

# ON OUR SLEEVES<sup>®</sup>

The Movement for Children's Mental Health

## What Is Mindfulness?

It is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally.

Mindfulness can help you with:

- Relaxing
- Reducing stress
- Helping you remember things
- Keeping you from being distracted or disengaged.

All things that can be helpful in school, personal life, and with relationships.

## Breathing

- Practice mindfulness by taking a couple of minutes to notice your breathing.
- Bring your attention to the flow of the breath, in through your nose, out through your mouth. Do you notice how the air comes in cool and blows out warm?
- Focus on the rise and fall of your chest and belly. Breathe in for 4 counts and fill your belly up with air, pause, and breathe out for 6 counts.
- Feel your ribs expand as you breathe in and your belly button "touch your back" as you breathe out.

When your mind wanders to thinking, gently bring it back to your breath. This way you can give your mind a break and be present in the moment, free of worries.

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## Single Object Mindfulness Activity

- Find an object that you can hold in your hand.
- Hold the object in one of your hands, close your eyes, and breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- With your eyes still closed trace the object with your finger, notice the texture, any bumps or grooves. Notice the temperature of the object and the weight in your hand. Is it hard or is it soft? Can you move and bend it or is it hard?
- Open your eyes and focus on the object. Notice the colors, textures and shapes. Notice how the light shines or reflects it or any shadows.
- Finally, does the object make any sounds? Tap and scratch it with your ginger nails. If it has buttons, or zippers, or different textures, do they make sounds when you fidget with them?
- Keep breathing in through your nose, and out through your mouth.

What was it like to focus on just your breath and your object?

If it was relaxing, you might enjoy practicing mindfulness.