

TEACHER RESOURCE KIT

Managing stress and anxiety





Anxiety, Stress and the Classroom

Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria

Children and Anxiety Facts

1 in 4 young Australians has a mental health condition

1 in 14 (6.9%) young people in Australia aged 4-17 experienced an anxiety disorder in 2015

In a state of high anxiety, the prefrontal cortex of the brain (responsible for high level functions such as decision making, problem solving, and rational thinking) is diminished – therefore capacity for learning is extremely challenged

Students therefore need support and guidance in the school setting to manage their anxiety symptoms in order for greater learning to occur – ALL students benefit from learning these tools

Overview

The fact sheet aims to highlight how students might respond and behave when experiencing extreme levels of stress and anxiety, informing and assisting educators to acknowledge what may be behind the student's reactions, behaviours, or lack of interest. Secondly, the fact sheet outlines what can be done to assist and support them in the school setting.

Teachers have an extremely important role to play and can make a profoundly positive difference in the life of any student, nurturing and engaging young people to assist them to discover their potential. We know that all students are different and what may work for one might not be suitable for another. The more information we have around the different types of anxiety and the ways in which they may impact on students, the better we can adapt our teaching strategies, modify classroom practices and work towards providing just the right environment to help a student grow and be more engaged and open to learning. Understanding the classroom dynamics, the students' learning styles, the various ways they interpret their world and respond to it, are key.

We all feel anxious at times and need anxiety to motivate us or protect us from danger.

However, anxiety for some of our youth is more than a fleeting feeling or thought. For some students, it can be extremely debilitating and impact on their ability to engage with others, their ability to develop meaningful relationships, and their capacity to learn.

Some of the most common classroom red flags/indicators of students experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety include:

Excessive need for reassurance or praise, high absenteeism, low self-esteem, behavioural problems, inability to retain information, identifying people to talk for them, excessive slowness/perfectionism, irritability/anger if pushed into an anxiety provoking situation, constantly sitting in the back of the class, isolation, inability to make decisions, frequent somatic complaints or illness (headaches/upset stomach) and frequent need to go to the toilet/sick bay.



There are a combination of elements that can impact on a student's ability to work through their experience of anxiety and stress in the school environment:

1. The Student's Experience

It is important to understand that a student who is anxious, stressed or overwhelmed may have difficulty in:

Learning

Their thoughts and feelings may be so intense that they may be overly focused on masking their feelings and pretending they are coping. This can interfere with the student's ability to attain, process and retain information. The prefrontal cortex of the brain is offline, making high-level tasks such as problem-solving, rational thinking, and decision-making challenging.

Communicating

Communicating and discussing their feelings and thoughts with you may be challenging, as they may struggle to verbalise, express or even understand where their feelings come from.

Participating

They may struggle with participating or contributing in the classroom for a variety of reasons – for example, they may be worried about how they may be perceived or accepted by their peers, or they may be concerned about publicly making mistakes and embarrassing themselves.

Helpful tips:


- Acknowledge and validate students' thoughts, feelings and experiences.
- Encourage the students to develop their own vocabulary to describe how they are thinking and feeling (e.g. what are they feeling in their body, what's going through their mind etc.).
- Assist the students to adopt a problem-solving approach so they feel empowered and understand that they have options in how to respond to their thoughts and feelings.
- Help the students to identify and seek any other supports they may need.
- Assist the students to access resources to learn more practical strategies to assist with their anxiety and stress.
- Consider options for peer support (e.g. working in pairs or small groups).
- Be mindful that some students may arrive to school already in a highly anxious state, and may require some strategies to assist them in settling into the school routine.

2. Teacher Approach

As a teacher, it is important to be mindful of our own demeanor and feelings of anxiety and stress. Just as students can pick up on their parents' anxiety, they are also perceptive of the anxiety of their teachers. There are a variety of considerations to keep in mind when engaging with highly anxious students:

Personal Approach

It is important to be mindful of tone, presence, and body language to ensure we make ourselves approachable. Be mindful also of providing too much reassurance around the student's anxiety, as this can lead to the student believing their thoughts are important and that they need to be concerned about them.





Flexibility

Provide various types of options for students to communicate their concerns without retribution. Consider offering flexible options for tasks and assessments (See 'The Classroom' for more information).

Recognition

One of the most effective tools we can use is acknowledgment. Acknowledge the students concerns, listen, respect their experience, and validate their feelings without judgment, ensuring to protect and respect their privacy. Take opportunities to reaffirm and express confidence in the student's ability and effort to overcome anxious and stressful feelings.

Helpful tips:

We too can play a role to model how we deal with our own anxiety and stress. Students can relate to teachers who openly share common emotions and feelings.

Be mindful of being reactionary, as this can exacerbate the student's feelings of anxiety and stress.

Be persistent and consistent with classroom management styles and strategies. This assists with predictability and familiarity, which can promote emotional safety.

Be mindful of sensitive topics that could trigger or exacerbate the student's anxiety and stress level (e.g. divorce, loss, death).

3. The Classroom

Creating a safe and nurturing classroom can greatly assist highly anxious students.

Some factors to consider include:

Classroom Culture

Consider the culture of your classroom and what you can do to create a safe space where all students feel valued and included. Work on creating an understanding within the classroom that it's okay to make mistakes—that mistakes create opportunities for all of us to learn and grow. It can be useful to find ways to normalise that there are times when we all feel insecure and unsure - modeling opportunities to assist students in working through such feelings and doubts can create a great learning environment.

Helpful tips:

Develop a set of classroom guidelines, "a code of conduct", together - outlining a list of what is needed from the teacher and others to feel physically and emotionally safe. If students are engaged in the development of guidelines, they are more invested and therefore more likely to commit to and follow them.

Include classroom conversations to normalise anxiety and stress in relation to work pressures and/or other classroom situations as they arise. This provides opportunity to discuss strategies and encourage students to explore and discover activities that can help them in times of stress and anxiety.

Role model positive self-talk to the entire class.





Classroom Dynamics

It is important to consider some flexibility or variation in lesson structure and assessment options; a student who experiences high levels of anxiety in social situations, for example, may find it extremely anxiety provoking and distressing to deliver an oral presentation in front of their class.

Helpful tips:

Incorporate some relaxation/mindful activities in the day to assist with transition between curricular topics, to allow students to prepare and transition from play to work mode, (e.g. Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique / body scan / breathing exercise / SURF technique).

Role model problem solving, for example, using brainstorming exercises with the class. This can be a powerful tool to demonstrate that we always have choices, there can be more than one approach, and that everyone is learning together and can support each other

Provide opportunities for small group activities, where students learn from each other and can provide a group response. This takes the focus off the individual and can be extremely helpful in engaging students who are highly anxious.

Careful consideration of work groups and student pairing.

Classroom Environment

Constant change, whether this is the physical environment or school schedule, can be stressful and anxiety provoking, therefore providing rules and routines can provide safety and predictability. Anxious students can feel more secure when the learning environment and expectations are predictable, consistent and familiar.

Whilst predictability and routine are important, flexibility is also necessary.

Helpful tips:

Prepare students for possible changes ahead of time and brainstorm ways to manage and work through changes as a class.

Provide short checklists (3 -5 points) - this can be helpful to outline expectations and to assist with time management strategies.

Consider creating calm spaces in the classroom or school setting. (Refer to 'Calm Centre' for more information).

Consider classroom seating arrangements— may need to be near a door/window or seated next to a caring nurturing student.



Objective

- To explain the SURF poster and discuss the meaning behind the message.
- To explore how the poster can help us to work through our stress and anxiety.
- To normalise and role model that we all feel stress and anxiety and how this affects our emotions, thoughts, and behaviours.
- To learn and share strategies to manage these feelings.

Essential Learning Outcomes

- Everyone experiences stress and anxiety.
- Acknowledge and understand the signs and symptoms we may experience related to stress and anxiety.
- Learn and apply management strategies to help with stress and anxiety.

Key Understandings

- Sometimes people can feel anxious without an obvious reason.
- Anxiety and stress raise a wide range of thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
- All thoughts and feelings are OK.
- Active healthy lifestyle practices play a key role in dealing with anxiety and stress.
- It's ok to seek further help.
- To identify individual supports that work for them.

Resource Materials Needed

- Classroom Poster
- Teacher Fact Sheet
- Butcher's Paper
- SURF Cue Card

Length of session 40 mins

Jon Kabat-Zinn said: "You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."

Interpretation of the Meaning

There will always be times in our life where we will struggle and we will not always be able to change or avoid these obstacles. But what we can do is learn to accept and acknowledge this and learn to work our way through them the best we can.

If we learn how to manage our thoughts and feel our feelings, we are able to ride the waves, see a way through our struggles or situation. When we acknowledge and accept how we are thinking and feeling, we are able to see that we are so much wiser and more capable than our thoughts and emotions. We are not our thoughts.

Sometimes we may feel powerless and feel like we have no control but what we can learn is we always have a choice of how to respond. Take the time to reflect and step back and consider your options, select any one that feels right for you and just try to do your very best. That is enough, rather than giving in to our thoughts and feelings and allowing them to define us.

Introduction

Depending on your class you may choose to do this as a class activity and then break up into small groups. For children with social anxiety and or generalised anxiety the option of doing smaller group work may provide some safety and help them feel more at ease. Each small group can then nominate someone to report back to the larger group.

Firstly, ask the class or group for their interpretation of the poster. What is the meaning behind the poster? Can they give some examples?

Discussion Points - Classroom Activity/Small Group Work

Brainstorm some situations that can make us feel stressed or anxious.

Talk about how this makes us feel. Using butchers paper brainstorm/share experiences of how this affects us:

Physical (e.g. What do we feel in our body? - muscle tension, sweating, racing heartbeat etc.)

Emotional (e.g. What do we feel in our heart? - sadness, frustration, anger etc.)

Cognitive (e.g. What happens to our thinking? - doubt, uncertainty, negative self-talk etc.)

Behaviour (e.g. What do we do or not do? - stay in bed, avoid situations, hand in our homework late etc.)

What sort of strategies have you found helpful? Share ideas with the members of their group.

What sort of things do you do for self-care - to make yourself feel good about yourself?

SURF Cue Card

Learning to SURF, work our way through stress and anxiety the best way we can. The acronym SURF provides 4 steps that can assist someone to gain perspective and provide a choice on how to respond.

Small Group Activity

Think of a situation that can make us stressed or anxious and encourage the group to apply the SURF technique. Share this with the larger group.

S	STOP Focus on the breath Aim to slow down Try breathing slowly and deeply
U	UNDERSTAND and acknowledge your thoughts and feelings Our thoughts are just thoughts Feelings will come and go Acceptance is the key "resistance is futile"
R	REFLECT and remember you have a choice how you respond Ask yourself What do you have the power to change about this situation? What can you do to change this situation for the better? What could help you let go of worrying about it so much?
F	FOCUS on a way forward You have the power to choose your path Think of 2-3 options to try Select the best option for you and just do the best you can

You can't stop the waves, but you can learn how to SURF

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Stop
Understand
Reflect
Focus

STOP

Focus on the breath
Aim to slow down
Try breathing slowly
and deeply

UNDERSTAND

and acknowledge your
thoughts and feelings
Our thoughts are just thoughts
Feelings will come and go
Acceptance is the key "resistance is futile"

REFLECT

and remember you have a choice how you respond
Ask yourself
What do you have the power to change about this situation?
What can you do to change this situation for the better?
What could help you let go of worrying about it so much?

FOCUS

on a way forward
You have the power to choose your path
Think of 2-3 options to try
Select the best option for you and just
do the best you can

There will always be times in our life where we will struggle and we will not always be able to change or avoid these obstacles. But what we can do is learn to accept and acknowledge this and learn to work our way through them as best we can.

Our Helpline OCD & Anxiety HelpLine **03 9830 0533** or **1300 ANXIETY** or **1300 269 438**



bgkllen.org.au



arcvic.org.au





Sometimes life doesn't always go to plan we can get really overwhelmed, anxious and stressed whether it's a concern about a particular stressful exam, an assignment, a disagreement with a friend, we all have challenges to face and surprisingly, meditation can provide some much needed benefits.

To experience the benefits of meditation, regular practice is necessary. Meditation is not an overnight exercise it takes time to see the results. We won't feel the benefits immediately but with regular practice, just five minutes a day can bring positive changes to our life and learning ability.

What is meditation?

- Meditation is the deliberate focusing of attention to bring about feelings of calm and general awareness.
- Meditation is a practice that assists us to control our thoughts, focus our mind and concentrate better on one thing at a time.
- Meditation can give us the permission to slow ourselves down and gain perspective, see things a different way and help gain some clarity and balance in our life

Benefits of meditation:

- Regular meditation offers improved sleep, mental clarity, improved immune function and emotional stability and works to reduce stress and anxiety over time.

There are many different ways to meditate, such as using a mantra, looking at an object, or focusing on the breath. It can be done sitting still or moving around while maintaining self-awareness.

Exercise 1 – Self Compassion Meditation

Place your hands over your heart or whenever it feels soothing, feeling the warmth and gentle touch of your hands. Say to yourself aloud...

- May I be kind to myself (See if you can find the words for what you need in difficult times)
- May I learn to accept myself as I am
- May I learn to give myself the compassion and love that I need right now
- May I learn to accept myself as I am right now
- May I learn to forgive myself
- May I learn to be strong
- May I learn to be safe

Exercise 2 – Outdoor Meditation

Find a quiet location in your garden or local park. For this exercise you simply need to use the sounds and smells around you, this acts as your focal point and helps you appreciate your surroundings.

- Find a comfortable place to sit and gently close the eyes. Begin taking some slow soothing breaths. Spend some time just noticing the rise and fall of your chest with each breath.
- Start to expand your attention to what you can hear around you. Perhaps you can hear the birds, people talking, the rustling of leaves or the hum of cars driving by. Simply allow what you are hearing to come gently into focus. Let your attention to gently move from one sound to another.
- Now bring your attention to any smells that you might find around you, perhaps this is the freshly cut grass or nearby flowers. Take your time and allow your nose to seek out your surroundings.
- Once you feel you have connected either with the sounds or smells, gently open your eyes and take the time to appreciate what is in front of you, reconnect with your surroundings and reflect on what you have just experienced.



What does grounding actually mean?

Grounding exercises are helpful for many situations where you find yourself becoming overwhelmed or distracted by distressing thoughts or feelings.

Do you ever feel like you are all over the place? Sometimes when we are overwhelmed or feeling really anxious or stressed we start to feel like we are disconnected and can experience out of body sensations that can feel scary and uncomfortable. This is what can happen if you are not grounded. Grounding restores your connection to your self, your environment and the present moment.

The main aim is to keep your mind and body connected and working together. Grounding exercises are about using our senses (see, hear, smell, taste, touch) to build our mind and body connection in the present moment. In working through the grounding exercises suggested here, you might find one or two that work for you – remembering that everyone is different and with a little exploration you may find that there are particular exercises that work best for you. It is our basic human senses that remind us we are here now, and we are safe.

Exercise 1

Using our senses to bring us into the present moment.

Name objects in your current surroundings using all five senses:

- ✓ 5 things that I can see
- ✓ 4 things that I can hear
- ✓ 3 things that I can smell
- ✓ 2 things I can touch
- ✓ 1 thing that I can taste ... (maybe this is a drink of water)

Exercise 2

Remind yourself of who you are now. Say your name. Say your age now. Say where you are now. Say what you have done today. Say what you will do next.

My name is _____, and I am 16 years old. I am currently at ... home/school, in Surrey Hills, in Melbourne, in Victoria. I woke up early today. I had breakfast and fed my dog. I just finished my coffee and toast. Soon I am going to walk to the train station and go in to work. I am going to walk down _____ street and then turn left at the bike shop. Then I am going to ...

Other grounding includes activities such as:

- Crippling the back of a chair—feel the connection with your environment.
- Walk barefoot on tiles, carpet, etc.—take your time to notice each step as you take one, then another, notice the sensation or sound as you connect with the ground.
- Pushing your heels into the floor.
- Touching various objects around you feel the texture, notice the colour, is it soft or hard?
- Running your hands under hot or cold water, noticing how it feels, the temperature of the water and how this changes over time.
- Having a warm bath—feeling the water over your body, contact with the bath.
- Lighting a candle—focussing on the smell, noticing the flame and how it dances.
- Rubbing hand cream slowly into your hands and arms—noticing the sensations, the smells, saying encouraging things to yourself.

Taking ten slow breaths. Focus your attention fully on each breath, on the way in and on the way out. Say the number of the breath to yourself as you exhale.

- Splashing some water on your face. Notice how it feels. Notice how the towel feels as you dry your face.
- Holding a cold can or glass of drink in your hands. Feeling the coldness, and the wetness on the outside. Noticing the bubbles and taste as you drink slowly.
- Feeling the clothes on your body, whether your arms and legs are covered or not, and the fabric, texture of your clothes as you move in them. Noticing how your feet feel to be encased in shoes or socks.
- If you are sitting, feel the chair underneath you and the weight of your body and legs pressing down onto it. What can you feel first, your torso, upper body, shoulders, arms, hands? Feel the weight and distribution of your weight. Is it even on both sides etc.?
- If you are lying down, feel the contact of the floor between your head, your body and your legs, as they touch the surface you are lying on. Starting from your head, notice how each part of your body feels, all the way down to your feet, on the soft or hard surface.
- Stop and listen. Notice and name the sounds you can hear nearby, gradually moving your awareness of sounds outward, so you are focusing on what you can hear in the distance.
- Holding a mug of tea or hot chocolate in both hands and feeling its warmth. Taking small sips, and taking your time, feeling the temperature, the smell and tasting each mouthful.
- Getting up and walking around. Stamping your feet, clapping and rubbing your hands together. Hearing the noise and feeling the sensations in your hands and arms.
- Wearing an elastic band / bangle on your wrist (not tight) and flicking it gently, so that you feel it spring back on your wrist.

The Calm Centre



Objective

- To create a safe space/positive space that allows students to seek further support within the classroom environment to manage stress and/or anxiety.
- To provide a hub to learn and share new strategies to manage the uncomfortable thoughts, feelings and behaviours associated with high levels of stress and anxiety.

The benefits of creating a positive space in the classroom:

- It provides an opportunity for students to refresh their mind and body, which could be helpful when transitioning from one subject to another.
- It may improve students' focus and concentration.
- To develop an understanding and awareness of the need to stop, acknowledge and assist to regulate their emotions if needed, promoting self-care.
- To provide an opportunity to develop self-awareness and promote positive behaviour.

Essential Learning Outcomes

- Research, learn and apply management strategies to help manage stress and anxiety.
- Acknowledge and understand when the need arises to seek additional support.

The safe space could provide

- self-help support books
- podcasts – breathing techniques/meditations/mindfulness exercises
- opportunity for students to share affirmations they have found helpful and display them in the classroom - either through posters, wallpaper on their phones/tablets etc. For example, encouraging students to create their own materials and share these with others, possibly through taking a photograph and using an application such as "Font Candy" to place their message or affirmation over the top of the image.
- meditation scripts - (refer to the Meditation fact sheet)
- breathing techniques (refer to the Breathing fact sheet)
- if the space allows, provide beanbags which encourage meditation/unplug time
- sensory grounding strategies.

If it's not possible to have a physical assigned space, some of the options mentioned above could be displayed to decorate a wall space/window etc. Another option is for students to create a portable toolbox that could be housed in their pencil case/saved to the app.

Ideas

Developing a Personal Comfort box.

A comfort box is a great way to gather strategies, techniques and self-care ideas that one can access to manage stress and anxiety. This could include:

- music the student likes – create playlists
- cue cards
- affirmations
- photos of positive memories/images
- "I can" script, notes to self, mantras
- objects that have meaning and provide soothing in times of need (e.g. bracelet/stress ball/crystal etc.)
- things that make them feel good about themselves.

Creating a Wall of Courage

Encouraging students to develop or share their own affirmations/statements they find that help inspire, motivate them or assist in providing perspective. For example, "You're just having a bad day not a bad life".

Mindfulness



Do you find that you spend lots of time caught up in your thoughts? Everyone does this at times, but if we experience high levels of stress and anxiety, we are likely to chew up even more time than most people by being stuck in our mind. This can result in us finding it difficult to concentrate or absorb information at school, it can impact on us being able to enjoy what is actually happening in the present moment, and it can leave us feeling exhausted.

This is where mindfulness can help us. Mindfulness is about being able to focus all of our attention on the present moment, the here and now, allowing us to fully absorb and experience what is occurring in this given moment. Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there's a 'right' or 'wrong' way to think or feel. When we practice mindfulness, we tune all of our attention in to the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.

Practising being mindful assists us to be more mindful during daily life. There are so many different ways we can practice mindfulness—here are a few ideas to get you started.

Body scan

Sit comfortably in a chair with both feet flat on the floor and your hands gently resting in your lap. Try and sit as upright as you can. You can also try this lying down but it can be tempting for some to nod off for a bit of a nap!

Gently close your eyes and focus on your breath. There is no need to change your breath in any way, just pay attention to the movement in your body as you breathe in and out.

Draw all of your attention to the soles of your feet, noticing any sensations that you are currently experiencing in your feet. You may, for example, notice the connection between the floor and your feet/shoes, the temperature of your feet, and any other sensations that are currently occurring. There is no need to change anything that you notice, nor is there a need to label anything that you notice as good, bad or anything else. All you're doing is simply focusing your full attention on the soles of your feet. If your mind wanders off on a trail of thought, gently acknowledge that this has happened (without criticising yourself) and refocus your attention back to the soles of your feet.

Repeat this process as you move up your body. If you have time, you may like to slowly scan through your body, moving your attention up to your lower legs, then upper legs, lower back, back, shoulders, upper arms, lower arms, hands, neck, head and face. If you have less time, you can choose to focus on bigger areas (e.g. legs, back, shoulders, arms, neck/head etc.). Whichever you choose, remember that your task is to focus all of your attention to that part of your body, redirecting your attention as many times as you need to back to your body when your mind has wandered.

Once you have completed this process, draw all of your attention to the very top of your head and slowly and gently scan through your body until your attention rests back into the soles of your feet. When you feel ready, take a slow, deep breath and gently open your eyes.

Mindful activities

Pick an activity that you are taking part in to practice being mindful. Whether it's playing sport, going for a walk or a run, reading a book, or playing a game, completely absorb yourself in what you are doing. If your thoughts wander, gently acknowledge this and refocus your attention back to the activity you are doing. You may notice that you enjoy the activity more when you are paying your full attention to it.

Mindful appreciation

Establish an appreciation practice. Think of an object/gadget/appliance etc. that you use:

- What do you appreciate about this?
- How does it assist you/make life easier etc.?
- Imagine what your life would look like/how different your life would be if this weren't available.
- What would you have to do differently?



Have you ever noticed what happens to your breath when you're feeling stressed or anxious? Sometimes for some strange reason, we naturally start to breathe rapidly and shallowly when we experience high stress or anxiety. Did you know that doing this can make us feel even more stressed or anxious? When we don't breathe slowly and deeply, we breathe out carbon dioxide more quickly than we make it, which can cause us to experience light-headedness, tingling, muscle tension, rapid heartbeat and a host of other anxiety symptoms.

Practising breathing techniques when we're feeling calm can help us to draw on these strategies when we need them during times of high stress and anxiety. Regulating the breath can reduce anxiety through activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. There are so many different breathing techniques you can try. You might find one that works for you doesn't work for someone else you know, and vice versa. Here's a few to get you started. If the techniques you try ever make you feel uncomfortable or more stressed or anxious, stop and allow your breath to return back to a natural state.

Breathing waltz

The breathing waltz encourages you to breathe in a slow rhythm. Time each count for one second (use a clock or timer on your phone if you need help) to set the pace.

- Breathe in - two - three
- Hold your breath - two - three
- Breathe out - two - three
- Repeat above steps at least 6 or 7 times until you notice an impact.

Nostril breathing

- Press your index finger down on your right nostril and breathe in gently through your left nostril
- Now press your finger down on your left nostril (releasing your other index finger from your right nostril), and breathe out gently through your right nostril
- Keep your finger on the left nostril as you breathe in gently through your right nostril
- Now press your index finger down on your right nostril (releasing your other index finger from your left nostril), and breathe out gently through your left nostril
- Repeat the above steps 10 times.

Mindful breathing

- Find a comfortable position and focus on your breathing. There is no need to try to change it in any way, just focus and become aware of your natural breathing
- If your mind starts wandering to your thoughts, gently acknowledge those thoughts (without criticising yourself) and return your attention to your breathing
- It's perfectly natural for your mind to wander - it happens to everybody. Just notice it as quickly as you can and refocus your attention to your breathing as many times as you need to.
- Start for just a minute or two, and gradually you may find yourself more able to focus on your breathing and more comfortable in redirecting your mind when it wanders.