Emotional Reset Pause

Office of Mental Health | New York State Trauma-Informed Network & Resource Center

ABOUT THIS TOOL

Audience
Therapists, clinicians, counselors, case managers, peers, aides

Description
This is a short, intentional pause you can take between client sessions. It can help you mentally "close" the last session so you can be fully present for the next client.

When to Use
- Right after finishing a session or client interaction
- Before meeting with a new client
- When you notice stress or strong emotions
- When you feel mentally tired or overwhelmed
- During busy or emotionally heavy workdays

WORKPLACE STRESS

Behavioral health employees often support people who are experiencing trauma, crisis, or strong emotions. Listening to difficult stories and helping others through hard moments can be emotionally draining. Without a pause, thoughts and emotions from one session or interaction can carry into the next. Over time, this may lead to feeling emotionally worn out, compassion fatigue, or burn out.

WHY THIS HELPS

Back-to-back client sessions or interactions leave little room for the emotional and mental residue of one conversation to clear before the next begins. Without a deliberate pause, unresolved thoughts, emotions, or tension from one interaction quietly carry over, making it harder to be fully present and effective with the next client. This brief reset works by giving your mind a clear signal that one session has ended and another is beginning — breaking that carryover effect. It also allows your nervous system a moment to settle after the emotional demands of behavioral health work, so you show up to each client fresh, focused, and genuinely available rather than mentally still in the last room.

THE PRACTICE

1. Pause for a moment where you are

- Stop typing or preparing. Let your body be still.

2. Take three slow, deep breaths

- Breathe in through your nose.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth.

3. Silently say to yourself:

That session/interaction is complete.

- Let this thought mark the end of the previous session/interaction and the start of the next one.

WHY THIS WORKS

Your brain needs a clear signal to shift from one task to another. Without a pause, stress and emotions can build up throughout the day.

This short, intentional break helps your brain reset. It can:

- Lower stress and emotional buildup
- Improve focus and attention
- Reduce mental fatigue

In just one minute, you can feel more grounded, balanced, and ready to support the next person.

Resources:
Find additional wellness information on the NYS Trauma Informed Network and Resource Center at traumainformedny.org

Looking to go deeper?

Explore BREATH-BODY-MIND™ (BBM) for weekly breathwork practice, expert tips, and a welcoming community.
Check out the website here for additional details.

Source:
Gross, J. (2015). Emotion Regulation: *Current Status and Future Prospects.*