



The Healing Collective

Five Count Breath



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FIVE-COUNT BREATH

Symptoms Addressed

- Emotional awareness and regulation
- Concentration and attention
- Dysregulated interoception
- Intrusive memory
- Stress response
- DSM-5 PTSD arousal and reactivity symptoms



The Five-Count Breath is a focused breathing technique in which clients direct their attention to the breath, counting to five as they inhale, then holding the breath for five counts, and then exhaling for five counts. As they engage in this sequence, they concurrently visualize these counts as forming the outline of an upside-down triangle, such that on the inhale they visualize a line moving upward and to the left, then as they hold the breath they visualize a line going straight across from left to right, and then on the exhale they visualize the line moving down and to the left, connecting at the point where the line first began. This sequence is repeated for several minutes. The Five-Count Breath should be practiced in conjunction with diaphragmatic breathing.

FIVE-COUNT BREATH TIPS

- Instruct clients to breathe through the diaphragm, as opposed to engaging in shallow chest breathing.
- This exercise can be completed standing, lying down, or sitting.
- If participants feel comfortable closing their eyes during this practice, this is recommended. If not, they may find a place on the floor to gently focus their eyes on.
- It is recommended that this technique be practiced for approximately five minutes, multiple times per day.

