

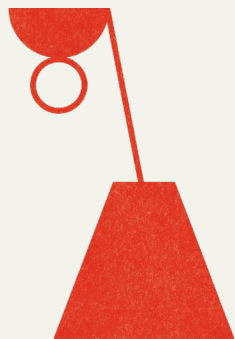
Practitioner and Parent Practice



Mindful Breathing: A way to build resilience to stress, anxiety, and anger.

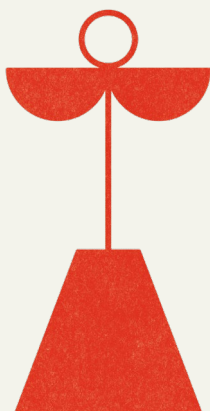
Time Required: Five minutes

First, try this step-by-step activity for yourself and then guide the parents you support through the practice. During and after the activity, take a moment to pause and notice your thoughts, sensations, and feelings. Guide the parents you work with in doing the same.



Why you should try it

The impact of stress, anger, and anxiety extends beyond our health, affecting our ability to focus and make sound judgments. Mindfulness offers a solution by fostering attentive awareness of our thoughts, emotions, and sensations in the present moment, free from judgment. Numerous studies highlight the benefits of mindfulness, including improved health, reduced anxiety, and enhanced resilience to stress.³⁵



Why it works

Mindfulness offers a perspective that allows us to step back from our thoughts and emotions, enabling us to manage and navigate challenging feelings without being consumed. Mindful breathing, in particular, serves as a valuable tool by providing us with an anchor—the steady rhythm of our breath—that we can return to when we feel swept away by stressful thoughts.

How to do it³⁶

A fundamental approach to mindful breathing involves directing your attention to the rhythm of your breath as it goes in and out as you inhale and exhale.

1

Time: Set aside a specific time for this exercise, though practicing it during heightened stress or anxiety can be beneficial. Consistently engaging in mindful breathing fosters the ability to use it readily during challenging situations.

2

Position: Start by standing, or preferably, sitting or lying down comfortably.

3

Eyes: Keep your eyes open or closed or maintain a soft gaze, adjusting to your comfort level.

4

Observation: Observe each breath—*inhalation* and *exhalation*—without attempting to alter its natural rhythm. Occasionally, particularly when seeking to soothe yourself during a tense moment, you may find it beneficial to begin by taking a deliberate, deep breath:

- a. Deeply inhale through your nostrils (3 seconds),
- b. Hold your breath (2 seconds),
- c. Release with a long exhale through your mouth (4 seconds).

5

Focus: Focus on the rise and fall of your chest or the sensation of air flowing through your nostrils.

6

Distraction: Expect your mind to wander, distracted by thoughts or bodily sensations. That's OK. When you notice this happening, gently bring your attention to your breath.

7

Closing: After five minutes, offer yourself gratitude and wishes of well-being for completing this practice.