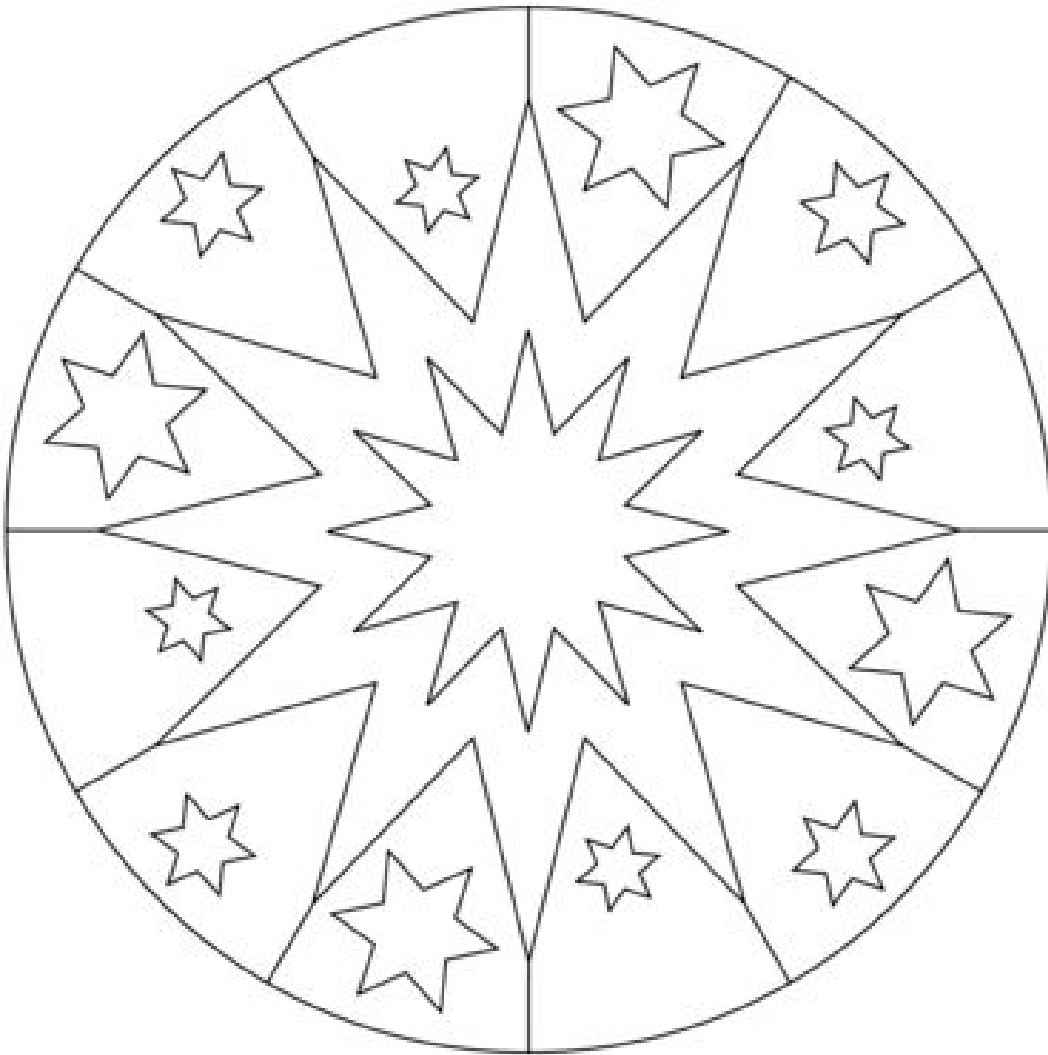


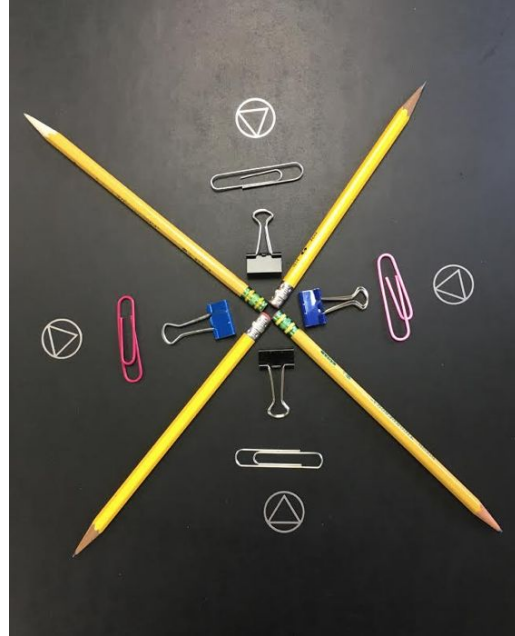
Art & Breathing activities for Stress Reduction

Art Activities- Try coloring a geometric mandala.

These can often be helpful to focus our attention, especially if we choose very intricate ones. Feel free to pick your own colors, patterns, and drawing implementations (colored pencils, markers, and pens).



After trying the mindful paper mandala you might want to make a mandala outside or around the house using found objects. Remember to try to stay focused on the art you are working on. Give yourself the time and joy of creating a visually pleasing piece!



Breathing activities:

Our breath is closely linked to our stress level. We often hold our breath or shorten our breath when overwhelmed or stressed. It can be helpful to find time to focus on our breath and watch it rise and fall.

Belly Breathing

Find a comfortable seat or a place to lay down. Place one hand on your belly and the other on your heart center. When breathing in notice that the belly expands slightly (feeling your hand rise on your belly). Feeling your hand soften as you breath out and your belly contracts.

As you continue to feel your hand on your belly rise and fall also notice your hand on your heart center providing a calming weight or centering for your mind and body.

Do several rounds and return to normal breathing.



Mindful Breathing

Simply find time to notice the breath and feel it move in your body.

We can add words, phrases or visuals to make this practice more engaging and centering. Try this first, on the in-breath repeat the phrase, “I am the sky”, and on the out-breath, “I am calm”. We can use this breathing technique with any visualization or phrase. This can engage parents and children to use their imagination.

Walking/ Movement Mindful Meditations

You can practice mindful walking meditations when you are at home or outside. Try paying close attention to your foot falls, and how your body feels as you walk. Are your hands tense? Are your shoulders relaxed? Can you feel the air temperature around you? Try to let go of your thoughts and concentrate on your movement. Stay aware of your surroundings and keep your eyes open!

Try gentle stretches in the morning, afternoon, and or evening that focus on your breath. Example: Inhale- hands reach up towards the sky, exhale- hands fall gently to your sides. When we take time to link our breathing and our movements we can begin to reduce stress and feel a sense of calm.

