



## Mindful Self-Management Exercise: Managing Stress

This exercise will help you and your child learn how to manage stress by being with your thoughts and feelings without reacting or getting upset by them.

- 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 start our time together by getting peaceful and quiet so we can learn about ways to manage stressful and difficult feelings. Find a comfortable position, sit up straight, and place your hands on your thighs. Close your eyes, if that feels comfortable, or gaze softly downward. 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)*

*Now continue breathing slowly on your own. As you breathe in, notice your belly filling up like a balloon. As you breathe out, notice your belly relaxing as the air leaves your body. (pause)*

### Mindfulness Activity

*While you are breathing slowly, you may notice some thoughts coming into your mind. (pause)*

*Some thoughts bring up strong feelings. Think about a time that you felt a strong feeling, such as feeling angry, sad, worried, scared or something else. (pause)*

*Notice where you are feeling this feeling in your body. It could be in your chest, your belly, your arms and legs, or somewhere else. (pause)*

*Now imagine you are holding onto the string of a balloon that is floating over your head. Make a fist and hold the string tightly. (pause)*

*Take a deep breath in and blow your strong feeling out of your body and onto the balloon. (pause)*

*Picture a face on the balloon that shows your strong feeling. (pause)*

*Notice this feeling and be with it for a little while. (pause)*





*When we have a strong feeling, we can notice it. We can be with the strong feeling for a little while and then we can let it go. (pause)*

*Notice again the strong feeling that you sent out of you and up to the balloon. (pause)*

*The feeling is no longer in you, but you are still holding on to it. Take one more breath in and as you breathe out, open your fist and let go of the string. (pause)*

*Watch the balloon and your strong feeling floating away from you. (pause)*

*Notice how your body is feeling now, as your strong feeling is moving away. (pause)*

*Whenever you are having a strong feeling, you can say this poem: Take it easy. Take it slow. Breathe in the air. Then let it go! (pause)*

*Slowly, if your eyes are closed, open them.*

If you are able to, share the **Let It Go!** handout with your child.

## Reflecting

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

### Reflecting Questions

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>What?</b>     | What did you notice as you recalled a strong feeling today?                             |
| <b>So What?</b>  | Why do you think it might be helpful to imagine putting strong feelings onto a balloon? |
| <b>Now What?</b> | When might you use an imaginary balloon to help you with a strong feeling?              |



## Let It Go!

Take it easy.  
Take it slow.  
Breathe in the air.  
Then let it go!

