

Fact Sheet

Deep Breathing Reminder

What is a reminder card?

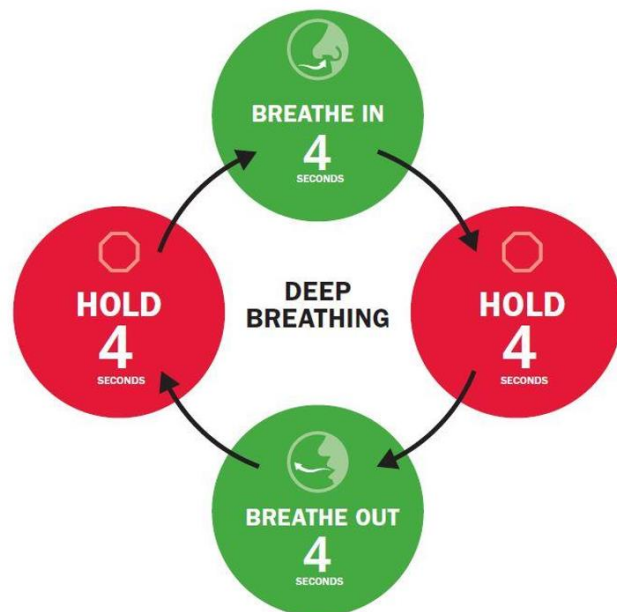
The deep breathing reminder card is a pictorial representation of the steps that support the completion of a task, in this case deep breathing exercise – a commonly used strategy used to distract attention away from an anxiety provoking stimulus and promote relaxation.

How can this strategy be used?

The following example reminds a child how to engage in deep breathing when they need to use this strategy to reduce anxiety during their visit to the hospital. In this example a number of visual cues prompt the child to engage in the steps required for deep breathing that would in turn serve to distract the child and to also facilitate relaxation. This visual not only reminds the child of the steps involved but also reinforces what was already taught previously. The caregiver teaches/coaches in the moment and then eventually simply reminds the child about how to use the strategy when an anxiety provoking response is anticipated. Ideally the child should practice this strategy prior to using it in an anxiety provoking situation. This distraction strategy ideally refocuses the child's attention. Some children may require more tangible things to blow, such as, bubbles to be successful. Within this context, you would still coach through the steps required for deep breathing.

What does the caregiver do?

- ✓ Introduce the strategy of deep breathing to facilitate relaxation.
- ✓ Teach the steps
- ✓ Practicing the steps with the child. Practice together and alone. If possible the child could practice when they are relaxed.
- ✓ Reward attempts to accomplish the strategy.
- ✓ Support the child's efforts during stressful or anxiety provoking encounters.
- ✓ Use the reminder card to prompt the child to complete steps involved with deep breathing.



Stress Busters: Deep Breathing Resource

