

## Mental Health Moment



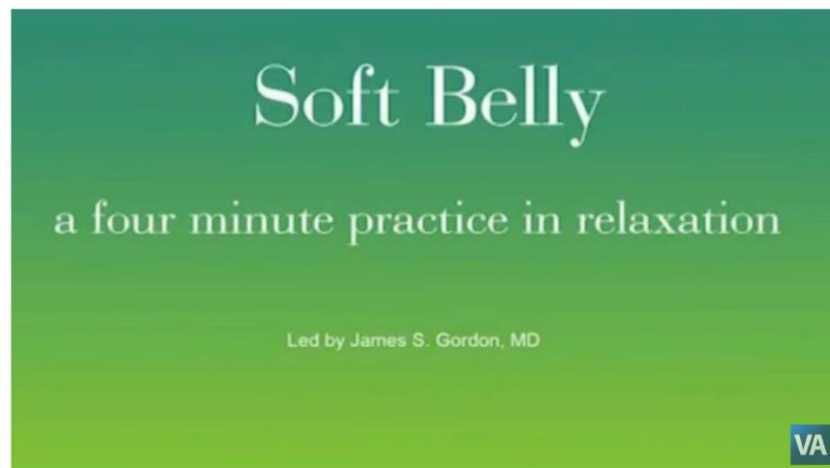
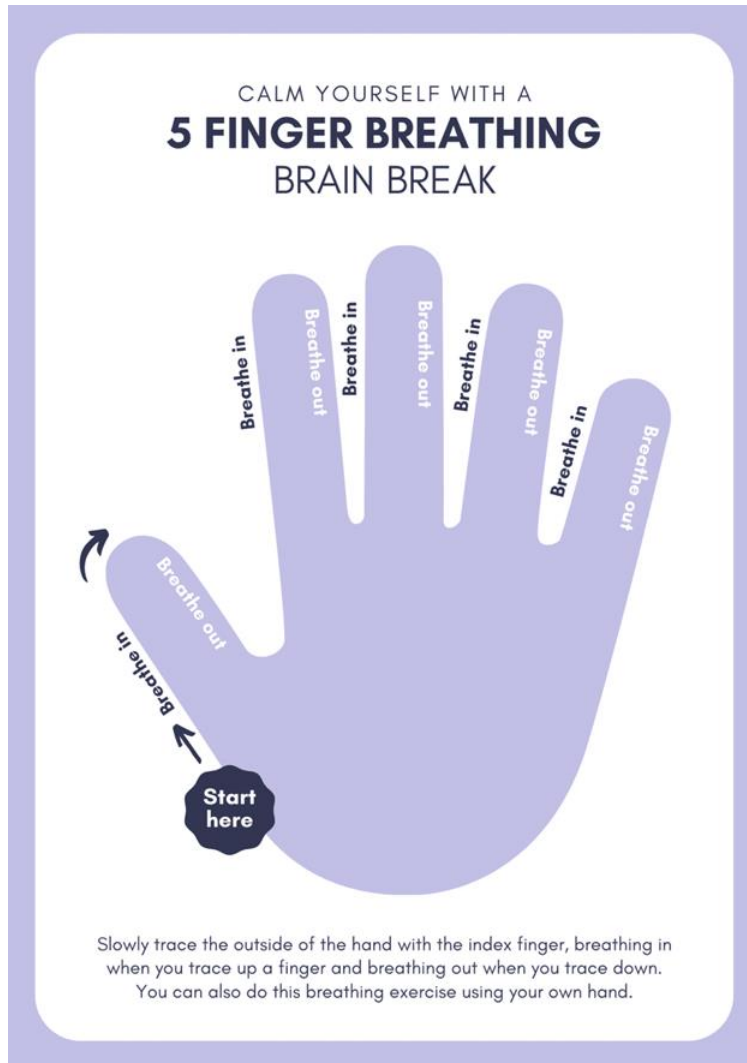
Threats, or acts of violence, particularly in schools, can confuse and frighten children who may feel in danger or worry that their friends or loved ones are at risk. They will look to adults for information and guidance on how to react.

Parents and school personnel can help children feel safe by establishing a sense of normalcy and security and talking with them about their fears.

1. Reassure children that they are safe. Emphasize that schools are very safe. Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them into perspective, and assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.
2. Make time to talk. Be patient; children and youth do not always talk about their feelings readily. Some children prefer writing, playing music, or doing an art project as an outlet.
3. Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate. Emphasize the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following school safety guidelines (e.g. reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to the school safety made by students or community members, etc.), communicating any personal safety concerns to school administrators, and accessing support for emotional needs.
4. Review safety procedures. This should include procedures and safeguards at school and at home. Help children identify at least one adult at school and in the community to whom they go if they feel threatened or at risk.
5. Observe children's emotional state. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can also indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. Seek the help of mental health professional if you are at all concerned.
6. Limit television viewing of these events. Adults also need to be mindful of the content of conversations that they have with each other in front of children, and limit their exposure to vengeful, hateful, and angry comments that might be misunderstood.
7. Maintain a normal routine. Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise. Encourage them to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

## Mental Health Moment

# Relaxation Activities



[Click here to Practice Soft Belly Breathing](#)

## Mental Health Moment

### *Helpful Apps*

**Headspace:** teaches effective meditation

**Calm:** helps you fall asleep easier and teaches meditation

**The Mindfulness App:** teaches you meditation and sends reminders for you to chill out

**Breathe2Relax:** walks you through breathing exercises

**Pacifica:** tracks your mood and provides relaxation techniques

**Relax Melodies:** helps you sleep

**MindShift CBT:** helps you take charge of your anxiety and teaches strategies for calming yourself

### REMEMBER

- Schools are safe places. School staff works with parents and public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep you safe.
- We all play a role in the school safety. Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.
- There is a difference between reporting, tattling or gossiping. You can provide important information that may prevent harm by telling a trusted adult what you know or hear.
- Although there is no absolute guarantee that something bad will never happen, it is important to understand the difference between the possibility of something happening and probability that it will affect you - our school community.
- Stay away from guns and other weapons. Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence.

## Mental Health Moment

### WHAT CAN I DO IF MY ANXIETY GETS TOO BAD?

- -Go see my school counselor
- -Talk to a trusted CBHS staff member
- Practice calming strategies such as: color, read, write, draw, paint, sing, dance, exercise, or breathing technique (see above)
- -Reach out to parents for support
- -Talk to your pediatrician with parent support



#### References:

National Association of School Psychologists  
Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers

American School Counselor Association  
Crisis & Trauma Resources