**Experiential: Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)**

When we experience stressful events, the body responds with increased arousal and muscle tension. By intentionally tensing large muscle groups, and focusing on the sensation of tension, then releasing the tension, you can become aware of the ability to control muscle tension to remain comfortable and focused. Progressive Muscle Relaxation is one way to learn to control your level of arousal by controlling physical tension.

**Script:**

Close your eyes or gaze at the floor and turn attention to your breathing (Pause). Take a deeper breath than usual and focus on feeling your belly rise and fall with each breath (Pause). Visualize a balloon in your belly. As you breathe in the balloon slowly inflates, starting from your belly and filling up through the top of your lungs. As you breathe out the balloon and slowly deflates, first from the top of your lungs and finally emptying from your belly. Place one hand on your belly and the other hand on your upper chest. Most of the movement should be in the hand on your belly; the hand on the chest moves only slightly.

Continue to practice for a few moments (Pause 30 seconds). Check in with your breath periodically to make sure you are breathing in from the bottom of your belly – filling up to the top of your lungs – then exhaling slowly from the top of your lungs down to the bottom of your belly.

Tense the muscles in your forehead by raising your eyebrows up as far as you can. Hold...and now release. Once again, tense the muscles in your forehead by raising your eyebrows up as far as you can. Hold on to the tension...and now release as you breathe. Imagine your forehead muscles becoming smooth and limp as they relax.

Tense the muscles around your eyes by squeezing your eyelids shut. Hold...and now release.

Tense the muscles around your eyes by squeezing your eyelids shut. Hold onto the tension...and now release as you breathe, allowing your eyes to completely relax.

Tighten your jaw by opening your mouth as widely as possible. Hold...and now release. Once again, tighten your jaw by opening your mouth as widely as possible. Hold onto the tension...and now release as you breathe. Let your lips part as your jaw hangs loose.

Tighten your neck and shoulders by raising them up towards your ears. Hold...and now release. Again, tighten your neck and shoulders by raising them up towards your ears. Hold onto the tension...and now breathe as you allow your neck and shoulders to completely relax.

Tighten the muscles behind your shoulder blades by drawing them back and towards each other. Hold…and now release. Again, tighten the muscles behind your shoulder blades by drawing them back and towards each other. Hold onto the tension...and now breathe as your release and relax.

Tighten the muscles in your chest by taking a deep breath in and extending your chest forward. Hold...and now release. Again, tighten the muscles in your chest by taking a deep breath in and extending your chest forward. Hold onto the tension…and now breathe as you release and relax.

Clench both fists firmly and draw your fists towards your shoulders, tensing your biceps. Hold…and now release. Clench both fists firmly and draw your fists towards your shoulders, tensing your biceps. Hold. Feel the tension...and now release as you breathe. Allow your arms and hands to completely relax at your sides.

Squeeze the muscles in your hips and thighs all the way down to your knees. Hold...and now release. Again, squeeze the muscles in your hips and thighs all the way down to your knees. Hold on to that tension...and now release as you breathe. Allow your hips and thighs to relax.

Tighten your calf muscles by flexing your toes up towards your knees. Hold...and now release. Again, tighten your calf muscles by flexing your toes up towards your knees. Hold on to the tension...and now breathe as your release and relax.

Tighten your feet by curling your toes and squeezing them. Hold...and release. Again, tighten your feet by curling your toes and squeezing them. Hold on to the tension…now breathe and release. Allowing your feet to completely relax.

Take a moment to scan your body from head to toe. Notice any areas of tension that may still exist. Breathe into the tension. Allowing it to release. Take a few moments to focus on your breath again. Breathing in feelings of relaxation. Knowing that your breath is like an anchor, keeping you steady and focused in your mind and body. Begin to notice any sounds of the room around you. Feel your body being supported by ground beneath you. Notice how you feel in your body and the quality of you mind. And when you are ready open your eyes.