

MINDFULNESS FOR FAMILIES

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means slowing down to notice what is happening in the present moment. All you need to do is focus on one thing right now and gently catch yourself when your brain creates judgments or distractions. Mindfulness can be helpful during times of uncertainty and stress.

Why Practice Mindfulness with your Family?

Regular mindfulness practice can:

- **Reduce symptoms of anxiety and stress**
- **Increase compassion for yourself and others and reduce emotional reactivity**
- **Focus your attention and gain distance from constant news cycle consumption**
- **Provide an opportunity to slow down, notice emotions, thoughts, and urges**
- **Provide an opportunity to come together as a family**

How Do You Practice Mindfulness as a Family ?

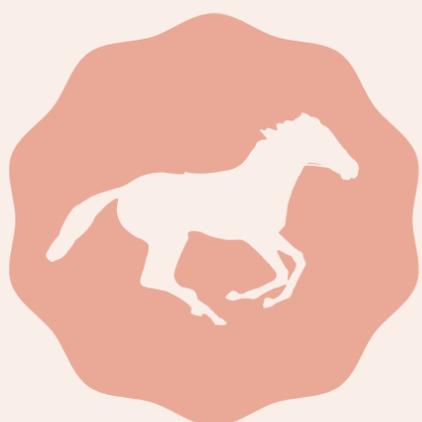
- **Explain the purpose of practicing mindfulness**
 - **"We do this to help train our brains to focus on the here and now"**
- **As a family, pick an activity or object to focus on**
- **Set a timer for 3–5 minutes**
- **Tell family members to bring their attention to the object/activity**
- **Tell family members that when their attention wanders from the activity:**
 - **Notice that their attention has wandered**
 - **Gently bring their attention back to the activity without judgement**
- **Resist the urge to be silly and/or competitive**
- **After the activity, share observations with your family**
 - **What did you notice?**
 - **Where did you mind go?**
 - **Did you notice any thoughts, feelings, urges, physical sensations, or judgments?**

MINDFULNESS EXERCISES FOR FAMILIES



TWIST AND SHOUT

Family members each write the words "Twist," "Shout," "Baby," and "Shake" on a piece of paper. Play the song Twist and Shout and each person makes a tally mark for every time they hear each word.



TEAR A HORSE

Each family member is given a blank piece of paper. Everyone closes their eyes and when someone says "start," everyone tries to rip their paper into the shape of a horse without looking. Everyone shares their "horses" at the end.



PASS THE CUP

Fill up a cup with water so that it is only an inch from the rim. Sit in a circle. Silently pass the cup around the circle, trying not to spill it. After 5 successful passes, start passing it around with everyone's eyes closed.



BUILD A STORY

Family members sit in circle and take turns saying one sentence in a story. They create the story together, one line at a time, until the timer goes off.



SHOE MINDFULNESS

For 1 minute, have family members observe each other's shoes. After, have each person describe the shoes without judgment and with specific language such as, "Your shoes are black and have white laces." If someone makes a judgment (e.g., "your shoes are cute"), ask "What makes you say that?" to prompt more descriptive language.

TRY PRACTICING MINDFULNESS ONCE A DAY

Created by the McLean School Consultation Service