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This research article is the first of a series of three research articles that document the initial development and evaluation of Guided Respiration Mindfulness Therapy (GRMT), as the approach is now known. To be consistent with these subsequent publications, the name of this approach has been updated from that used in the original published version of this article.

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Breathwork: An Additional Treatment Option for Depression and Anxiety?

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Abstract. Breathwork is an increasingly popular experiential approach to psychotherapy based on the use of controlled breathing, however, claims of positive mental health outcomes rely on anecdotal evidence, and the approach itself has not been clearly defined. To ascertain the likely efficacy of breathwork this review clarifies a clinical approach and its theoretical assumptions and examines relevant empirical research relating to breathing inhibition, suppression of inner experience, and possible neurological and physiological effects. Additionally, research into mindfulness-based psychotherapy and yoga breathing-based interventions with comparable features to the proposed intervention are examined. Findings suggest qualified support for the key theoretical assumptions of the Guided Respiration Mindfulness Therapy (GRMT) approach described in this paper, and its possible utility in the treatment of anxiety and depression. Further research aimed at exploring specific efficacy of this approach for these disorders may yield a useful additional treatment option utilising a different process of change to existing treatments.

Keywords Anxiety · Breathwork · Depression · Mindfulness · Psychotherapy · Respiration · Somatic