

## SUPPORTIVE TRANSITIONS

**Purpose:** Learning about mental health may feel new for some students, and for you. This resource is designed to help you to introduce and close each grade 7/8 mental health learning module in a good way. Before starting a module, it can be helpful to create a transition into the learning with a mindful practice. Take a minute or two with your students for reflection, to centre, calm and focus through the use of mindful practices. This can be a simple yet powerful way to help students to be present and ready to learn. Likewise, these practices can be used to draw mental health learning to a close before moving forward with other classwork or activities. The more opportunities that students have to explore mindful practices, the more comfortable they will become in using them as part of their everyday life. Over time students can begin to develop their own toolkit of mindful practices to help to maintain positive mental health.

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### Building skills and encouraging connections

- Select a brief mindful practice to try. To make the strategy even more meaningful, the selection could be done as a class.
- Try out the strategy together as a class. Provide opportunities for students to modify as necessary and to offer feedback about the strategy.

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### Building skills: Practicing strategies

Before considering the sample strategies listed below, **ask students to share strategies that work for them**. Students can learn from each other as well as from the sample strategies included here. If you have already created a student-informed list of strategies, feel free to refer to it. Provide various entry points for the unique needs of your students and try to offer exposure to a broad range of strategies.

Also, simple activities like **going outside for a walk, playing a game or music that students enjoy, doing a random act of kindness, or providing extra time for students to complete an assignment** are just as valuable as the resources shared below.

A list of links to mindful practices have also been included in the student notebook. Many of these practices are designed for use in a variety of settings — including at home.

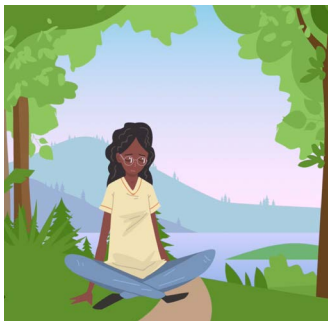
**Teacher prompt**



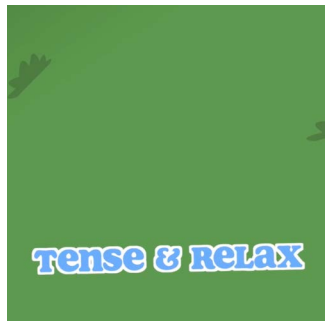
"These lessons are all about building our mental health, and practicing strategies is an important way to do that. Mental health strategies are like playing the piano, swimming, or any other skill. We get better with practice! Practicing regularly can help us be prepared for when there's a challenge. You might like some strategies better than others, and that's okay! Trying them out will help you find what works for you. Record the strategies in your journal and reflect those that fit you best."

Keep in mind that each student is unique and strategies that work for some, may not work for others. For example, students who have experienced trauma may have difficulty with practices that require them to close their eyes or to let their mind wander. For these students, grounding techniques are a better approach. Knowing your students will help you to select the most appropriate mindful practices to ensure a supportive transition to and from this important learning.

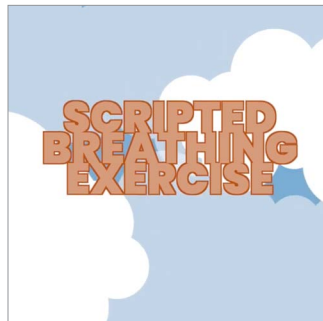
**Sample Press and Play Practices**



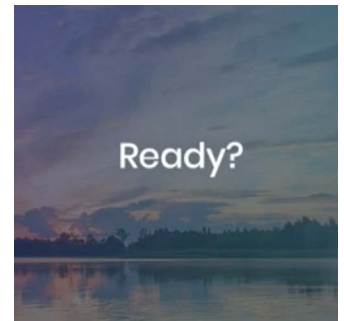
[Forest Visualization](#)



[Tense and Relax video](#)

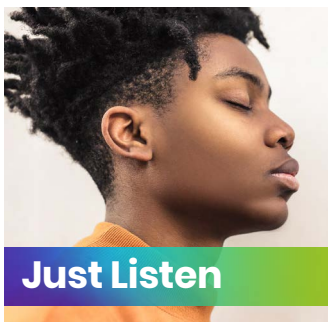


[Finding Calm  
Guided Breathing](#)

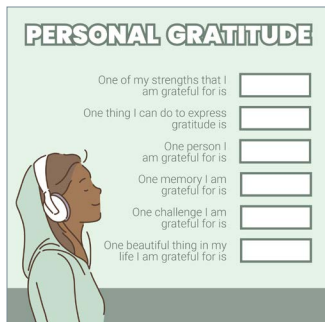


[Simple Visualization  
Exercise](#)

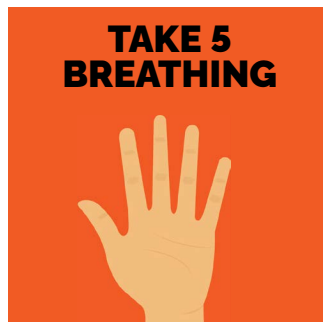
**Sample Educator Guided Practices**



[Posters and audio files](#)



[Gratitude Practices](#)



[Take 5 Breathing](#)



[2 Minute Mindfulness](#)

## Sample Practices for Connecting Learning at Home

**CHAIR EXERCISES**

- Put your hands behind your back, touching your elbows with your hands.
- Hold your hands up in front of you (hold for 5 seconds), make fists, turn fists upwards (hold for 5 seconds), turn fists downwards (hold for 5). Bring your hands back down. Repeat 5 times.
- With your feet flat on the floor, raise your heels for 10 seconds, drop them back down. Repeat 3 times.
- Put your hands flat on the back of your head and bend your elbows. Turn your head left (hold for 5 seconds), turn your head to middle, turn your head to the right (hold for 5 seconds).
- Leg extension: straighten right leg in front, bring down. Straighten your left leg in front, bring back down.



[Chair Stretch](#)

**STOP NEGATIVE SELF TALK**

**S** **STOP!** - When you have a negative thought, STOP and give yourself a moment to address the thought.

**O** **OBSERVE** - Reflect on what you're saying. Think about where your thoughts are coming from.

**S** **SHIFT** - Replace the thought with something positive. Shift your thinking.

*Repeat this every time you have a recurring negative thought.*

[Reframing Thinking](#)

**HAND-TRACING EXERCISE**

Starting at your wrist, trace the **left side** of your hand up to your **middle finger** while taking a **deep breath** for **four seconds**.

**Pause** at the tip of your middle finger, and **hold** in your breath for **4 seconds**.

**Breathe out** while tracing down the **right side** of your hand for **four seconds**.


Repeat **4 times**.



[Hand Tracing Exercise](#)

**CIRCULAR BREATHING EXERCISE**

Breathe in sync with the circle below.



[Circular breathing](#)

### Consider



These activities are a great way, any day, to transition students between different learning activities while providing them with opportunities to practice and refine strategies that work for them.

## Encouraging connection

As a final step to transitioning on from this learning, encourage connections. Although these modules focus on wellness and mental health as a positive concept, it's important to be aware that there are students in many classrooms every day who could benefit from extra support. Remind students about available resources and encourage them to continue using positive mental health strategies, including mindful practices, stress management strategies, and seeking help should they need it. Refer to the 'Support' section of the Educator Guide for more information. **Module 7.2 – Understanding Signs of a Mental Health Problem and How to Seek Support** and **Module 8.3 – How to Help a Friend – Seeking Support for Others While Caring for Ourselves** also provide information about wellness strategies and help-seeking.

### Teacher prompt



"An important strategy to support your mental health and well-being is reaching out for support. If you ever feel unwell, please speak to me or another adult you trust. There are people in our school and community who are here to help all students feel well and there are strategies to help you feel better. There are also resources noted in your journal. Your feelings matter and I encourage you to share them if other strategies aren't enough to support your well-being."