



Deep Breathing and Mindful Movements

Activity / 5-8 / 5-15 minutes

Purpose

To teach and practice self-regulation skills.

Instructions

Utilize one or more of the following exercises in class wide, small group or individual settings. Suggested times include morning meeting, before/after transitions, after lunch/recess or moments of class wide agitation.

Belly Breathing → Inform students that they will be learning an important tool they can use anytime to calm their body and mind. Ask students to place one hand on their chest and the other on their stomach. Say, “our goal is to use our noses to slowly breath in and fill our belly with air. We will know we are doing it right if the hand over our chest doesn’t move much and the hand on our stomach rises. When we can’t breathe in any more air, we will breathe out through our mouths as slowly as possible. Let’s take 4 breaths together. Breathe in through your nose (pause and model breath) and out through your nose as SLOWLY as you can (model out breath).” Repeat 3 more times. *Note:* it can be helpful to invite students to look down at their stomach or close their eyes during the exercise to avoid distraction and discomfort.

Color Breathing → Ask students to visualize a color that represents positive emotions and think about how much or where they feel that color inside their body. Then ask them to think of another color that represents negative emotions and how much or where they feel that color inside their body right now. Ask them to close their eyes (or look down towards the ground). Say, “As you breathe in, imagine that positive color filling up your body. It fills your nose, your mouth, your throat, your chest and belly and your whole body – filling you with calm, positive feelings. As you breathe out, imagine that negative color slowly exiting your body through your mouth. Blowing it all out as you exhale. Let’s do it again two more times. Breathe in, filling your body with positive, calm color. (Pause) And breath out, letting go of that negative color. Breathe in, and out.”

Progressive Muscle Relaxation → Say, “I’d like you to start by closing your eyes and thinking of someplace that makes you really comfortable, like your bed or the bathtub or the couch or the beach. Imaging that you are lying down there of sitting comfortably. Take a breath in, and out, in, and out – continue breathing this way as we go on and think about that safe spot. Now I’d like you to make a fist and squeeze it really tight. (You can open your eyes and see how I’m doing it if you’re not sure how) Hold it. Now relax completely, and shake it out. Notice the difference between how it felt what it was tight and how it feels when it’s relaxed. Let’s do the same thing for the rest of your arms. Tighten up your whole arm, like you are making a muscle, and hold it. Now relax it completely. Do it again. Tighten, now relax. Now let’s move to your shoulders. Bring your shoulders up to your ears and tighten them... hold it. Now relax. Do that again. Bring your shoulders way up near your ears...hold it...now relax completely. Make sure your hands, arms and shoulders are completely relaxed. Breathe in...and out...in...and out.”

References

Niroga Institute, (2012). Transformative Life Skills Program and Curriculum. Oakland, CA: Niroga Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.niroga.org/education/curriculum/samples.php>.

Jaycox, L. (2004). Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools. Longmont, CO: The RAND Corporation.



Deep Breathing and Mindful Movements

Additional Resources

Online and App Based Resources

Go Noodle → videos for energizing and calming <https://app.gonoodle.com/>

Relaxation Activities → <http://www.healthiersf.org/resources/pubs/stressRed/StressReductionActivities.pdf>

SmilingMind → app (from Australia) that includes mindfulness lessons, activities and guided meditations

Breathe2Relax → leads you in belly breathing

Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame → Sesame Street app to teach regulation and problem solving skills

Link to short video to share with students about breathing to relax → <https://mysmartgirls.com/short-film-just-breathe-helps-kids-deal-with-emotions-1b4f91dac5ad#.ma7ix76iy>

Books & Curricula (NOT freely available, but links to resources and access information below)

StarBright: Meditations for Children by Maureen Garth **copy available for use*

Yoga Pretzels – card deck with yoga and breath activities for use in multiple ways **copy available for use*

Ready Set R.E.L.A.X. by Jeffrey S. Allen and Roger J. Klein **copy available for use*

Project Peaceful Warriors → local organization offering YOGA Ed. trainings for educators
<http://projectpeacefulwarriors.strikingly.com/>

MeMoves → music and movement to promote regulation, originally developed for students with ASD, sample videos available <https://thinkingmoves.com/> **copy available for use*

Niroga Institute → offer online training in Dynamic Mindfulness Curriculum, links to free sample lessons
<http://www.niroga.org/education/curriculum/samples.php>

MindUp → <https://mindup.org/mindup-mindful-classroom-framework-schools/> **copy available for use*

Conscious Discipline → whole school social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation program. Free resources available here <http://consciousdiscipline.com/resources/>