*Leading through Reading*
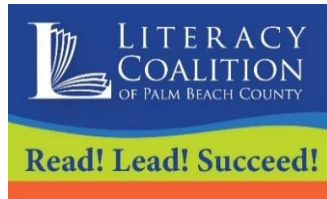
## Take a Deep Breath (3-5)

### READ

When we see and hear frightening things, our brain sends worry signals to our bodies. Then, our bodies react—our hearts pound, our muscles tense, our palms sweat, and our breathing quickens.  We start feel like we want to **fight** (use angry words and fists), take **flight** (to run and hide), or **freeze** (stay still).



        Over time, these reactions may have harmful effects on our bodies and our minds.

It is important to calm our minds and bodies.  Deep breathing is one of the best ways to calm ourselves.  When we breathe in deeply it calms us.  Our heart rate decreases, our muscles begin to relax, and our sweating lessens.  There are other ways to help too.  Focusing on a soothing word may help too.  Imagining a tranquil place and exercise can also be helpful tools.
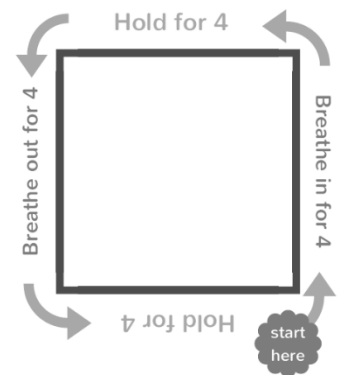
### THINK

You are an important person! Think about what ways have you been using this week to keep calm?  Think of a time and place you can do calming activities.  It is important to do this to take good care of yourself.   Select a safe place, time and way to keep yourself calm each day.

**ACT**        **Try Square Breathing:** Put your pointer finger out in front of your body.



- Practice SLOWLY drawing a square in the air with your pointer finger.

Start at the bottom of the square
        (see "Start" on the diagram to the right)
- Next, as you draw the first side of the square take a deep breath in.
- Then, draw the top of the square while you hold the breath.
- Draw the second side of the square while you gently exhale.
- Draw, the bottom of the square, relax before your next deep breath.
- Repeat 3 times

Click here for: <u>More Activities</u>