

4 Elements Exercises for Stress Reduction

(Earth -Air -Water -Fire)

E.Shapiro, 2007

Extended preparation INSTRUCTIONS

Hand out silicon wristband/s (or sticker/s) & say:

“Look at your wristband (sticker) and then notice how much stress/anxiety or tension you feel right now on a scale of zero (Lo) to 10 (Hi)

• **1-EARTH: Grounding, safety in the present**

[Attention is directed outwards via the senses to safety in the present]

*“Starting with your feet we begin with the 1st Element **EARTH** - place both **feet on the ground**, feel the floor/ground.....& the chair supporting you..... take a minute to “land”, to take “time out”, to be here, now..... Look around & notice 3 things you didn’t notice before.....what 3 things do you see?.....Now notice what do you hear.....what else?.....you are here now....and you are safe here now”*

• **2-AIR: Breathing & centered** [Attention directed inwards to center].

*“Now going up your body for the 2nd Element **AIR** : “notice your breathing.....now breathe in through your nose letting the air go all the way to your stomach as you count 4 secondsthen gently hold for 2 seconds ..& then breathe out for 4 seconds*

*“Let’s take a minute for about 6 deeper slower breaths like this.....
as you come back to yourself.....(to your center)”*

• **3-WATER: Calm & controlled**

[Attention directed to producing saliva, switching on relaxation response]

*“Continue up your body to the 3rd Element **WATER**. Do you have a moist mouth? ...Saliva?... when you are anxious or stressed your mouth often dries but when you are making saliva it is a sign that you are relaxing.....take a minute or two to make more & more saliva.....more & more salivaas you do this you may also notice that you have more & more focus and control of your thoughts & body”.....*

• **4-FIRE /LIGHT up a path of your IMAGINATION to a SAFE PLACE**

*“Now with your feet on the ground, breathing more deeply & slowly, making more & more saliva we move on to the **4th Element: FIRE or LIGHT**..... bring up an image of a PLACE or situation that helps you to feel calmer & saferlet’s call this your **SAFE or CALM***

***PLACE**notice what you **feel** when you connect to that place & how you **feel in your body?**”.....*

*Install with long set of Butterfly Hugs “keep noticing how you feel in your body when you focus on your safe or calm place”..... **give it a name**..... & install with another long set of Butterfly Hugs as you say the name & focus on your safe place.....*

“Look at your wristband or sticker again & notice how much stress you feel now from zero (Lo stress) to 10 (Hi stress).....