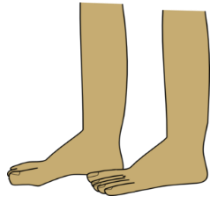


The 4 Elements Exercise

The 4 Elements is a simple tool you can use wherever you are that can help you to feel calmer or more in control. This exercise has been adapted from Elan Shapiro (2012).

Earth = Grounding, Reality of Safety in the Present Moment



Take a few moments to “land” where you are. Feel your feet on the ground. Feel the support of whatever is beneath you. Feel the contact your skin makes with whatever it is touching. Open your eyes and look around the room to notice 3 things that you have not noticed before. Notice any sounds, smells, or tastes that might be present.

Air = Breathing for Centring



Focus on your breath. Place your hands on your belly. Imagine you have a balloon in your belly. When you breathe in, feel that balloon fill up with air. When you breathe out, feel the air in that balloon deflate. Try breathing in for the count of 4, holding your breath for the count of 2, and breathing out for the count of 6. Feel free to adjust these counts as needed.

Water = Turn on Relaxation Response



Make saliva in your mouth and swallow a few times. If you have trouble doing this, you can take a sip of water or imagine biting an orange. When we enter fight or flight mode, the systems in our body that are not necessary for our immediate survival slow down. This includes the digestive system. Creating saliva turns on your digestive system, which in turn activates your body's relaxation response.

Fire = Imagination



Bring to mind a place, activity or state in which you feel safe, calm, and relaxed, or where you feel good about yourself. Bring all of your senses into this experience to notice what you see, hear, taste, smell and feel. Also notice what emotions you feel being in this safe, calm space or state.

When you have finished, come back to the present moment, notice the state of your mind, your breath and how you're feeling. Practice this exercise 6 - 10 times a day or every time you notice your wristband (or you could put a sticker on your phone instead). Monitor your stress levels from 0 – 10. After a week or two, you may be able to calm yourself more easily just by looking at or touching your wristband or sticker.