

## BOX BREATHING

**Box Breathing** brings mindfulness to your breath. It can help calm and regulate the nervous system and connect you to the present moment. Its name refers to the four sides of a box, a concept represented by breathing while you count slowly to four, four times.

- It can help to visualize a square in your mind as you breathe. Each count of four is one side of the square.
- Start by repeating this sequence four times (about one minute of controlled breath). Gradually build up to longer sessions if you feel comfortable, staying under 15 minutes to avoid lightheadedness.
- Getting distracted is to be expected. When it happens, be kind to yourself, don't judge; just bring your attention back to 'here and now.'
- Practice this exercise regularly and when you are not in a distressed state. This way, you will have the skills and the memory of how to do it when needed.
- Adapt positioning, script, and timing for your purpose, situation, and participants.

### Exercise:

- Find a comfortable place to sit, lay or stand where you know you will not be disturbed. Uncross your legs and arms if you can and rest your hands comfortably.
- Close your eyes or fix them on an object or point in front of you.
- Start by breathing comfortably in and out for a while. Notice how your breaths sound and feel and how they affect your body.
- *Pause*
- Breathe in slowly through your nose if you can. Count to four as you inhale – 1 2 3 4
- Hold your breath for a count of four - 1 2 3 4
- Open your mouth and slowly exhale for a count of four – 1 2 3 4
- Hold the exhale to another count of four – 1 2 3 4
- *Repeat the cycle*
- When you are ready, gently bring your attention to where you are. Take a few long, slow, deep breaths, and then breathe comfortably.
- Stretch if you like. Notice the room around you. If you are with others, notice them too.

