

# PARENTS, GUARDIANS & FAMILIES

FAMILY WELLNESS: RESOURCES TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN



**It is a scary time in our schools, communities, and world, and it's more important than ever that we take care of ourselves - and encourage our children to do the same.** As caregivers, it is our natural tendency to give so much of ourselves to our children and families; that's what we do, and who we are. But as COVID-19 continues to impact our daily lives, we invite you to pause, breathe, and prioritize your own health and well-being - and model for your children how to do the same.

We have put together 3 simple wellness practices that you and your children can draw on during this stressful time to reduce stress, enhance well-being and cope with the challenges that are ever-so-present in our world right now. Whether you're dealing with the stress of your child's school closing, you or someone you know has gotten sick, or you're afraid of the financial, psychological, or health-related unknowns ahead, you can draw on these powerful wellness practices everyday, in any moment, to support you and your children.

## ➤ — Lead with Love — ➤

**Now, more than ever before, it's time to breathe.** We invite you to draw on these 3 simple strategies to create space to connect to your breath, honor your emotions, and practice self-care and self-compassion.

## PRACTICE #1: THREE COLLECTIVE BREATHS

### PURPOSE

Mindfulness and Presence: This practice aims to bring you and your children a sense of calm, focus, and presence, and is especially beneficial during times of uncertainty, anxiety, or fear. Integrate 3 Collective Breaths into your daily routines to help relax the body and calm the mind, and draw on this practice in any moment to ground and center.

### 4 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Pause whatever you are doing.
2. Take a big breath in, and a big breath out.
3. Inhale again, exhale.
4. Breathe in, out with an audible sigh.



### TIPS FOR FACILITATING 3 COLLECTIVE BREATHS WITH CHILDREN

- Have a conversation about the benefits of this practice with your children; encourage them to think about why and how taking 3 Collective Breaths can support us when we feel stressed, upset, or afraid.
- Come up with a list of times in your routine that you and your children can practice 3 Collective Breaths together, and identify some potential scenarios when it could be helpful (e.g., when I get scared). Put that list somewhere visible.



*Reference Detailed Lesson Plan for Children below*

## PRACTICE #2: TWO WORD CHECK IN

### PURPOSE

Emotional Awareness & Acceptance: This practice will support you and your children in gaining a deeper awareness of and appreciation for whatever emotions are being experienced at any given moment. When practiced consistently, the 2 word check enhances our capacity to compassionately respond, rather than react, especially during times of stress and uncertainty.

### 5 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Pause, bring your hands to your heart, and connect to your breath
2. As you breathe, notice how you feel right now
3. Choose 2 words to describe how you feel right now
4. Reconnect to your breath, and open your eyes if they were closed.
5. If you are with others, have everyone share their 2 words; if you are by yourself, write down your 2 words in a journal to track your feelings overtime.



### TIPS FOR FACILITATING 2 WORD CHECK IN WITH CHILDREN

- This is a great practice to draw on before, during, or after an emotional experience, and can be particularly helpful to support us in understanding how to fulfill our own or our children's needs during unpredictable times.
- You can also use this as a daily practice with your family (e.g., to start your morning, at dinner, or before bed) to cultivate compassion and connection.



*Reference Detailed Lesson Plan for Children below*

## PRACTICE #3: LOVING KINDNESS

### PURPOSE

Compassion for Self, Others, and Society: This loving kindness practice aims to cultivate compassion for ourselves, our relationships, our community, and our world. This practice teaches us to emotionally and energetically give and receive compassion and be with suffering - and can be particularly meaningful during vulnerable circumstances, like that which we are experiencing with COVID-19.

### 6 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Find a comfortable position, bring your hands to heart, and breathe in and out.
2. As you connect to your breath, send yourself this blessing of loving kindness:  
*May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be safe, may I be free.*
3. Now, bring to mind someone you love. Send this person this blessing:  
*May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be safe, may you be free.*
4. Now, bring to mind someone who is suffering. Send this blessing their way:  
*May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be safe, may you be free.*
5. Now, bring to mind everyone in your community. Send this blessing their way:  
*May we be happy, may we be healthy, may we be safe, may we be free.*
6. Now, bring to mind all beings, everywhere. Send all beings this blessing:  
*May we be happy, may we be healthy, may we be safe, may we be free.*

## TIPS FOR FACILITATING LOVING KINDNESS WITH CHILDREN

- Have a discussion about what it means to show compassion for ourselves and others during this uncertain time.
- Facilitate this practice for children first, and if and when they are ready, invite them to lead it for you and your family.

