

Introduction to Mindful Breathing

Mindful breathing is the foundation of mindfulness practices. This brief exercise will acquaint you and your adolescent with this simple practice that you will be using with each mindfulness exercise going forward.

- Each exercise takes 10 minutes or less.
- Familiarize yourself with the exercise before using with your adolescent.
- 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 adolescent. Invite your adolescent to stay in mindful silence until the Reflecting Questions.

Breath Awareness

I thought it would be interesting to start doing some mindfulness exercises together because they can help us with managing stress and becoming more present. Have you ever heard the word mindfulness before?
(pause)

I understand that mindfulness means paying attention to what is happening right now in our bodies, minds, and all around us. And that will help draw our attention away from distractions and into the present moment where we can feel peaceful and relaxed no matter what is going on around us. And I know it can relieve stress and give us this power to choose how we will respond in any situation—with kindness and curiosity. It sounds like it will get us ready to have a good day. Let's try a simple mindfulness exercise and then we'll talk about it.

Let's find a comfortable position and sit up straight, placing your hands on your thighs. You can close your eyes if you like or just gaze softly downward. If you want to stand or lie down, find a comfortable posture that you can hold for several minutes. (pause)

Notice how this position feels. (pause)

Place your hands on your belly and notice what happens when you breathe in through your nose (pause) and out through your mouth. (pause)

Notice how your belly pushes out like a balloon when you breathe in and falls back toward your spine when you breathe out. Feel the rhythm of your breathing as your belly rises when you breathe in and falls when you breathe out. (pause)

Let's breathe like this with the belly rising and falling for five deep abdominal breaths. (pause)

If your eyes are closed, open them now. Thanks for doing this with me.



Reflecting

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

Reflecting Questions

- What?** What did it feel like to sit in your mindful posture? What did you notice?
- So What?** What did it feel like when your belly was rising? When it was falling?
- Now What?** How do you feel now? What might be useful about doing this when we're not present?