

Learning Activity 1
Review a Mindful Minute
Introduce Better
Breathing

Time (minutes)
7

Organization
Students seated on
a poly spot in the
instructional area.

Activity Progression:

Review the purpose of the health. moves. minds.™ program and a Mindful Minute.

Example script: “Last class we discussed that taking care of our minds and bodies makes us healthier. What was one way we practiced taking care of our minds when we feel sad, mad, scared, or overwhelmed?” [Allow students to answer] “That’s exactly right! We talked about a Mindful Minute. Did anyone practice taking a Mindful Minute at home? [Review a Mindful Minute and have students perform a Mindful Minute for 30 seconds]

Have students rate how they are feeling using the emoji rating scale before introducing Better Breathing. Introduce the concept of Better Breathing or deep, belly breathing. Tell students that Better Breathing is another technique to use when feeling sad, mad, scared, or overwhelmed.

Example script: “We’ve been talking about ways to better take care of our minds and bodies and ways to help us when we may feel sad, mad, scared, or overwhelmed. I’m going to talk about another technique called Better Breathing. Better Breathing is just learning to take a deep breath so that it goes way into your stomach. This kind of breathing can help us calm down and feel better. Let’s practice some Better Breathing.”

“I’m going to imagine it’s time to eat and I can smell the good food. Watch me as I breathe in a deep breath so much that it fills my lungs and makes my stomach poke out. [Take a deep breath and hold this breath and count to 4] 1, 2, 3, 4 and now I can breathe out slowly 1, 2, 3, 4. Let’s try it together, think of your yummy food and how good it smells and breathe in really deep! [Count to 4 as students are breathing in] What do we do next? We need to breathe out. I want you to SLOWLY breathe out the air QUIETLY. [Count to 4 as students are breathing out]”

Have students practice breathing in deep and blowing out slowly and QUIETLY a couple more times in their spots. Students may want to hurry their breaths and blow out loudly and faster. Practice with them emphasizing to count to 4 breathing in slowly and deeply and counting to 4 when breathing out slowly and quietly. Share with students this is also a good technique to use when catching your breath after you have moved around a lot.

Have students play musical spots again or an activity that increases the heart rate (for students with multiple disabilities, an activity that stimulates the nervous system) for about 60 seconds. Have students sit and practice Better Breathing again.

Cues:

- Mindfulness (or Self-Awareness)
 - Paying full attention
 - Slowing down to notice what you’re doing
 - Focused and relaxed
- Mindful Minute
 - Closing your eyes
 - Focus on breathing
 - Noticing what is around you
 - Takes practice – it’s okay for the mind to wander; bring your mind back to your breathing
- Better Breathing
 - Take a deep breath in – so deep your stomach pokes out
 - Breathe in on a count of 4 slowly and deeply
 - Breathe out to a count of 4 slowly and quietly

Modifications/Differentiation:

- Replace overwhelmed with stressed, worried or anxious.
- Allow students the option to sit or lay quietly, walk around the room quietly or use a fidget quietly.
- Break each step down for students who may only be able to process one step at a time.
- Provide students with pictures, dramatic actions, or a video demonstration.
- Use a balloon to show deep breathing.
- Use Smell the Flower and Blow Out the Candle as another method to teach deep breathing.
- Have students imagine there is a balloon in their stomach.
- Students who don’t have the lung capacity to take controlled deep breaths may do a slow repetitive movement with their hand or foot as a method to control the emotions and improve focus.
- Play calming music with the lights dimmed.
([Try this playlist.](#))

Checks for Understanding:

- Have students show the incorrect way to do Better Breathing (e.g., breathing in and exhaling fast) and the correct way to do Better Breathing.
- **Extension question:** Have students think of a time they could have used Better Breathing.