



## VIRTUAL MINDFULNESS – LETTER TO THE EDUCATOR

### LESSON TWO: ANCHOR BREATHING

Hello Educators!

How are you all doing out there? I want to start our communication this week by making sure you know that we are available at Starr Commonwealth with a variety of resources to support you in your journey through all of the changes that have come out of COVID-19. You have likely heard the phrase "*It takes a village to raise a child.*" We consider ourselves part of your village, so please reach out with questions or experiences you have while sharing mindfulness practices virtually, or seeking additional resources and supports for yourself or your students. We are here for you.

This week the mindfulness practice we are sharing is called Anchor Breathing. We are building on the definition of mindfulness, and mindful posture from last week to practice focusing awareness on breathing. By far, breath awareness has been the practice that students report they use the most on their own. It truly is a transformational moment for students when they are navigating a big emotion or racing thoughts, and they are able to shift their awareness to slow, deep, belly breaths. It is important to practice deep belly breaths in moments of calm, so pathways are built to lay the groundwork to access slow, deep breathing in more overwhelming moments of stress, anxiety, fear, worry, sadness.

Practicing paying attention to our breathing truly is a super power. Taking slow, deep breaths into a soft belly is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. This is because, when you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. This mindfulness practice is called *Anchor Breathing* because your breath can function like an anchor does for a boat. Just as an anchor keeps a boat from being swept away, resting all of your awareness on deep, slow belly breaths can keep you from being swept away by thoughts and emotions.

Here are a few ways you may share this practice with students and their families:

- Play the video on Zoom or other conference software and practice right alongside your students.
- Do the anchor breathing practice yourself with the video, and then lead the practice in your own way within the virtual communications you have with your students, or to prepare anchor breathing as a tool for next school year.

- Share the video link with students and families, and include your personal experience with students and families.

If you can practice with your students, not only are you building pathways for emotional regulation, but you are also building relationships – even virtually! However you deliver these mindfulness lessons, build in an opportunity to connect through shared practice. If you come up with another way to share these practices, please let me know. As my niece used to say when she was little, “*Sharing is caring.*”

May the coming days be filled with many moments of awareness of your body slowly breathing in and breathing out. Please accept my gratitude for all you are doing for your communities.

Deep Peace,

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