

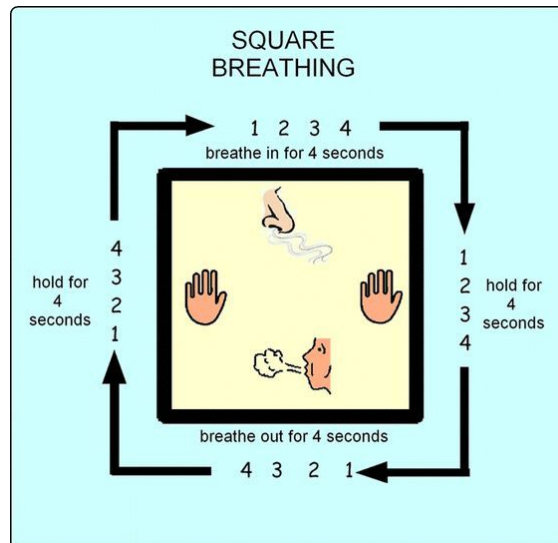
## Activities for Mental Health Care

### 1. GROUNDING EXERCISES (easy to do at home and does not require too many materials)

A. **Positive Affirmations:** In this activity, a jar/box of affirmations can be kept in the house. When required, an individual can pick an affirmation from the jar and read it out for themselves or for the whole family. The individual or family members can spend some time repeating the affirmation to themselves before going about their usual routine. Some affirmations have been included at the end of the document.

- Suggestions for using the activity: This activity can be used during the morning routine as it will allow people to settle before their daily schedule. At the end of the day, the individual or the family can go over the affirmation again and can choose to spend some time reflecting on how it helped (or did not help) during the day (reflection can be through writing, drawing, speaking or silent contemplation).

B. **Square breathing exercise:** In this exercise, the breathing process is assisted by following the lines of a square. For this exercise, the individual can draw a square on a piece of paper or may even trace a square on the palm of the hand. The individual will therefore breathe in and breath out while tracing the outline of the square. A pictorial representation of the exercise is as follows:



- Suggestions for using the activity: As this activity is not time consuming it can be used during transition (lunch break, snack etc.) or whenever someone is feeling restless.

C. **Clap-Tap-Breathe Out or Clap-Snap-Breathe Out:** In this activity, individuals will follow a rhythm which will allow them to engage in physical activity as well as focus on their breathing. In this activity, an individual will first clap, followed by a snap/tap and then finally they will breathe out. When they are breathing out, they will do so from their mouths and will make a sound while exhaling.

- Suggestions for using the activity: Can be used whenever the person is feeling restless and needs a break from the work space.

**D. Power Hug:** In this activity, individuals will be giving themselves a hug! They will be instructed to place their right hand on their left arm and the left hand will be placed on the right arm. Once they're in this position, they will follow this pattern for the activity: '*Tap-Tap-Squeeze*'. The purpose of the activity is to again allow people to have the chance to be aware of their own bodies and be present in the moment. This activity can also be done as follows: '*Tap-Tap-Squeeze-Affirm*'. In this pattern, after a person has given a hug to themselves, they will repeat a positive affirmation (for example: I have the power within me or I believe in myself).

- Suggestions for using the activity: This activity can be helpful to ground people in the present moment.

**E. Breathing exercise:** In this activity, individuals will have to concentrate on their breathing. This can be done for 2-3mins for people who are not used to doing breathing exercises and the time can eventually be increased till however an individual is comfortable. The purpose of this activity is to be aware of the body and be present in the moment. The following links can be used for reference:

<https://youtu.be/cI4ryatVkKw>

<https://youtu.be/SEfs5TJZ6Nk>

- Suggestions for using the activity: This activity can be helpful to transition between different activities in the daily schedule (especially in getting back to work post lunch or late in the afternoon)

**F. 5-4-3-2-1 Technique:** This grounding activity utilises all the 5 senses that we have. The activity can be done as follows:

Focus on, 5 things you can see  
4 things you can hear  
3 things you can touch  
2 things you can smell  
1 thing you can taste

If engaging all of the 5 senses is difficult, individuals can start with engaging the senses that they are most comfortable with and which are easy to focus on - like vision, hearing and touch. After they are used to these senses, they can slowly start engaging the other senses as well. It is also possible to switch the number of things they have to notice when using their different senses.

- Suggestions for using the activity: This activity can be helpful to ground oneself in the present moment especially when starting to feel restless or when attention starts diverting.

**G. ABC grounding technique:** Individuals can use the following script for themselves while doing this grounding activity: "*Stop. Pause. Now try to notice things in the room (or in your surroundings) which begins A, B, C, D, E .....etc*". If they wish to, individuals can note down the objects they notice in a notebook - this can further help them in orienting themselves to the present.

- Suggestions for using the activity: This activity can be helpful to ground oneself in the present moment especially when starting to feel restless or when attention starts diverting.

## H. Reorientation script

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old

I am a \_\_\_\_\_ (profession/gender)

It is \_\_\_\_\_ (Day)

It is \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

It is \_\_\_\_\_ (Month) etc.

I like to eat \_\_\_\_\_

I like to drink \_\_\_\_\_

In this manner, the individual can orient themselves to the present when they are experiencing distress.

## I. Breathing in and breathing out

*First step:* Record in your soft voice in a soft tone this msg –

“Seat yourself in a comfortable position in a quiet space in your home. Think to yourself of a relaxing colour. It can be any colour you like, as long as it is one that makes you think of relaxation.

Now think of a colour that represents stress.

Now bring your attention your breathing, slowly imagine breathing in the relaxing colour and visualise it filling their lungs. then imagine breathing out the stress colour.

Imagine you are surrounded by the relaxing colour. No longer is the air clear, it is the relaxing colour.

You can still make out shapes, but your world is now a different colour. Imagine that as you breathe in, you breathe in this colour too. See the colour filling up your lungs.

Imagine as you breathe out, that your breath is the colour of stress.

See the stress colour mix into the relaxing colour around you. Watch the stress colour slowly disappear.

Breath in your relaxing colour.

Breath out the stress colour.”

Play this recording on your headphones or on speaker in your home and carry on this exercise.

This exercise could help you relax and de-stress for 10-15 minutes of your day.

**Meditation:** Mindful Breathing/Movement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2zdUXve6fQ>

Guided Metta Meditation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cLoHy7O3Oo>

## **List of Positive Affirmations for Grounding activity:**

- I deserve love
- I am doing my best
- I have people who love me
- I am unique
- I am special
- I deserve to be happy

- I am worthy
- I believe in myself
- I get better every day
- I forgive myself for my mistakes
- My mistakes help me learn and grow
- Today, I choose to think positive
- I am open and ready to learn
- I can make a difference
- I am in charge of my life
- I have the power to make my dreams come true
- I have inner strength
- I am a loving person
- I am taking things one step at a time
- I am full of potential
- I am calm and peaceful
- Everything I do today leads to a better tomorrow
- I breathe in peace
- There is power within me
- I choose to see the good in everything
- I am important
- I try my hardest
- I like to share what I have
- I have great ideas
- I like to smile

**2. HELPLINES** - The following are some numbers that people can get in touch to talk about how they are feeling in these times of self-isolation and quarantine:

- a. Project Mumbai: Website: [www.projectmumbai.org](http://www.projectmumbai.org) ; the website lists the numbers of counsellors who can provide services on call.
- b. <https://drive.google.com/file/u/2/d/1gz6jGh5T3beSKldLB-Nn7xdqUdlfj1BT/view?usp=sharing&fbclid=IwAR2jQNmjgNs0KTaxrl6fVzggqMa2CQpuvDcdPNybkFhOSdBXpaTSAT5ZIBU>

**3. WORKING WITH CHILDREN: BUILDING AWARENESS** *(of their thoughts and feelings about Covid 19)*

A. **Read:**

[https://www.counselorkeri.com/2020/03/14/talk-to-kids-about-coronavirus/?utm\\_source=Counselor+Keri%27s+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=816e35d49a-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_03\\_16\\_06\\_52&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_91899b3296-816e35d49a-89950963&mc\\_cid=816e35d49a&mc\\_eid=d0f922cfl1e](https://www.counselorkeri.com/2020/03/14/talk-to-kids-about-coronavirus/?utm_source=Counselor+Keri%27s+Newsletter&utm_campaign=816e35d49a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_16_06_52&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_91899b3296-816e35d49a-89950963&mc_cid=816e35d49a&mc_eid=d0f922cfl1e)

B. Resource Book:

The story of the Oyster & the butterfly

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/13-SrIaH9MIW\\_bYaYktRhrMG7y0IDGsx/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/13-SrIaH9MIW_bYaYktRhrMG7y0IDGsx/view)

C. Video: Child friendly explanation of Covid 19

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEYq\\_Yv9PXY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEYq_Yv9PXY)

#### **4. ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN ( &Adults!):**

**A. Links:**

- Fun Games (Math and Reading)K-8th: <https://www.funbrain.com/>
- Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus A - Read through this comic on COVID-19 then have your kids create their own  
[https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-t  
he-new-coronavirus](https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus)
- Math and science rap - Just for fun <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMXzBKm3SSA>
- Zines about science - A beautiful combination of art and science - <http://ipsawonders.com/zines/>
- Indoor Activities for Toddlers - <https://busytoddler.com/2020/03/indoor-activities>
- [www.classroommagazines.scholastic.com](http://www.classroommagazines.scholastic.com)
- [www.toytheater.com](http://www.toytheater.com)

**B. Art Activities:**

#### **Create a story book with your child or your partner**

This is a fun activity that can be done with children as well as your partner/spouse.

Pick up an empty notebook/scrapbook/drawing book/A4 sheets. You can use a box of crayons, colour pencils, soft pastels, paints, sketch pens, colour pens or even just a pencil (any stationary that is easily available at home). If you need glue, scissors, cut outs from newspapers, sparkles, stickers, pencil sharpener shavings for decoration or anything else that you would need, gather it in advance and place it all in a basket/tray next to you.

Start creating a storyline of your choice. It can be your personal life story, an idea your child has or a story that you and your spouse choose to create together. Get as creative as possible. Bring in imaginary characters, funny characters you may have come across in life, add some humour in it and any other emotions you choose to bring in to the story. Remember to make it as creative and imaginative as possible. It's your story. No one is judging it, there is no right or wrong, the aim is to just have fun creating something magical with the people you love.

Once the storybook is complete, choose a spot in your home to read it or look at the end product together :) Something that was made with all hands on deck plus all those imaginative minds put together! What fun! :)

**It's time to make some greeting cards! :) (Nishtha)**

When was the last time you made a card for someone you love, someone you miss, someone you wish was close to you?

Things you will need: Paper, colour pencils or crayons or sketch pens, glue if you are sticking things to decorate

Write a small message for the person/people you wish to share this greeting card with after this turbulent phase has passed. You can write your favourite quote or something that the other person may want to hear from you. Get as creative and messy as possible!

## **Fun with paints**

Paint me!

It can be anything in your own homes. For example: Finding a corner of the wall, painting a family tree along with your spouse and kids, even painting your palms in your favourite colour and stamping it on the wall will create a stamp-print of all the palms in the family (only if you're okay with painting a wall in your house, the decision is completely up to you because it may not be practical for some of us).

Pick out an old piece of furniture or trunk and paint it as colourfully and creatively as possible. Call it the 'Trunk Project' if you must. Not only will this give your central nervous system some relaxation, it can also bring to life something antique in your homes.

Why paint? It gives our senses the stimulation it needs and relaxes our bodies in ways we're not even aware of. Use your fingers, your palms, your fine motor skills and creative sides of your mind and paint away!

### **C. Reading material for kids and adults-**

- Scanned copies of Amar Chitra Katha comics - [https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=1oYu7ExxmavGZDQENCp\\_nwuIPPqOOHeD9](https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=1oYu7ExxmavGZDQENCp_nwuIPPqOOHeD9) - Calvin & Hobbes (All Comic Strips) - <http://bit.ly/CandHComix>
- Dr Seuss | <http://bit.ly/booksdrseuss>
- TIN TIN | <http://bit.ly/TinTinComix>
- Garfield | 1978-2007 - <http://bit.ly/GarfieldComix>
- Dilbert (1994-2002) | <https://bit.ly/DilbertComix>
- Amar Chitra Katha and Tinkle are offering their entire catalog free, till March 31st to help with social distancing. Please share. Here are the links:

Amar Chitra Katha: [bit.ly/ACKFree](http://bit.ly/ACKFree)

Tinkle: <http://bit.ly/TinkleFree>

- Scribd is making our digital library of ebooks and audiobooks free for everyone: <http://scribd.com/readfree>

- D. **Activities for Sensory Stimulation** (Can be done for children as well as for adults. Can help to engage different senses)
- **Oral-motor Stimulation**: The following simple activities can be done at home for oral-motor stimulation and for regulating breathing (especially when feeling distressed):
    - Blowing Bubbles: This can be done either by using straws to blow bubbles in a bowl of water or making a soap solution and then using straws to blow bubbles.
    - Blowing Balloons: Another activity that can help with oral-motor stimulation and help regulate breathing. Can be especially helpful for children who need sensory stimulation.
  
  - **Auditory Stimulation**: The following activity can be done at home for auditory stimulation (can be used with both children and adults):
    - Shaker Bottles: Items easily available at home can be used to make shakers which can then be used by children or by other adults to make sounds which can help in auditory stimulation and integration. Household items like old bottles, rice grains, lentils, or other grains, buttons, beads etc. can be used to make shakers. The following link has a tutorial about making shakers: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2Gkf\\_HFrMM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2Gkf_HFrMM)
    - Listening to Calming Music: This can be another effective way of helping a person relax when feeling overstimulated or distressed. For this activity, it would be ideal to use headphones or earphones which will allow an individual to focus on the music completely. People can choose to have the music playing in the background while they are working or they can take a break from their work and simply focus on the music while taking deep breaths and regulating their breathing along with the music playing in the background. People can choose how long they would like to focus on the music. For the purpose of the activity, people can choose to listen to (soft) music from their own playlist or the following links can also be helpful for the same:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjHGZj2IjBk&t=750s>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcfbOtMeNFI>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ckMFFUDVws>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hWgA7qjK2c&pbjreload=10>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3-cXUblWgs>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osttfX5L5jM&pbjreload=10>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoY81oAiwD0>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGIXT7ce3vQ&pbjreload=10>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCF6nZ1Kd8o&t=86s>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxiyUWdVYDw&t=5s>
  
  - **Tactile Stimulation**: The following activities can be done at home for tactile stimulation (can be useful for both adults as well as children).
    - Using Stress Balls: Stress Balls can be very effective means of meeting the tactile sensory needs of an individual. Additionally, it can also help a person to ground themselves in the present when feeling overstimulated or indulge in more sensory activity when feeling under-stimulated.

- Materials required for the activity: Soft (sponge) balls available in the market. If these are not accessible, stress balls can also be made at home without using too many materials. The following link has a tutorial about making stress balls:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fz5iEBdJM84>
- Using Clay, Sand, Slime (if available at home) or even foodgrains (rice, dal) can be an effective way of regulating tactile needs of an individual.
- Finger Painting: using fingers to paint using watercolors or poster colours can be another way of regulating tactile stimulation
- Sorting Activities: This can be a fun way of bringing one's attention back to the present by focusing on what the hands are doing. This activity can be especially helpful for use with young children and it can be a fun way for them to help in the house as well. However, we need to keep in mind that the task must not be too difficult otherwise attention will be easily diverted. Some examples of sorting activities can be as follows:
  - Sorting vegetables and keeping them in respective places in the kitchen.
  - Sorting clothes and keeping them into different piles.
  - Sorting grains (rice, dal etc.)
  - Sorting buttons/beads/earrings etc.
  - Sorting books
  - Sorting newspapers