



Save the Children.



# MENTAL HEALTH AND KIDS

RESOURCES FROM SAVE THE CHILDREN

# MINDS IN MAY

Every child, no matter where they live, deserves to live a safe, happy and healthy life. Being mentally healthy is no exception.

At Save the Children, we recognize that mental health is crucial to a child's physical and intellectual growth and development. Strong mental health and psychosocial supports at a young age lay a vital foundation for their education and ability to cope with challenges later in life.

**That's why this Mental Health Awareness Month we are prioritizing mental health and psychosocial support for children and caregivers around the world.**

[Learn more about the MINDS Act](#) and how you can stand up for the mental health of children in crises around the world!

Additionally, try out the included drama-based relaxation exercises, which are part of our global [Healing and Education through the Arts \(HEART\) program](#) for children living in stressful situations.



# TAKE ACTION FOR KIDS:

## WHAT IS THE MINDS ACT?

**The Problem:** Despite the fact that millions of children desperately need treatment and support, less than 1 percent of funding on global health goes to address their mental health and well-being.

**Solution:** We need improved humanitarian policies and funding to support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of children impacted by conflict.

**That's why the MINDS Act is so important** – it puts mental health at the forefront of the discussion, and sheds light on mental illness affects millions of children worldwide.

The Mental Health in International Development and Humanitarian Settings (MINDS) Act is the first-ever piece of legislation that would promote mental health and psychosocial support as a key component of U.S. foreign assistance. It will support best practices in the mental health strategy and emphasize the needs of at-risk populations such as children, women and girls.

To take action and learn more, [sign our petition with Save the Children Action Network.](#)



# Stress Busters that work for everyone...

## Getting started

- Find a quiet space away from distractions
- If you're trying these exercises with a child or a group of children, make sure your instructions are clear and engaging.
- You don't have to do them all. Keep an eye on how long the children are engaged and try again another time.

# Flower and Candle

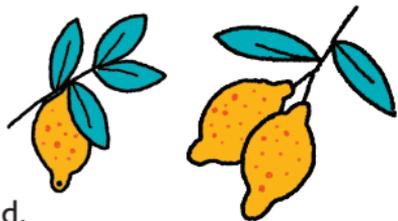


This is a simple exercise that encourages deep breathing – a way to relax.

Pretend you have a nice smelling flower in one hand and a slow burning candle in the other.

- Breathe in slowly through your nose as you smell the flower.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth as you blow out the candle.
- Repeat a few times.

# Lemon



This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you have a lemon in your hand.

- Reach up to the tree and pick a lemon with each hand.
- Squeeze the lemons hard to get all the juice out – squeeze, squeeze, squeeze.
- Throw the lemons on the floor and relax your hands.
- Then repeat, until you have enough juice for a glass of lemonade!
- After your last squeeze and throw, shake out your hands to relax!



# Lazy Cat

This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you are a lazy cat that just woke up from a lovely, long nap.

- Have a big yawn.
- And a meow.
- Now stretch out your arms, legs and back – slowly like a cat – and relax.



# Feather/Statue



This exercise releases muscle tension.

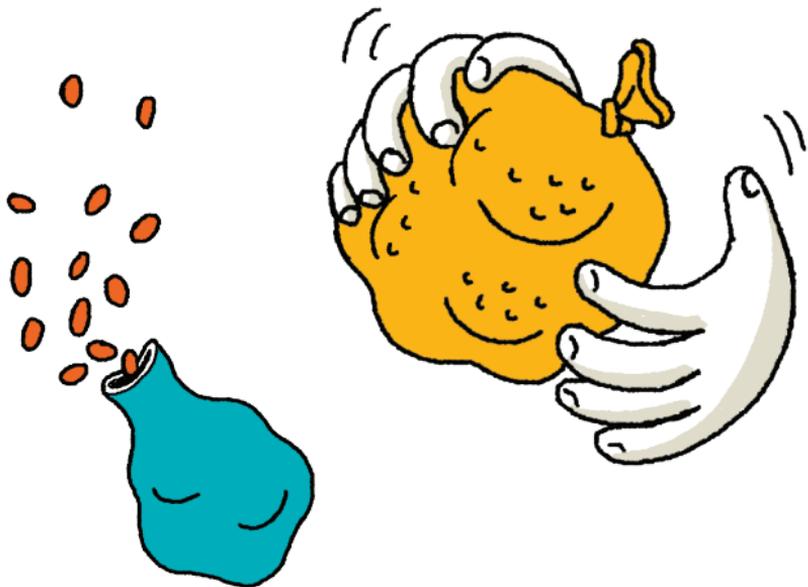
Pretend you are a feather floating through the air for ten seconds.

- Pretend you are a feather floating through the air for about ten seconds.
- Suddenly you freeze and transform into a statue. Don't move!
- Then slowly relax as you transform back into the floating feather again.
- Repeat, making sure to finish as a floaty feather in a relaxed state.

# Stress Balls

This exercise releases muscle tension and massages your hands. Make your own stress ball(s) by filling balloons with dry lentils or rice.

- Take the ball(s) in one or both hands and squeeze and release.
- Experiment with squeezing the ball. Find way that is right for you, adjusting the speed, pressure and timing of your squeezes to whatever way you like.



# Turtle



This exercise releases muscle tension.

Pretend you are a turtle going for a slow, relaxed turtle walk.

- Oh no, it's started to rain!
- Curl up tight under your shell for about ten seconds.
- The sun's out again, so come out of your shell and return to your relaxing walk.
- Repeat a few times, making sure to finish with a walk so that your body is relaxed.
- Repeat, making sure to finish with a walk.