Mindfulness

"Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally." - Jon Kabat-Zinn

Studies show us that mindfulness decreases stress and anxiety, improves attention and brain functioning, improves mood and emotional regulation, and increases overall health and body awareness.

Mindfulness is an excellent tool in times of uncertainty. Slow, mindful breathing is calming and restorative -- it sends signals to the brain and body that everything is OK.

Included in this packet, you'll find activities and resources to help you bring a little mindfulness into each day. The activities are geared toward children, but meant to be practiced together.

Please check out our social media accounts - @shanthiproject - for more resources and information. Just click on the icons below!

We are here to support all of you - please don't hesitate to get in touch:
info@shanthiproject.org
www.shanthiproject.org

With gratitude,

All of us at Shanthi Project
Bring awareness to your breath in this moment. Notice the rising and falling of your chest. Notice the sensations as your breath moves in and out of your body. When your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breath.
Mindful Routines

Now is a great time to create daily mindful routines. Start the day with a check-in and some breaths. Throughout the day, check in a few more times and take mindful breaks. Get in the habit of a regular breathing practice. Right before bed is the perfect time to practice gratitude.

Check-Ins

Check-ins promote self-awareness – they are quick and can be done as needed or at specific times (e.g. every hour on the hour). To do a check-in, pause and notice how you feel, then ask yourself if there’s anything you need (Examples: “I feel tired, so I need to get up and get a drink of water.” Or... “I feel frustrated, so I need to take three deep breaths and ask for help.”). During a check-in you may also notice that you feel fine and don’t need anything in that moment. Conclude your check-in with three mindful breaths.

Gratitude Practice

Studies tell us that the benefits of a gratitude practice include improved physical health, better sleep, increased self-esteem and empathy, and a reduction in aggression. Kids can begin their own gratitude practice by starting a Gratitude Journal. Grab a notebook (it doesn't need to be fancy!) and ask them to draw or write down three things they are grateful for. Get in the routine of doing this each day. Remind your child to take the time to notice how it makes them feel when they stop to reflect on all the wonderful things that they're grateful for. Try to practice gratitude together everyday -- it doesn’t take up much time, and is a great way to connect!

Thank you
3-2-1 Focus

The idea is to use your senses for a few mindful moments.

- Use your EYES to find three different objects of a specific color
- Use your EARS to hear two separate sounds
- Use your NOSE to notice one thing you smell

Begin by finding your mindful body: sit in a chair or on the floor, make your back a little taller, relax your shoulders, rest your hands on your knees, eyes stay open. 3-2-1, Go!

Mindful Scavenger Hunt

**Outdoors:** create a list of items to find (leaf, flower, pine cone) or look for objects that are smooth, bumpy, small, large, shiny, etc.

**Indoors:** look around the house and find objects in every color of the rainbow - red...orange...yellow...green...blue...purple.

Write out the alphabet on a large piece of paper, then find one thing that starts with each letter. If it's small, put it next to the letter. If it's large, draw or write what it is next to the letter.
Finger Labyrinth

Place your finger on the entrance to the labyrinth. Slowly trace your finger through the labyrinth – really take your time. Try to focus only on following the path. When you reach the center, pause and take five slow breaths, then trace your way back out of the labyrinth. After you're done, check in with yourself – notice how you feel.

Try it again with your non-dominant hand (the hand you DON'T write with).
Mindful Break
Stand in Mountain Pose. Press both feet into the floor, make your back a little taller, arms at your sides and slightly away from your body. Look straight ahead, or close your eyes if you want. Feel tall, sturdy, and strong in your Mountain Pose, as you breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth.

Mindful Break
Three Wishes. Close your eyes if you’d like, and think of someone you care about. Now, make three wishes for that person. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth three times, softly blowing all the wishes into the sky.

Mindful Break
Go outside. With a grown-up’s permission, go outside and take a nature break. Stand or sit in one spot and slowly look all around. What do you see? What sounds do you hear? What can you smell? How does it feel to be outside under the big, open sky?

Mindful Break
Float on a cloud. Imagine you are lying on a big, fluffy cloud, floating across the sky on a beautiful day. You feel safe and cozy on your cloud. Maybe you’re looking all around, taking in the sights from above, or maybe you’re just enjoying the feeling of slowly floating along.

Mindful Break
Listen. Stop what you’re doing a be still. Listen to the sounds around you…in the room, outside the room, all around. How many different sounds do you hear when you listen closely?

Mindful Break
Practice gratitude. Grab paper, a pencil, and a timer. Set the timer for one minute and then write down all the things you’re grateful for until the timer goes off. Notice how you feel when you’re done.
Mindful Break
Jellyfish Pose. Lie on your back. Lift your legs into the air. Lift your arms into the air. Now... WIGGLE your arms and legs like a swimming jellyfish! Keep wiggling, then STOP and just float with the current. Then WIGGLE some more!

Mindful Break
Body scan. Choose a body part, like your hands or your feet. Without moving, just notice. Do you feel warm, cool, just right? Do you feel any tingling? Maybe nothing at all? You can also scan each body part, starting with your toes, and moving all the way up to your nose!

Mindful Break
Say thank you. Grab a piece of paper and a pencil and write a thank you note to someone. Maybe it's someone you admire, or someone who taught you something important. Maybe you just want to thank them for being a good friend!

Mindful Break
Put your note in an envelope, and ask for help to mail it. Imagine the person reading your letter and smiling.

Mindful Break
Rainbow scavenger hunt. Take a slow walk around, inside or outside (make sure if you’re outside that a grownup is with you!). Try to find at least one object in every color of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

Mindful Break
Music break. Put on your favorite song and don't do anything else but listen to it. Notice how it makes you feel to listen to your song. Think about why you like it so much. Listen to it again and notice all the different instruments that are a part of the music. If it has words, listen closely to the singer’s voice.

Plan a vacation! Imagine that you can go anywhere on a dream vacation. Where would you go? How would you get there? Who would go with you? What would you see, do, and eat while you're there? Use your imagination to plan out the best vacation ever!
Mindful Break

S...T...R...E...T...C...H! Stand up tall and reach your hands up high. Stretching your arms toward the sky. Now jump your feet apart and reach your arms out to the side. Notice how your body feels as you stretch. Jump your feet back together and reach up for one more full body stretch.

Mindful Break

Peace begins with me

Create a mantra. Touch each finger to your thumb, slowly and one at a time. Say a word or sound for each touch, like Peace...Begins...With...Me. Feel free to make up your own mantra, like "I am so strong" or "I can do this." Say your mantra out loud two times, whisper it two times, then just say it in your head until you feel like you're all done.

Mindful Break

Laugh! Start off with a quiet little laugh, then get louder and sillier! What's the silliest laugh you can do? It may be hard to get started, but then I bet you're really laughing! When you're done, notice how you feel.

Mindful Break

Eat mindfully. Choose something to eat, like a raisin or a bit of chocolate. Use as many of your senses as you can to enjoy your food. Touch it, look at it, and smell it before you take a bite. When you finally bite it, feel it on your tongue and chew it slowly before you swallow it. Really taste your food and notice how yummy it is!

Mindful Break

Your super power. If you had a super power, what would it be? How would you use it to help the world? What would your super hero costume look like? Take a few moments to imagine yourself as a super hero, and think about all the good you would do.

Mindful Break

Mindful looking. Choose a color, then look around the room (or apartment, house, office, classroom, wherever you are!) and find 5 different things in that color. If you are playing with a friend, compare what you found, then choose another color!
Mindful Breathing

Hold up one hand with fingers spread wide. Find your pointer finger on the other hand. Starting at the base of your thumb, trace your pointer finger up your thumb as you breathe in. Trace down your thumb as you breathe out. Trace up the next finger as you breathe in again...Trace all of your fingers while taking mindful breaths.

Lie down on your back or sit up tall, and imagine there's a balloon in your belly. (What color is your balloon?) Now imagine filling that balloon with air as you breathe in through your nose. Watch your tummy rise as the balloon gets bigger! Now, let all the air out -- PSSSSSSSSSSH -- and watch your tummy go down. Repeat your balloon breaths and notice how it makes you feel.

Imagine you have a hot cup of hot chocolate in your hands. Hold your cup up to your nose and take a slow breath in to smell the delicious chocolate. It smells good, but it's still too hot to drink, so gently blow on the hot chocolate to cool it down. Take another big breath in to smell the chocolate, and blow gently (it's still too hot!). Take a few more breaths - smelling then gently blowing until it's ready to drink. Then drink it down and let out a big "aaaaaaahhhhhhhhh" -- That was delicious!
Mindful Breathing

Animal Breathing

Snake Breath: Take a breath in through your nose. As you let it out, make a long SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSsound, just like a snake!

Lion Breath: Breathe in slowly through your nose, then stick your tongue way out and let out a big lion breath roar!

Bear Breath: When bears hibernate, they breathe very s...l...o...w...l...y. Imagine you're a sleepy bear, and take a slow breath in, hold it for the count of three, then let it out just as slowly.

Bunny Breath: Take three quick breaths in through your little bunny nose, then let out one long breath through your mouth.
Mindful Breathing

Square Breathing

Start at the ♾️

- = breathe

= pause

Breathe in

Breathe out

Breathe in

Breathe out
Feelings can be complicated. We often feel more than one feeling at a time and that can be difficult for kids to express. Explore the emotions cards with your child and have them tell you how they interpret each face. There are blank faces included for your child to draw any additional feelings of their own. Remind your child that ALL feelings are okay to have, and some feelings are more difficult than others.

**What to do with your feelings cards:**

Place the feelings cards in an accessible area. Sometimes emotions are so overwhelming that it becomes difficult to speak. Simply ask your child to point to how they’re feeling, then validate the feeling and support them as they work through it.

Play feelings charades. Choose a card and act out the feeling until your partner guesses the answer. Talk about a time you felt that way. Use the cards to start discussions about dealing with difficult feelings. Talk about the fact that we show feelings on our faces and with our body language some of the time, but we always feel them inside (Example: “I was mad when someone at school called me a name. My heart was beating fast, I felt my face get hot, and my muscles in my hands and jaw got tight”). This can lead to discussions about appropriate ways to respond to feelings, and how breathing can help us be less reactive.

Don't forget to model your own feelings and how you respond to them!
Mindful Resources

Books for Kids
Breathe Like a Bear by Kira Willey
Alphabreaths by Christopher Willard
I Am Peace by Susan Verde
Sitting Still Like a Frog by Eline Snel
Breathing Makes it Better by Christopher Willard
Be Kind by Pat Zietlow Miller
In My Heart by Jo Witek
Breathe and Be: A Book of Mindfulness Poems by Kate Coombs

Books for Adults
Wherever You Go There You Are by Jon Kabat-Zinn
The Gifts of Imperfection by Brene Brown
The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself by Kristin Neff
Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat Zinn
Say What You Mean by Oren Sofer

Card Decks
Mindful Games Activities Cards - Susan Kaiser Greenland
Mindful Kids: 50 Mindfulness Activities for Kindness, Focus and Calm - Whitney Stewart

Websites
Kira Willey - https://kirawilley.com/
Ten Percent Happier - https://www.tenpercent.com/
Mindful - https://www.mindful.org/

Videos
Why Mindfulness is a Superpower
Just Breathe
MINDFULNESS GUIDE
to Staying Home + Staying Calm

LIMIT MEDIA

Limit news to reliable sources and updates from your local officials. Details are changing rapidly, so take the time you need to process it by unplugging throughout the day.

CONTROL YOUR BREATH

Start at the green star. Breathe along the lines, then pause at each corner on the circle. Draw a similar square on half a sheet of paper, or use a household item like a coaster.

OFFER SELF COMPASSION

Offer yourself the same compassion that you would offer to a friend. Recognize your fears before they become overwhelming.

Name a Positive: What is good in this present moment? Could it be that you are safe? Your body is working right now?

www.shanthhiproject.org
MINDFULNESS GUIDE
to Staying Home + Staying Calm

COOK AS A FAMILY
Cooking together can be structured or spontaneous! Following a recipe accurately keeps you present. If you go off-plan, bring yourself back to the present moment with a mindful breath.

MINDFUL EATING
Make the most of each meal by engaging all five senses before you take a bite. Look, listen, feel, smell, then taste. Talk about what you saw, where your food came from, and how it got to your plate.

MINDFUL SEEING
Choose a work of art, coffee table book, or houseplant and explain what you see to someone else while they draw your description on a piece of paper. Then, compare the original image to the drawing. Talk about the results.

Draw a sign for your door declaring your home a judgment-free zone!

www.shanthiproject.org