

# MINDFULNESS FOR FAMILIES

**Here are some great mindfulness exercises you can try with your family!**

**1. "NAME 3" GRATITUDE PRACTICE:** You can do this at the supper table or even before bedtime with your children. It's also a great practice it with your spouse. Each member of the family will take turns, and name 3 things they are grateful for from the day.

**2. SITTING MEDITATION PRACTICE:** Turn down the lights, shut your phones off and have everyone sit on the floor (or a chair with a back) for a few minutes. The most common form of meditation is to focus on the breath. Kids can get the hang of this by envisioning they are slowly blowing out to cool a cup of hot tea, then slowly breathing in to sip the cooler tea. (Eventually, work up to breathing in and out through the nose.) Set a timer of a few minutes, working yourself up to 5 minutes. End each session with a moment that solidifies the silence before everyone makes their mad scramble back to their routines!

**3. TAKE A SENSORY WALK:** Go someplace—even your backyard—and walk together in silence, listening for sounds you typically overlook: leaves rustling, a pine cone falling from a tree, your own steady breath. Add in your sense of smell..and notice what you smell and then use your sense of touch to connect to nature by touching and feeling things along the way. Although nature is especially relaxing, a sensory walk can occur anywhere—even a noisy shopping mall or restaurant.

**4. BODY SCAN EXERCISE:** Sit or lie with your kids and begin by taking deep breaths and bringing awareness to the body starting with the toes, silently or out loud bring awareness to one body part for a moment, until you've worked your way up to the top of your head. A variation is for everyone to take turns naming one part of their body out loud and briefly describing how that part feels. You might start by saying, "I'm focused on my stomach, and it feels rumby." Your child then continues, "I'm focused on my left toes, and they feel tingly." Continue for as long as there's interest, or just do one round periodically through the day.

**5. BODY RELAXATION EXERCISE:** Similar to the body scan you will begin by sitting or laying down and taking a few deep breaths. Then, starting with the feet, you will squeeze all of the muscles in the feet and hold for 3 seconds, followed by releasing those muscles. Continue to work your way up the body to the calves, quad muscles, glutei, stomach, arms & hands, neck & face. This is a great way to release tension and stored emotion!



BALANCE

