



Mindful Self-Management Exercise: Impulse Control

This exercise helps with controlling our impulses when faced with strong feelings by identifying feelings that come from challenging thoughts, inserting a pause, and reframing those thoughts to take positive action.

- Each exercise takes 10 minutes or less.
- Familiarize yourself with the exercise before using with your child.
- Use the script to guide the exercise. Adjust language as needed.
- All exercises begin with **Breath Awareness** followed by a **Mindfulness Activity** that teaches a practical mindfulness skill.
- Each exercise ends with **Reflecting Questions** to discuss with your child. Invite your child to stay in mindful silence until the Reflecting Questions.

Breath Awareness

Let's take a few minutes together to get peaceful inside. Then we will look at how we can help ourselves feel better and act in more positive ways when we have difficult feelings, as we all do. We will do this together. First, let's get comfortable. Sit with your back as straight as you can. Place your hands on your legs. You can close your eyes if you like or gaze softly toward the floor. Breathe in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth. Let's do this three times together—in and out (pause), in and out (pause), in and out. (pause)

As you breathe in, notice your belly filling up like a balloon. As you breathe out, notice your belly relaxing as the air goes out of your body. (pause)

Mindfulness Activity

Continue to breathe slowly and deeply. We all know that some thoughts and feelings feel really good and some are not so helpful. Think about a time when something happened that caused you to have a strong feeling. (pause)

Maybe someone is saying or doing something that is making you very upset and you can see your feelings getting stronger and your body is getting tighter. (pause)

For example, maybe someone took something away from you that you wanted. You are just about to say or do something that could be a big problem, like yelling, having a tantrum, or saying something that is not nice. (pause)

*Then you realize that you have the power to pause the scene, count to five, and choose a positive thing to do! Now imagine you are holding a remote control like the one for our TV. Press the **PAUSE** button. Everything on the screen is frozen! (pause)*





Now take five deep breaths in and out. For each breath, say to yourself: "I'll take a deep breath, and count to five, until I feel all calm inside." (pause)

Now you are ready to think about a positive thing that you can say or do. (pause)

Press **PLAY** on your remote control and watch yourself using helpful words or actions to solve the problem. (pause)

Notice how others around you feel and respond to your good choices. (pause)

Notice how your positive choice feels in your body now. (pause)

Pressing the **PAUSE** button lets you choose the best way to respond. (pause)

Take two deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth to finish the activity. Slowly, if your eyes are closed, open them.

If you are able to, share the **TV Remote Control** handout with your child.

Reflecting

Take this opportunity to have a conversation about your shared experience using the following reflecting questions:

Reflecting Questions

- What?** What did you notice and how did you feel when you pressed the PAUSE button?
- So What?** Why do you think it might be helpful to press a PAUSE button when strong feelings come up?
- Now What?** What are some situations that come up in a day when it might be helpful to use your imaginary PAUSE button?





TV Remote Control

I'll take a deep breath.
I'll count to five,
Until I feel all calm inside.

