

# 5 for Managing our Emotions and Reactions During Times of Stress or Crisis

## STEPS

Does your heart beat fast in times of stress or crisis?  
Does your breathing get shallower? Does your body tremble?  
Do you feel confused, disoriented, anxious, panicky or helpless?  
These are natural reactions in times of stress. They can be calmed and changed on the spot by taking the following steps:  
On a scale of 0-10 what is the degree of tension you feel right now?



If it's above 6 on the scale, follow all the steps. If it's below 6, go straight to steps 4 & 5.



**The Butterfly Tap:** Cross your arms and tap alternately with open palms 25 times on your upper arms. Take a few breaths and then repeat.



**Basic Grounding:** Place your feet firmly on the ground. Feel the support of the ground. Now look around you and count ten different objects of the same color and/or then ten different objects of different shape.



**Self-Soothing and Regulation:** Put one hand on your chest and the other hand on your stomach. Pay attention to your breath. This exercise will stabilize your breath and bring comfort.



**Discharge:** Notice one sensation at a time. Just be curious, with no judgment and give it time; Release will happen spontaneously as a deep breath, a yawn, trembling, heat, warm sweat, goosebumps, spontaneous laughter or crying.



**Resources:** Strengthen the sense of calm by thinking of something that makes you feel good, feel stronger or feel calmer. It could be a friend, something you love, an activity, a place, an image or a spiritual entity. Notice the relaxing effect this resource has on you.

Use these tools to calm yourself first and then give support to others. This will enhance coping skills and resiliency and prevent a chain reaction of fear and stress. As you experience the effectiveness of these tools, you can decide whether to use all or some of the steps until you feel relief and a sense of calm.