

### **Deep abdominal breathing**

**What?** – Abdominal breathing uses the diaphragm muscle to regulate your breath. Anxiety can cause us to breath shallowly from the chest, whereas abdominal breathing pulls the breath down allowing your abdominal cavity to expand.

**Why?** – Deep breathing promotes relaxation, decreases heart and respiratory rate, blood pressure and muscle tension.

**How?** – Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose to the point that you feel your abdomen push outward. If you can, place a hand just below your ribcage so that you can feel the depth of your breath expanding your abdomen and pushing your hand out. Pause, holding your breath for a moment and then exhale slowly through your nose or mouth clearing your lungs of air as completely as possible. Deeply inhale again through your nose, repeating two more times, in a slow, deliberate, rhythmic, unhurried manner.

**When?** – As much as you want! Consider deep breathing whenever anxiety hits, and practice when you are not at your most anxious to increase your confidence in your ability to do it and its effect. Practice while driving, taking a shower, taking a break, in meetings and waiting in line. Let the activity remind you – “when I wait in the cafeteria line I will deep breathe.”