

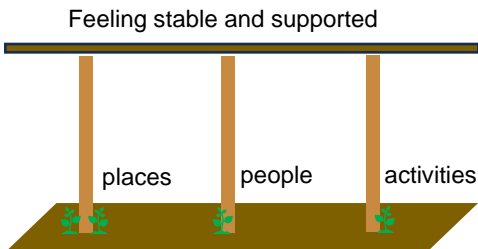
3 pillars of life

Information for parents and carers

The management of anxiety around change for Autistic people and people with learning disabilities

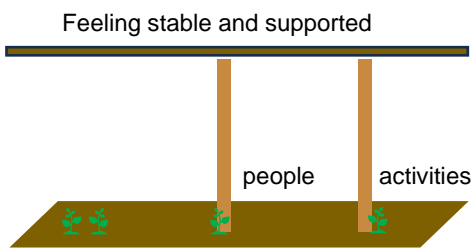


A guide to the 3 pillars of life



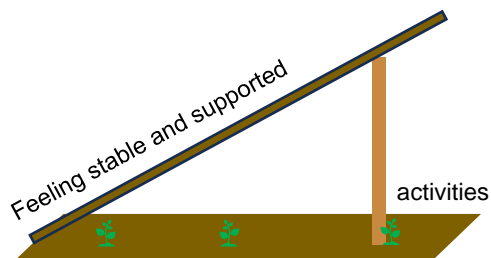
People need **3 pillars** to feel stable and supported in their lives.

These 3 pillars are made up of familiar places, people and activities.



It's important to only change **one** of these pillars at a time so people still feel stable.

For example, it's ok to introduce new places to a person as long as they still have familiar people around them and carry on with familiar activities.



Changing too many of these pillars can lead to feelings of uncertainty and instability – this can be seen in a person's behaviour or emotions.

Try to change only one thing at a time in a person's life so they remain feeling stable and secure.

A change in people

If there is a change of **people** in a person's life, such as a death of a loved one or meeting a new person, avoid changing their regular **activities** and carry on going to familiar **places**.

Here are some helpful tips

- When meeting a new person, go to a familiar place or do a familiar activity together
- Leisure activities improve quality of life and wellbeing
- Activities include things like
 - sport and physical activities (gym, swimming, team games)
 - art and entertainment (theatre, cinema, concerts)
 - home-based leisure (TV, reading, video games)

If they can't spend time with someone they usually do spend time with, try and distract them with a familiar activity or go to a familiar place with them.

A change in places

If there is a change of **places** in a person's life, such as a break in day centre support, you should try and keep **activities** and **people** familiar.

Here are some helpful tips

- It's normal to feel anxious about going out again, especially after Covid. Maybe they could start by going to places with people they feel safe with, like family and friends
- They can start by going to places they are familiar with such as a local park, shops or café
- They can start with short visits to places and then slowly increase the time they spend there
- They can write down their worries and put them into a worry box – writing them down can help them to think things through
- They can have a look at their worry box during worry time. Worry time is when a person shares their worries with a carer, friends or family member.

A change in activities

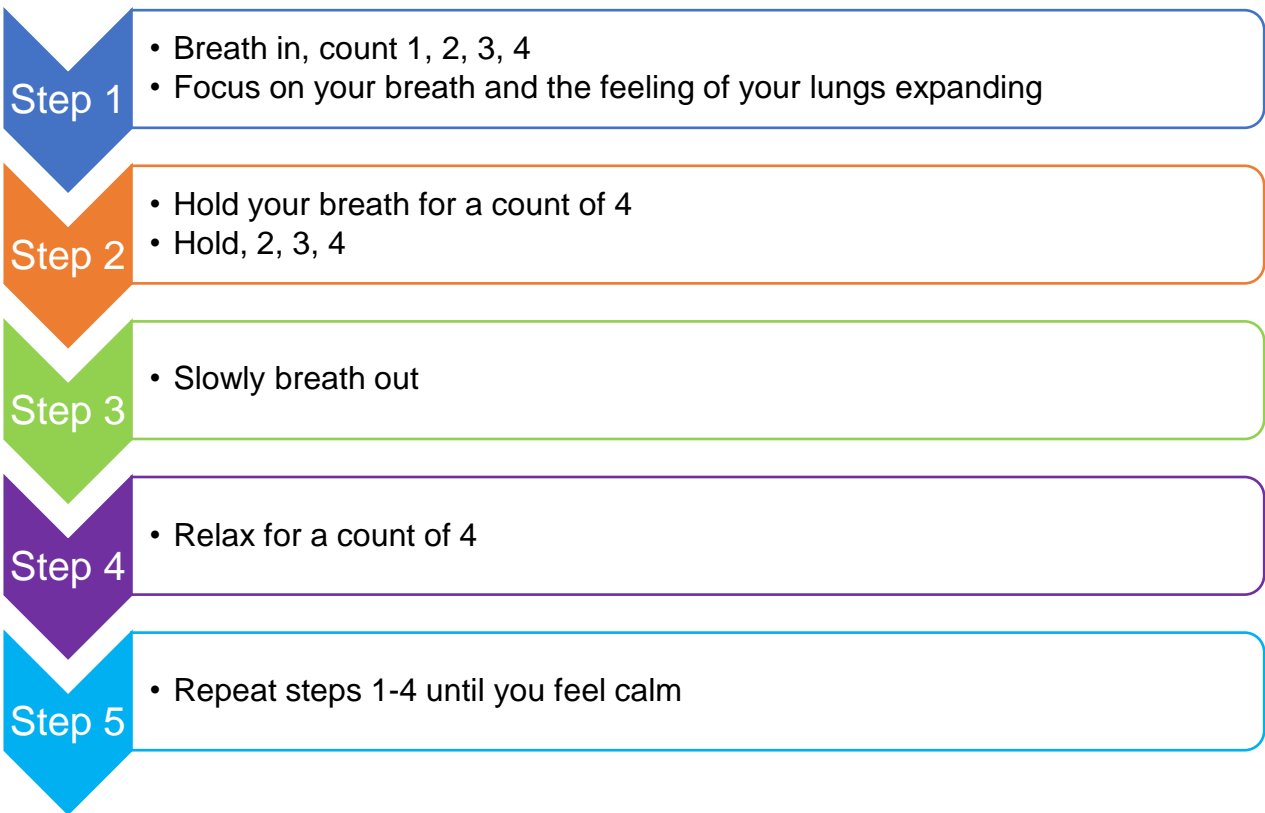
If there is a change in **activities** in a person's life, such as not being able to cycle anymore because of an injury, you should try to keep **places** and **people** familiar.

Here are some helpful tips

- They can start with activities at home such as helping their parents with preparing meals – this helps to develop or maintain their living skills
- It might be difficult to stay in touch with family and friends during times like Covid. They can reach out to them by making a card and posting it
- They can share thoughts and feelings with their family by making a **family thought box**. Family members can post any worries or thoughts into the box, then as a family you can read them together.

Breathing exercises

Breathing exercises can help control breathing – this can help the person when they feel anxious



Safe space visualisation

When a person is feeling stressed or anxious, imagining a happy place can help calm them.



Resources and helplines

- Breathing exercises video
[youtube.com/watch?v=qn9jN1unfc8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn9jN1unfc8)
- Safe space visualisation video
[youtube.com/watch?v=RnvTdix7x6w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnvTdix7x6w)
- Breathe bubble video
[youtube.com/watch?v=9tOJZQhO_Uw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tOJZQhO_Uw)

- Samaritans – call 116 123

- Shout – text **SHOUT** to 85258

- Mencap – call 0808 808 111

- The Silver Line – call 0800 4 70 80 90

- Autism Hub – visit theautismhub.org.uk

Contact us

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If you would like this leaflet in large print, as audio or in another language, please call 020 7974 3737

