

# Rescue remedy breathing exercise

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this exercise is to reduce unwanted emotions in difficult situations.

## **Description**

When facing difficult situations, this breathing exercise provides the client with a strategy that enables them to remain calm by countering the negative biological tendency to produce unhelpful stress hormones such as adrenalin and noradrenalin in stressful situations. These hormones are associated with what has been termed the 'stress response'. When stressed, individuals are likely to experience unhelpful emotions such as anxiety or anger and this breathing exercise helps them manage and gain control over such feelings. It trains the client to breathe in a way that takes the edge off negative feelings and is not noticeable to others. It can therefore be used even when the client is engaged in conversation, for example while they are listening to what the other person is saying.

## **Process**

The client is asked to take in a long, slow breath through his/her nose and then to release it equally slowly through the mouth. While doing so, the client is asked to consciously

relax his/her shoulders and to repeat the exercise three or four times.

The coach checks with the client to ascertain whether the individual feels more relaxed when engaging in this exercise. The client is also asked to repeat the exercise as many times as possible, in as many situations as possible, throughout the day. The rationale for practising the exercise is that the more the client practises, the more readily s/he will be able to call upon this relaxation technique when it is needed. If the client does not practice the exercise until it can be called upon easily, the harder it will be to gain the benefits associated with this strategy when the individual actually needs it.

### **Pitfalls**

The coach should check with the client to ensure that s/he does not have any breathing difficulties or suffer from asthma. Although rare, there is a very slim possibility that the exercise could trigger an attack. If the client does suffer from a breathing difficulty, the coach should explain the possibility and the client can decide whether s/he wishes to engage in the strategy.

### **Bibliography**

- Davis, M., Eschelman, E. R. and McKay, M. (2000) *Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook*, Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.
- McMahon, G. (2005) *No More Anxiety: Be your Own Anxiety Coach*, London: Karnac Books.