

## TIP SHEET 8.5

### Client Worksheet: Controlled breathing

Controlling your breathing is essential for calming down an anxiety response. When we become anxious we often tend to breath quicker, and more shallowly than normal, which actually makes our anxiety worse.

The following instructions are designed to slow down your rate of breathing. It might feel a little strange at first – it just takes practice.

Remember to focus on your breath, and focus on the air coming into your body and filling your lungs.

To begin:

- Just breathe through you nose, noticing the air going in. . . and out. . . and noticing time for each in and out breath. . . That's it, just noticing the air going in. . . and out. . . (allow the client to do this for 5-6 breaths).
- Now breathe more into the bottom of your lungs, so that your abdomen rises. . . and falls. . . Imagine the air filling your belly first, then rising to the top of the chest cavity. You don't need to take big breaths, just normal size breaths that go deeper into your lungs. Just breathe deeply into your lungs, filling your belly first, before it rises to the top of your chest cavity. . . (allow the client to do this for 5-6 breaths).
- Now, you are belly breathing into your belly, see if you can slow the breathing down. . . 3 slow counts in, hold for 3 counts, 3 slow counts out, hold for 3 again. . . that's it. . . 3 slow counts in. . . and hold. . . and 3 slow counts out. . . and hold (allow clients to do this for 5 – 6 breaths).