

## Balloon Breath

Take deep, slow, rhythmical breaths.

These breaths calm the nervous system, reversing the “alarm” that has been triggered by anxious thoughts.

Imagine that you are breathing right down into the bottom of your belly. Watch it rise and fall as you take deep breaths. You can imagine that you are blowing up a big balloon inside your belly as you take your breaths.

Count IN 1-2-3-4 and OUT 2-3-4.

Breathe in the happy feelings and breathe out the angry or worried feelings, until you can feel that you have filled your balloon with calm and relaxation.

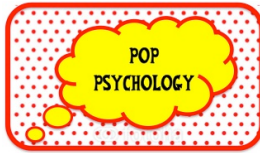
## My Relaxing Place

*A useful way of relaxing is to try to imagine a calming picture.*

*This picture can be a real place you have been to or a picture you may have created in your dreams.*

- ☒ Choose a quiet time when you will not be disturbed
- ☒ Close your eyes and try to imagine your picture
- ☒ Concentrate on the picture . . .
- ☒ Think about the colours and shapes of things in your picture . . .
- ☒ Think about the smell- what would it smell like if you were there? *Smell the sea*
- ☒ Think about the sounds- what would you be able to hear? *Hear the waves crashing and the sea gulls calling*
- ☒ As you think of your picture notice how calm and relaxed you feel. Notice how relaxed your body feels.

This is your special calming place. Return to this place as often as you feel like.



## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Working through each area of the body, through tensing and relaxing each muscle group, a relaxation response occurs.

Arms and hands: Clench your fist and push your arms straight out in front of you.

Legs and feet: Push your toes downwards, gently raise your legs and stretch them out in front of you.

Stomach: Push out your tummy muscles, take a breath and hold it. Then release.

Shoulders: Scrunch up your shoulders.

Neck: Push your head back against the chair or bed.

Face: screw up your face, squeeze your eyes tight and push your lips together.

### **Remember:**

- **Choose somewhere quiet**
- **Sit in a comfortable chair or lie on your bed**
- **Tense your muscles enough to notice what it feels like BUT don't squeeze too hard**
- **Tense your muscles for 3-5 seconds THEN Release**
- **As your release (let go) say RELAX**

## Feelings are Like Weather

Take some deep, calming, breaths, and close your eyes.

Imagine that your mind is like the clear, blue sky. It feels good to be clear, calm, and relaxed underneath that big blue sky. As though anything is possible.

Sometimes our feelings will brew up a weather event – and suddenly it might pour down rain with sadness, thunderous anger will crash and roar upon us, or we get all unsettled and swept up in the winds of anxiety.

Try to stay firm with your feet planted onto the earth, even when these feelings start to get all stirred up. You are not your feelings, you are you.

Sure enough, just like the weather, our feelings will settle down again. Soon we will be back to the big, clear, blue sky again. We can watch our thoughts as they drift across the sky, each thought lingering like a cloud in the sky, and eventually passing on by.