



BOX BREATHING

Box Breathing, also known as tactical breathing, is a technique used to regulate breathing and manage stress, anxiety, or high-pressure situations. It involves deliberate and controlled breathing patterns that help calm the nervous system and improve focus and performance in adults. We believe that implementing tactical breathing strategies can support educators and students in maintaining remaining calm during times of stress, emotional well-being and enhancing self-regulation skills.

KEY COMPONENTS |

- **Awareness:** Encourage individuals to recognize when they are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or in need of emotional regulation.
- **Breathing Pattern:** Teach the 4x4 breathing technique, also known as box breathing, which involves inhaling, holding the breath, exhaling, and holding again, each for a count of four.
- **Focus:** Direct individuals to focus on their breath, counting each inhale and exhale, to increase mindfulness and divert attention from stressors.
- **Practice:** Encourage regular practice of tactical breathing in various settings to reinforce its effectiveness and establish it as a coping mechanism.
- **Integration:** Foster a classroom or school culture that normalizes the use of tactical breathing as a tool for self-regulation and stress management.

MORNING ROUTINES

A teacher begins each class session by leading students in a brief tactical breathing exercise, promoting a calm and focused atmosphere conducive to learning.

SMALL GROUP

A school counselor leads a mindfulness session with students, incorporating tactical breathing exercises to help them manage stress and anxiety during challenging situations.

TESTING

During a high-pressure test or exam, a teacher guides students to take a moment to practice tactical breathing by instructing them to inhale deeply for a count of four, hold their breath for four counts, exhale for four counts, and hold again for four counts.



IMPLEMENTATION TIPS |

- **Teach** the box breathing technique explicitly, ensuring individuals understand the process and benefits.
- **Encourage** regular practice, incorporating it into daily routines or specific moments of stress or tension.
- **Remind** individuals to use box breathing as a proactive strategy to manage emotions and enhance self-regulation.
- Provide a **supportive and non-judgmental environment** for students and educators to practice tactical breathing.
- **Model** the use of box breathing as an adult, emphasizing its effectiveness in managing stress and promoting well-being for you, and suggest students try it too.
- **Incorporate** box breathing into existing mindfulness or self-regulation practices within the school or classroom setting.

FIDELITY CHECKLIST

The following tool can be used for self-assessment and/or non-evaluative learning walks (e.g., buddy observations, peer observations, coaching observations).

Date	Time		
FEATURE	NO	SOMETIMES	ALWAYS
Awareness: I recognize and acknowledge the need for emotional regulation.			
Breathing Patterns: I teach and guide individuals in the 4x4 breathing technique.			
Focus: I direct individuals to focus on their breath and count each inhale and exhale.			
Practice: I encourage regular practice of tactical breathing in various settings.			
Integration: I foster a culture that normalizes and supports the use of tactical breathing.			

REFERENCES

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