



COPING WITH CORONAVIRUS

3-Step Mindful Breathing Space

This technique can be done in 1-2 minutes, or half an hour, depending on how much time you have and how much you need to re-centre. It can be used at any time, like while you're brushing your teeth or waiting for the kettle to boil. However, it is a very helpful **response to difficult emotions or worries**. When we feel strong unpleasant emotions we tend to try and solve them or get rid of them immediately. Doing a 3-minute breathing space in these moments will help us to slow down and stay calm, present and aware- the best way to be for making rational and helpful decisions.

This exercise is often explained with an **hour glass metaphor**: Your attention is the sand. It starts broad at the top collecting into one place. Then it narrows as much as possible, and then expands again, settling in a different way.

Step 1: Notice what is going on

- Notice what is going on in your environment (lighting, sounds, smells, temperature)
- Notice what is going on in your body (tension, temperature, sensations, needs)
- Notice what is going on in your mind. *What is occupying most of your attention? What thoughts are coming up for you? What emotions are you feeling right now?*

Don't try to change, or solve any of these things. Don't make judgements about any of these things being good or bad. Just accept that they are present, and be present with them.

Step 2: Focus on your breath

Now bring your attention inwards, and focus as much as possible on your breathing. Notice all the places in your body you can feel your breath (mouth, nose, throat, chest).

Now pick just one of those and focus all of your attention on that place and the sensation of breathing there.

Step 3: Expand your attention and let it settle

Expand your attention outwards again. Noticing again your body, your mind and your environment without judgement and without giving in to your urges to change or problem-

Try to attend to the entire experience of being you, right here, right now.

What does that feel like? What matters most?

