

## **STRESS REDUCTION EXERCISES**

### Deep Breathing

- Relax shoulders and arms.
- Slowly circle head right, then left.  
Repeat several times.
  - Close eyes.
  - Take a slow, deep breath. Exhale. Repeat, Concentrating on breathing.

### “6-Second Quieting Response”

- Smile (to relax facial muscles).
- Inhale. Imagine air flowing in through feet and hands.
- Exhale. Let jaw, tongue and shoulders go loose, “feel” warm air flow down from the chest and out through the feet.
- Tell your self that your body is calm.
- Go back to what you were doing.

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Tighten muscles in the right arm by making a fist.
- Hold the tension for a moment.
- Open the hand and enjoy feeling the tension flowing away.
- Repeat with the left arm.

Repeat for legs, back, chest, shoulders, neck and face.

### Meditation (for older children)

- Sit or lie comfortably.
- Close eyes, let muscles relax.
- Concentrate on breathing.
- Select a word and say it silently each time you exhale. Think only of the word.
- Open eyes after 10-20 minutes.
- Sit quietly for a few minutes more.

### Visualization/Imagery

- Visit a park, forest, meadow or other quiet place.
- Observe the colors, sounds, and scents.
- Later, close eyes, breathe deeply and spend a soothing 10-minute break recalling those sights, sounds, and scents.
- Put worries, thoughts into a file cabinet or box, to lock away until ready to deal with them.

### Exercise

- Sports can be fun and they’re great ways to “let of steam.”
- Besides relaxing muscles, exercise makes the brain release tranquilizing chemicals (“endorphins”).