

Visual Support: Breathing Cue Card

A breathing cue card can be used to help a person learn and practice deep breathing as a calming strategy. Cut out the card and laminate it for durability. Ensure the card is easily accessible on a lanyard, in a desk, or in a pocket.

How do I teach someone to use the breathing cue card?

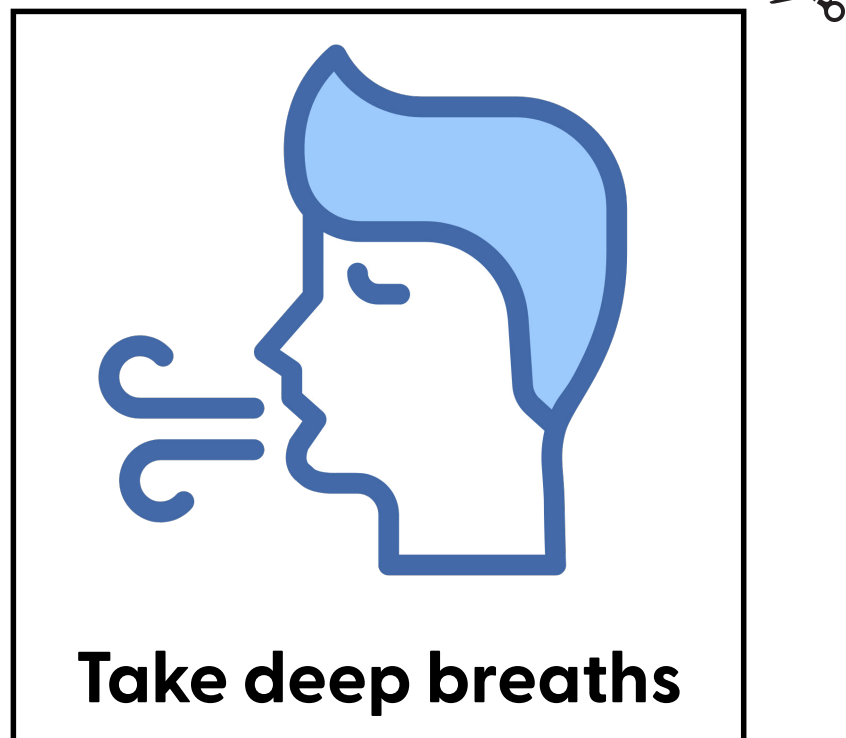
Model using the card by showing the person the card and taking deep breaths. Say, "This card reminds me to take slow, deep breaths when I am feeling upset or need to calm down." Hold the card and do the breathing exercise yourself. Say, "Watch me! First, I take a deep breath in, then I slowly let it out."

After modeling how to use the card have the person practice using the card to take deep breaths. Say, "Now you try!" Show the card to the person and say, "Let's take some deep breaths." Take deep breaths with the person while showing them the card. Praise them for using the card. Periodically repeat the process of showing the person the card and taking deep breaths when they are calm during different parts of the day.

How do I use the breathing cue card in a stressful situation?

Once a person understands how to use the cue card when they are calm, they will feel more prepared to use it when they feel anxious or upset.

When the person seems overwhelmed, gently remind them, "Let's use our breathing card." Calmly guide them through the steps again. Remember to praise the person for using the card and taking deep breaths even if they are not able to successfully calm themselves.



Mallory, S., Fletcher, A., Ambrosie, A., & CDS DNEA Team. (2024). *DNEA resource guide: Grab and go supports: Visual support: Breathing cue card*. Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism
Additional resource guides at <https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/>.