

## Mindful Self-Management Exercise: Responding Using S.T.O.P.

This exercise helps with controlling our impulses when faced with strong feelings by identifying feelings that start as challenging thoughts, inserting a pause to interrupt the “thought-feeling-action” chain, and reframing these thoughts to take positive action.

- 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

*Today, let's focus on a mindfulness skill of pausing when facing a challenging situation so that we can respond in a positive way. 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. If you want to lie down or stand up, just make sure you are in a comfortable position that you can hold for several minutes. Breathe slowly and deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth three times. (pause)*

### Mindfulness Activity

*As we know, it can feel like we are traveling through life at high speed. So much activity can cause us to react without thinking and say or do something we later will regret. (pause)*

*Think about a time when you reacted quickly to something in a hurried or stressful moment. (pause)*

*For example, maybe someone treated you unfairly or criticized you in public. (pause)*

*Maybe you then said or did something you later regretted. (pause)*

*Your powerful thoughts and emotions were causing you to travel full steam ahead without using the brake. In these situations, we don't realize that we actually DO have time to use the brake. We can insert a Mindful STOP to pause and choose our response. (pause)*

*A Mindful **STOP** means to physically Stop your thought or action, **Take** a breath (or as many as needed), **Observe** how the situation is making you feel, then **Proceed** mindfully with a response that will help you solve the problem. Feel what it would be like to stop an action or thought. (pause)*



# Lions Quest

FAMILY  
G6-G12

*Feel what it is like to observe something quietly and objectively. (pause)*

*Imagine what it will feel like to proceed after taking this time to choose rather than react. Now imagine yourself back in that stressful situation and you are about to react. (pause)*

*Imagine yourself, instead, hitting the brake and inserting a Mindful STOP. (pause)*

*In that moment, stop the action (pause), take a breath (pause), observe how you are feeling (pause), and proceed with a positive and helpful response. (pause)*

*Notice any changes in how your mind and body are feeling now. (pause)*

*You can use a Mindful STOP whenever you feel yourself in high gear and about to lose control. (pause)*

*Take a couple of deeper breaths. If your eyes are closed, slowly open them.*

If you are able, share the **Mindful STOP** 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 happening in your body and with your feelings when you were practicing the four parts of STOP during this exercise?
- So What?** Why do you think it might be helpful to insert a Mindful STOP in challenging situations?
- Now What?** What are other examples of when you might use a Mindful STOP?



A Program of Lions  
Clubs International  
Foundation

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

## Mindful Responding Using the S.T.O.P. Method



**S**—STOP what you are doing.

**T**—TAKE a breath.

**O**—OBSERVE how you are feeling.

**P**—PROCEED mindfully with a helpful response.