

## Let's Talk About...

# Counterstimulation techniques: Using sensory distraction

Counterstimulation is a way of distracting the brain when it is sending stress signals. To do this, you block these signals by sending another loud signal to the brain using one of the 5 senses (touch, sight, sound, smell, and taste).

## What are some examples of counterstimulation techniques?

### Touch

Focus on how your skin feels, using temperature or pressure.

- Apply ice or heat packs.
- Use heavy objects like a weighted blanket.
- Play with something sticky or messy, like clay or dough.
- Massage or push a pressure point with your fingers.
- Rub your hands together until you can feel heat.

### Sight

Focus on a single object you can see, using color or texture.

- Look at a picture book or photo.
- Get a fish tank or lava lamp.
- Watch your pets play.
- Notice something outdoors (ocean, trees, sky, mountains).

### Sound

Focus on a single sound or many sounds.

- Play music or listen to live instruments or playlists.
- Listen to the sounds around you.
- Use a fan, furnace, or vacuum for background noises.
- Turn on a clock, metronome, or other paced sound.



### Smell

Focus on a smell and breathe it in.

- Smell citrus fruits, like lemons or oranges.
- Use essential oil concentrates (peppermint, spearmint, mandarin, and lavender).
- Apply scented muscle rubs or lotions.

### Taste

Focus on a taste and feel it on your tongue.

- Suck on hard candies or mints (butterscotch, peppermint, or cinnamon).
- Let chocolate melt on your tongue.
- Try frozen or cold fruit, ice water, or ice cream.
- Eat tart or sour foods like lemons, limes, and apples.

