



## 4 Elements Exercise for Stress Reduction

### EARTH-AIR-WATER-FIRE

(Adapted from Elan Shapiro, 2012 by Beverlee Laidlaw Chasse)

#### Earth: GROUNDING, REALITY OF SAFETY IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

*Take a minute to "land", be here, now. Feel both feet on the ground, feel the support of the chair. Look around and notice 3 things. What do you see? What do you hear? Imagine you are a tree, roots coming down through your feet connecting with the healing energy and strength of the Earth.*

#### Air: BREATHING FOR CENTERING

*Imagine you have a balloon in your belly. When you INHALE fill the balloon. When you EXHALE deflate the balloon completely and squeeze out any emotional distress you are experiencing. Option: Breath in through your nose as you count 4 seconds, then hold for 2 sec and then breath out for 4 sec. and hold for 2 sec. Take about a dozen deeper, slower breaths like this.*

#### Water: CALM AND CONTROLLED. MORE IN CONTROL, SWITCHING ON THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

*Make Saliva, Get moisture in your mouth. When you are anxious or in fight, flight or freeze your Sympathetic Nervous System shuts down your digestive system and your mouth goes dry. So when you start making saliva you switch on the digestive system again and the Parasympathetic Nervous System activates the relaxation response allowing you to feel calmer, focused and more in control.*

#### Fire: LIGHT UP THE PATH OF YOUR IMAGINATION

*Bring up an image of SAFE PLACE or an experience when you felt comfortable or good about yourself.*

*Let yourself be there. What can you see, hear, smell. What does it feel like outside your body? Inside your body. Activate this experience by doing the BUTTERFLY HUG. Cross your arms across your chest so that your thumbs are intertwined and your other fingers are spread under both collarbones. (See diagram below) Slowly tap bilaterally, on each side of your chest, to enhance the feelings of SAFETY and CALM in your body. Wear a 4 Elements Bracelet on your wrist and use it as a reminder that you now know how to immediately reduce your stress levels by performing the 4 Elements Exercise.*



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