

Monday, April 6, 2020

Dear Briarwood Families,

Happy Monday! I hope the second week of distance learning went as smoothly as possible for everyone. While services like Zoom have given us the amazing benefit of being able to continue the school year even while we are physically apart, spending the day looking at a computer screen can be tough on our bodies. I have noticed a lot of tension and soreness myself after a long day at the computer!

One important aspect of mindfulness is to be connected to your body and aware of how you are feeling physically, as well as emotionally. A great way to do this is through progressive muscle relaxation. While this might sound complicated, it is actually a very simple exercise that you can do anywhere! Starting at your toes, pick one muscle and squeeze it tight. Count to five. Release, and notice how your body changes. Repeat the exercise, moving up your body. By doing this, you can draw attention to what areas of your body are tense - you might be surprised to discover where you hold your tension!

Using progressive muscle relaxation throughout the day is a great way to be more mindful and connected with your body. Check in with yourself as well as your student and talk about how your bodies have been feeling lately. I have also attached a few other exercises that can help to release any tension you might be carrying.

Take care,

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SQUEEZING THE LEMON

Pretend you have a whole lemon in your left hand. Feel the roundness and weight in your hand. Give it a slight squeeze. Now squeeze it hard. Try to squeeze all the juice out. Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. That's it; you're almost finished. Yes! Now drop the lemon. Notice how your hand, wrist, and arm muscles feel when they are relaxed. Take another lemon, this time in your right hand, and squeeze gently. Now try to squeeze this one even harder than you did the first one. That's right, squeeze it as hard as possible; get that last drop of juice out. Good. Now relax and let the lemon fall from your hand.

STRETCHING LIKE A CAT

Pretend you are a furry, lazy cat. You want to stretch—stretch in that awesome way cats stretch. Stretch your arms way out in front of you. Raise them up high over your head. And then reach them way behind your back. Feel the pull in your shoulders. Stretch higher. Now just let your arms drop back to your side. Let's do that again. Stretch your arms way out in front of you again. Raise them way up high over your head, trying to touch the ceiling. Push them way, way back. Notice the tension and pull in your arms and shoulders. Hold tight, now. Great. Let them drop very quickly and feel how good it is to be relaxed. It feels good and warm and lazy.

JAWBREAKER

Pretend that you have in your mouth the most monstrous size jawbreaker ever. It's huge but it still fits in your mouth. It's extremely hard to break. Try biting down on it hard! Let your neck muscles help you. Now relax. Just let your jaw hang loose. Notice how good it feels just to let your jaw drop. Okay, let's tackle that jawbreaker again. Bite down as hard as you possibly can. Harder! Try to break it apart and squeeze its yummy insides out between your teeth. Oh, you're really working hard. Good. Now relax. Try to relax your whole body. Let yourself go as loose as you can.