Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology
Academic Programs & Planning

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Centering Breathing (2 mins)

When you recognize that students' stress response is (or likely is) ramping up, here is a quick and effective method for helping them to center and calm themselves so that they can be at their best in your class. Consider facilitating this for, and with, your students.

Introduction/Framing Prompt

"Before we get to the course activities today, I wanted to take a few minutes to check in with all of you. We're a few weeks from the end of the quarter and this is often a high-stress part of the term. When you recognize that your stress response is ramping up, I can offer a quick and effective method for centering and calming yourself. It is commonly used by professionals, athletes, experts, and students at all levels. Let's try it, if you're willing. This will take only one minute and it can help you to be at your best for this class/test/exam/presentation.

NOTE: If you'd rather not participate, that's fine – this is not required. We will be done very quickly."

Instructor leads with this guidance:

1. *Close your eyes if you wish*
2. *Inhale slowly through your nose to the count of 5*
3. *Hold for the count of 5*
4. *Exhale slowly through your mouth to the count of 5*
5. *Repeat four times*
6. *Open your eyes slowly*

Debrief Prompts

*   *"How was that for you? Can you notice that you may are at least a little calmer, a little less frazzled, a little more centered and focused?"*
*   *"If you wish, we can do this again – as often as you all wish. And you can try this on your own any time you're starting to feel overwhelmed with stress or anxiety."*
*   *"Remember, whenever you begin to feel that your level of stress or anxiety is approaching the point where it's more than you can handle on your own, Campus Health and Well-being has considerable resources to support you. It happens to many students, and there is no reason to feel shame or embarrassment when it happens to you."*
*   *https://hcs.calpoly.edu/campus-wellbeing*