Useful websites:

Breathing & Grounding | Youthscape

Grounding Techniques for Kids | Free Printable PDF

The role of the supporting adult

- Model the activity with the learner.
- Verbally reinforce when the learner is following instructions.
- Ensure the learner practises little and often.
- Review the impact of the strategy once it has been used at a time of heightened emotion.
- Provide a breadth of different breathing and grounding strategies for the learner to access.

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BREATHING AND GROUNDING ACTIVITIES

A guide for Practitioners

What are they?

Breathing and grounding activities are tasks that involve breath work or sensory input to take a person from feelings of anxiety or dysregulation back into a calm connected state.

A Little More Information

- Once a child is able to recognise what is happening in their body they can then be supported to use a strategy to calm themselves down. This can either be achieved alongside an adult in co-regulation or after practise, independently on their own.
- It is important to remember that these strategies only work when they have been practised. This practise must occur when the child is calm and regulated so that they are able to follow and replicate the activity precisely and understand when they need to use it in the moment.

Some Examples of Breathing Activities

1. **Hand breathing**

Breathe in. Then breathe out through your mouth, gently blowing each one of your fingers. One breath for each finger.

2. **Star breathing**

Following the outline of a star, take a deep breath in along one side, hold the breath when you reach a point of the star, then exhale as you trace along the next side of the star. Continue until you have worked your way around the star.

3. **Square/box breathing**

Following the outline of a square, take a deep breath in as you trace a side , hold the breath as you trace the next side, breathe out as you trace the third side and then pause as you trace the final side of the square. Repeat.

4. **Balloon breathing**

Imagine inflating a balloon by inhaling deeply and then slowly blowing the air out of your mouth like you are blowing up a balloon.

Some Examples of Grounding Activities

1. **Five things**

Get the child to look for and say 5 things that they can see, 4 things that they can hear, 3 things that they can touch, 2 things that they can smell and 1 thing that they can taste.

2. **Body scan**

Get the child to notice sensations from head to toe, such as the feeling of clothes, heartbeat, or feet on the floor, helping them reconnect with their body.

3. **Give themselves a hug**

Ask the child to cross their arms and rub their hands up and down their arms until they feel warm. Then get them to give themselves a big squeeze.

4. **Snow angels**

Get the child to lie on their back on the floor and imagine that they are lying in snow. Get them to move their arms and legs backwards and forwards to make snow angels.