Mind Body Skills: Activities for Emotional Regulation

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General Disclaimer:

Various activities in this book may be activating for certain children. Know the background history of the child you are working with before using these interventions.
About the Author

Caelan Soma, PsyD, LMSW, ACTP, Chief Clinical Officer, provides oversight for all clinical operations and research at Starr Commonwealth. Dr. Soma provides trauma assessment and trauma informed, resilience focused intervention for youth utilizing evidence-based practices, including Starr’s SITCAP® model programs.

She has been involved in helping with the aftermath of disasters such as Sandy Hook, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and others. She is has authored several books, the most recent, *10 Steps to Create a Trauma-Informed Resilient School* and *Healing the Experience of Trauma: A Path to Resilience*.

She is an internationally acclaimed speaker and trainer, and is the instructor for many Starr courses, including *Children of Trauma and Resilience* and *Structured Sensory Interventions II*. She received her doctorate in clinical psychology at California Southern University, where she received the 2013 Cal-Southern President’s Award.
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Introduction

My dissertation included a research project that evaluated a mind body skills program to determine its effects on the improvement of impaired emotional-regulation, a common symptom in youth with posttraumatic stress symptoms and reactions. The 10-session program consisted of mind-body interventions aimed to address the adverse impact posttraumatic stress has on the physiologic responses in the body. Activities included drawing and expressive art, guided imagery, mindfulness meditation, deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation. Results of this program suggest that mind-body interventions decrease posttraumatic stress symptoms and increase emotional regulation in children and youth. Based upon these results, I have created this resource for practitioners to use with children and adolescents ages 3-17 years old using a collection of the activities used in the research project as well as additional activities to support each mind-body skill.

About this Book

This resource contains five main sections for each category of mind-body skill activities: breath work and movement, mindfulness, guided imagery, expressive art activities, songs/finger plays (3-5 year olds) and writing/journaling activities (6-12 and 13-17 year olds). In each section there are several mind body skill activities divided into three age ranges; early childhood (3-5 year olds), school age (6-12 year olds) and adolescents (13-17 year olds). Each activity includes directions, required materials and most include worksheets or coloring pages to support the activity.

As with all our activities, please use the activities that are developmentally appropriate for the child. For example, if you are working with a ten-year old child, but developmentally they are closer to a five-year old, you may want to select activities from the younger age category. You may also find that some activities in more than one age range are appropriate. It is okay to use any activity that you feel is developmentally appropriate and to overlap between the sections. Several of the adolescent activities are appropriate and beneficial to use with adults. The activities in this resource can be used alone or they may be incorporated into any of Starr's trauma intervention programs for individuals or groups. All of the activities are excellent ways to start and end sessions or can be completed in 15-20 minutes when time is limited. Feel free to repeat activities that are of particular interest or benefit to a child. Practice and repetition are encouraged. If you have any questions please email me anytime at somac@starr.org.
Breathing and Movement

“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor.”

Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk

“The body says what words cannot.”

Martha Graham, American Modern Dancer and Choreographer
Breathing and Movement

Breathwork refers to many forms of conscious alteration of breathing, such as connecting in-breath with out-breath, or intentionally changing the pace or deepness of breath. Breathwork is something that children of all ages can learn and practice. For younger children, it is fun to use props like pinwheels and bubbles to support breathwork activities. Adolescents will enjoy learning that they can practice breathwork activities without any props and without anyone knowing they are practicing! The following breathwork activities will help you teach children how they can use their breath to calm themselves and to notice various body sensations.

Movement is an act of changing physical location or position. Engaging children in movement activities helps them to become more aware of their bodies and the sensations within their bodies. This awareness is the first step to mastering emotional regulation.

Start by teaching breathwork and movement activities to children and then practice them on a regular basis. Encourage them to practice the activities on their own or with the help of their parent/caregiver. The goal is for them to easily engage in breathing or movement changes when they need help regulating their emotions or behaviors. The more they practice, the easier it will become for them to call upon these resources during uncomfortable or overwhelming situations.

For each breathwork and movement activity, ask children to notice how their bodies feel before and after the activities. Compare the similarities and differences.
Breathing Activity for Ages 3-5

Deep Breathing and Awareness of Breath

Directions:

For this activity, the child can sit on the floor or in a chair. If the child is sitting in a chair, invite them to sit comfortably and to put their hands in their lap. If the child is sitting on the floor, ask them to cross their legs in the crisscross applesauce position and put their hands in their laps.

Demonstrate for them how to take one deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Encourage them to watch your shoulders and chest rise when you breathe in and fall when you breathe out. After you demonstrate this 2 or 3 times, invite them to try. *Breathe in the air through your nose 1-2-3 and then blow out the air from your mouth 1-2-3.* Repeat this 3 times.

Now, invite the child to go back to normal breathing. Encourage the child to pay attention to the little rises in their shoulders and chests when they breathe in and the gentle fall of their shoulders and chest when they breathe out.
Bunny Breath

**Directions:**

The child can sit or stand for this breathing activity.

* We are going to pretend like we are little bunnies. Can you wiggle your nose like a bunny? Show the child how you wiggle your nose like a bunny. Great job! Now, I am going to teach you how to breathe like a bunny.

* Demonstrate for the child by taking three quick sniffs in through your nose and then breathe out one long breath from your nose. Now you take three quick sniffs in through your nose and then breathe out one long breath from your nose. Very good!

* Invite the child to practice sniffing like a bunny for various things in your environment (select a few favorite toys, books or plush animals). Now let’s sniff like bunny rabbits for some of our toys and books.

Invite the child to color in the image of the bunny.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3-5

Brown Bear Breath

Directions:

Invite the child to sit or to lie on their backs on the floor for this activity.

Tell the child to relax and close their eyes and imagine that they are a cuddly brown bear. Imagine you are a cuddly brown bear that is going into his cave to take a long nap. You lie down and get very cozy. Relax and close your eyes like the brown bear. Now, feel the air as you breathe in through your nose and breathe out from your nose. Pause. Breathe in through your nose to the count of 1-2-3. Pause. Now, breathe out from your nose 1-2-3. Pause. Repeat three times.

After the children complete the Brown Bear Breath activity ask, How does your body feel? Warm, relaxed, sleepy? When you are having a hard time going to sleep or when you need to take a break from playing you can always pretend you are a cuddly brown bear.

Invite the child to color in the image of the bear.
Breathing and Movement
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3-5

Stretching

Directions:

Demonstrate while guiding the child through the following stretching activity.

1. Stand up straight with your hands down by your sides. Let your whole body feel relaxed. You can even wiggle your hips and bend your knees and elbows if that feels good. Now, reach up your arms above your head. Okay, good, put them back down.

2. Now reach up your arms again but this time a little bit higher. Great job! Okay good, now put them back down and wiggle or bend if you need to. On this reach I want you to reach as high up in the air as you can. 1-2-3…great job! Reach up high…higher…just a little bit higher! Reach as high up as you can! Great! Great! Great! Okay let your hands come down. Now bend down towards your toes. Good job! Come on back up. This time see if you can bend down just a little but farther. Great!

3. Okay, straighten back up again and this time I want you to reach down as close to your toes as you can. 1-2-3, bend down – go as low as you can but don’t hurt yourself! Lower, lower….great job! Now stand up and let’s reach our arms up in the air just one more time! It feels so good to stretch the muscles in our body!
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3-5

**Spaghetti & Meatballs**

**Directions:**

The child can stand for this activity. Demonstrate while you guide the child through the activity.

- Imagine that your arms are long, uncooked spaghetti noodles. Hold your arms stiff and straight. Demonstrate by holding your arms stiff and straight. *Okay great job! Now let your arms relax.*

- Next, imagine your hands are meatballs that haven’t been formed yet so they are still floppy and loose. *Shake your floppy and loose meatball hands.* Demonstrate by shaking your hands and fingers. *Very good!*

- Now imagine the noodles (your arms) have been cooked and now they are relaxed like long cooked spaghetti! Wiggle your arms like long cooked spaghetti. Great! When your arms are tense they are stiff like raw noodles and when they are relaxed they are soft and floppy like cooked noodles aren’t they?

- Now imagine that we have formed and cooked the meatballs (hands). Make a tight fist with your hands. *Very good! Those are meatballs.* When our hands and fingers are relaxed they are like meat that hasn’t been formed into a meatball but when they are tight they are like round meatballs! See the difference?
When I say Spaghetti I want you to wiggle your arms like long cooked spaghetti! Spaghetti! Wiggle! Wiggle!

Wiggle!

Now when I will say Meatballs and I want you to make two tight fists like this. (Demonstrate) Meatballs!

Hold tight….1-2-3-4 Spaghetti! Spaghetti! Spaghetti! Now let everything go loose! Great job!

Repeat several times.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3-5

Triangle Breathing

**Directions**

- Imagine a triangle.

- *Breathe in* while raising your arms above your head into the point of a triangle. 1-2-3.

- *Breathe out* while you lower your arms outward on an angle from your shoulders creating the two sides of a triangle. 1-2-3.

- *Now, counting to 6,* slowly bring your hands into the middle of your body creating the bottom of the triangle. 1-2-3-4-5-6. Say, *All is still.*

Repeat several times.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3-5

A Blooming Flower

Directions:

The child can sit and close their eyes for this activity.


- Now imagine that you are a flower. Your roots grow down into the earth beneath your stem and your leaves reach out on each side of you. Pause.

- You are growing in the sunlight. Feel the warm sun on your leaves and the deep soft soil around your roots. What color are your petals? What shape are your petals? Are they small or long petals? You are a very beautiful flower. Breathe in the beauty. Breathe in 1-2-3. You are very beautiful. You have everything you need right now, in this moment.

Invite the child to color in the image of the flower.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3-5

Belly Breathing

Directions:

At first it’s best to have the child lying down to learn the proper way to breathe. Then you can expand this exercise having the child sitting upright in a chair or couch. Some kids need to feel the sensation of something on their stomach to learn how to belly breathe. Small stuffed animals or small bean bags used for tossing work well to place on their stomach while they are getting used to feeling the sensation of air filling their belly.

- Lie down and put your hand on your belly. Take a slow deep breath in through your nose and let it out through your mouth with a gentle ah-h-h-h-h sound. (The child should feel their belly rise and fall).

- Breathe in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth like you are trying to move a feather up in the air. Breathe in slowly 1-2-3-4 and out 1-2-3-4, In 1-2-3-4 and out 1-2-3-4.

Repeat several times.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3-5

Be a Whale

Directions:

The child can stand up for this activity. Demonstrate while guiding the child through the activity.

Did you know that whales don’t really blow water out of the their blow holes? It is really just air but since they don’t come all the way out of the water when they blow out the air, water collects and it looks like water spurting out! Pretend you’re a big whale swimming underneath the water in the ocean. You can move your body like you are swimming like a whale in the ocean.

Take a deep breath and hold it for a count of 1-2-3. Good job. Okay, let the breath out and this time let’s try to take an even deeper breath in and try to hold it for longer! Okay, breathe in and I will count 1-2-3-4-5-6 okay, good job! Hold it in like a whale holding its breath under the water. Now, when you can’t hold your breath any longer, pretend like you are coming up to the surface of the water and let out all of the air you breathed in! Good job! I bet that would have looked like a big spout of water in the ocean just like a whale!

Invite the child to color in the image of the whale.
Breathing and Movement
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 3–5

A Rocket Blasts Off!

**Directions:**

The child can stand up for this activity. Demonstrate while you guide the child through the activity.

- **Imagine you are a rocket ship getting ready for blast off. When I start counting, you take a deep breath in.**
  
  Okay, breathe in for 1-2-3-4. Good job! Now you can let your breath out.

- **This next time I want you to try to breathe even deeper while I count to 6. Okay, breathe in 1-2-3-4-5-6 Hold your breathe and when you can’t hold your breath any longer raise up your arms above your head and blow out all the air you have been holding as if you are a rocket and you are blasting off into space!**

Invite the child to color in the image of the rocket ship.
Breathing and Movement
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Breath Awareness

Directions:

Read the following excerpt from Thich Nhat Hanh (2008):

“With each in-breath, we can notice we are breathing in. With each out-breath, we can notice we are breathing out. When we breathe like this, our body and our mind come together. When our body and mind are together, we are capable of living more fully. We are able to enjoy what is going on in and around us in each moment.”

Notice your in-breath and notice your out-breath. Just notice the pace of your own breathing. Do this for a few breaths. Now, allow your in-breath to come down all the way into your belly. Then exhale your out-breath completely. Continue to breathe slowly, aware of each in-breath and out-breath.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Smell the Flowers Breath

Directions:

The child can sit during this activity. A nice addition is to have soft music playing in the background as you guide the activity and the child colors.

Imagine that you smell a beautiful flower. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Repeat 3 times.

Very good, now take your time and color in these flowers. As you color pay attention to your breathing.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

**Blast Off! Breathing**

**Directions:**

The child can sit or stand for this activity. Demonstrate as you guide the child through this activity.

Stand or sit up straight. Now, hold your hands together in front of your chest, getting ready to blast off. As I count down from five to one, press your hands together and inhale as you count. When you get to one, blast out your exhale and move your hands up towards the sky. Okay, are you ready? 1-2-3-4-5.

Repeat a few times.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation – Brief Version

Directions:

The child can sit down in a chair for this activity.

- Notice your body in your chair, uncross you legs. You can close your eyes or keep them open. First, scrunch your toes – tight…tighter…tighter…relax. Bend your toes up toward your face – tight…tighter…tighter….relax.

- Now, your calves, hold your lower legs up under your chair, now let them down. Tighten your thighs and your bottom and feel yourself rise up in your chair. Now, relax.

- Tighten your abdominal muscles. Good job, now, relax them.

- Pull your shoulders in toward each other…relax.

- Scrunch your hands into a fist – tight…tighter…tighter…relax. Now pull your hands in and cross them while scrunching your shoulders up toward your ears. Good job, now, relax.

- Tighten your jaw. Relax. Scrunch up your face real tight – tight…tighter…tighter…relax.

- Now go back through your whole body and let go of any tension you might still feel in each place as you move through it. Notice the difference in places that are still tight and relax.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Deep Belly Breathing

**Directions:**

The child can stand up straight with their feet shoulder width apart for this activity.

- **Stand straight up with feet shoulder-width apart. Relax your arms and hands and extend them downward.**

  Relax your body. Close your eyes.

- **Focus on your lower abdomen (belly) and imagine a small balloon in that space. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nostrils, imagining the balloon inflating (getting bigger/larger/growing) slowly, hold a few seconds.**

- **Slowly exhale through your mouth, imagining the balloon gently deflating and getting smaller and shrinking; blow out of your mouth as if you are blowing out a candle.**

Repeat several times.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Progressive Relaxation – Long Version

**Directions:**

The child can sit or lay down for this activity.

- **Raise your eyebrows and wrinkle your forehead.** Try to touch your hairline with your eyebrows. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Make a frown. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Close your eyes as tightly as you can. Draw the corners of your mouth back with your lips closed. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Open your eyes and your mouth as wide as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your face.

- **Stretch your arms out in front of you.** Close your fist tightly. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your hands. Stretch your arms out to the side. Pretend you are pushing against an invisible wall with your hands. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Bend your elbows and make a muscle in your upper arm. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the tension leave your arms.

- **Lift your shoulders.** Try to make your shoulders touch your ears. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Arch your back away from the back of your chair (or off the floor). Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Round your back. Try to push it against the back of your chair (or against the floor). Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the tension leaving your back.

- **Tighten your stomach muscles.** Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Tighten your hip and buttock muscles. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Tighten your thigh muscles by pressing your legs together as close as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax.
Bend your ankles toward your body as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Curl your toes under as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds...and relax. Feel the tension leave your legs.

Tighten all the muscles in your whole body. Hold for ten seconds...and relax. Let your entire body be heavy and clam. Sit quietly (or lie quietly) and enjoy this feeling of relaxation for a couple of minutes.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Simple Breathing Meditation

Directions:

- Begin by sitting comfortably, balanced, and relaxed (if seated in a chair, feet on the ground). Breathe easy and from the abdomen/"belly breathing" (not chest breathing). Practice a few deep breaths.

- Rotate the head in easy, slow circles; change direction and rotate in slow, easy circles. Look up; tilt your head back. Look down; put your chin on your chest.

- Drop your arms and hands to the side and shake them gently and easily.

- Raise your feet off the floor and gently and easily shake the knees.

- Straighten your spine.

Repeat several times.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Silent Ball

Directions:

This game works best with 4 or more players. You will need a soft ball to play this game.

We are going to play silent ball. No one can talk or make a sound; that is the object of the game. Now, I am going to tell you the rules.

- Talking or making sounds is an automatic “out.”
- Missed catch or bad pass is an out.
- A “good” throw is within arm’s length of the intended catcher and does not include “fast balls” (Demonstrate a good throw).
- If you get “out” you must remain quiet at your desk and not interfere with the game in any way.
- You may stand anywhere in this room.
- The person who starts will make a good throw to another person; (you cannot throw back to the person who threw to them.
- Remember, if you miss the ball or make a bad pass (too fast or reckless), you are out.
- The last two people “in” are the champs!

Okay, let’s start. I will go throw first.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Freeze Dance

**Directions:**

For this activity you will need music (a CD or iPod with portable speakers or an iPad or tablet will work well).

A mix of fast and slow music works best.

- *When I start the music move or dance to match the tempo, beat and rhythm of the music. When I stop the music you have to FREEZE. When the music resumes, you can continue to move or dance to the music.*

- *Let’s go over the rules one more time. When the music starts move or dance to match the music. When the music stops, FREEZE.*

- *Let’s try this.*
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Deep Breathing

Directions:

- Invite the teen to close his/her eyes and focus solely on breathing. *Breathe calmly through your nose.*

- Place one hand on your stomach and focus on the rising and falling of your stomach with each breath. As you take a breath and your stomach fills with air, your stomach should expand. As you release a breath, your stomach will fall. Focus on the rising and falling of your stomach. If your chest is rising and falling, you are not yet engaged in deep breathing and need to focus on inhaling air all the way into your stomach.

- Let’s “count up” while breathing in 1-2-3-4-5-6 and “count down” while breathing out 6-5-4-3-2-1. Very good!

  *Let’s practice this a few more times.*

Repeat 3-5 times.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 6-12

Stretching (Head, Neck, Shoulders and Hands)

**Directions:**

- **In this stretch activity we will try to release tension and stretch our muscles. Take a deep breath in 1-2-3-4 and breathe out 4-3-2-1 releasing tension. Continue to breathe in for a count of four and out for a count of four throughout the stretching exercises.**

- **Let’s start by stretching and relaxing your neck and shoulders. Turn your head to the right, gently looking over your right shoulder....Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Now move your head so you are looking forward. Okay, good! Now, turn your head to the left while gently looking over your left shoulder. Breathe in as you look over your left shoulder 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1 as you move your head back to the facing forward position. Turn again to the right, and now look forward and turn to the left and back to facing forward. Take a deep breath in 1-2-3-4. Facing straight ahead, exhale as you look down 4-3-2-1. Bring your chin toward your chest and look down slowly. Allow the muscles on the back of your neck to lengthen as you move your chin closer to your chest. Allow your head to hang forward, gently stretching the muscles. Breathe slowly in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Now raise your chin and look straight ahead again. Very good!**

- **Breathe in as you look up and raise your chin up as you gaze toward the ceiling. As you exhale, feel the muscles along the front of your neck lengthen. Relax your head backward and continue to look toward the sky. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Very good! Now return your head the facing forward position. Breathe in 1-2-3-4.**
Now, look down one more time. Exhale as you allow the weight of your head to gently stretch the muscles of your neck as you relax your head forward. Don’t force this position, just relax into this position of looking down with your chin toward your chest and continue breathing as you feel your neck muscles relaxing further. Now return your head the facing forward position. And now inhale 1-2-3-4 as you look up again and relax your head back while you feel the length of your neck, stretching out your muscles gently. Breathe out 4-3-2-. Now return your head the facing forward position. Take another deep breath in 1-2-3-4 and bring your shoulders up toward your ears. Raise them up and then lower your shoulders as you exhale 4-3-2-1.

Raise your shoulders again and lower them, allowing the muscles down the sides of your neck and the top of your shoulders to lengthen. Roll your shoulders in forward circles. Rotate them forward 1-2-3-4 times. Good. Now, change directions and rotate your shoulders backwards 1-2-3-4 times. Rest your shoulders now. Feel how much more relaxed your shoulders feel.

Now breathe in through your mouth as you stretch your jaw by opening your mouth wide and feel the muscles stretching 1-2-3-4. Now breathe out 4-3-2-1 and close your mouth but let your jaw drop slightly so your teeth are not touching allowing your jaw to be loose and relaxed.

The last area we are going to stretch and relax to relieve tension is your hands. Clench your hands into tight fists... hold.... and relax. Let your hands be limp. Now open your hands very wide, stretching your fingers out wide and bring your arms forward and out to the sides, raising them above your head. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and now breathe out 4-3-2-1 as you relax your arms and hands, releasing the tension and letting them go limp. Shake out the tension as you gently shake both arms. Very good! You have stretched your shoulders, neck, face and hands! You can stop here or you can continue to stretch the rest of your body by following the next stretching activity.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 13-17

Deep Breathing

Directions:

Invite the teen to close his/her eyes and focus solely on breathing.

- **Breathe calmly through your nose.** Place one hand on your stomach and focus on the rising and falling of your stomach with each breath. As you take a breath and your stomach fills with air, your stomach should expand. As you release a breath, your stomach will fall. Focus on the rising and falling of your stomach. If your chest is rising and falling, you are not yet engaged in deep breathing and need to focus on inhaling air all the way into your stomach.

- **Let’s “count up” while breathing in 1-2-3-4-5-6 and “count down” while breathing out 6-5-4-3-2-1.** Very good! Let’s practice this a few more times.

Repeat 3-5 times.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 13-17

Stretching (Head, Neck, Shoulders and Hands)

Directions:

In this stretch activity we will try to release tension and stretch our muscles. Take a deep breath in 1-2-3-4 and breathe out 4-3-2-1 releasing tension. Continue to breathe in for a count of four and out for a count of four throughout the stretching exercises.

Let's start by stretching and relaxing your neck and shoulders. Turn your head to the right, gently looking over your right shoulder. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Now move your head so you are looking forward. Okay, good! Now, turn your head to the left while gently looking over your left shoulder. Breathe in as you look over your left shoulder 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1 as you move your head back to the facing forward position. Turn again to the right, and now look forward and turn to the left and back to facing forward. Take a deep breath in 1-2-3-4.

Facing straight ahead, exhale as you look down 4-3-2-1. Bring your chin toward your chest and look down slowly. Allow the muscles on the back of your neck to lengthen as you move your chin closer to your chest. Allow your head to hang forward, gently stretching the muscles. Breathe slowly in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Now raise your chin and look straight ahead again. Very good! Breathe in as you look up and raise your chin up as you gaze toward the ceiling. As you exhale, feel the muscles along the front of your neck lengthen. Relax your head backward and continue to look toward the sky. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Very
good! Now return your head the facing forward position. Breathe in 1-2-3-4

Now, look down one more time. Exhale as you allow the weight of your head to gently stretch the muscles of your neck as you relax your head forward. Don’t force this position, just relax into this position of looking down with your chin toward your chest and continue breathing as you feel your neck muscles relaxing further. Now return your head the facing forward position. And now inhale 1-2-3-4 as you look up again and relax your head back while you feel the length of your neck, stretching out your muscles gently. Breathe out 4-3-2-1. Now return your head the facing forward position.

Take another deep breath in 1-2-3-4 and bring your shoulders up toward your ears. Raise them up and then lower your shoulders as you exhale 4-3-2-1. Raise your shoulders again and lower them, allowing the muscles down the sides of your neck and the top of your shoulders to lengthen. Roll your shoulders in forward circles. Rotate them forward 1-2-3-4 times. Good. Now, change directions and rotate your shoulders backwards 1-2-3-4 times. Rest your shoulders now. Feel how much more relaxed your shoulders feel.

Now breathe in through your mouth as you stretch your jaw by opening your mouth wide and feel the muscles stretching 1-2-3-4. Now breathe out 4-3-2-1 and close your mouth but let your jaw drop slightly so your teeth are not touching allowing your jaw to be loose and relaxed.

The last area we are going to stretch and relax to relieve tension is your hands. Clench your hands into tight fists... hold.... and relax. Let your hands be limp. Now open your hands very wide, stretching your fingers out wide and bring your arms forward and out to the sides, raising them above your head. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and now breathe out 4-3-2-1 as you relax your arms and hands, releasing the tension and letting them go
*limp. Shake out the tension as you gently shake both arms. Very good! You have stretched your shoulders, neck, face and hands!*

You can stop here or you can continue to stretch the rest of your body by following the next stretching activity.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 13-17

Stretching (Toes, Calves, Legs, Hips, Abdomen, Arms)

Directions:

- In this stretch activity we will try to release tension and stretch our muscles. Take a deep breath in 1-2-3-4 and breathe out 4-3-2-1 releasing tension. Continue to breathe in for a count of four and out for a count of four throughout the stretching exercises.

- Point your right toes, feeling the calf muscle tighten, and the front of your shin stretching. Now place your heel on the floor and bring your right foot toward your right shin to stretch the back of the lower leg. To stretch even further, lean slightly forward at the hips and bend your left leg to bring your center of gravity toward the floor. Feel the stretch up into your right hamstring 1-2-3-4.

- Now release your right leg back to natural position and point your left toe. Stretch the muscles on the front of your left lower leg. Now put your left heel on the floor and point your left toes upward, stretching the back of the left lower leg. Lean forward a little, bending at the hips and right knee, to further stretch the calf and left hamstring. Stretch and relax. Release your left leg to its natural position. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1.

- To stretch the thigh muscles, support yourself by placing your left hand on a wall, chair back, or other stable surface, and then bend your right knee and grasp your right foot in your hand. Feel the quadriceps on the
front of your thigh stretching. Hold 1-2-3-4 and now release 4-3-2-1. Slowly place your right foot back on the floor. Switch sides. Bend your left knee and grasp your left foot behind you in your hand. Stretch the front of the left thigh. Hold 1-2-3-4 and release 4-3-2-1.

With both feet on the floor, shoulder-width apart, and hands on your hips, breathe in 1-2-3-4. Now exhale as you lean gently left 4-3-2-1 only until you feel a slight stretch at your waist on the right side. Hold 1-2-3-4 and now inhale and return to your natural position 4-3-2-1. Now breathe out as you lean slightly to the right 3-2-1. Feel a gentle stretch on your left side. Hold 4-3-2-1 and now inhale and release breathing out 4-3-2-1.

Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Now gently grasp your hands behind you, with your arms straight. Breathe in as you bring both hands toward the back, away from the body. Bring your shoulder blades in toward each other. Feel the space between your collarbones widening and stretching. Hold this 1-2-3-4 and stretch and relax 4-3-2-1 and now let go. Breathe out. Shake it out. Shake both arms gently and feel them relax.

Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out as you tighten your abdominal muscles again, curving your back forward and then relax 4-3-2-1. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Return to your natural position. Let your back be relaxed with its natural curves. Stretch and relax.
Take a breath as you reach your right arm up toward the ceiling, stretch high up, lengthening the entire right side of your body. Breathe out and relax. Return to neutral. Now inhale and reach your left hand up high, reaching for the ceiling, lengthening the left side of your body. Then exhale and return to neutral.

Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Continue to breathe slowly and gently. Bring your right arm across the front of your body, grasp your upper arm with your left hand, and gently stretch your right shoulder. Now relax. Bring your left arm across, grasp the upper arm with your right hand, and stretch your left shoulder. Now relax. Shake both arms a bit and feel them relax further.

Breathe in 1-2-3-4 Stretch both arms straightforward and breathe out 4-3-2-1. Reach straight out to the sides at shoulder level and inhale 1-2-3-4 and reach forward again exhale 4-3-2-1 and stretch your arms back out to the sides. Good, now inhale 1-2-3-4 and reach up above your head and stretch and relax as you exhale 4-3-2-1. Shake your arms out. Very good.

Scan your body for any areas of tension. Gently stretch and relax these areas or focus on relaxing them passively, just by thinking about releasing the tension. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and exhale 4-3-2-1 any remaining tension. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and release tension as you breathe out 4-3-2-1.

Stretch your arms up above your head as you breathe in 1-2-3-4. Relax as you breathe out 4-3-2-1. Stretch up 1-2-3-4 and breathe in 1-2-3-4. Relax and breathe out 4-3-2-1. Breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. One more time, breathe in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1. Allow your whole body to feel relaxed. Very good!
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 13-17

Push the Great Wall

Directions:

Stand up with your feet shoulder-width apart and place your hands, palms flat, on a wall in front of you. You should be a comfortable distance away from way (your arms should be just a little bit bent at the elbows.)

When I say, “push” I would like you to push the wall in front of you as if you are trying to push the wall over. We will do this a few times and each times I will count a little bit longer. Hold the count and then you can release your push. Okay, “push” 1-2 push hard 3-4-5. Great, now release your push and you can shake your arms out.

Okay again “push” 1-2-3 push hard 4-5-6 harder 7-8-9. Great job, now release and shake your arms out again.

Okay last time so give it all you’ve got “push” 1-2-3-push-4-5-6-push-push-8-9-10. Very good! Release your push.
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 13-17

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Directions:

 Invite the teen to sit or stand comfortably, but straight and to close their eyes.

- Take three deep breaths in 1-2-3-4 and out 4-3-2-1 through your nose. Starting at your feet, feel them completely relax. Then, think of each body part as you move up your body.

- VERY SLOWLY think of and relax your ankles (pause), calves (pause), shins (pause), knees (pause), thighs (pause), hamstrings (pause), bottom (pause), abdomen (pause), lower back (pause), stomach (pause), middle back (pause), spine (pause), chest (pause), upper back (pause), shoulders (pause), upper arms (pause), lower arms (pause), wrists (pause), hands (pause), fingers (pause), neck (pause), chin (pause), eyes (pause), forehead (pause), top of your head (pause).
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 13-17

Full Body Breathing

Directions:

Sit in your chair with your feet on the floor and your eyes closed. Take three long, deep breaths. With each breath feel yourself relaxing more and more. First breathe in 1-2-3 and out 3-2-1.

Now, let’s take a second breath in 1-2-3 and out 3-2-1. And a third breath in 1-2-3 and out 3-2-1.

With our next breaths I want you to see how far down into your body you can breathe. Take a deep breath and let the air fill your chest 1-2-3-4. Breathe out 4-3-2-1. Take another deep breath and let the air go past your chest and into your arms and hands. With each breath you become more relaxed.

Take another deep breath and this time let the air go down all the way into your legs. Breathe the air all the way in 1-2-3-4-5 and now (pause) out 5-4-3-2-1. Very good! You are calm and relaxed.

Now breathing slowly, feel the air fill your body and relax your chest, arms, stomach and legs. Continue breathing slow and steady for another minute. Very good! Open your eyes!
Breathing and Movement Activity for Ages 13-17

Deep Belly Breathing

**Directions:**

The child can stand up straight with their feet shoulder-width apart for this activity.

- **Stand straight up with feet shoulder-width apart. Relax your arms and hands and extend them downward.**
  
  Relax your body. Close your eyes.

- **Focus on lower abdomen (belly) and imagine a small balloon in that space. Breath in slowly 1-2-3-4 and deeply through your nostrils, imagining the balloon inflating (getting bigger/larger/growing) slowly, hold a few seconds 1-2-3-4.**

- **Slowly exhale through your mouth, imagining the balloon gently deflating and getting smaller, shrinking; blow out of your mouth as if you are blowing out a candle 4-3-2-1.**

Repeat several times.
“Mindfulness gives you time. Time gives you choices. Choices, skillfully made, lead to freedom. You don't have to be swept away by your feeling. You can respond with wisdom and kindness rather than habit and reactivity.”

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, Buddhist monk
**Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. Mindfulness can be taught to and practiced with children of all ages. Since children are concrete thinkers, activities should be simple and clearly described but should allow room for imagination and creativity. The mindfulness activities that follow will help you implement fun and beneficial mindfulness activities. Remember the importance of starting slow and keeping things simple. Practicing mindfulness for a short time (1-5 minutes) everyday will prove to be a benefit to children. You may want to introduce an activity and then repeat the activity several times; gradually lengthening the amount of time each time you practice. It is okay to repeat the same mindfulness activities over and over again if there is a particular activity that a child seems to enjoy. The goal is to provide the child with an opportunity to be fully present in the moment, even if for only a few minutes. This will provide the child with relief from re-experiencing past stress and trauma and from worrying about the future.
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 3-5

**Coloring My Body**

**Directions:**

Take your time and color in the outline of this body however you want it to look. You might want to make it look like you or someone else you know. You could even color it in using one or two colors.

**Variation:** Using large poster board or butcher paper, ask the child to lie down and let you trace their body. Then, using paint or markers they can color in the outline of their body. This also works well outdoors with sidewalk chalk.
Mindfulness
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 3-5

Shhh...Listen

**Directions:**

Invite the child to sit in a chair or they can even lie down on a couch or mat if they want to. Start by practicing some breaths and then ask the child to close his eyes.

- As you close your eyes, open up your listening ears as much as you can. What do you hear? If you hear your breath just say ‘Breath’ – if you hear a voice in the hall, just say “hall”. I am going to be still and quiet and open up my listening ears too. Let’s see what we can hear. Pause.

- Notice all of the sounds you hear in this room. Notice the sounds you are making too. When we are quiet and still we can hear so much more than when we are busy and moving about.

**Variation** – do this outside in nice weather
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 3-5

Find the Hidden Pictures

**Directions:**

Invite the child to look at the following page and try to find the hidden animals in the picture.

*Circle each animal as you find it! Can you find them all?*

The hidden animals are a bird, monkey, snake and lion.
Mindfulness
How I Feel

Directions:

Look at the following pictures of feeling faces. Tell me what you think each face is feeling. Why do you think they are feeling that way?

Note: There are no right or wrong answers to how the child perceives each feeling face.
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 3-5

Hand Tracing

Directions:

→ Use the space below to trace the outline of your hand. First put your hand on the paper and take the pencil and trace the outline of your hand. Make sure to start on one side of your hand and trace around each finger and every part of your hand. Pay attention to how the pencil feels as you trace your hand.

→ Do you want to trace my hand now?

→ What do you notice about your hand? What do you notice about my hand? How are they different? How are they alike?

→ Do you want me to trace yours again for you? If you want you can color in your hand.
Mindfulness

My hand tracing:
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 3-5

Rhyming Game

Directions:

I am going to say a word and then you have to think of as many things that rhyme with that word as you can. I will write them down as you say them. We are going to see how many words we can get to rhyme with each word in one minute. I’m going to set a timer for one minute.

- Cat
- Blue
- Tree
- Frog
- Ball
Mindfulness

Cat

Blue

Tree

Frog

Ball
Matching Game

**Directions:**

We are going to make a matching game using the following squares. First you can color in the pictures on the squares. After that we will cut them out and turn them face down and try to find the matches by taking turns.
Copy and cut along the dotted lines:
Copy and cut along the dotted lines:
Copy and cut along the dotted lines:
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 3-5

Going on a Letter Hunt

**Directions:**

We are going on a letter hunt. Let’s try to find as many things in this room as we can that start with the letters: R — S — T — L — N — O.
Mindfulness

Write down what you found that starts with each letter:

R
S
T
L
N
O
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 3-5

Memory Name Game

Directions:

(Adapted From Adapted from Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village Community's activity Memory Game p. 154). This activity is best for groups of 4 or more children.

Going around the circle, say your name and one thing you like that starts with the same letter as the first letter of your name. (For example, “I’m Julia and I like jump roping.”)

Now, try it as a memory game, with one person building on the previous person’s sharing, repeating everyone’s name and what they like. (For example, She is Julia and she likes jump roping, He is Alex and he likes apples, I am Susan and I like swimming.”)
Directions:

Sit quietly in your chair and take a few deep breaths. I am inviting you to check in with your body. Start with your head and work your way down. How does your head feel? Your face, neck, shoulders? How does your chest feel? How do your arms and hands feel? What about your stomach? How does your back feel? How do your legs, bottom and feet feel? What about your toes?

Now that you have scanned your entire body, take a look at the worksheet you have in front of you of the body outline. Ask yourself the question “What would ______ body part say if it could talk?” For example, start with your head. If your head could talk, what would it say? Write down the answer in the bubble next to the head on the body outline. Go through and fill in as many bubbles next to the body parts that you can. Provide the child with 5-10 minutes to fill in the bubbles. If they are stuck on a body part just have them move on to the next one. They don’t have to fill them all in.

Great job. Do you want to share what any of your body parts would say if they could talk? Did anything surprise you about what your body parts would say? Which body part do you think feels the best? Which body part do you think needs more attention?
Mindfulness
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 6-12

Sounds Right

Directions:

Ahead of time fill plastic Easter eggs with various objects to create different sounds. You will want to select at least 4-6 different items to create the sounds. For example, you may want to use split peas, a marble, a penny and rice.

Fill 2 eggs with each of the same objects. For example, fill two eggs with split peas, two eggs with a marble, two eggs with a penny and two eggs with rice. (Don’t use the same color eggs for the items that match)

Put the eggs into a large bowl or an empty egg carton. The object of this activity is for the child to shake the eggs and determine which two eggs contain matching items.

Select one egg at a time and shake the egg. Then try to find another egg that matches the sound of the egg that you selected when you shake it.
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 6-12

Awareness of an Object

**Directions:**

Invite the child to select an object to draw. Examples might include a shoe, a water bottle, a pair of scissors or a potted plant.

> **Draw a picture of the object you selected. Remember that the goal of this activity is not to create a masterpiece or even see how well you draw but rather to pay attention to as many details of the object as possible.**
Mindfulness

Draw the object you selected below:
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 6-12

Newspaper Reporter

Directions:

Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter. Your job is to pay attention to everything that has happened so far in your day and report that story to your readers. Let's start with this morning and the first hour after you woke up. (For younger children you may want to ask the questions and write down the answers for them).

Think back to when you first woke up this morning.

- Do you remember what you did first?
- What did you see?
- What did you first think about?
- Who is the first person that you saw?
- Do you remember what you said? What did the other person say?
- Try to think of as many details as you can remember.
- What kind of day is it? Is it a school day, the weekend or summer vacation?

Okay good job, now let’s go back and look at your answers to the questions and see if you can add as many more details to each question as you can. Think back to when you first woke up this morning. What else do you remember about when you first woke up this morning, when you first opened your eyes?

- Do you remember what you did first? Where did you go or what did you think about?
- What did you see? Did you see certain objects or colors?
What did you first think about? Describe that.

Who is the first person that you saw? What did they look like?

Do you remember what you said? What did the other person say? Add anything else about what you said or about what they said that you didn't add before.

Try to think of as many details as you can remember.

What kind of day is it? Is it a school day, the weekend or summer vacation? What is the day of the week?

What is the weather like?

Good job, when we notice as many details about our life as possible we are being mindful.
Mind Body Skills: Activities for Emotional Regulation

Mindfulness

MORNING NEWSPAPER

What I did first:

What I first thought about:

What I saw: (above)

The first person I saw: (above)

What I first said:

What kind of a day it is: (above)
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 6-12

Trinket Find

Directions:
You can either make a trinket find ahead of time and engage the child in the activities that follow or you can make the trinket find with the child. Materials needed:

- Clear jar or plastic container with a lid.
- Rice, sand or very small beads (Pick one: This will be the main content of your trinket find and will be what the trinkets are hidden in.
- Trinkets (at least 10 but as many as you want to include depending upon the size of your jar)

Trinket ideas: coins, paper clips, stones, gems, marbles, glass hearts, small plastic or glass animals, safety pin, ribbon, hair clip, rubber band, thumb tack, pocket size toys

To make the Trinket Find put a small amount of rice/sand or beads in the jar and then alternate adding trinkets along with more rice/sand or beads. Don't fill the jar too much – you want to allow some space for the rice/sand or beads to move around. Put the lid on your jar.

Option 1 – Make a list of all of the trinkets that are in the jar. Ask the child to without taking the lid of the jar off to turn or shake the jar and as they see each of the trinkets they cross them off of the list as “found.”

Option 2 – Number the paper 1-10 and ask the child to try to find at least 10 trinkets that have been hidden inside the jar.
Mindfulness

List the trinkets:
List the trinkets you have found:

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10.
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 6-12 (Best for 6-9 year olds)

**Color Search**

**Directions:**

Let’s go on a color search. We need to find 12 items. Each item has to be a certain color. When you find an item that is a color on the list, write down the item you found. Red, white, light blue, dark blue, brown, black, purple, pink, gray, yellow, orange, green.
List the items you found next to each of the colors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Red</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark Blue</td>
<td>Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Blue</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Pink</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 13-17

Body Scan

Directions:

Sit quietly in your chair and take a few deep breaths. I am inviting you to check-in with your body. Start with your head and work your way down. How does your head feel? Your face, neck, shoulders? How does your chest feel? How do your arms and hands feel? What about your stomach? How does your back feel? How do your legs, bottom and feet feel? What about your toes?

Now that you have scanned your entire body, take a look at the worksheet you have in front of you of the body outline. Ask yourself the question “What would ______ body part say if it could talk?” For example, start with your head. If your head could talk, what would it say? Write down the answer in the bubble next to the head on the body outline. Go through and fill in as many bubbles next to the body parts that you can. Provide the child with 5-10 minutes to fill in the bubbles. If they are stuck on a body part just have them move on to the next one. They don’t have to fill them all in.

Great job. Do you want to share what any of your body parts would say if they could talk? Did anything surprise you about what your body parts would say? Which body part do you think feels the best? Which body part do you think needs more attention?
If my body could talk it would say:
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 13-17

Awareness of an Object

Directions:

 può Invite the child to choose an everyday object to draw such as a water bottle, coffee mug or a school supply.

The aim of the activity is not about your ability to draw but about noticing details.

 pouvez Once you have drawn the object, draw it a second time and see whether you can identify any details missing from the first drawing that were in the second. Usually, the second drawing is more accurate. Consider what it is like to spend time really looking at an object that you wouldn’t usually take the time to notice.
Mindfulness

Draw an object:

Mindfulness

Draw the object again with the details you missed:
Hand Study

**Directions:**

I would like for you to draw your hand. The aim of the activity is not about your ability to draw but about noticing details. Pay attention to your hand and on your paper draw all of the details you notice about your hand. Your drawing may not end up looking like a hand but rather a study of wrinkles, bumps and lines.

Consider what it is like to spend time really looking at an object that you wouldn't usually take the time to notice.
Mindfulness

Draw your hand:
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 13-17

Newspaper Reporter

Directions:

Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter. Your job is to pay attention to everything that has happened so far in your day and report that story to your readers. Let’s start with this morning and the first hour after you woke up. (For younger children you may want to ask the questions and write down the answers for them).

Think back to when you first woke up this morning.

- Do you remember what you did first?
- What did you see?
- What did you first think about?
- Who is the first person that you saw?
- Do you remember what you said? What did the other person say?
- Try to think of as many details as you can remember.
- What kind of day is it? Is it a school day, the weekend or summer vacation?

Okay good job, now let’s go back and look at your answers to the questions and see if you can add as many more details to each question as you can. Think back to when you first woke up this morning. What else do you remember about when you first woke up this morning, when you first opened your eyes?

- Do you remember what you did first? Where did you go or what did you think about?
- What did you see? Did you see certain objects or colors?
What did you first think about? Describe that.

Who is the first person that you saw? What did they look like?

Do you remember what you said? What did the other person say? Add anything else about what you said or about what they said that you didn't add before.

Try to think of as many details as you can remember.

What kind of day is it? Is it a school day, the weekend or summer vacation? What is the day of the week?

What is the weather like?

Good job, when we notice as many details about our life as possible we are being mindful.
MORNING NEWSPAPER
What I did first:

What I first thought about:

What I saw: (above)

The first person I saw: (above)

What I first said:

What kind of a day it is: (above)
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 13-17

Thought Bubbles

Directions:

Start by sitting in a comfortable position, with your back straight and shoulders relaxed. Close your eyes.

Imagine bubbles slowly rising up in front of you. Each bubble contains a thought or feeling. It doesn’t matter what it is about. Go with whatever comes up for you. As you see the first bubble rise up answer these questions to yourself:

○ What is inside? See the thought and then imagine it slowly floating away. Try not to judge your thought or think about it more deeply. Once the bubble has floated out of sight, watch the next bubble appear.

○ What is inside this bubble? Observe it, and watch it slowly float away. If your mind goes blank, then watch the bubble rise up with “blank” inside and watch it slowly float away.

We are going to continue to do this for the next 3-5 minutes.
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 13-17

Sounds Right

**Directions:**

Ahead of time fill plastic Easter eggs with various objects to create different sounds. You will want to select at least 4-6 different items to create the sounds. For example, you may want to use split peas, a marble, a penny and rice.

Fill 2 eggs with each of the same objects. For example, fill two eggs with split peas, two eggs with a marble, two eggs with a penny and two eggs with rice. (Don’t use the same color eggs for the items that match)

Put the eggs into a large bowl or an empty egg carton. The object of this activity is for the child to shake the eggs and determine which two eggs contain matching items.

*Select one egg at a time and shake the egg. Then try to find another egg that matches the sound of the egg that you selected when you shake it.*
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 13-17

Word Search

Directions:

Try to find as many of the hidden words as you can in this word search. The answer key is listed below. This word search was made on http://www.armoredpenguin.com/wordsearch. You can make your own puzzles there.

acceptance  aware  breath  calm  caring  happy  inspired  love  nature  peaceful  soft  sky  peaceful 听  inspired  safe  waves  wind  waves  safe  a  a  wind  n  p  a  a  e  t  t  caring  sky  e  e  accepting  inspired  n  h  f  peaceful  a  a  a  soft  love  t  p  l  cautious  r  u  p  l  ug  s  a  c  o  p  a  r  y  e  breath  a  e  t  t

acceptance  aware  breath  calm  caring  happy  inspired  love  nature  peaceful  soft  sky  peaceful 听  inspired  safe  waves  wind  waves  safe  a  a  wind  n  p  a  a  e  t  t  caring  sky  e  e  accepting  inspired  n  h  f  peaceful  a  a  a  soft  love  t  p  l  cautious  r  u  p  l  ug  s  a  c  o  p  a  r  y  e  breath  a  e  t  t
Mindfulness

acceptance  aware  breath  calm

caring  happy  inspired  listen

love  nature  peaceful  safe

sky  soft  waterfall  waves

wind
Mindfulness Activity for Ages 13-17

Crossword Puzzle

Directions:

How many of the crossword puzzle clues can you answer? This crossword puzzle was made on http://www.armoredpenguin.com/crossword/. You can make your own crossword puzzles there.

Across
4 A red fruit that keeps the doctor away.
5 When you mix yellow and blue you get this color.
8 A caterpillar changes into this.
11 One of the five senses.
12 A kind of a flower with thorns.

Down
1 Sometimes you can see one of these after it rains.
2 An animal that barks.
3 We have two of these to see with.
6 You can usually see these in the night sky.
7 Big puffs of water vapor in the sky.
9 We live on this planet.
10 The color of the sky on a sunny day.
Mindfulness

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4  A red fruit that keeps the doctor away.
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9  We live on this planet.
10 The color of the sky on a sunny day.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation

“Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere.”

Carl Sagan, American Scientist
Guided Imagery and Relaxation

Guided Imagery is the use of words and/or music to evoke positive imaginary scenarios in a subject with a view to bringing about a beneficial effect. For traumatized children guided imagery is a strategy to help interrupt intrusive thoughts. Guided imagery is usually directed by a script and can be recorded or read aloud. For children, it is helpful for an adult to read the script to them slowly in a quiet place free from interruptions. The script will guide the child through the visualization. You may want to include soft, relaxing music while you read the script but you don’t have to – experiment to see what works best for each child. As you guide the child through their experience, remind them this is their experience and that there is not a right or wrong way to do the activity. What they visualize in their mind will be much different than others who are read the same exact script. If there is a particular script that a child likes, it is beneficial to practice using the same script several times a week over several months. You may want to record yourself reading a particular script and email or text that script to the child or the child’s parent using a voice memo application so that the child can listen to the script in between sessions.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 3-5

Dorothy and Toto’s Rainbow Breathing

**Directions:**

Close your eyes and imagine that you are Dorothy or her dog Toto. Which do you want to be? Okay great!

Now, imagine that you are lying under a beautiful rainbow. You can see all the colors of the rainbow. As I name each color take a deep breath of that color.

- I see the color red - breathe in red. Now breathe red out.
- I see the color orange - breathe in orange. Now breathe orange out.
- I see the color yellow - breathe in yellow. Now breathe yellow out.
- I see the color green - breathe in green. Now breathe green out.
- I see the color blue - breathe in blue. Now breathe out blue.
- I see the color purple - breathe in purple. Now breathe out purple.
- Now imagine you see the entire rainbow. Take in a deep breath of the whole rainbow. Now breathe the rainbow out. Good job!
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Acorn - Tree

**Directions:**

- I am going to teach you how to pretend like you are a tiny acorn turning into a big and tall tree! Scrunch down on the floor and become as tiny as you can. Imagine you are a tiny acorn buried deep in the ground where it is warm and soft. If you are very still you might feel some rain falling on your back (with your finger-tips patter lightly on the child’s back).

- When you start to feel the raindrops take a deep breath in and slowly imagine that you are starting to grow. As you take deep breaths start to move your body so that you grow very, very, very slowly. First you might want to kneel and raise your head. Next you might stand up slowly to show off your strong tree trunk. Then you can start to move your arms and hands like they are branches and leaves filling up into the air. Reach up, up and up!

- Look at you, you were once a little acorn and now you are a beautiful tree! Spread your branches and stretch your leaves towards the sun.

Invite the child to color in the image of the tree.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 3-5

Waterfall

Directions:

Read the following slowly to help children relax.

A beautiful waterfall of white light is flowing down on you. It flows on your head, helping your head relax.

You feel your head relaxing. The waterfall light moves down over your neck and shoulders are relaxing and letting go of all the tension and stress they carry. Now the waterfall flows down over your arms. You feel your arms releasing, there is nothing for your arms to do. The waterfall flows down you back. Your back is letting go and relaxing. The waterfall flows over your chest and stomach, helping your chest and stomach to release. You can feel your chest and stomach relax, letting go of anger, hurt, and sadness. The waterfall moves down over your legs and feet. You feel your legs and feet letting go and resting. The beautiful waterfall of light is flowing over your whole body. You are very peaceful and rested. Just stay in the waterfall of light for a few moments and feel how it relaxes your whole body.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 3-5

Wishes of Love

Directions:

Adapted from *Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children* by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village Community’s activity *Sending Wishes at the Start and End of Each Day*

Sit comfortably in your seat and place your hands on your heart. You might be able to feel your heart beating or maybe you can just feel your chest rising and lowering as you breathe. Imagine your heart inside of your body filled with love. Who is someone that you love very much? Picture this person in your mind. Once you have pictured this person that you love in your mind, make a wish of love for this person. With your hands on your heart, take a deep breath and think of your wish for this person that you love. What is your wish for this person? Now take a deep breath in 1-2-3 and as you breath out 3-2-1 send your wish for this person that you love out into the world!
Guided Imagery and Relaxation

Draw a person that you love with your wish for them coming true:
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 3-5

A Bird is Hatching!

**Directions:**

- I am going to teach you how to pretend like you are a tiny bird that is hatching from its egg. Scrunch down on the floor and become as tiny as you can. Imagine you are a baby blue bird’s egg nestled warmly in a soft nest and buried deep where it is warm and safe.

- When you start to feel the warm sun shine on your egg take a deep breath and start to stretch out your little bird body. As you slower stretch you feel the sides of your egg and it begins to crackle. You know it is safe and warm outside of your egg so you continue to stretch and grow. First you might want to kneel and raise your head. Next you might stand up slowly to finally crack out of the egg. Once you stand all the way up you can stomp your feet to get the broken eggs off of you. Then you can peek outside of your nest to see the world around you. What do you see?

- Look at you, you were once a little bird in an egg and now you have the whole world to see! What do you see outside of your beautiful tree?

Invite the child to color in the image of the bird/nest
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 3-5

Caterpillar to a Butterfly

**Directions:**

- I am going to teach you how to pretend like you are a caterpillar that coming out of its cocoon as a colorful butterfly. Scrunch down on the floor and become as tiny as you can. Imagine you are a caterpillar that is inside your cocoon. You are warm and safe but you feel your body starting to grow wings.

- As your wings get wider you feel the sides of your cocoon and it begins to stretch. You know it is safe and warm outside of your cocoon, so you continue to stretch and grow. First you might want to kneel and raise your head. Next you might stand up slowly to finally crack out of the cocoon. Once you stand all the way up you can stomp your feet to get the broken cocoon off of you. Then you can slowly look around to see the world around you. What do you see?

- Look at you! You were once a little caterpillar in an cocoon and now you have the whole world to see! What do you see outside of your cocoon?
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 3-5

Making Pictures in the Clouds

**Directions:**

This activity is best for days with clouds in the sky.

- Lie down on the grass or on a blanket or towel and look up in the sky at the clouds. What do you see? Do you see any shapes or images of things in the clouds?
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 3-5

Flower, Mountain, Water and Space Simple Meditations

Directions:

Flower

\[ \text{Breathe in 1-2-3 and see yourself as a flower. Take a few deep breaths in and out. As you breathe out for the last time say, “I am beautiful like a flower.”} \]

Mountain

\[ \text{Breathe in and see yourself as a mountain. Take a few deep breaths. As you breathe out for the last time say, “I am strong like a mountain.”} \]

Water

\[ \text{Breathe in and see yourself as a lake. Take a few deep breaths. As you breathe out for the last time say, “I am calm like this lake.”} \]

Space

\[ \text{Breathe in and see yourself as the big blue sky with a lot of space. Take a few deep breaths. As you breathe out for the last time say, “I feel very free.”} \]
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Lotion Massage/Relaxation Activity

Directions:

Children should wear short sleeve shirts for this activity. You will also need some hand or body lotion.

During this activity you need to sit quietly and listen very carefully to my instructions. If you need more cream, put out your hand quietly and I'll give you some more. Breathe slowly, very slowly... take in air... let it out...

Rub the cream into the palms of your hands... over all your fingers. Start with one hand from finger to finger, one by one, starting from where it joins your hand till the tip.... Start with your thumb... index finger... middle finger... ring finger... pinky... then move over to your other hand. Spread the cream over each finger... slowly, gently... the fingers are relaxed now, soft, and feel nice...

Now we'll continue using our fingers to relax the rest of our body... Let's move on to our hands...spread the lotion all the way down our arms...from top to bottom... slowly does it... up and down... soften them... leave them relaxed and comfortable... go over to the other hand, spread the lotion from top to bottom. Very good! Doesn't it feel good to massage lotion into our fingers, hands and arms?
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 6-12

Waterfall

Directions:

A slow and steady waterfall is flowing down next to you. As it flows, it helps you to relax. First imagine the waterfall. It is calm. It is white and it is warm. The waterfall is gentle. Now imagine the waterfall helping your head to relax. You feel your head relaxing. The waterfall moves down over your next and shoulders and you feel your neck and shoulders relax. Now the waterfall flows over your arms. You feel your arms relaxing. The waterfall flows over your hands and fingers. As it flows over you hands and fingers, each finger relaxes. The waterfall is gentle and soothing. Now the waterfall flows down the front and back of your body. As it flows, your back and chest and stomach are relaxed. You feel your back and chest and stomach relax. Now the warm and soft waterfall flows down your legs. You feel your legs relax. Lastly, the waterfall flows over your feet and toes. You feel your feet and toes relax. The slow, steady, warm, gentle waterfall flows over your entire body and makes you feel very peaceful and relaxed.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 6-12

A Daffodil is Blossoming

Directions:

Imagine that you are a daffodil bulb buried beneath cool soil in a garden. Through the darkness of the rich, black soil you see a glimmer of sunshine. Through the rich, black soil, you smell fresh air. You want to know more about the sunshine and more about the air. It is exciting! You wiggle in the soil and you can feel that from the bottom of your bulb, you have grown deep roots. To your surprise there is a little green stem emerging from the top of your bulb. Suddenly your green stem and feel more sunshine. Your green stem can feel the cool, fresh air. The air is cool but the sunshine feels warm. You grow taller and taller and taller. From the top of your stem a bright and beautiful flower blossoms. Your roots are deep in the ground keeping you steady and your flower petals stand proud in a beautiful garden.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 6-12

Relaxation

Directions:

- Sit quietly and get comfortable in your chair. Close your eyes and listen to the rhythm of your breathing. Now, let's release all the muscles in our bodies and let them relax... Relax your feet... your legs, the palms of your hands, your shoulders and neck... your face. Breathe very slowly...

- Let's move very slowly, try and feel each and every muscle and bone in your body. Start with your hands... Visualize your right hand from the tip of your pinky through all your fingers; all the way up to your elbow... from there to your right shoulder. Everywhere you go - continue to breathe deeply, and visualize your body parts letting go... relaxing... becoming softer... warmer... heavier... Move around to your left shoulder and down to your left arm. From there to your wrist, your hand... and fingers. Move back up to your shoulders, and slowly go up your neck... Continue relaxing into each part of your body... move up to your head. Move around your head to your scalp... to your forehead... your eyebrows and eyes... ear... lips and mouth... to your chin and back again to your neck and shoulders. Go back through the cavity of your chest... notice your heartbeat... Move to your solar plexus, to your stomach... notice what you feel there.

- Notice how your whole body is relaxing... feeling warm... good... Now move down your right leg... to the knee... ankle... and heel, ball of your foot, toes. Now move to your left leg. Down to the knee, ankle, heel, ball of your foot, to the end of your toes... Now your whole body is feeling relaxed and calm. Stay with that feeling for a moment or two and enjoy it. Remember that you can come back here whenever you wish... Now, move...
out slowly and quietly... begin to let your eyes flutter... move your fingers and toes and slowly, very slowly, come back here, to the classroom, to your chair.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 6-12

Walk in the Woods

Directions:

It's a nice sunny day today... a wonderful day... not too hot and not too cold. We're going on a walk... We're walking over a big green lawn. The grass is lovely and green and is surrounded by wild flowers... a pleasant fragrance fills the air. We're walking along enjoying ourselves... In the distance we see a forest. We all want to reach the forest and the deep green shade... Here we are now, resting in the shade... enjoying the deep green of the trees. Take a deep breathe and smell the wonderful smells of the forest...

Now... take off your knapsacks. Think of the nice surprises waiting for you inside... in your mind open your knapsack... unzip it slowly... notice what is inside. When you have seen, or heard, or felt, the surprise that is in your knapsack, you may slowly, very slowly open your eyes...

Now I'm going to ask you to very quietly draw what you found in your knapsack. When you're finished, if you want you can tell me what you found in your knapsack.
What did you find in your backpack?
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 6-12

Guided Visualization

Directions:

- Close your eyes and begin to calm down your whole body. We’re going on a little Nature Adventure using our imaginations. Pretend that you are lying in field of pretty flowers and as you breathe in the fresh air, you can smell the grass and flowers all around you. You can hear the sound of the wind and the birds flying and chirping in the sky. And if you lie very, very still, you can even hear the sound of your own breath as it goes in and out.

- You look around and see colorful butterflies fluttering all about and tiny ladybugs crawling on the ground. You open your arms out wide, as you feel the sunlight warming your whole body. You are surrounded by the wonders of Nature in all its beautiful colors. The lush green trees, the bright blue sky, birds and bugs in all colors, and the bright yellow sun, which looks like a giant gumball of light. As you look up at the puffy white clouds above, an amazing rainbow appears and you begin to climb up to the top where you can see the whole world below… all the people, animals, trees, ocean, mountains and everything in Nature.

- You feel so happy and are filled with peace inside to know that you are part of this big, beautiful world we live in. You breathe in this happiness and let it wash over you like a gentle rain. You slide down the other side of the rainbow and when you land back on the grass, you feel like you are floating on a cloud, your heart filled with such joy and love for everything and everyone.
You can feel that you are loved by Nature and you let that love inside your heart, flowing like a river, as you share it with those around you. Let yourself sink deeper into this peaceful place and know that you can always go here with your breath and your imagination.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 6-12

Hot Air Balloon

Directions:

Imagine that you have just taken off in your very first hot air balloon ride. It is a beautiful day – not too hot and not too cold. You are taking this hot air balloon ride with a few of your best friends and you are heading to a secret destination where you are going to spend the day having fun!

You are starting to rise up higher into the sky and you are standing on the side looking out across the land beneath you, the sky in front of you and you can feel the warm air on your skin. As you look out you can see the tops of green trees clouds, the lake, fields and houses. It is beautiful and peaceful and you and your friends are taking in all of the sights.

Which of your friends are with you?

What sounds can you hear? Can you hear noise of the balloon's burner? Is the wind whistling? Do you hear the balloon gently lapping in the air?

Focus on all that you can see. Focus on all that you can hear. Enjoy the company of your friends. Can you hear the heat of the flame making the balloon fly? Breathe in deeply and relax your entire body. You feel comfortable and relaxed. Enjoy this moment of relaxation. When you open your eyes you will be at your destination.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 6-12

Sand in my Toes

Directions:

- Close your eyes and imagine you are lying down on a beautiful beach. The sun is shining warmly, the breeze coming from the ocean is soft and warm and palm trees are overhead. There are a few seagulls flying above you. You can hear them making noises. Imagine walking barefoot in the warm sand, feel your feet sink in the sand with each step.

- Walk toward the water’s edge and let the water roll over your feet. Jump in the water; it is warm, gentle and very refreshing. Come out of the water and walk to your big beach towel, lie down and relax. Rest for a while in all the peace and beauty surrounding you. Imagine how it looks, how it sounds, how it smells.

- Breathe in deeply the warm ocean air, stay as long as you like. When you are ready to leave, go to the edge of the water and throw in anything that has been bothering you, anything you wish to be rid of in your life, anything you are feeling sad or angry about, anything you worry about (e.g. problems at home, violence in your neighborhood, bullies, death of a loved one, issues with friends). Picture it as a big rock, a chain, a heavy bag over your shoulders, or any image that helps you see it as undesirable.

- Throw it in the ocean as far as you can. Watch it sink and get taken by the waves. When the “visit” is done, be thankful for the release of the burden, the problem, the worry; then walk peacefully back through the warm sand and take a rest on your beach towel.
Allow time for students to debrief and share about where they went in their visualization and what they felt about the experience/technique. This can be done in pairs, small groups or sharing with whole class.

Sample guiding questions:

- Where did your visualization take you?
- Do you feel more calm/relaxed after going through this exercise?
- What did you see, hear, feel and smell during your visualization? Did anything in particular stand out?
- What was it like throwing your burdens into the water?
- How does it feel to be back in the classroom?
- Is this technique/exercise something you might do in the future to calm down, relax and reduce your stress?
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Simple Relaxation

Directions:

Get comfortable in your chair and close your eyes. Take three deep breaths, in 1-2-3 and out 3-2-1, in 1-2-3 and out 1-2-3. Very good!

We’re going to relax our bodies starting at the top of our head and working down to our toes. Relax your scalp (pause), relax your eyebrows (pause), relax your chin (pause), cheeks (pause), ears (pause). Okay breathe in 1-2-3 and out 3-2-1 and continue to relax. Relax your nose (pause), relax your eyes (pause), eyelids (pause), relax your lips (pause). Now, relax your throat (pause), neck (pause), your hands (pause), your fingers, feel the tension flow out of your fingers.

Enjoy the feelings of both arms being heavy and completely relaxed. Relax all the muscles of your back (pause), muscles of your chest (pause), your abdomen (pause), Let the seat you’re in support your weight and then relax your thighs, your knees, the muscles of your lower legs, Relax your feet, your toes (pause). Imagine all the tension flowing out of your toes so that both legs and both feet are heavy, relaxed. Relax your mind, your heart, your lungs and all your internal organs.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 13-17

Relaxation

Directions:

To begin, sit in a comfortable chair. Place your feet flat on the floor. Let your hands rest comfortably in your lap.

Slowly take a deep breath and, as you slowly let it out, let your eyes close and your body relax as deeply as possible right now. Let your eyes remain relaxed and imagine you are standing on a road on a bright sunny day. It’s a warm day. Feel the warmth of the sun, the warm, warm sun on your face and hands. If you feel too warm, there will be a breeze to keep you comfortable. As you stand there, just enjoy the warmth of the sun.

You’re walking down the side of the road and off in the distance there is a gentle stream. You’re walking over to the stream. Stop and look around at the trees on either side of the stream. Imagine you are able to hear the wind as it blows gently through the trees. The leaves are rustling and, as the breeze comes toward you, it brings with it the smells of the trees and woods. It’s a very cool and fresh smell.

It feels good as you fill your lungs with the fresh air. Take a deep breath in 1-2-3 and out 3-2-1. Walk along the stream through the trees, and notice the trees and leaves.

Now, the gentle sounds of the stream draw your attention. And, as you look in the stream, leaves float past you, spinning and twirling. You have come to a large tree on the side of the gentle stream. You sit down on a large, smooth rock that is next to the tree and stream. As you sit on the rock you lean over the stream and look into the calm gently flowing water.
Now, sit back against the tree and let the sounds of the water and the breeze blowing through the grass and the trees fill your ears. You enjoy the peacefulness and allow yourself to relax even more deeply. Take another deep breath in 1-2-3 and out 3-2-1.

Now it is time to return to the road. So, get up slowly, and begin to walk back down along the stream again, walking down past the leaves as they rush past you in the stream. Climb the side of the ditch beside the road. You are standing on the road, again, feeling the sun.

Let the image fade away for now. Begin to feel your body sitting here in a chair. Become aware of your body's surroundings. Pause a moment to feel the restful relaxation sensations within your body. If you are aware of a specific area of tension, allow it to relax. Let yourself settle down and become even more deeply relaxed. If you can't let all the tension go, don't worry. Just let go as much as you can this time.

Continue to breathe in slowly and deeply. Begin to wiggle your fingers and move your toes and feet. Continue breathing deeply while moving your legs and the upper part of your body. Whenever you are ready, go ahead and open your eyes.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 13-17

My Color

Directions:

- Close your eyes and think of the color that makes you feel happy and safe. Imagine that you are surrounded by that color. The color is everywhere you look and you feel happy and safe with the color.

- Check in with your body, how do you feel surrounded by that color? Where in your body do you feel most happy? How does your body let you know when you feel safe?
Guided Imagery and Relaxation
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 13-17

Safe and Calm Place

Directions:

Imagine a place that is very calm and very safe. This could be a real place or could be a place that you have seen in a movie or through pictures in a magazine. It could be a place you have read about in a book. It doesn’t matter where this place is; all that matters is that when you imagine this place, it should be safe and calm. Once you have this place in your mind, really focus on what you see. What things do you see? Are there certain colors that you see? What about other people, are there other people in this place or are you by yourself? What do you hear? Do you smell anything? Really imagine yourself in this place and how your body feels when you are here.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation

My safe place drawing:
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 13-17

Safe and Calm Person

Directions:

Imagine a person who is very calm and kind. Imagine a person that makes you feel accepted and makes you feel good about yourself. This might be a parent, a family member, a friend or a teacher. Once you select your person, imagine what this person looks like. What about this person makes you feel calm and safe when you are with them? What things does this person usually say to you? What do you say back to this person? How does your body feel when you think about this person?
Guided Imagery and Relaxation

My safe person drawing:
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 13-17

Special Box

Directions:

Imagine a place in your mind (or heart) where you keep what is most special and sacred to you. In that place there is a box. What does the box look like? Even if it is small it can hold every special thing you have in your mind and heart. Is the box a certain shape or color? Now begin thinking about how you can open that box. Maybe there is one special memory you can think about that automatically opens the box. Or, maybe you need a key or a secret code to unlock the box. Now imagine that you open the box and you can look at all or some of your favorite memories, feelings, images, thoughts, hopes and dreams that you want to keep safe in your special box. What do you see?
Guided Imagery and Relaxation

My special box drawing:
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 13-17

Mantra Meditation

**Directions:**

Mantra meditation focuses on a word or phrase. It can be a word or phrase that means something to your teen or suggest a word to use like "relax", "hope", "courage" or "love".

Clear your mind, relax and breathe. You can start repeating your mantra, either aloud or in your mind. Doing so helps bring the mind to focus.
Guided Imagery and Relaxation

My mantra coloring phrase:
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 13-17

Compassion Meditation

Directions:

Relax and notice your breath. Let your mind drift toward someone you love. It could be a person or an animal. Imagine you are this person or animal. How do you think this person or animal sees the world? Imagine you are looking at the world through a new set of eyes, this person or animal's eyes. What do you see, what do you hear, what do you feel with this person or animal's heart? Stay here for a moment and just imagine that you are this person or animal. What are you worried about? What do you love? What is your favorite part of the day? What do you wish someone would say or do for you? Pause for a minute. Okay, good now come back to your own perspective. If you could name one wish for this person or animal, what would that wish be? As you finish this pay attention to your breath again to quiet your mind and offer thanks for this person or animal in your life.
This is what the person/animal looks like that I love:
Guided Imagery and Relaxation Activity for Ages 13-17

Journey Through My Body

Directions:

1. Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Take a few moments to get in touch with the movement of your breath and the sensations in the body. When you are ready, bring your awareness to the physical sensations in your body, especially to the sensations of touch or pressure, where your body makes contact with the chair or bed. On each outbreath, and allow yourself to let go, to sink a little deeper into the chair or bed.

2. Bring your awareness to any sensations you detect, as you focus your attention on each part of the body in turn. Now bring your awareness to the changing patterns of sensations in the abdominal wall as you breathe in, and as you breathe out. Take a few minutes to feel the sensations as you breathe in and as you breathe out.

3. When you become aware of tension, or of other intense sensations in a particular part of the body, you can "breathe in" to them—using the in-breath gently to bring awareness right into the sensations, and, as best you can, have a sense of their letting go, or releasing, on the outbreath.

4. After you have "scanned" the whole body in this way, spend a few minutes being aware of your body sense as a whole, and of the breath flowing in and out of your body.
Drawing and Coloring

“Art is not a thing but rather it is a way”
Elbert Hubbard, American writer and artist

“The object isn’t to make art it is to be in that wonderful state which makes art inevitable.”
Robert Henri, American painter and teacher
Art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form. All children benefit from the psychomotor activities of coloring or drawing. The following activities are designed to be fun and relaxing. The activities should not be analyzed but rather simply enjoyed. You may want to draw or color along with the child. Playing music in the background is also a nice way to create a relaxing atmosphere.
Drawing and Coloring Activity for Ages 3-5

Simple Mandalas

Directions:

Simply invite the children to color in the mandalas. You may want to have soft music playing as they are coloring.
Drawing and Coloring
Drawing and Coloring
Drawing and Coloring
Draw a picture of your favorite pet or animal:
Draw a picture of yourself:
Draw a picture of your family:
Drawing and Coloring
Drawing and Coloring
Simple Mandalas

Directions:

Simply invite the children to color in the mandalas. You may want to have soft music playing as they are coloring.
Drawing and Coloring
Drawing and Coloring
Draw a picture of your favorite pet or animal:
Draw a picture of yourself:
Drawing and Coloring

Draw a picture of your still and quiet place:
Drawing and Coloring
Simple Mandalas

Directions:

Simply invite the children to color in the mandalas. You may want to have soft music playing as they are coloring.
Drawing and Coloring
Drawing and Coloring Activity for Ages 13-17

Word Collage

Directions:

For this activity I am going to ask you to only use words to create a collage. First you will need to select a focus. You can select a focus and make a word collage all about yourself or maybe about a friend or someone that you admire. Once you decide on the person (or yourself) begin writing down words in bold print all over the paper that best describe that person (or yourself). Be creative and use various colors and sizes of lettering to write down your words. You don’t have to follow any directions, put the words, big or small all over the paper going in any direction you wish.
Directions:

Materials Needed: Magazines, Glue, and Scissors

For this activity, look through these magazines and cut out anything that you think best describes you. You can cut out words, letters, photographs or designs. Whatever you select is up to you—the only rule is that whatever you select has to describe you in some way. Some teens like to start by cutting out the letters of their name or just their first initial and pasting those at the top or in the middle of the page.

When the teens are done creating their collages invite them to share them. Ask them to discuss why they selected various words and images to help describe themselves.
Drawing and Coloring Activity for Ages 13-17

Coloring Pages

Directions:

There is no processing necessary for the following coloring pages – the only direction is for the teen to color in the pages as a form of mindfulness and relaxation.
Drawing and Coloring
Drawing and Coloring
Drawing and Coloring
Songs and Finger Play Activities

“Words make you think.
Music makes you feel”

Edgar “Yip” Harburg, American Lyricist
Songs and Finger Play Activities

Music making (playing an instrument or singing) is a multimodal activity that involves the integration of auditory and sensorimotor processes. Music is soothing and fun. Like the art activities, teaching children songs and finger-plays should be relaxing. If a child doesn’t seem to like a particular song, move on to another one. You may also find that they want to teach you one of their own. It is okay to repeat a song that a child really likes. The lyrics are provided for each song and finger play. You can do a simple YouTube search for a demonstration of each.
A Sailor Went to Sea

Song:

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To see what he could see, see, see
But all that he could see, see, see
Was the deep, dark bottom of the sea, sea, sea.
Song and Finger Play
Alice the Camel

Song:

Alice the camel has five humps.
Alice the camel has five humps.
Alice the camel has five humps.
So go, Alice, go.

Alice the camel has four humps.
Alice the camel has four humps.
Alice the camel has four humps.
So go, Alice, go.

Alice the camel has three humps.
Alice the camel has three humps.
Alice the camel has three humps.
So go, Alice, go.

Alice the camel has two humps.
Alice the camel has two humps.
Alice the camel has two humps.
So go, Alice, go.

Alice the camel has one hump.
Alice the camel has one hump.
Alice the camel has one hump.
So go, Alice, go.

Alice the camel has no humps.
Alice the camel has no humps.
Alice the camel has no humps.

Now Alice is a horse!!

Caelan Soma

www.starr.org
Song and Finger Play
Song and Finger Play Activity for Ages 3-5

Five Fat Peas

**Song:**

♫ Five fat peas in a pea pod pressed (children hold hand in a fist)

One grew, two grew, and so did all the rest. (Put thumb and fingers up one by one)

They grew and grew (raise hand in the air very slowly)

And did not stop,

until one day

The pod went POP! (children clap hands together)
Song and Finger Play
Song and Finger Play Activity for Ages 3-5

Colors of the Seasons

Song:

🎵 The colors of the seasons
are beautiful to see
Flowers all abloom
Pink and powder blue
that is spring to me

Grape and cherry ice cream
summer's here again
Lemonade and lime
The sun will shine
until day's end

Golden red and brown
are the colors all around
Leaves are falling, everywhere
Now that autumn’s in the air

Snowy and gray clouds
Skies of midnight blue
Playing in the snow
Pink and red cheeks glow
in winter’s hue

A season’s view
for you and me
The colors of the seasons
are beautiful to see
summer, spring and fall
winter fun and all
their colors too

A season’s view
for you and me.
Song and Finger Play
Song and Finger Play Activity for Ages 3-5

It Ain't Gonna Rain No More

Song:

♫ Oh, it ain't gonna rain no more, no more
   It ain't gonna rain no more
   How in the heck can I wash around my neck
   if it ain't gonna rain no more
Here is a Beehive Finger Play

Finger Play:

♪ Here is the beehive, where are the bees?
Clench fist and bring out fingers quickly one by one
Hidden away were nobody sees
Watch and you will see them come out of their hives,
One, two, three, four, five,
Buzz, buzz, buzz.
SMILE Song

Song:

It isn't any trouble
Just to S-M-I-L-E
It isn't any trouble
Just to S-M-I-L-E
So smile when you're in trouble,
It will vanish like a bubble
If you'll only take the trouble
Just to S-M-I-L-E
Song and Finger Play
Song and Finger Play Activity for Ages 3-5

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

**Directions:**

🎵 Head, shoulders, knees and toes,

Knees and toes. Head, shoulders, knees and toes,

Knees and toes. And eyes, and ears, and mouth,

And nose. Head, shoulders, knees and toes. Knees and toes.

Place both hands on parts of body as they are mentioned. On second time speed up, and get faster with each verse.
Song and Finger Play
Song and Finger Play Activity for Ages 3-5

If you are Happy and You Know It

Directions:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. (stomp stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" (hoo-ray!)
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" (hoo-ray!)
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" (hoo-ray!)

If you're happy and you know it, do all three (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!)
If you're happy and you know it, do all three (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!)
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!)
Song and Finger Play
Journaling

“A word after a word after a word, is power”
Margaret Atwood, Canadian Poet and Novelist

“Writing: It is not to say what we can all say, but what we are unable to say.”
Anais Nin, American author
Journaling

Writing and journaling is the act of writing and processing the written word as therapy. The following activities will prompt children to write and should be fun and relaxing. It is important to tell children that there is not a right or wrong way to journal. Making lists, writing simple poems and jotting down words or phrases are all forms of journaling. Children should be given the option to share what they have written or to keep their writing private.

Before beginning this section you may want to ask the child to select a notebook they want to use for their writing or you can photocopy each of the activities and staple them together with a blank cover that the child is invited to decorate.

Writing prompts can be used over and over. It is interesting to compare responses to the same prompts over a certain time period.
Journaling Activity for Ages 6-12

Prompts

Directions:

Some children have difficulty knowing where to start when they are asked to write or journal. On the following pages you will find journal prompts. Each prompt helps structure what the child might choose to write about, however if they have something else in mind they should feel free to write about that subject instead. These prompts are only meant to be a guide for children when needed.
Write a friendly wish for yourself. Now write one for a friend.
Things that make me happy:


Journaling

Things that make me sad:
Things that make me angry:
Journaling

My friends are:
When it is hot outside I like to:
Journaling

I like books about:
Journaling Activity for Ages 6-12

My Name

Directions:

Use the letters in your name to select words that best describe you. You can use more than one word for each letter. When you are done with yours, write down the names of your brothers, sisters or friends and do the same thing for them.

For example:

J  joyful    S  studious
O  outstanding  U  understanding
H  happy    S  spectacular
N  neat    A  athletic
N  noisy

Things I am thankful for.

Three things I can’t live without.

How would your best friend describe you?
Poem and Journal Prompt Activity for Ages 13-17

My Book

Directions:

If you could write a book about yourself, what would the title of your book be? Write down the title of the book and a short description of what the book is about.

Include the on the book image and color in the cover of the book. You can include a picture or design along with the title if you wish.
The title of your book: ________________________________
A brief description of your book:
Poem and Journal Prompt Activity for Ages 13-17

Dialogue with Sensation (or Trauma Theme)

**Directions:**

Select one of the following sensations/themes (Worry, Hurt, Fear, Anger, Guilt, Hopelessness, Survivor, Hope). Invite the teen to write down a dialogue they might have with a sensation or theme.

Here is an example:

“Hello worry” (or whatever sensation/theme they select on their paper).

Then ask, “If you said hello to your worry what would your worry say back to you?

“How would you answer it?” Encourage them to have a conversation with this theme/sensation.

**Example:**

**Susan:** Hi Hurt

**Hurt:** Hi Susan

**Susan:** Why are you always hanging around?

**Hurt:** Well I guess it is because I don’t want you to forget about your Mom.

**Susan:** I will never forget about my Mom! I can think about her and not be hurt all of the time.

**Hurt:** Well sometimes when you are having fun it makes me think you aren’t still sad that your Mom died.

**Susan:** I will always feel sad that my Mom died but there are some moments when I want to remember her and all the good things about our relationship. Having you stick around all of the time is bringing me down.

**Hurt:** Oh, I’m sorry, Is it okay if I come around sometimes or should I go away forever?

**Susan:** I don’t expect you to go away forever and sometimes feeling hurt is okay, it just isn’t okay to have you here constantly.
**Hurt:** Okay, as long as I know that you won’t forget your Mom maybe I won’t bother you so often.

**Susan:** You have a deal! I won’t forget my Mom and I won’t forget about you either, just give me some time to have fun too!
Poem and Journal Prompt Activity for Ages 13-17

ABC Poem

Directions:

I would love for you to try to write a poem about yourself or maybe even something in your life you are struggling with using the letters of the alphabet. Along the side of your paper you see the letters A through Z.

Using each letter, start a new word or phrase about yourself or your situation. Let me show you a couple examples.

Example One About Myself
Always trying to
Be popular at school and I
Can’t keep up anymore and I really
Don’t
Even want to!
Finding people that accept me for who I am
Got to be easier on myself
Have to
Investigate my strengths. I am
Joyful
Kind and I
Laugh
More when I am with friends that

Never care about clothes or hair or cars.
Opening up my circle of
Peeps will be
Quite different but it will be
Real
Surely I am Too stressed out to not
Too stressed out to not
Undo the
Very silly
Way I have been picking friends.
Xtra special friends
You don’t need to impress! They wouldn’t even care if I lived in a
Zoo!
Example Two About The Argument with my Mom
Always
Better to
Calm
Down before
Entering her bedroom
From now on I have to try to remember that she
Gets so tired right after work
Had
I gone in there
Just ten minutes later, everything would have been
Kool – she needed her own space just like I need mine sometimes too
Let’s
Make up and
Not fight anymore, I want us to be
Open and at
Peace with each other
Quiet time after school and work is what she has told me since I was a little girl
Really – this time she was right
Sometimes I have to stop and
Try to
Understand that she has a lot on her plate too.
Very hard to be a
Working Mom and
Expect to have to do it all
You were right Mom, I’m sorry – let’s start fresh and
Zoom forward.

⚠️ First let’s get relaxed and take a few deep breaths. Breathe in 1-2-3 and breathe out 1-2-3. Very good okay,
   one more time breathe-in 1-2-3 and breathe out 1-2-3.

⚠️ Okay when you are ready start with the letter A and let the words flow! Just let whatever comes to your mind
   come! Sometimes these poems don’t make sense to anyone but else but us and that is completely okay!
10 Favorite Things

Directions:

Try to make a list of your favorite ten things under each category people, foods, games, places and animals.
### Journaling

List your ten favorites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Favorite People</th>
<th>My Favorite Animals</th>
<th>My Favorite Games</th>
<th>My Favorite Places</th>
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<th>My Favorite Foods</th>
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Poem and Journal Prompt Activity for Ages 13-17

Gratitude

Directions:

Make a list of all of the things you are thankful for. Think of things big or small and if you can’t think of several today, just name a few and add to this list everyday as you think of more.
Poem and Journal Prompt Activity for Ages 13-17

Self-Compassion

**Directions:**

Write yourself a letter. Pretend like you are your own best friend and you need to hear some words of support and encouragement. Write down these words of support and encouragement in a letter to yourself. If you can also include a few compliments! Remember, nobody has to see this letter it is only for yourself so don’t hold back!
Poem and Journal Prompt Activity for Ages 13-17

Dream Catcher

Directions:

On the dream catcher image list or write about one or more of your dreams for the future. Color in the dream catcher when you are finished.
Journaling
Poem and Journal Prompt Activity for Ages 13-17

Writing Prompts:

Directions:

Some children have difficulty knowing where to start when they are asked to write or journal. On the following pages you will find journal prompts. Each prompt helps structure what the child might choose to write about, however if they have something else in mind they should feel free to write about that subject instead. These prompts are only meant to be a guide for children when needed.
My saddest memory is:
My happiest memory is:
My best friend would describe me by saying that I am:
If you could become an expert in any subject or activity, what would it be?
I feel fresh, energetic and happy when:
Journaling

I feel strong and confident when:
I feel calm and relaxed when:
I feel confused when:
I would love to travel to:
I worry about:
I really admire:
A famous person I would love to meet is:
References


