



The Butterfly Hug

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As I began my social work placement, I experienced a mix of excitement and anxiety. After years of studying theories and methods, the opportunity to apply my knowledge in a real-world setting was both thrilling and daunting. I had a strong desire to make a difference, but I quickly became overwhelmed by the emotional weight of my clients' stories.

Working with clients facing various challenges—mental health issues, family conflicts, and financial hardships—left me emotionally drained. Each story tugged at my heartstrings, making it difficult to separate my feelings from their realities. The burden of empathy often felt suffocating, and I started to question my ability to provide the support they needed.

One particularly tough day, after a session that left me feeling helpless, I sought support from my counsellor. I expressed how overwhelming it was to carry the weight of my clients' struggles. She listened intently and then introduced me to a self-soothing technique called The Butterfly Hug. At first, I was sceptical. How could a simple technique help me manage my emotional turmoil?

But my counsellor explained that The Butterfly Hug promotes relaxation and emotional regulation, especially in stressful situations.

She demonstrated the technique by crossing her arms over her chest and gently tapping her shoulders in a rhythmic pattern. Intrigued and desperate for relief, I decided to give it a try. As I crossed my arms and tapped, I focused on my breath, inhaling deeply and exhaling slowly. With each tap, a wave of calm washed over me, and the weight of the day started to lift.

This experience made me realise the vital importance of self-care. The Butterfly Hug served as a reminder that I needed to nurture myself as I supported others. I began to incorporate this practice into my daily routine, and I also shared it with my colleagues and clients.

Through this journey, I learned that to care for others, we must first embrace and care for ourselves. In a field that often feels overwhelming, prioritising self-care is essential for effectively serving those in need.



HUG YOURSELF



LIVE THE MOMENT

The Butterfly Hug is an easy self-soothing technique to quickly ease stress and anxiety.

1. Cross your palms over your shoulders.
2. Inhale and exhale slowly.
3. Close your eyes and stay focused.
4. Clap your palms slowly, like the wings of a butterfly.

