

Mindful Breathing

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| Time Needed: | 5 Minutes |
| Group Size: | Any |
| Objectives: | To learn and practice mindful breathing as a stress relief technique. |
| Materials: | None |
| Links/Resources | Kids Have Stress Too! ® The Psychology Foundation of Canada KHST 7-9 Guide https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cdDt-rXsWJYmp-wv4pm4JxVMBUodOfn4/view?usp=sharing |
| Recommended Grade: | 7-9 |

Activity Description

- *This activity has been adapted for you to do with your students online such as on Google Hangout*
 - *Make sure to limit the amount of distraction/noise around you during this exercise*
 - *After all students are added to the video chat, ask them to mute their microphones to avoid distraction to others*
 - *Invite students to find a comfortable position sitting in a chair.*
 - *Explain to students that before we begin, this will be a **silent activity**, as they need to focus on their own individual experience to participate and remind them to mute their microphones*
- *“Explain to the class that mindfulness is a way to be aware of your thoughts and feelings in the present moment. You can use mindfulness when you start to feel as though things are spinning out of control, so you can stop worrying about what might happen and focus instead on what’s happening now.*
- *One simple way of learning to practise mindfulness is by starting with our breath. We’re breathing all the time, without thinking about it. But when we stop and focus our attention on our breath, it gives us an easy and immediate way of calming our stress.*
- *The best thing about using mindful breathing is that you can do it anytime, anywhere, and no one even has to know you’re doing it. It can be as simple as breathing in slowly, on the count of four, and exhaling slowly, on the count of four, and repeating this five times.*
- *Now we’re going to practise mindful breathing. Keep in mind the importance of your posture during this exercise; when the ears, shoulders and hips are in a line, the skeleton supports the body,*

allowing muscle tension to relax and breath to flow more easily. Good posture makes us feel good. When the body is still and comfortable, the mind can relax and find calm as well.

• Focusing on breathing slows down the heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and makes us more alert and focused. It overrides the amygdala's stress response and allows us to access higher brain functioning. So when we're anxious, worried or mad, slowing down the breath and turning inward for a minute can help to slow down the amygdala and make us feel better.

Script for Mindful Breathing: "Become aware of your breathing. Focus on the feeling of coolness at your nose then you breathe in and the feeling of warmth as you breathe out. Count "one, two, three, four" as you breathe in and "one, two, three, four" as you breathe out. Repeat this ten times. Thoughts will come into your head. That's okay, just know that they are thoughts and just push them gently away and go back to counting your breath."

Questions for Reflection

Reflect with your students by making a list of potentially stressful situations that would be helped if they had a minute to practise mindful breathing. What difference do they think it would make?