Feeling Overwhelmed?

Try TIPP & Radical Acceptance

- *Everyone becomes overwhelmed at times! When our emotions become intense, it's difficult to think through making positive decisions.*
- *Luckily, there are steps we can take when we are feeling over whelmed. These steps will help us get to a level of calm in which we can make healthy and positive decisions. Both of these skills are used in Dialetical Behavior Therapy or DBT.*

Activity #1—TIPP

When learning skills to help when feeling overwhelmed, it's a good idea to practice them when we are calm. This way, we know what to do when we are feeling intense emotions. Again, when we are feeling intense emotions, it can be difficult to make decisions. By practicing ahead of time, you will have a better idea of how to use the skills when needed.

*Be sure to talk this through with an adult prior to practicing and make sure you only do what you feel comfortable with when doing the temperature and exercise portion. Individuals with certain medical conditions should not use these skills.

TIPP is an acronym that stands for

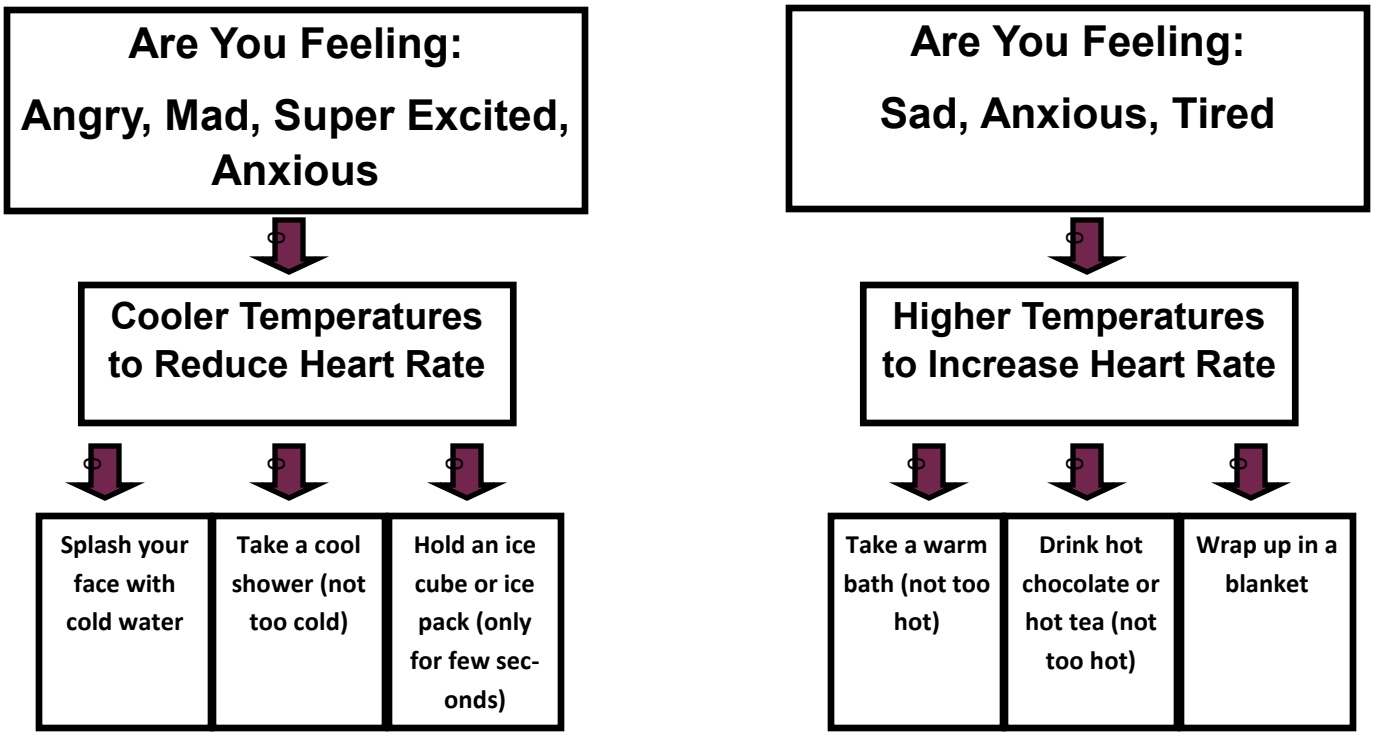
- **T**emperature
- **I**ntense Exercise
- **P**aced Breathing
- **P**rogressive Muscle Relaxation.

Temperature

When we are experiencing intense emotions, our heart rate typically changes. Have you ever been so mad that you could feel your heart thumping and it felt like everyone else could as well? Have you ever been so tired you feel like your heart is beating like a snail's? By using temperature, we can either decrease or increase our heart rate which will then help us regulate and return to a baseline.

Use the following flow chart to help decide what technique would be best depending on which intense emotion you are experiencing.

**Note: Anxiety (and other emotions) can be experienced as an overwhelming feeling or as a sluggish feeling. Depending on how you experience emotions will determine how you respond.*



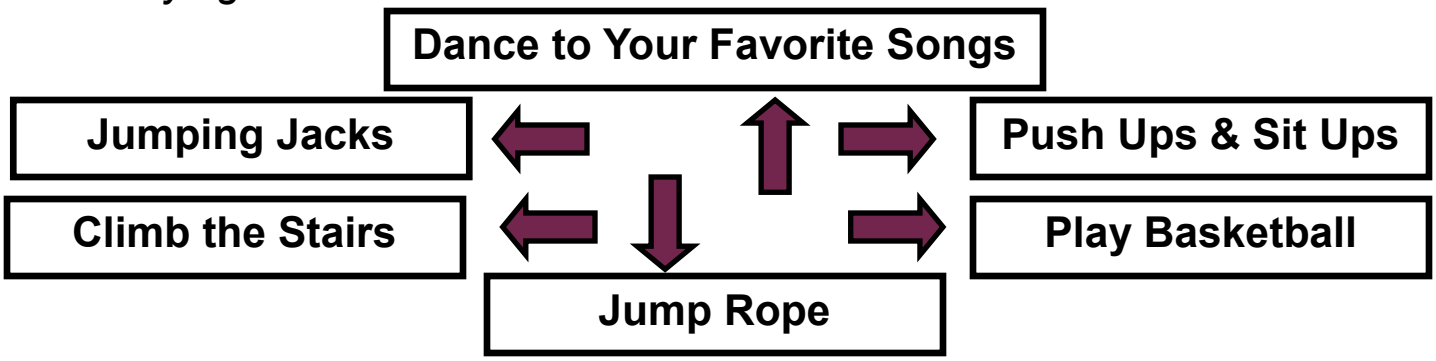
Source: dialecticalbehaviortherapy.com

Intense Exercise

Intense emotions go hand-in-hand with extra energy. Have you ever been worried about something and you find yourself pacing? Have you ever been so excited about something that you couldn't hold still? In order to regulate, we need to use some of the extra energy.

Try the following activities for 10-15 minutes at a time and see which exercises best help you return to your baseline energy level.

**Note: Only do what feels comfortable—do not over extend yourself or do anything that hurts. It is recommended that you discuss with an adult before trying these exercises.*



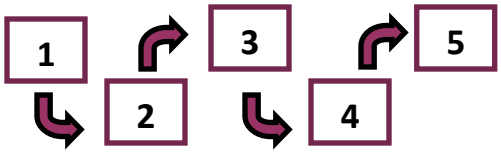
Source: dialecticalbehaviortherapy.com

Paced Breathing

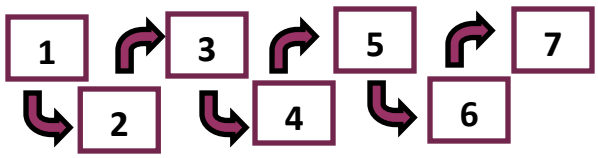
When we experience intense or overwhelming emotions, our breathing often changes. At times, we may feel like we cannot breathe deep enough, or our breathing becomes rapid. Regulating our breathing can help us return to baseline so that we can make good decisions.

Try the following breathing exercises and note which is your favorite to use the next time you need it.

#1: **Breathe In Like You are Smelling a Flower for 5 Seconds**



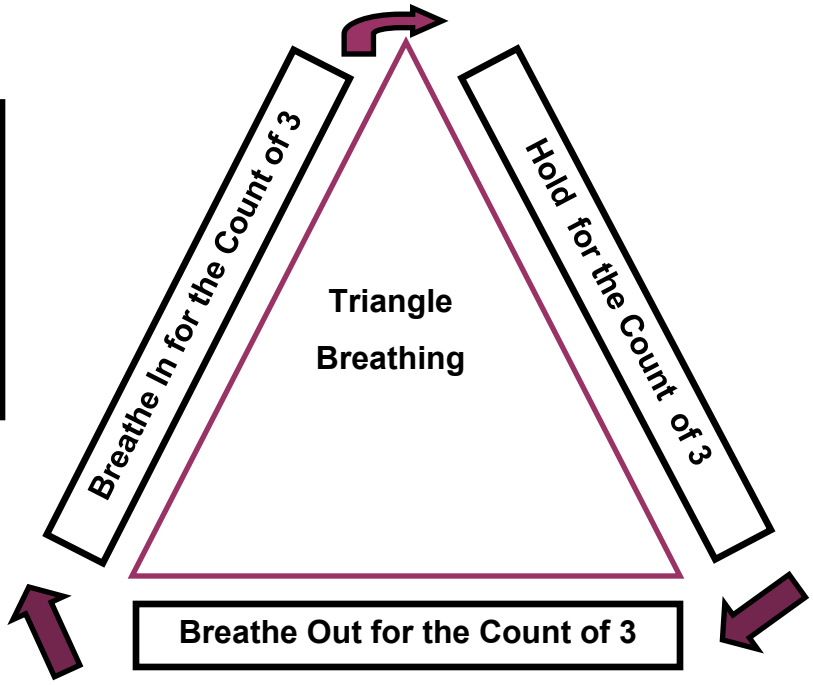
Breathe Out Like You are Blowing Out a Candle for 7 Seconds



#2:

Trace the shape with your finger while breathing in, holding, and breathing out.

Repeat 3-5 times.

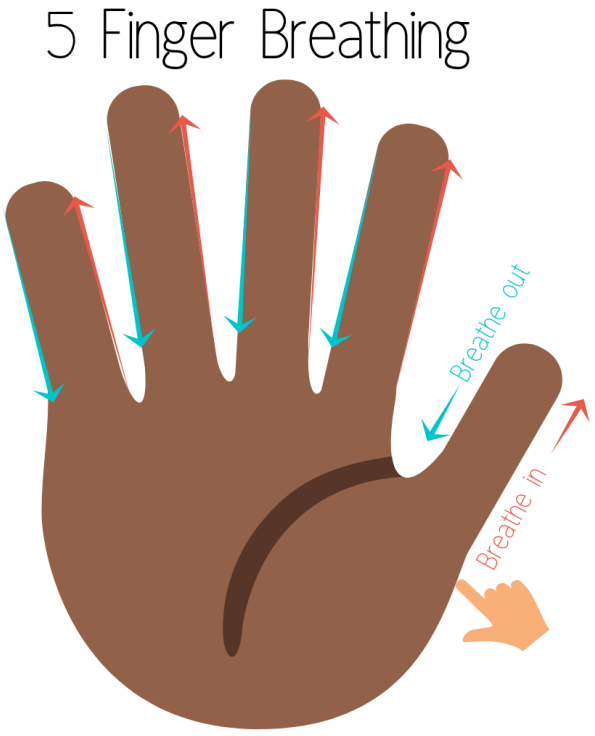


Source: https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/using-shapes-to-teach-deep-breathing

#3:

Take 5 Breathing

Trace the fingers, breathing in when tracing upwards and breathing out when tracing downwards.



Source: http://www.thecalmcorner.com/tag/coping-skills

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

When we experience intense emotions, our body often reacts by tensing our muscles. Have you ever noticed someone clenching their fists when they are angry? Have you ever noticed yourself clenching your teeth when feeling nervous? In order to return to baseline and regulate, we need to relax our muscles.

Source: dialecticalbehaviortherapy.com

Try following this script and see if you feel relaxed when finished:

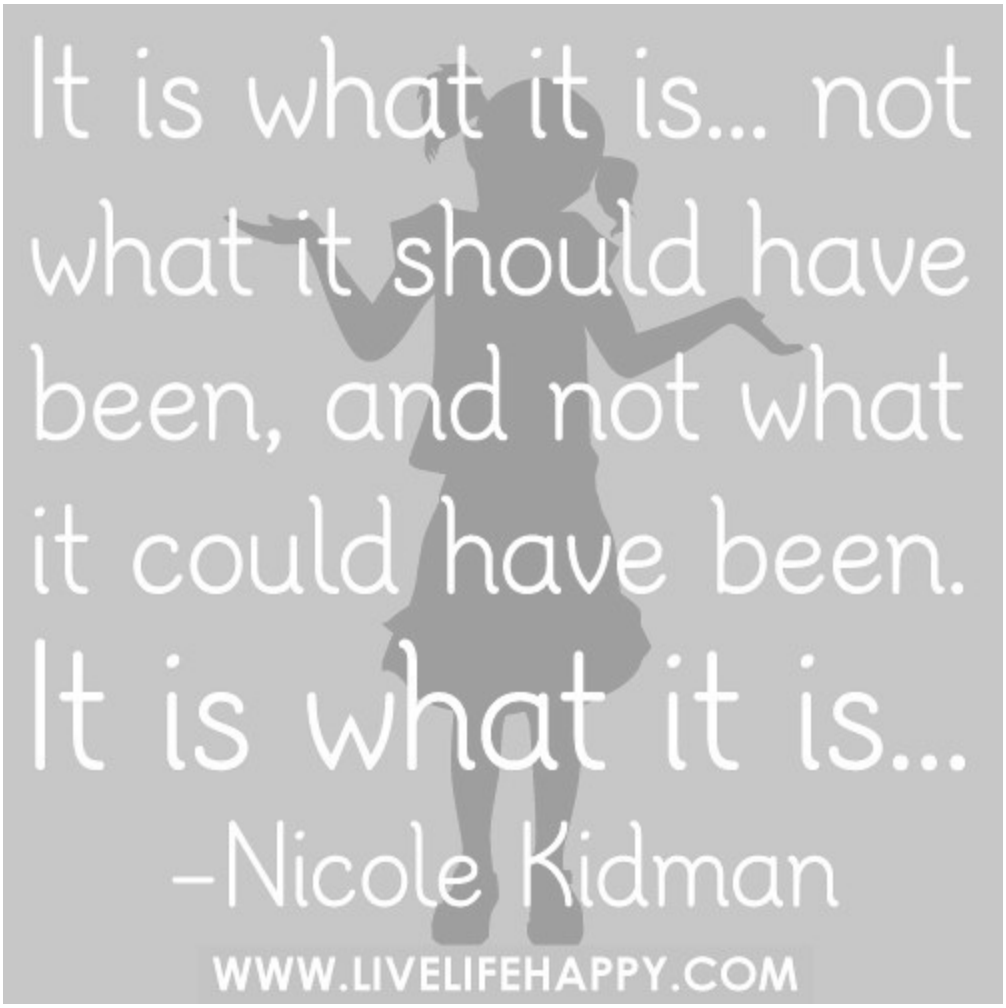
- *Sit comfortably in your chair or lay on the floor on your back.*
- *Begin at the top of your body with your head. Squeeze your eyes shut tight, your lips pulled tight and your jaw clenched for the count of three… 1, 2, 3. Now relax your eyes, relax your lips, and relax you jaw. Picture your head feeling like jelly—loose and relaxed.*
- *Move to your shoulders, arms, and hands. Squeeze your shoulder blades together, straighten your arms, and clench your fists. Hold for the count of three… 1, 2, 3. Now relax your shoulders, your arms, and unclench your fists. Picture your arms and fingers feeling like cooked spaghetti—loose and noodle like.*
- *Move to your belly, legs, feet, and toes. Suck your belly button to the your spine, straighten your legs making them tight, flex your feet, and curl your toes. Hold for the count of three… 1, 2, 3. Now relax your belly, legs, feet, and toes. Picture your legs and toes feeling like cooked spaghetti—loose and noodle like.*
- *Take 3 deep breaths and scan your body from your head to your toes. Make every muscle feel loose and relaxed.*

An example of how a person might use these exercises follows:

Elliott was so angry. His new air pods were stolen at school. He had no idea who took them but he was certain someone stole them. And now he was at home, waiting for his mom to come home so he could break the news. Every time he thought about the situation he felt like steam was coming out of his ears. Elliott went to the bathroom and ran a washcloth under the sink in cold water and placed it on the back of his neck. Once the washcloth lost it's coolness, Elliott went up and down his stairs for 10 minutes. After doing the stairs, he felt like he had less pent-up energy and

could feel his body beginning to relax some. He practiced breathing while looking at his hand and pictured tracing his hand while breathing in and breathing out. After a few minutes of deep breathing, he lied on the floor and began tensing his muscles than releasing beginning from his head to his toes. He had no more finished when his mom returned from work. He was able to tell her what happened and while he was still angry about his missing air pods, he felt in control of his emotions.

Activity #2—Radical Acceptance



Have you ever heard the phrase "it is what it is"? That phrase is a good summary of the concept of Radical Acceptance. Let's walk through what this strategy entails.

There are things in life that we cannot change. We cannot change past experiences. We cannot change some aspects of our current situation. We have to learn to accept where we are, what's happened, and move forward. That doesn't mean that we have to feel happy about things we cannot control but rather we learn to recognize it for what it is and go on with new experiences. Often when we do not practice radical acceptance, we end up having a tantrum of sorts because things are not going how we want them to go.

Let's use the current situation with Corona Virus to walk through Radical Acceptance.

Recognize what reality you are having difficulty accepting.

In our current situation, I am having difficulty accepting that my niece will not have a graduation ceremony after working so hard for 4 years of college. When I think about this, I feel mad and sad—it's simply not fair.

It is what it is and cannot be changed.

I need to remember that this situation cannot be changed. There is no action that I can take to change this outcome. It's okay for me to sit for a bit with the anger and sadness and acknowledge that this situation is not fair.

Remember the cause.

There is a reason that this is occurring. It is not safe at this time to have such a large group of people gathering together. This is for the safety of everyone.

Accept the situation.

This does not mean that you agree with the situation. Rather it means that you recognize that "it is what it is" and you make plans to move forward. Rather than spending my energy on thinking how unfair this is—even though it is—I will focus my energy on writing her a note about how proud I am of her.

Activity #3—Your Turn

Think of a situation that feels unfair in regards to the Corona Virus. Think about how you might use TIPP to help regulate intense emotions associated with this unfairness or how you might practice Radical Acceptance and focus on moving forward.

TIPP

I feel _____ about that Corona Virus.

To help regulate my emotions I could:

T= Temperature—

- ☐ Take a cold shower
- ☐ Take a warm shower
- ☐ Hold an ice cube for a few seconds
- ☐ Wrap up in a blanket
- ☐ Other _____

I= Intense Exercise—

- ☐ Jumping jacks
- ☐ Climb the stairs
- ☐ Run in place
- ☐ Sit-ups and push-ups
- ☐ Other _____

P= Paced Breathing—

- ☐ Breathe in for 5, breathe out for 7
- ☐ Triangle Breathing
- ☐ Take 5 Breathing
- ☐ Other _____

P= Progressive Muscle Relaxation—

- ☐ Follow the script
- ☐ Other _____

Radical Acceptance

I am having difficulty accepting that this will not happen or will happen because of the Corona Virus: _____

Read the following to yourself: There is nothing that I can do to change the situation regarding the Corona Virus. It is okay for me to feel _____ regarding the situation but then I need to focus on moving forward.

Remember the cause: The reason that this situation is occurring is because _____.

It is what it is: Hold your hands out and say, “It is what it is. I cannot change the situation. I can only accept that this is the reality and move forward.”