**Activities to do with students:**

When working with your students, lead the activities and if you wish, as a follow-up, students can then draw, act out, write or discuss how they felt after the experience.

**1-Watching the breath**-

* In meditation, we breathe from our bellies. You can share that singers and people who practice yoga breathe through their bellies because we can breathe deepest from that place.
* Guide students to place their hands on their tummies and try to breathe so that they feel their bellies rise and fall.
* Once students are able to feel tummies go in and out, take a few moments to allow everyone to connect with their own breath. If students seem attentive, you can guide them to close their eyes. Remind them that everyone’s breath will be different and move in a different pace.

**For younger students**:

* Talk about the breath. How and why do we breath? What parts of our bodies are used to breath? Think/pair/share or group discussion, come together and synthesize what was discussed (lungs, mouth, nose, belly, chest, back, oxygen).
* Initially you can guide them to place their hands under their noses and right outside of their mouths to feel their breath. Ask them how it feels.
* Explain how when we sleep and when we are babies, we all breathe from our bellies, because it is the deepest kind of breathing. In meditation we also breathe through our bellies and sometimes we need to re-learn how to do this.
* They can lie down and place an object such as a stuffed animal on their bellies to actually watch it rise and fall.

**For older students**,

* Once they are comfortable with their breathing, you can guide them to simply look at their breath (beforehand you can discuss the idea of looking at something that isn’t visible and how this would be possible. Invite ideas then share options of concentrating on the *feeling* in the belly, or the *sound* of the breath, or the *sensation* of the breath entering through the nose and going deep within you and then coming out). Tell them to try different things every time until they find one the way that really helps them concentrate best.
* Tell students to be aware of when their thoughts come up. As soon as a thought comes up, place it in a cloud and watch it float away and return to watching your breath. Every time a thought comes do this and return to the breath.

“Keep your mind on the feeling of your breath as it moves from the tip of your nostril into your chest and back out again. If your mind wanders, which it usually does, that’s ok. When you notice that it has wandered, bring it back to the feeling of the movement of your breath. Breathe in, breathe out. Let everything drop away for the length of one breath and feel what it’s like to be alive right now, in the present moment”.

* Try this for 10 minutes. If students are able to do this, move on to 15 or more.

**2-Using the bell to remind mindful breathing**

* Introduce them to the practice of listening to the bell and teach them to invite in the sound and the calmness it will bring.
* There may be other sounds that make them feel peaceful and happy. Have them share some with the class. Maybe a bird singing, or the sound of laughter, or a baby cooing, or a bubbling brook, or the gentle sound of rain on the roof.
* Sitting in a circle you can hold up the bell, wait till they are attentive and let them hear its sound. Let the bell fully resonate.
* You may want to ask them how hearing its sounds made them feel
* Share that the sound of the bell is a reminder to stop what we are doing and just breathe. When we hear the bell, we take this chance to rest, to take a break, to enjoy ourselves. We are aware of our in and out breath.
* Ring the bell and take one breath together
* You may want to start each day with a ringing of the bell, to prepare students to begin focusing and being present in class.
* You can also ring the bell any time you think it’s a good time for the class to be reminded to focus, eg: if there is a disagreement or inattention among students.

Discuss how many sounds can help us come back to the place of calm and peace within us.

**These meditations should be guided with students sitting somewhere comfortably with eyes closed and feet on the ground, or lying down, ensuring that they have enough space between one another as not to distract each other:**

**3-counting backwards from 10-1** with eyes closed, guiding on every few numbers with affirmations (you can look some up online: feeling proud through your breath, breathing in happiness, calmness…) and a reminder that they are feeling more and more relaxed, calm, listening to their own breath, being aware of what they are feeling in their bodies. You can guide them to just one sense if you’d like.

**4**-**focusing on the senses:** You can start with the 10-1, then guide a sensory activity like smelling, tasting various objects , listening to certain sounds you prepared in advance and trying to experience it silently without reacting outwardly.

**5**-**Visualization-**

* Before theexercise, ask the students to share a place where they have felt the most relaxed. Tell them it could be anywhere: their own bedroom or somewhere else at home, a place where they have been on vacation, somewhere by the water, looking at the stars. If they can’t think of an actual place they have been, make it up!
* Once they are sitting or lying down with eyes closed remind them to try to find one comfortable position so that they don’t move around so much. Let them know that the exercise works best when you are the most still that you can be.
* Now invite them to picture this place in their mind. Think of the all the things they see around them, the colors and the shapes. Take a few moments to let them do this.
* Now listen for the sounds all around them in this special place.
* Try to smell the aromas that surround you, make it as real as possible. Picture yourself as though you’re really there.
* Now think about how you feel being there. You are not worried about anything. You are just here for yourself. Relax your body, feeling every part of your body completely relaxed. Start with your face and feel your eye lids heavier, relax the muscles of your mouth. Relax your shoulders, your hands, your legs, everything feels heavy and calm.
* Guide them back to seeing what’s around them, smells, sights, sounds, being very present here and now.
* You can stay in this place for a few minutes. Guage the timing according to how the students are responding. Then slowly guide them back to the present by bringing awareness back to their body.
* Tell students to start wiggling their fingers and toes, start to move your hands and slowly wake up your face by moving the muscles around a little bit. If they are lying down, guide them to slowly bring themselves up to sitting position and then slowly opening their eyes. Make sure you do all this slowly to allow students to adjust back to being all together once again.
* Invite students to share what they experienced either to the whole class, in small groups or in pairs. They can also individually draw images of their experiences or write about how they felt in their journals.

**6- Comfort Cards-**

* Find serene images online like birds, ponds, trees and create cards with affirmations on them. Laminate them. Use these when a student is acting out or needs a time out. Student can pick a card and sit somewhere and calm him/herself down using the reminder on the card
* Students can also create their own comfort cards in class that they can use during a difficult time. You may want to open with a meditation and discussion before leading into the activity of creating their own cards so they have a context and can more easily visualize a calming scene for themselves.

References:

[www.Edutopia.org](http://www.Edutopia.org)

<http://learning2breathe.org>

-A mindfulness-based curriculum for adolescents, developed by Patricia Broderick, a research associate at the Penn State University Prevention Research Center and former director of the Stress Reduction Center at West Chester University of Pennsylvania

<http://www.susankaisergreenland.com>

-A mindful-awareness practices training program researched by UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center

<http://www.thehawnfoundation.org/mindup>

-An educational initiative of The Hawn Foundation, is a mindful-awareness program developed in consultation with University of British Columbia professor Kimberly Schonert-Reichl

<http://www.mindfulschools.org>

-A program using mindfulness to teach kids how to manage emotion, handle stress and resolve conflict

<http://www.lineageproject.org>

- A program using awareness-based practices such as yoga and meditation to teach mindfulness to at-risk and incarcerated teenagers

<http://www.smart-in-education.org/>

-A program that trains K-12 teachers in mindfulness through its SMARTinEDUCATION eight-week program

<http://www.cwae.org/>

-The nonprofit organization responsible for implementing the Quiet Time program at Visitacion Valley Middle School; specializes in high-impact, whole-school transformation through meditation-based stress-reduction and readiness-to-learn programs