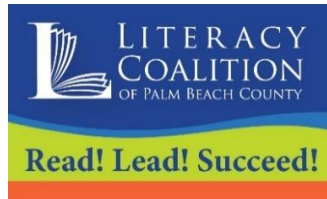


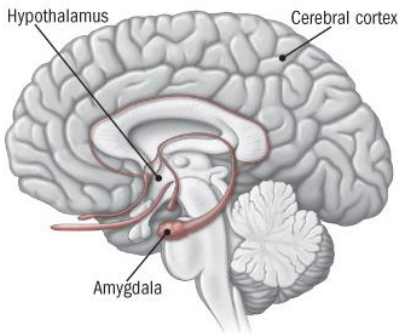
READ and THINK before you ACT.



Leading through Reading

Take a Deep Breath (6-8)

READ



Our brains react to our stress and worries by sending signals to our bodies. Our bodies react—our hearts pound, our muscles tense, our palms sweat, and our breathing quickens. These reactions are commonly known as our **flight, fight or freeze** responses. Over time, these reactions may have effects which we want to avoid. Our heart and arteries may be strained and become clogged. Our brains may change in ways that make depression, anxiety, and addiction more likely.

The **amygdala** is an area of the brain which helps to process our emotions. Our eyes and ears may sense something, and they send messages to the amygdala. The amygdala interprets sights and sounds, then sends a signal to the

hypothalamus. The hypothalamus functions like a command center. It communicates with the rest of the body through the nervous system causing our bodies to react. Sometimes, the signals of distress can be significant and ways to lessen the bodies response are recommended.

Deep breathing is one of the best ways to calm our bodies responses. When you breathe in deeply it calms our bodies reactions. 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, such as peace or calm, may help too. Imagining a tranquil place and exercise can also be helpful tools.

References: [Harvard Edu](#) and [UOMFM](#)

THINK

When and where can you take a moment to calm your mind and body?

ACT Do not worry about yesterday. Do not panic about tomorrow. **Be in the present moment.**

Use Imagery

Sit peacefully. Take three slow deep breaths. Imagine a calm scene and whisper words such as PEACE, calm, tranquil or Wooh Saauh



Use Your Surroundings

Sit peacefully. *Take three slow deep breaths.* Slowly take in the scenery around you. Name 3 things you can see, 3 things you can smell, 3 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel.



This at-home educational activity is from the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County's literacy-based social emotional learning program.

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Sharing is caring! Send us a picture of you and your Lead! Read! Succeed! projects to nbirardi@literacypbc.org