the container and ensure it is locked tight, until you feel safe and ready to deal with the feeling or memory.



**Hand Tracing:** Take a pen or your finger and run it along the edges and inside the webbing of the fingers on your other hand. Focus only on the feeling.



**Square Breathing:** Breathe in slowly for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds, and hold it once again for 4 seconds. Picture scaling the walls of a square while breathing.



**Yawning Exercise:** Fix your jaw into a yawning position and place your fingers on the space where your upper jaw and lower jaw meet. Gently massage those muscles and hold for a period of time. This will activate more than one yawn back to back, each holding a deeper breath than the one before.