

MindUP Lesson 3

Focused Awareness

Grades: 3-5

Lesson 3: Focused Awareness is the third video in a virtual series of MindUP programming for the 2020-2021 academic year. Based in neuroscience, MindUP teaches the skills and knowledge children need to manage stress, regulate emotions and face challenges with optimism, resilience and compassion.

Length of Lesson: 15 minutes including worksheet

Objectives: Students will practice mindful listening and mindful breathing. These exercises will help their mind and body relax and improve their focus.

Materials

- Focused Awareness Reflection Sheet
- Pen or Pencil

Preparation: Have child sitting at a desk or table before starting the lesson.

Focused Awareness at Home and School:

Pause, Listen, and Breathe

We all have moments when we feel flustered. When we have moments like this, it is important we pause, listen, and really focus in on our breathing. For children, it can be useful when they need help settling down to work or when they are shifting their attention between tasks. Controlling your breathing has a lot of different benefits. When you are able to regulate your breathing, you are helping your brain reinforce the habit of planning a response and enabling mindful behavior. Other benefits include:

- Focusing on breathing helps calm the body by slowing heart rate, lowering blood pressure and sharpening focus.
- Paying attention to breathing helps support strong functioning in the brain.
 - This is a helpful tool to use when children are learning something new in school or when they are working on getting better at a sport or activity.
- Controlling breathing lessens anxiety by overriding the “fight, flight, freeze” response.
 - Think about the last time you were surprised. If you ran away, that was a flight response. If you got angry or upset, that was a fight response. If you stood still and did not know what to do, that was a freeze response.
- Teaching children to focus on and control their breathing helps them become less reactive and more reflective when feeling anxious or stressed.

Being mindfully aware of your breathing is not always an easy task, but practicing a few minutes a day can have a big impact.

REFERENCE

- The Hawk Foundation. (2011). *The MindUP Curriculum Grades 3-5: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living* (pg. 42-49). New York, NY: Scholastic.

