

# Calming techniques to self-soothe

**Affirmations:** Affirmations are positive statements, preferably phrased using active verbs that, when repeated consistently over a period of time, can change the way a person feels about himself or herself and the world at large. The best affirmations are carefully chosen phrases that mirror the individual's personal goals.

**Breath-Work:** Breath-work is the conscious alteration in the way you breathe. It is often used as psychotherapy, meditation, development of a spiritual connection, yoga, and even exercise.

**Exercise:** It's no secret that exercise generates a "natural high." People who take up exercise, once they get past the initial muscle-aches stage, uniformly report feeling better (not just physically, but emotionally) both during and after exercise. Research tells us that regular exercise encourages better and more fulfilling sleep and a greater natural ability to rebound from life's challenges.

**Gathering Interpersonal Support:** The most common method of self-soothing involves reaching out and talking to another supportive person, be it a friend, a family member, a therapist, a religious figure, or some other empathic person. Talking with a supportive, nurturing person is an active form of de-escalation and down-regulation.

**Hobbies/Recreation:** Whether you are a gardener, painter, reader, coin collector, or museum goer, you are likely to find not only enjoyment but solace in your hobby. Activities that are fun and interesting (to you) are a great way to escape the tedium and difficulties of day-to-day life. They may also help to create a community that can be turned to for social support.

**Journaling:** Journaling forces the individual to slow down and think about what is happening in his or her life. By thinking about and writing about things in one's life, both good and bad, one develops a better understanding of thoughts and events, and perhaps a level of acceptance that in and of itself reduces stress and anxiety.

**Meditation:** Meditation is a practice in which the individual attempts to induce a peaceful state of mind and being. There are numerous forms of meditation, all of which are designed to promote relaxation, positive energy, and love of self and others.

**Prayer and Spiritual Practice:** Developing a "conscious contact" with a power outside ourselves is similar to talking with an actual person. It takes us outside our own problems, helping us to see the bigger picture. For many, it also provides a sense of being loved, cared for, and "part of" something more important than our day-to-day troubles.

**Service and Volunteering:** Much like prayer and spiritual practice, being of service is a way to forget about our own issues for a while. It enables us to become part of something more important than our own, petty (or even major) problems. Plus, there is a natural high that occurs when we know we have done something innately good.

**Yoga:** Yoga is a physical, mental, and spiritual practice. Among the many goals of yoga is finding and maintaining inner peace. There are numerous schools and disciplines of yoga, some of which are more physical (with the same benefits as exercise), others of which are more spiritual (with the same benefits as meditation).