

Restorative Parenting

Practicing mindfulness as a family

Mindfulness means more than sitting around meditating. It is about being present and intentional. It's about taking time to be still and focused on the things and people that matter most. We can practice mindfulness at any point and we can use a variety of things to help us. We can focus on our breath, visualize something calming / beautiful or set an intention for our day. We can practice mindfulness in the silence of our own home, on a walk or in the car as we drive.

When we practice mindfulness as a self-care practice it can also become a helpful tool to regulate our emotions in the midst of conflict or challenges. One core practice in mindfulness is focusing on our breath. This can be especially helpful when we are experiencing tension or hard feelings. Focusing on our breath helps return oxygen to our brain, helping us to make better decisions.

Take time to practice your breathing as a family. It can take some time to remember to use it when we need it most, so practicing often will help. Remember, that children will look to the adults in their lives to model how to deal with big feelings. This means that even when our children are the "source" of our frustration, it is important to model the behavior we want to see in them.

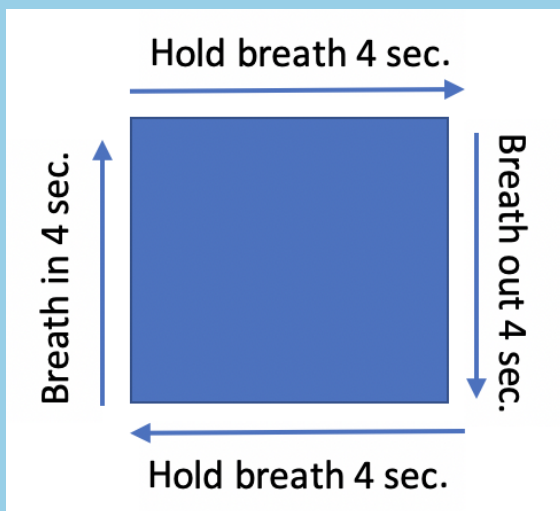
"We can [use mindfulness to] focus on our breath, visualize something calming / beautiful or set an intention for our day."



Practicing mindfulness at home

Practice box breathing

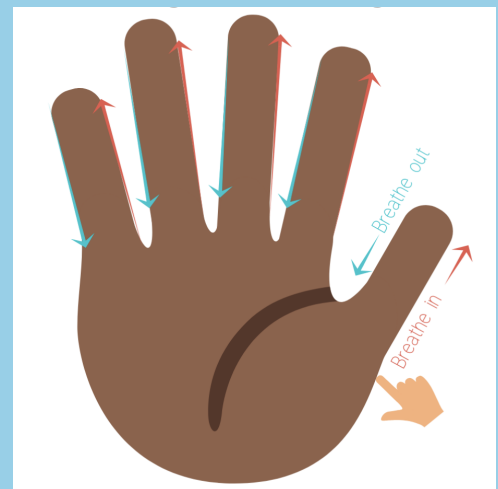
To practice box breathing, identify a time when the family is not experiencing conflict. Envision a box. You can even draw a picture of a square if you want. As you trace the shape in your mind, practice breathing in for 4 seconds, holding your breath for 4 seconds, releasing it for 4 seconds, and holding your breath for 4 seconds. Continue the exercise as many times as needed.



Practice finger tracing

Another breath practice that works well for younger kids is finger tracing (this can work for adults too).

Simply open your hand flat with fingers spread out. Take your other hand and with one finger, trace the outline of your fingers. As you move up a finger, breathe in. When you trace down a finger, breathe out. Do this until you have traced your own hand. It is important to trace your hand slowly so the pace of your tracing matches your breath speed. You don't want to hyperventilate as you breath! Repeat as many times as as needed.



“[Breathing] can be especially helpful when we are experiencing tension or hard feelings. Focusing on our breath helps return oxygen to our brain, helping us to make better decisions. ”

For more information on restorative practices, visit:

<https://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/system-of-supports/Pages/Restorative-Practices.aspx>