

# Getting and keeping their attention

## Mindful awareness

A fun and effective way to harness the attention of a young person is to introduce a brain engaging exercise such as mindful awareness.

Teaching young people mindful awareness will provide them with a practice to use whenever they run into difficulty focusing on a task.

Mindful awareness is the act of paying attention to what's happening now. Mindful breathing is one of the best ways to learn mindful awareness.

Use the following script to lead your club members through a quick deep breathing exercise that will help them harness their inner calm and focus.

### How to lead this exercise

Speak slowly, calmly, and clearly. Pause frequently to allow everyone to follow your words.

### Deep breathing script

We're going to exercise our brains by practicing deep breathing. To begin I want you to sit with your feet flat on the floor and straighten your back. Don't lean, but sit-up tall.

Rest your hands on your lap palms down.

Sit very still and close your eyes.

I will count to help you know when to breathe in and out. When breathing in, fill your lungs completely. Imagine filling a big balloon full of air. When breathing out empty your lungs completely. While doing this imagine letting all the air out of the balloon.

Here's how I'll instruct you. Inhale 1 – 2 – 3 and hold. Exhale 3 – 2 – 1 hold.

We'll do this a few times. Let's begin.

Inhale: 1 – 2 – 3 – hold.      Exhale: 3 – 2 – 1 – hold.

Inhale: 1 – 2 – 3 – hold.      Exhale: 3 – 2 – 1 – hold.

Inhale: 1 – 2 – 3 – hold.      Exhale: 3 – 2 – 1 – hold.

Breathe as you normally do and relax. Focus on feeling the air moving in and out of your nose. We'll focus on our breath for a few minutes. Sit, relax and notice only your breath.

Let's take one more deep breath 1 – 2 - 3, hold it and now slowly exhale. How do you feel? Do you feel relaxed and calm?

Open your eyes slowly.

If you are ever in a situation where you start to feel frustrated, tense or upset, you can use this breathing practice to help you become calm.