



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 feeling

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.