



Teaching Your Child Mindfulness

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Title IV Social Worker for SCPS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn the basics of mindfulness
- Learn the benefits of mindfulness
- Learn how to practice mindfulness with your child
- Learn about mindfulness resources



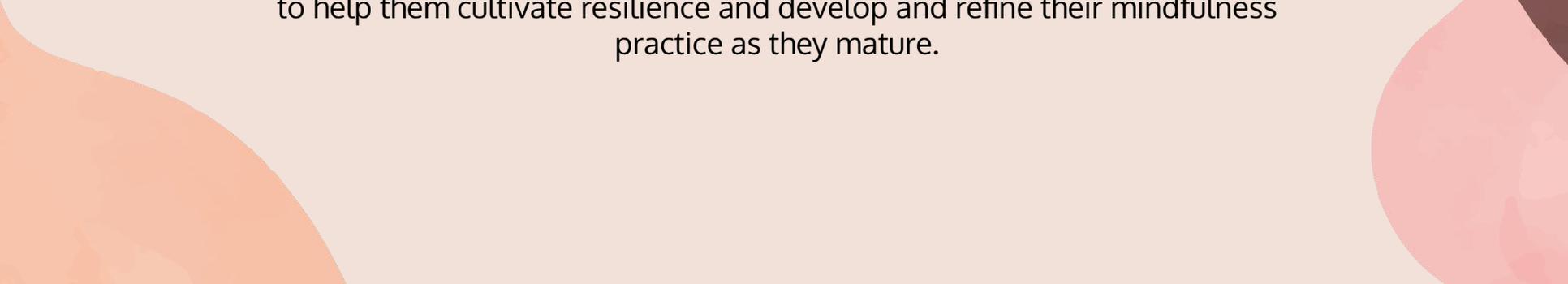
What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, without judgment, or without wishing things to be different.

Mindfulness is about learning to respond and not react.

Mindfulness is about focusing on the present moment, with no distractions.

When we teach **mindfulness** to kids, we give them the tools they need to build confidence, cope with stress, and relate to uncomfortable or challenging moments. The earlier we do so in their young lives, the greater the opportunity to help them cultivate resilience and develop and refine their mindfulness practice as they mature.



What is Mindfulness?





Research

Research has found that mindfulness practice can also help children in school. A recent study found that fourth and fifth graders who took a four-month meditation program demonstrated improvements in cognitive control, working memory and math test scores. Other studies have shown that mindfulness can be especially helpful to children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and also reduce children's aggression, anxiety and stress. And around the country, many educational institutions — from elementary schools to graduate programs — are bringing mindfulness training into the classroom.

Source:

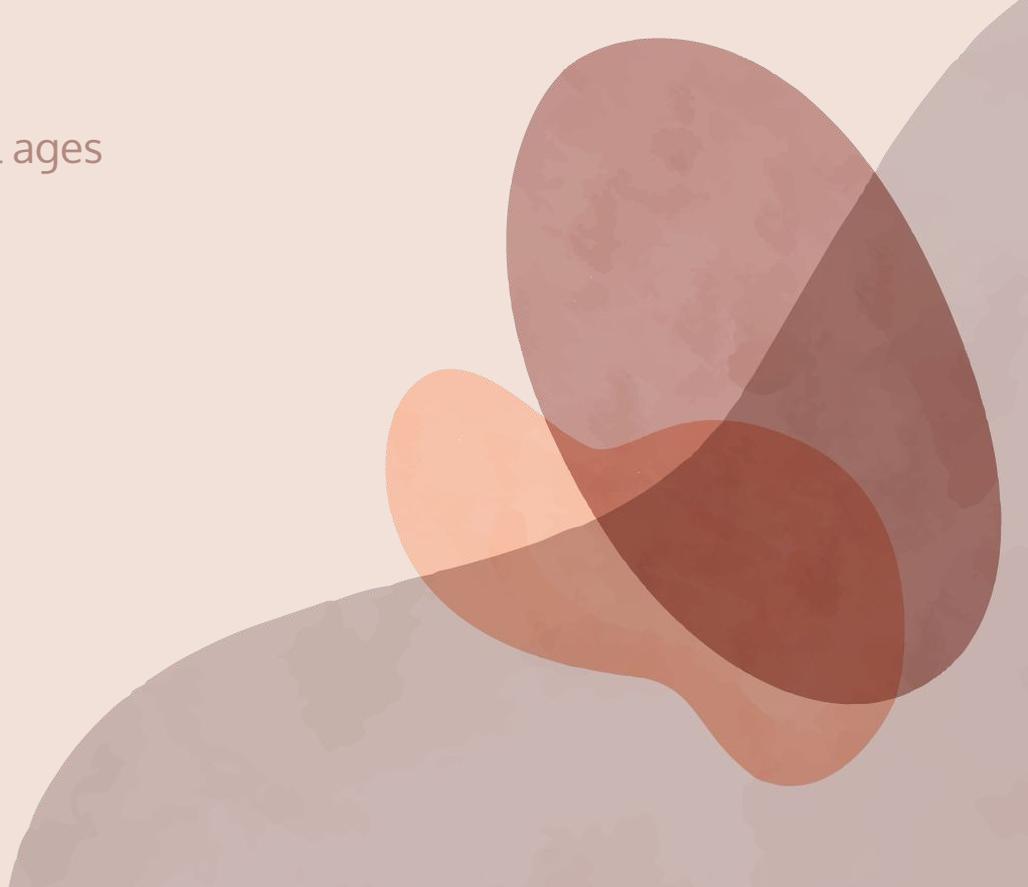
<https://www.nytimes.com/guides/well/mindfulness-for-children>

Research

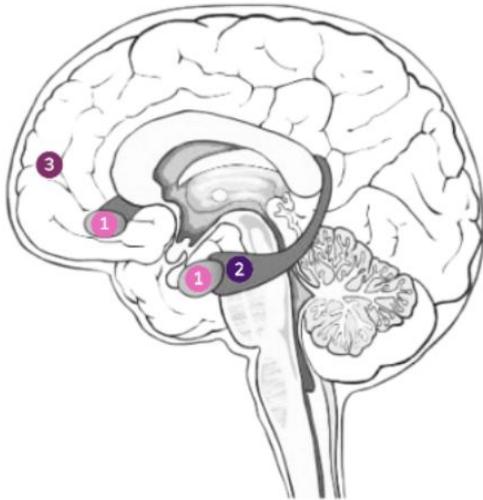
Research has found that children of all ages who practice mindfulness have:

- Improved attention & focus
- Cognitive development
- Better behaviors in school
- Empathy & perspective taking
- Improved social skills
- Emotional regulation
- Reduced anxiety & stress
- More resilience
- Lower rates of depression

Source: Mindful Schools



Mindfulness Develops Our Brains



1. **The amygdala** is activated when detecting and reacting to emotions including difficult or strong emotions such as fear. Following sessions of mindfulness training, this part of the brain may be less activated.¹⁰

2. **The hippocampus** is critical to learning and memory and helps regulate the amygdala. The hippocampus is more activated¹², and produces more gray matter density¹³ following mindfulness training.

3. **The prefrontal cortex** is most associated with maturity, including regulating emotions and behaviors and making wise decisions. This part of the brain is more activated and developed following mindfulness training¹⁴.

How Do We Explain Mindfulness to Children?

We don't have to call it "mindfulness" - we can tell children to find their "calm place" or "quiet place."

Aiming to remove distractions (technology, toys, external noise) and letting people sit.

Find different ways to be mindful. Some ideas:

- Mindful Seeing (go outside and have them notice nature, identify plants/flowers, birds, etc.)
- Mindful Hearing (pay attention to the sounds)
- Mindful Eating (taking time to focus on the taste and texture of food, savoring it)
- Mindful Breathing (counting breaths, belly breathing)
- Heartfulness (sending kindness to others, gratitude)



Different Ways to Teach Your Child Mindfulness

Taken from PsychologyToday

1. Notice and name body sensations, thoughts, and emotions.

"My chest feels warm and I feel so happy when we are playing outside together like this." "It sounds like you might be nervous about this new situation. What do you notice in your body right now?" The more insight our kids have into their inner experience, the more they are able to *choose* appropriate responses.

2. Enlist a guide.

Whether it's books, YouTube videos, or apps that can be download to a phone/tablet.

3. Share a 3-breath hug.

Hugging your child, take three deliberate, synchronized, deep breaths together. Drop your shoulders, relaxing any muscles that feel tight. Let go and feel the tension melt away. Use it as you say goodbye in the morning, when you recognize when someone could use a calming hug, or just for the love of it.

Different Ways to Teach Your Child Mindfulness

Taken from PsychologyToday

4. Move, stretch, and notice body sensations.

Teach your children to observe and appreciate all that our bodies are capable of and do for us.

5. Stop and be aware of surroundings.

Whenever you find yourself waiting with a spare moment— in the grocery checkout line, at a doctor's appointment, walking to your car—pause, tune into the five senses, and share what you notice with one another.

6. Describe your own process of noticing, naming, and using the breath to calm yourself.

"Wow, I am feeling overwhelmed right now. I need to walk away and take a few deep breaths... Whew, okay, now I feel calmer."

Different Ways to Teach Your Child Mindfulness

Taken from PsychologyToday

7. Eat a mindful snack.

If you have a toddler, this may come easily, as toddlers often eat at an excruciatingly slow pace. As kids grow older, they may need a reminder to slow down. Together, use your senses to observe the food. Enjoy the first few bites with careful attention to appearance, scent, feel, and taste.

8. Count the breaths.

Either lying down with a small pillow or stuffed animal on your child's belly, or sitting up with a hand resting on the belly, notice the inhale and exhale, the rising and falling of the belly. Count the inhales and the exhales, at first out loud, then silently on your own.

9. Take a mindful nature walk.

Move at your child's speed, which, of course, can vary from sprinting like a cheetah to slugging along at a snail's pace. Bring your sense of curiosity and adventure and allow your child to lead the way.

Different Ways to Teach Your Child Mindfulness

Taken from PsychologyToday

10. Practice belly breathing.

Place one hand on the chest and one on the belly. As you inhale, fill up the belly like a balloon and as you exhale, allow the balloon to deflate. This often feels counterintuitive at first, as most of us breathe shallowly into the chest most of the time. Belly breathing automatically turns on the relaxation response in the body.

11. Let them be.

Kids are instinctively more mindful (which is why it can take them so bleeping long to get from point A to point B). Whenever possible, allow them to explore at their own pace. Create space in your schedule for free time to investigate and be mindful naturally.

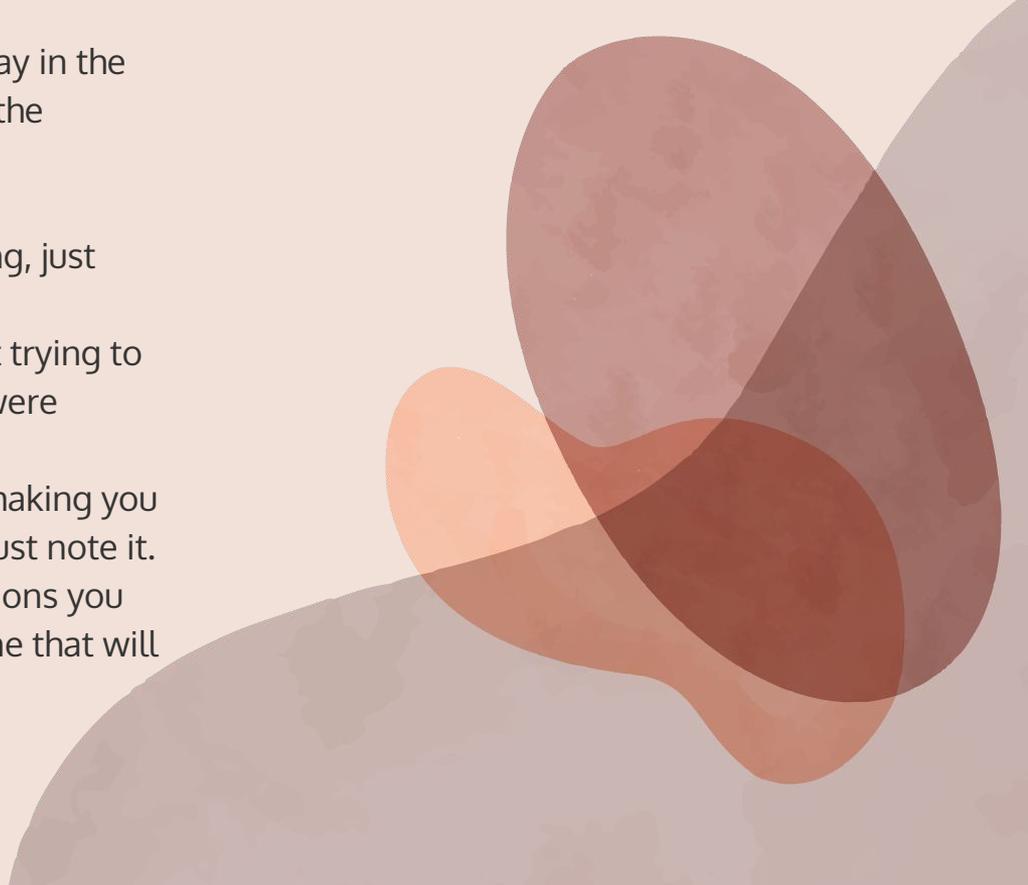
12. Teach by example.

You are modeling mindfulness for your children, right?

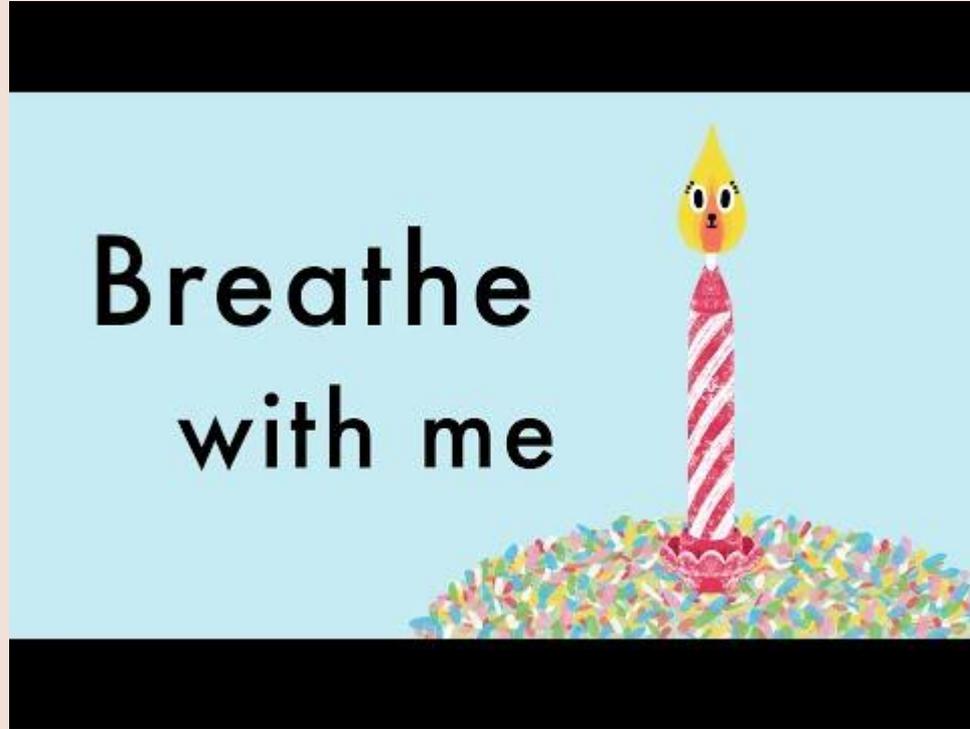
R.A.I.N.

A simple exercise, known as **R.A.I.N.**, can help us stay in the present moment and not get caught up clinging to the experiences of others, or our own emotions.

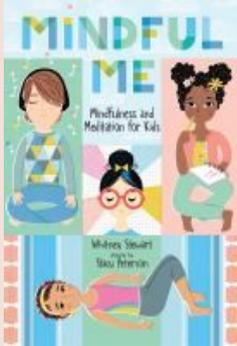
- **R:** Recognize. Acknowledge what is happening, just noting it in a calm and accepting manner.
- **A:** Accept. Allow life to be just as it is, without trying to change it right away, and without wishing it were different somehow.
- **I:** Investigate. See how it feels, whether it is making you upset or happy, giving you pleasure or pain, just note it.
- **N:** Non-Identification. Realize that the sensations you are feeling make for a fleeting experience, one that will soon pass. It isn't who you are.



Candle and Flower Breathing

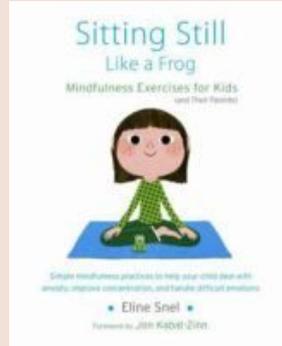


Mindfulness Books Available at the Seminole County Library



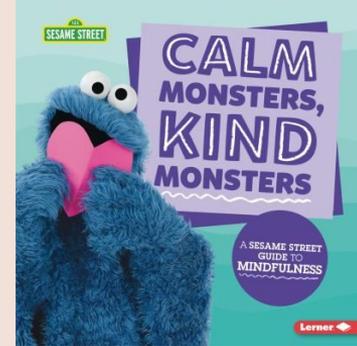
Mindful Me

Mindfulness & Meditations
for Kids by Whitney Stewart
and Stacy Peterson



Sitting Still Like a Frog

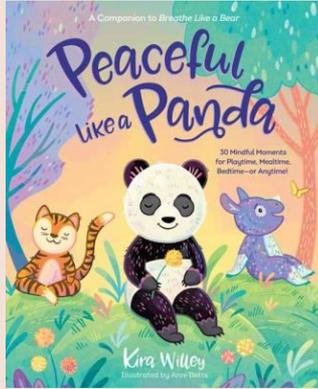
Mindfulness Exercises for
Kids (and Their Parents) by
Eline Snel



Calm Monsters, Kind Monsters

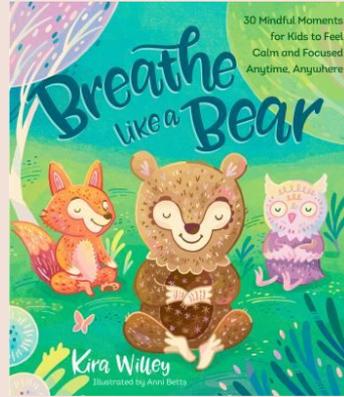
A Sesame Street Guide to
Mindfulness

Mindfulness Books Available at the Seminole County Library



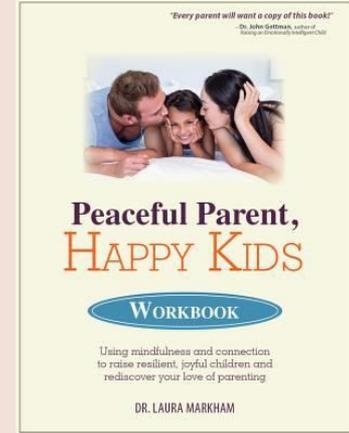
Peaceful Like a Panda

30 Mindful Moments for
Playtime, Mealtimes,
Bedtime—or Anytime!



Breathe Like a Bear

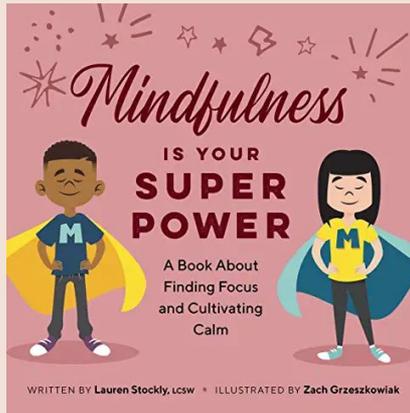
30 Mindful Moments for Kids
to Feel Calm and Focused
Anytime, Anywhere



Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids

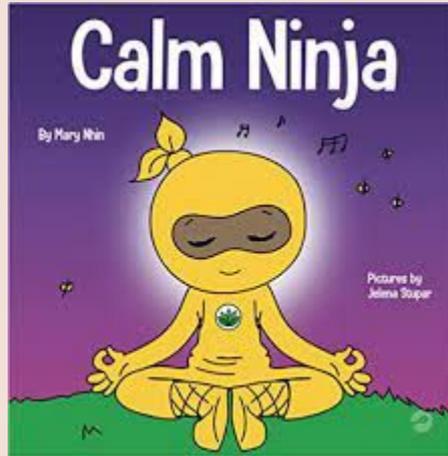
Using mindfulness and
connection to raise resilient,
joyful children and rediscover
your love of parenting

Mindfulness Books for Younger Children



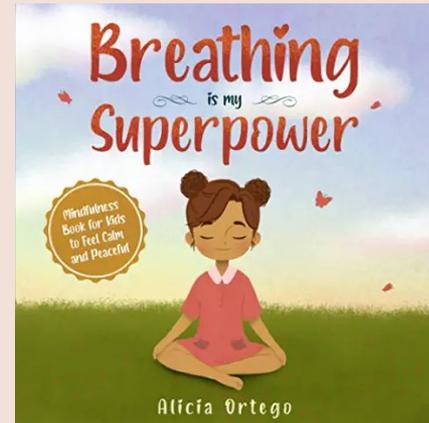
Mindfulness is Your Super Power

A Book About Finding Focus & Cultivating Calm



Calm Ninja

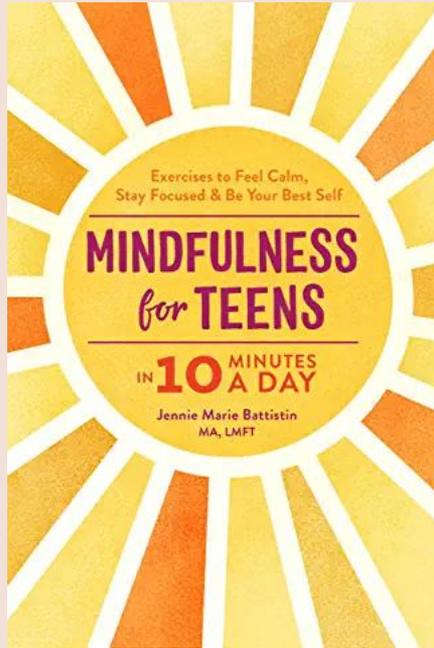
A Children's Book About Calming Your Anxiety Featuring the Calm Ninja Yoga Flow



Breathing Is My Superpower

Mindfulness Book for Kids to Feel Calm & Peaceful

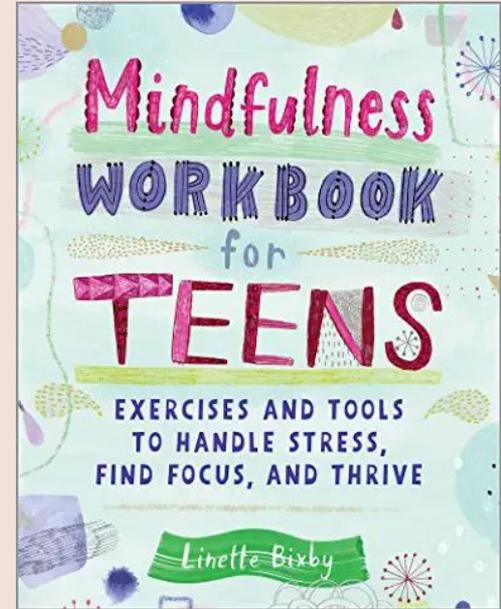
Mindfulness Books for Adolescents



Mindfulness for Teens
in 10 Minutes a Day



5-Minute
Mindfulness
Meditations for Teens



Mindfulness
Workbook for Teens

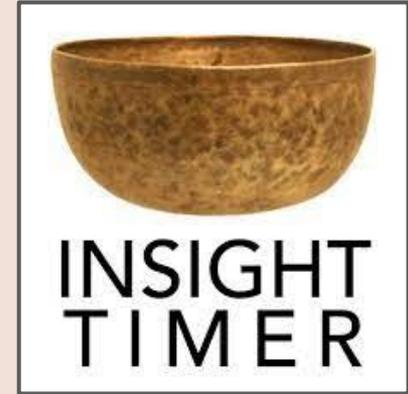
Mindfulness Apps for Phone/Tablets



Headspace



Smiling Mind



Insight Timer

Mindfulness Apps for Phone/Tablets



Stop, Breathe & Think

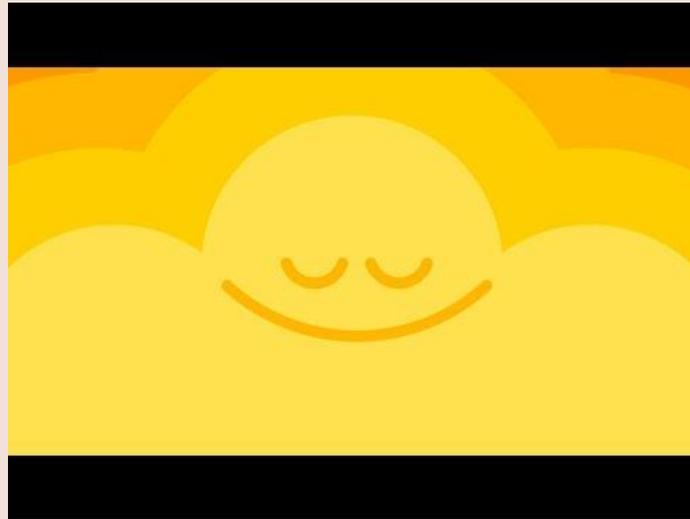


Healthy Minds



Breathe, Think, Do
with Sesame Street

When adults are regulated,
Children are regulated.





OR VISIT:
<https://bit.ly/scpsmindful>

Thank You!

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me: graveshz@myscps.us

Please fill out an evaluation form!



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