

Mindful Self-Management Exercise: Managing Stress

This exercise will help you and your child manage stress by learning to be present with thoughts and emotions without reacting to them every time.

- 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 begin our time together by getting peaceful and quiet inside so we can learn how to manage our stressful thoughts and emotions without always reacting to them. Let's get comfortable and sit up straight as if your head was attached to the ceiling. Place your hands on your thighs. Close your eyes, if that feels comfortable, or gaze softly downward. Begin breathing slowly and deeply, in and out, in and out. (pause)

As you are breathing in and out, notice any thoughts that may arise. (pause)

Mindfulness Activity

Continue breathing slowly and deeply. Imagine each thought is like a cloud, drifting overhead in the sky. The thoughts are drifting toward you. As they drift, thought clouds may settle over you for a little while, and then continue on their journey. (pause)

We know that some of our thoughts may be stressful and may cause us to have strong emotions, such as anger, worry, sadness, or frustration. This is normal. Notice any emotions that come up as you watch the thought clouds approaching. (pause)

Notice where you might be feeling these emotions in your body. (pause)

Imagine placing that strong emotion on a cloud and watching it slowly drift away from you. (pause)

Focus on your breathing instead of focusing on the emotion, and notice how it starts to float away. Your thoughts and emotions come and go. Sometimes they stay with you for a while. You can simply notice them without reacting to them, which will help them float on by. (pause)

You can say this rhyme to yourself: When a cloud of emotion hangs over me, I notice it and let it be. I watch it floating over my head, traveling somewhere else instead. (pause)



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FAMILY
G3-G5

When you are distracted by a thought or emotion, imagine it floating by on a cloud and bring your attention back to breathing slowly, in and out. Notice if that makes you feel more peaceful. Let's take two more deep breaths to finish the activity. If your eyes are closed, slowly open them.

If you are able, share the **Clouds of Emotion** handout.

Reflecting

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

Reflecting Questions

- What?** What did you notice in your body today when you recalled strong emotions?
- So What?** Why do you think it may be helpful to imagine our strong emotions floating by on a cloud?
- Now What?** How might you use the emotion cloud image to help you when you are stressed?



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Lions Quest is a social and emotional learning program of Lions Clubs International Foundation.

Clouds of Emotion

When a cloud (of emotion) hangs over
me,

I notice it and let it be.

I watch it floating over my head,

Traveling somewhere else instead.