FOR CLIENTS AND CLINICIANS

Gentle Paced Breathing Guide

A flexible practice for slowing and softening the breath. There is no single correct rhythm, and the exercise should not be forced.

Important: Stop if you feel faint, increasingly breathless, panicked or unwell. Seek medical advice if breathing exercises are unsuitable for you, especially with respiratory or cardiac conditions.

Before you begin

- ☐ Choose a supported sitting or lying position.
- ☐ Let the breath remain comfortable; depth is not the goal.
- ☐ Start with one or two minutes.
- ☐ If counting increases distress, return to ordinary breathing and orient to the room.

A gentle practice

1. Notice your natural breathing for several cycles without changing it.
2. If comfortable, let the out-breath become slightly longer or softer than the in-breath.
3. You might try breathing in for a count of four and out for a count of five. Adjust the count so there is no strain or breath-holding.
4. Continue for up to two minutes, then return to your ordinary breath and notice how you feel.
5. Over time, some people find a slower rhythm comfortable. A clinician can help you adapt the practice if symptoms or medical conditions complicate it.

Practice notes

What did I notice before, during and after?

What pace felt comfortable?

Pacing sheet

Comfort over precision

Round	In-breath	Out-breath	Comfort 0-10	Notes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Afterwards

Did the practice feel neutral, helpful or unhelpful? What would I change next time?

Paced breathing can support regulation for some people, but it does not guarantee a particular physiological or emotional outcome.