

Things that can make you feel safer and more grounded in the present:

- Open your eyes and look around
- Breathe deeply and slowly
- Pay attention to your body and what you notice about it
- Give yourself a hand or foot massage
- Pay attention to how you are sitting and how your feet feel on the floor
- Drink something cold and attention to how that feels
- Carry something in your pocket that reminds you of being safe in the present
- Look at photos of people you care about
- Write in a journal about a time when you felt safe
- Make a list of foods you like to eat when you are feeling low
- Do things you like to do
- Call or talk to a friend
- Listen to music that is safe, soothing or fun
- Read a favorite book
- Write "safety reminders" on index cards and carry them in your pocket
- Wrap yourself in a blanket
- Say affirmations or positive things about yourself
- Walk around and stretch

Breath Awareness:

- Shift around in your chair or seated position a little bit on the ground, until you find a position that for you symbolizes paying attention
- Be mindful not to slouch, but also be aware not to sit so straight up that it is uncomfortable
- Spend some time paying attention to your breath, and just notice the experience; notice the natural rise and fall of your chest or stomach. See if you can keep your attention fully on your breath
- If your mind starts to wonder or you feel that you've stopped paying attention, that's ok. You can always bring the attention back to the breath- the exercise is in noticing it wonder.
- Work up to practicing this in three-minute increments. If all you can start with is 30 seconds to a minute, that is fine. It's about practicing patience with the process and yourself.

Diaphragmatic ("Belly") Breathing:

- Put one or both hands on the upper area of your stomach so that you can really pay attention to the motions you are engaging with your diaphragm
- As you inhale with your nose, allow your belly to expand as far as it will go
- Exhale with your mouth allowing the belly to pull back in
- Continue this inhale, exhale pattern at your own pace, giving it at least 6-7 repetitions to find a rhythm and style that works for you...curiosity and non-judgement are key... find what works for you
- After finding your rhythm, consider puckering your mouth and really exaggerating your exhale, striving to make it slightly longer than your inhale...this may help to lower your heart rate and relax you even more

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that relaxes your mind and body by progressively tensing and relaxation muscle groups throughout your entire body. You tense each muscle group vigorously, but without straining, and then suddenly release the tension and feel the muscle relax, allowing your body to release tension that has been held in your body.

If you'd like to try, you can keep your eyes open, or close them if that feels comfortable for you today.

Take a deep breath in, raising your shoulders to try and meet your ears (demonstrate), tensing up the muscles in your arms and making a tight fist with both hands.
Hold for 1...2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5
and release your fists and arms abruptly as you exhale.

Take a moment and notice the feeling of tension leaving your shoulders and arms, pausing for a few seconds and remembering to breath in and out evenly.

Clench again, shoulders up to your ears and tightening your arms and fists.
Holding 1...2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5

And release with your exhale.
Again, notice the feeling of tension leaving your muscles.

One last time, clench your shoulders, arms, and fists tightly
Holding 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5
And release as you breathe out.

"I Statements"

Finding alternative ways to express anger: Planning your response:

"I Statements" are a clear, assertive and non-threatening way of telling another person how you feel when something happens, and why.

What are the parts of an I message?

I FEEL...	State how you feel.
WHEN...	State the problem.
BECAUSE...	State why.

Ineffective

"You make me feel stupid when you tell me how to empty the dishwasher."

"You make me angry when you tell don't answer my phone calls."

Effective

"I FEEL frustrated WHEN you explain how to load the dishwasher BECAUSE I think both of our ways are fine."

"I FEEL upset WHEN you you're not able to answer my phone call BECAUSE I feel ignored."

An example of how this might be used in Labor & Delivery...

"I FEEL angry WHEN you examine me before I am ready BECAUSE it makes me feel like I have lost control (autonomy) over my own body."