

# MINDFUL MOMENTS

## *The Butterfly Hug*

**Tapping is a common exercise utilized to decrease anxiety and calm the nervous system by releasing energy flow and muscle tension through tapping on acupuncture meridian points throughout the body.**

The butterfly hug incorporates the use of bilateral stimulation to desensitize, or self-soothe, while decreasing anxiety and lowering your heart rate after an activating/stress inducing event.

### **DIRECTIONS**

*\*Please note that before engaging in any mindfulness exercises that require you to close your eyes or use of your hands, it is advised that you are not actively engaging in any activity such as operating heavy machinery, etc. These Mindful Moments exercises are best utilized by taking a moment to excuse yourself to a private or semi-private break room or area that is well lit and ventilated.*

- **Step 1:** Sit or stand comfortably in a relaxed, yet dignified position, Activating and lengthening your spine while engaging your core. Check in with your body and notice any areas of tension.
- **Step 2:** Bring your awareness to your breath. Mindful breathing is often referred to as “belly breathing” or “diaphragmatic breathing”. This is done by expanding your belly on your inhales and sucking your belly button in towards your spine on your exhales while elongating your exhales to be just slightly longer than your inhales. Keep in mind this is not labored or pressured breathing.
- **Step 3:** Cross your arms over your chest, like a hug, and as if to make the shape of a letter “X”. Place your palms flat on your chest with your fingertips resting just under the area where your collarbone meets your shoulder socket. Followed by interlocking your thumbs as if to make a letter “W” with your hands.
- **Step 4:** Lowering your gaze, or closing your eyes, begin to gently lift your left fingers and then lower to tap back down on your chest. Follow this by then doing the same thing with the right hand. You will repeat this motion, one hand lifting and tapping at a time while alternating sides. Keep your pace steady by tapping each side per second, or a bit slower, try not to go too fast and remember to keep your breath at a slow inhale/exhale pace of 3:4. So your breath does not and should not follow the pace of your tapping.
- **Step 5:** If you would like you could incorporate affirmations, to say aloud, or to think of while you are tapping. Examples of affirmations to repeat while tapping could be: “I am safe/I am calm” or “I am grateful/I am patient”. The key to these affirmations is to use “I” statements that are brief, encouraging, and supportive of you at that moment.
- **Step 6:** When you are ready, slowly lower your hands, palms facing up, down by your side and reorient yourself to your space. Check back in and notice any areas of released tension. Remember that you can do this exercise for as long or as little as you would like.