

# START@home<sup>SM</sup>

Assisted Alcohol Detox  
Caregiving in your home or hotel

## SELF-SOOTHING

The goal of developing self-soothing skills and a plan for using them is so that you are able to comfort yourself by doing things that are pleasant and not harmful. At the same time, you will be able to get outside of your own head and away from troubling thoughts, feelings and impulses. Techniques listed below are a starting point. Each of us has to find what works best. Here are some suggestions for getting started with “Grounding” using your senses.

### Self-Soothing Exercises

#### With vision or sight

Look at nature around you  
Light a candle and watch the flame  
Buy a flower  
Walk in a pretty part of your town  
Look at pictures in a book  
Gaze out your window  
Go to a museum  
Read from Daily Meditations

#### With hearing or sound

Listen to soothing music  
Listen to the sounds around you  
Listen to your own breathing and imagine that it is slowing down and becoming calm and controlled  
Hum a soothing tune

#### With smell

Spray a fragrance in the air  
Light a scented candle  
Put lemon oil on your furniture  
Use your favorite perfume or lotion and smell it if you begin to feel anxious  
Walk in wooded area and breathe in the fresh smells of nature

#### With touch

Take a bubble bath  
Pet your dog or cat  
Have a massage  
Hug someone  
Sink into a really comfortable chair  
Experience whatever you are touching

#### Breathing

Breathing exercises are very beneficial for decreasing anxiety. Here is one exercise.  
Breathe in slowly, counting to three  
Hold breath in your lungs for the count of three  
Breathe out slowly, counting to six while you do so

#### Imagery

Imagery is using your powerful imagination to make pictures in your mind to release unhappy experiences and bad feelings.  
You can use symbols and rituals to release  
Anger  
Fear  
Sadness  
Uncomfortable feelings

#### Affirmations

Try some “Affirmations” by looking in the mirror and making affirmations of healing and empowerment. Examples might be: “I am in the process of growing stronger”, “I am healing” etc.

Make up a story of somewhere safe where you want to send a bad feeling. See the feelings coming out of you and going to that safe place.

We would like you to practice doing at least *one* of these exercises or some other coping skill that you have used successfully, every day...even if you are not experiencing stress or anxiety. We suggest that you try a variety of different coping skills.