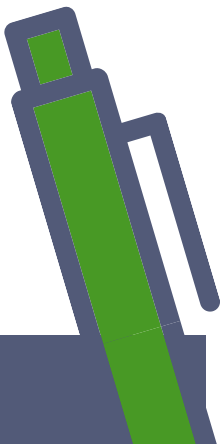
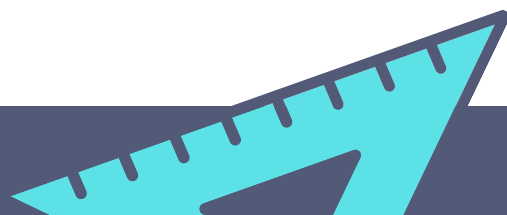
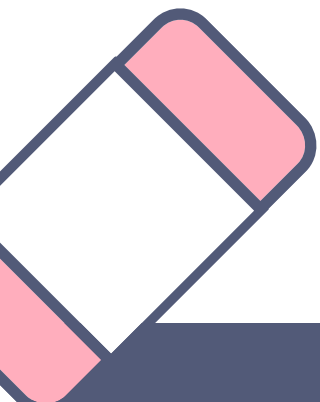
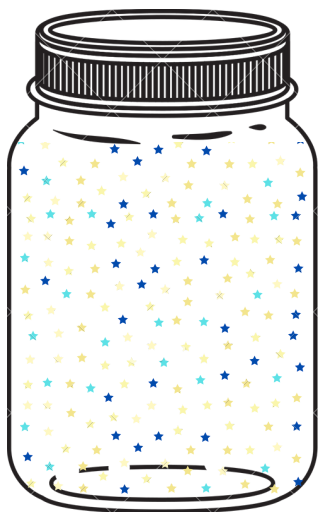


# Mindfulness for the Classroom

## **A TOOLBOX FOR TEACHERS**

Joanne Doucette, MSW, RSW  
<https://www.cafco-ceafo.ca>





# glitter jar

The glitter represents our thoughts and feelings. If we stay in the moment, take some deep breaths and wait for a while, the glitter settles, just like our thoughts and feelings.

The glitter jar also reminds us as adults we don't have to "fix" distress, but help students to see that emotions will rise, swirl and then eventually settle.

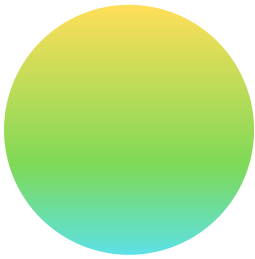
Please refer to this link for ideas about how to present the glitter jar in class, including a sample script of what to say to students:

**<https://www.mindful.org/how-to-create-a-glitter-jar-for-kids>**

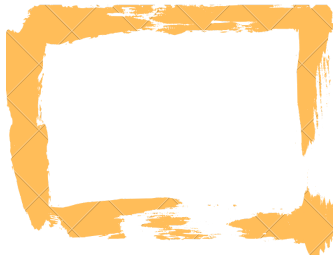
# deep breathing



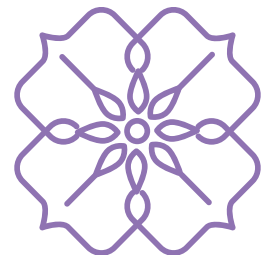
Teaching children how to take deep, abdominal breaths is at the heart of mindfulness.



**COLOUR  
BREATHING**



**SQUARE  
BREATHING**



**FLOWER-CANDLE  
TECHNIQUE**

This website provides a wonderful description of Square breathing, including some fantastic tips for how to use it in the classroom:

**<http://kidsrelaxation.com/uncategorized/the-deep-breath-box-square-breathing/>**

Here is an example of a fun video that teachers can play in class to guide children with deep breathing:

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLbK0o9Bk7Q>**

## GUIDED IMAGERY

# my happy place

Set aside about 5 minutes for this activity. Consider dimming the lights and asking children to settle with some deep breaths. Invite them to close their eyes if comfortable to do so. Follow the script attached to this handout, to guide students to use all their senses to imagine they are in their happy place, feeling calm and relaxed. You can use the following script, either by reading this out loud, adapting it to suit your own use and eventually asking students to lead the activity by reading the script for their peers.



## "My Happy Place"

(for all ages, children and teens respond well to it)

We are going to relax and think about a place we have been to before or a moment in time that we remember as very calm, peaceful and happy. Take a minute to think of your happy place. It could be a spot where you went on vacation, the dock at your cottage, or it could be curled up at home on the couch with your dog. Just choose somewhere that reminds you of feeling relaxed and happy. Does everyone have a place in mind? Great! Now I am going to guide you through this meditation. I will ask some questions to help you reflect, but you don't need to answer me out loud. Just let the questions help you to imagine visiting your happy place. Let's start by closing our eyes and relaxing our bodies. Let go of any tension in your shoulders and neck. Notice if you are holding tension in your face: your jaw should feel relaxed, with some space between your lips. Take three deep breaths to start: A slow, deep breath in through your nose, (Pause), then a slow exhale through your mouth. Let's take another deep breath (repeat), and now a third and final deep breath. Throughout this guided imagery, just keep taking nice slow breaths. Now I want you to imagine your happy place. Pretend that you are back there right now.

Look around you: what do you see? Are you out in nature? Are the colours bright and cheerful? Is it sunny? Can you see people or is it very quiet and peaceful with nobody around you? Let the sights around you remind you of how calm and relaxed you feel when you are there. Now notice what you can hear. Is it very quiet, with just soft sounds such as the wind in the trees, or waves hitting the shore? Can you hear the sounds of nature, such as birds chirping? Are there people around and their chatter fills the air? Tune in to the sounds of this environment and let those noises remind you of how you feel when you are here: you can let go of any stress or worries. Now think about the smells in this happy place: perhaps you smell your sunscreen, or the scents of food cooking on a barbecue. Perhaps it's the smell of fresh ocean air or your Mom cooking dinner in the kitchen. Try and sink into that feeling of being in that environment with those familiar smells. Also, think of taste: are there certain foods or drinks that you have there? How do those familiar foods add to the happiness of this place for you? Lastly, recall the sensation of touch. Can you feel the warmth of the sun on your face? Is there a cool breeze on your skin? What are you standing on? Do you feel the prickly grass or warm sand under your toes? Remember how those sensations felt and how they helped melt your stress away. Keep taking nice deep breaths and feel how you are so relaxed and calm. Now, put all those senses together: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Let yourself sink into the comfort of being in your happy place. Take a few moments to enjoy being there. (Pause for a few minutes of quiet.) Now, when you are ready, you can slowly let yourself come back into the present. Wiggle your fingers, wiggle your toes. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes.



# PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Often, we hold tension without realizing it. By deliberately tensing and then relaxing muscle groups, we can allow our mind and body to relax. Encourage students to sit comfortably in their chairs, remembering to breathe. Follow the script attached to guide them to tense one muscle group at a time, counting to 4, and then soften and release the tension, allowing time to relax completely. Continue on to the next muscle group.

# “Tense and Relax”

(all ages)

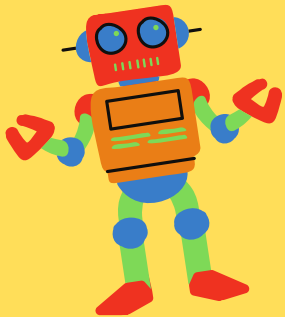
Tense your feet by curling your toes under. Hold for a count of 4: 1, 2, 3, 4. Relax your toes and take a deep breath in, then let it go. Now, tense your legs by pulling your toes up and pointing them toward your head. Tighten the muscles in your thighs. Hold for a count of 4: 1, 2, 3, 4. Relax your legs, feel them soften and all the tension release. Take a deep breath in, then let it go. Tense your stomach. Feel your stomach muscles get very tight. Hold for a count of 4: 1, 2, 3, 4. Relax and take a deep breath in, then let it go. Tense your hands by squeezing them into fists. Pretend you are squeezing the juice out of a lemon. Now tense your arms, feeling your bicep muscles get very tight. Hold for a count of 4: 1, 2, 3, 4. Relax and take a deep breath in, then let it out. Lastly, tense your shoulders by pulling them up towards your ears, like you are shrugging your shoulders. Hold for a count of 4: 1, 2, 3, 4. Relax and take a deep breath. Repeat as needed.

For a longer script, see examples such as:

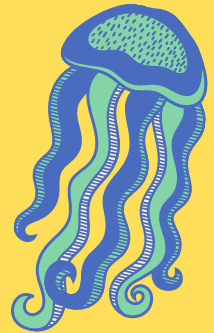
**<https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/MuscleRelaxation.pdf> )**



Fun option for elementary age children:



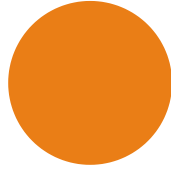
# ROBOTS, TOWERS, JELLYFISH



Play music and allow children to dance, or do jumping jacks or whatever silly movement they would enjoy. When the music stops, call out one of the commands and children move into either Robot or Tower (holding muscles tight!) or Jellyfish (relaxing and falling into their chair or the ground). Kids love this activity and it helps them notice the different feeling in their body when tense or relaxed, and can release tension and energy at a transition time.

This activity is from the FRIENDS for Life program: <https://www.friendsresilience.org/friendsforlife>

# other resources to explore



- ▶ Check out apps, such as CALM, Insight Timer, Headspace.



- ▶ Search Youtube videos about “mindfulness for kids” and you will find videos you can play in class, that touch on all the activities covered here! This is a great option for teachers who don’t feel quite confident enough to guide the activity yourself.



- ▶ MindMasters 2 is a great program with free Mindfulness scripts and audio files. These resources can be found on the Ottawa Public Health website:

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/iecmh.aspx#Mindmasters-2>

# tips + ideas



- Practice yourself - you will benefit, and it will show as you will be confident and calm in modelling the tools for your students.
- Consider asking students to take on leadership roles and lead the activities as they become more familiar with them.
- Build a sense of pride in the class for being open to new ideas.
- When students feel connected to their teachers, it improves all aspects of learning and classroom behaviour. Mindfulness is a wonderful way that teachers can slow down, strengthen their relationship with students, as well as foster compassion and closeness between students.