

# EFFECTIVE BREATHING

Deep breathing has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to deal with difficult and strong emotions. Bringing fresh air into our lungs and physical system can help us deal more effectively with any situation we are in. We need to inhale the oxygen in (fresh air) to our lungs which travels through our bloodstream to our brain to allow us to process information and make healthy decisions. We need to get oxygen to our muscle groups to relieve tension and help us relax. We need to release the carbon dioxide through exhaling to remove excess poisons from our system.

If we take shallow breaths, we are not getting enough oxygen to our brains and muscles to deal with challenging situations. We will remain tense and are in a position to make poor choices.

Therefore, deep breathing is critical to our emotion management as parents and caregivers. We need to learn these strategies for our own day to day coping and we need to teach these skills to our children to help them deal with their many emotions as well.

## The Breathing Process (using a minimum 3 second count)

1. Inhale (for a count of 3 seconds)
2. Hold (for a count of 3 seconds)  
**This is the most important step which makes the major difference between shallow and deep breathing as oxygen is being transferred into the lungs and carbon dioxide is being transferred out of the lungs. Be sure to include this step!**
3. Exhale (for a count of 3 seconds)
4. Empty (remain empty for a count of 3 seconds)

Practice this 4 step process either counting aloud, counting internally or counting on your fingers until it becomes a natural process.

When you are comfortably doing 3 seconds for each step, increase the count to 4 or 5 seconds. Individuals who practice extreme meditation and yoga often hold their counts for up to 9 seconds! However, as long as individuals are counting for 3 seconds for each step a significant positive change will affect their physiological system.

Repeat the process often and practice whenever possible (in the grocery line or while watching TV). Feel free to use it during important meetings or if having difficulty falling asleep.

Focus on your breath (not the worries of the day). Remember, life is breathing you.

When you practice using this breathing exercise there is a better chance of you being in control instead of your many emotions.

Breathe, Breathe, Breathe.