

MINDFUL MOMENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

4, 3, 2, 1 Activity for Big Emotions



Try this 4-3-2-1 strategy to help your students navigate strong emotions. In this activity students use their senses of sight, hearing, and touch as well as their breath to shift their attention and ease any overwhelm they might be feeling.

Prepare Students for the Activity

Read aloud to students.

Mindfulness is simply noticing whatever is happening right now, without judgment. We might notice big emotions, or that it's hard to focus on something, and that's okay. Today, I'm going to invite you to see what it's like to bring your mindful attention to the things around us in our room.

4-3-2-1 Activity

Read aloud to students. Depending on age and engagement, you can pause longer between numbered instructions.

4

See if you can find four **blue** or **green** objects in the space around you. Each time you find one, take a deep breath in and out.

Pause to allow time for students to look around them, encouraging them to look behind them, too. Reorienting their focus outward, and away from their internal sense of dysregulation, helps them settle, and blue and green in particular are considered soothing colors.

3

Now see if you can shift to noticing three sounds outside of our classroom. Perhaps you notice kids talking in the hall, or birds chirping, or the wind blowing? Each time you notice a sound, take another deep breath in and out.

Pause to allow time for students to listen.

2

Now see if you can notice two sounds inside this room, taking another deep breath each time. Do you hear any sounds that you hadn't noticed before?

1

Finally, you can place one hand on your chest or your belly. Can you feel your heartbeat, or your chest or belly moving as you breathe?

Class Debrief

Give students a chance to make sense of their experience. It's the most important part of the mindful moment!

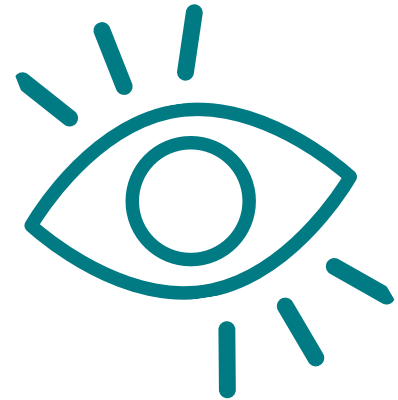
What sensations do you notice in your body now? You might prompt them with additional suggestions:

- What's going on with your breathing right now – is it slower, faster, or the same as before?
- What about your heartbeat? Has it sped up or evened out?
- Does anyone still notice strong sensations in their body? If yes, let students know that's totally normal, and invite them to repeat the exercise until they feel ready to move on.

4, 3, 2, 1 Activity for Big Emotions

4

See if you can find **FOUR** **blue** or **green** objects in the space around you. Each time you find one, take a deep breath in and out.



3

Now see if you can notice **THREE** sounds outside of our classroom. Each time you notice a sound, take another deep breath in and out.



2

Now see if you can notice **TWO** sounds inside this room, taking another deep breath each time. Do you hear any sounds that you hadn't before?



1

Place **ONE** hand on your chest or your belly. Can you feel your heartbeat, or your chest or belly moving as you breathe?