



Children's Mental Health Week 2018

Further information for parents and carers.





What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a technique which can help people manage their mental health or simply gain more enjoyment from life. It involves making a special effort to give your full attention to what is happening in the present moment – to what's happening in your body, your mind or your surroundings. Mindfulness describes a way of approaching our thoughts and feelings so that we become more aware of them and react differently to them.

Top Mindfulness resources:

- **'Headspace' & 'Headspace Kids'** See the App Store or <https://www.headspace.com/faqs/category/headspace-for-kids>
- **'Calm' app**-Can be found in the 'App store'.
- **Relax kids**-For free resources and parent packs that include mindfulness techniques and free music visit <https://www.relaxkids.com/>. Relax kids also publish many mindfulness books and CD's.
- **Mind**-For information on Mindfulness generally visit <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/#.WnzAxELHIU>
- **NHS 'Moodzone'**- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>

Relaxation/Breathing Exercises...

BALLOON BREATHING



Sitting in a comfortable position, place your hands around your mouth as if you were about to blow up a balloon. Take a deep breath in through the nose and, as you slowly exhale through your mouth, start to spread your hands out as if you are blowing up a great big balloon. Hold your hand position as you inhale again and then spread your hands further as you exhale. Once your balloon is as big as it can be, gently sway from side to side as you release your balloon up into the sky.

SHOULDER ROLL BREATHING



Choose a comfortable sitting position. As you take a slow deep breath in through your nose raise your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe slowly out through your mouth, lowering your shoulders as you exhale. Repeat slowly, rolling your shoulders up and down in time with your breath.

TAKE 5 BREATHING



Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.

ELEPHANT BREATHING



Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant's trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

Other relaxing activities for the family to try...

- Relaxing and listening to music together.
- Sports or physical activity. Some children enjoy yoga. Various instruction videos can be found online including on 'You Tube'. Here are some to get you started:

GARDEN YOGA FOR KIDS



Pretend to be a tree

Tree Pose: Stand on one leg. Bend the other knee and place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh. Sway like a tree in the breeze. Now the other side.



Pretend to be a frog

Squat Pose: Come down to a squat with your knees apart and arms resting between your knees. Touch your hands to the ground. Jump like a frog.



Pretend to be a seed

Child's Pose: Sit back on your heels and bring your forehead down to rest on the floor. Pretend to be a seed in the garden.



Pretend to be a butterfly

Cobbler's Pose: Sit on your buttocks with a tall spine. Bend your legs with the soles of your feet together. Flap your legs like the wings of a butterfly.



Pretend to be a flower

Flower Pose: Lift your bent legs, balancing on your sitting bones. Weave your arms under your legs, palms up. Pretend to be a flower in bloom.



- Chat about the day over dinner with the whole family.
- Introduce a family chill out night. Watch something you all enjoy, share stories, play games or listen to music.
- Set up a 'chill out corner' in the house so children can relax when they feel upset, stressed or anxious. Include music, cushions, favourite books, toys etc.
- Encourage plenty of 'Non-screen' time. Share focussed activities like craft, colouring, enjoy stories and games.