



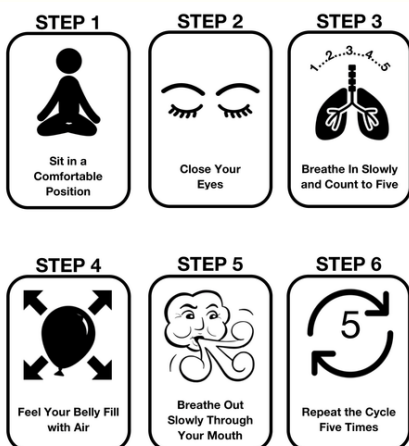
Breathe: How We Can Access our Inner Calm

"Take a breath!" We have all heard about the importance of deep breathing to promote stress management and relaxation, especially when experiencing heightened emotions. However, we hear much less about the biological processes behind breathing strategies or why they actually work.

When we breathe deeply and slowly, there are many biological benefits. But stress, anxiety, and anger often cause us to breathe in short, shallow bursts rather than deep from our diaphragm. When we take deep, slow breaths from our diaphragm, the nervous system moves from 'fight or flight' mode into 'rest and digest' mode. This, in turn, reduces cortisol (the stress hormone) levels in the body, regulates heart rate, and calms the nervous system. There is ample evidence that taking less breaths in a day is beneficial for our biological and mental health.

Different types of breathing practices can have different effects on the body. For example, some breathing practice can energize the body/mind, while others have a more relaxing effect. Give these a try at home to see what works best for you and your child! For more information on breathing, consider reading the book *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art*, by James Nestor.

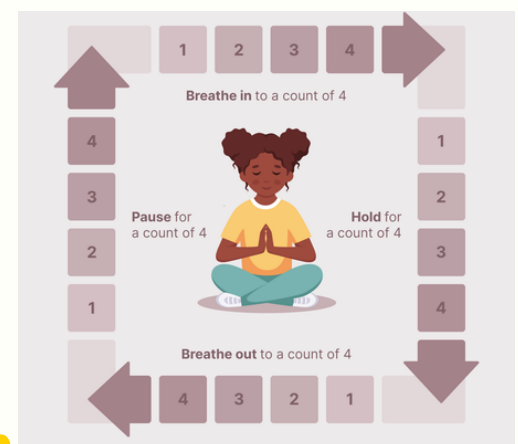
Belly Breathing



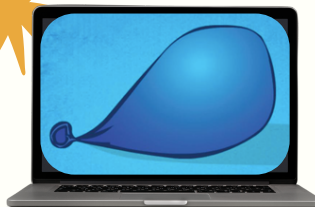
4-7-8 Breathing



Box Breathing



Remember to practice breathing exercises often so they become automatic! You can practice with these Breathing 'How-To' videos:



Belly Breathing



478 Breathing



Box Breathing

A Look into School Psychology in the TDSB ...and Beyond!

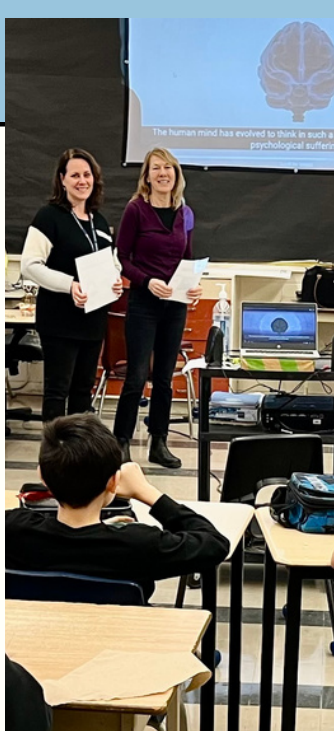


Rachel Horton, Ph.D., C.Psych.
(TDSB Clinical and School Psychologist)

I had the pleasure of delivering a presentation about 'Attachment' to school staff at Calico and Stilecroft P.S. Attachment refers to the relationships between an infant and their primary caregivers that develop over the first years of life. By the time children come to school, their attachment experiences can impact how they settle into school and their readiness to learn. We discussed the important part educators play in helping children to feel emotionally safe and develop self-regulation skills using the acronym P.A.C.E. (developed by psychologist Daniel Hughes), which help us remember to practice Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy with students. We discussed strategies at school that can help students feel a sense of belonging, safety, and motivation so that they are ready to do their best learning.

Jennifer Kapler, M.A, C. Psych.
(TDSB School Psychologist)

In December the school Social Worker Barbara Judge and I began a "Test Smart" group for selected students in grades 7 and 8 at Glen Ames Middle School. The group meets weekly at lunch to discuss values/goals and 'barriers' to achieving goals. We focus on a different topic each week: stress, organization skills, study strategies, healthy habits, and learning profiles. The goal is for each student to learn more about themselves and find their own unique skill set that works for them. Our aim is to help these students build independence and confidence in problem solving, school success, and life beyond school!



Curious what School Psychology staff do? Check out the [CPA's 2-minute YouTube video](#) to learn more!



Do you know a student who is interested in a career in school psychology? The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) has [information on post-secondary programs](#) that are available in Canada!



Bias and Attribution Errors

by Dr. Peter Mallouh, C.Psych

We all hold biases. We sometimes make errors when we perceive (think about) other people. Without being aware of it, our own expectations can greatly influence our impressions of other people. One common error we make is called **The Fundamental Attribution Error**. This is the tendency of people to underestimate the impact of situational factors and to overestimate the role of personality factors in explaining the behaviour of others.

In general, we tend to see behaviour as caused by an individual's personality or character traits, minimizing the importance of the context or situation. For example, consider a grade five student on the playground being bumped by a bigger student. In most contexts, the grade 5 student is likely to attribute the collision to the other student's bad intentions (personal motive). Yet, it may be that the bigger child was trying to escape from another student's bullying or they may have poor gross motor skills during group play. In contexts such as these, people will often attribute the behaviour or incident to personal factors and not consider or be aware of the circumstances of the overall situation.



Research shows that this bias has an opposite effect on our own self perception, as we tend to overemphasize situational variables to explain our own behaviour. People want to see good things about themselves and avoid unpleasant information. For example, a high school student may blame their teacher and the provided study materials when they fail their math test ("He's so tough on us!"), versus considering their own conduct and its impact on their math test ("Maybe I should have studied more than just 30 minutes before class?").

Considering situational factors, not only in our own behaviour, but in that of others, may go a long way in helping us to better understand what happens to us. Can you think of examples in your life where you may have underestimated situational factors in a conflict or situation?



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