ALL OF US HAVE THOUGHTS FROM TIME TO TIME THAT MAKE US FEEL UPSET. IN THIS STORY, YOU’LL MEET TAYLOR. TAYLOR IS LEARNING MINDFULNESS 5-4-3-2-1. MINDFULNESS 5-4-3-2-1 TEACHES YOU TO CALM YOUR MIND AND HELP YOU WORRY LESS. FOLLOW ALONG WITH TAYLOR SO YOU TOO CAN LEARN HOW TO PRACTICE MINDFULNESS 5-4-3-2-1 WHEN YOU NEED IT.
Taylor and their dad are watching their favorite game show.

Oh, Daddy! I really thought I knew the answer to that question!

Perfect timing! Let me go check on dinner. I’ll be right back.

Ah, another commercial break!

While Taylor’s dad goes into the kitchen to check on dinner, the TV commercial is interrupted by a breaking news report.

Taylor sees fire trucks with lights flashing. A news reporter explains that there is a house fire in a nearby neighborhood.

Is the fire going to reach us?

Oh no!

Anyone living in this neighborhood should be prepared to leave their homes.
AS THE REPORTER PROVIDES MORE INFORMATION, TAYLOR GETS REALLY SCARED AND UPSET.

DADDY!! COME QUICK!

TAYLOR'S DAD HURRIES TO THE LIVING ROOM.

I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED, BUT DADDY WON'T LET ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO YOU. THE FIRE ISN'T IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. WE'RE SAFE HERE.

FOR THE MOMENT, TAYLOR FEELS BETTER.

BUT LATER THAT NIGHT AT BEDTIME, WORRIES ABOUT THE FIRE START CREEPING BACK INTO TAYLOR'S HEAD. TAYLOR CAN'T SLEEP AND STARTS FEELING UPSET AGAIN.

DO YOU EVER FEEL SCARED AND HAVE WORRIES RUN THROUGH YOUR HEAD LIKE TAYLOR? THERE'S A WAY TO CALM YOUR MIND CALLED MINDFULNESS 5-4-3-2-1.

HOW DOES IT DO THAT?
You use your five senses — seeing, touching, hearing, smelling, and tasting — to focus on the present moment. This can help you calm down when you’re upset.

And, practicing mindfulness every day can help you feel happier and worry less.

Now, let’s give it a try. Follow along with Taylor as we walk through the steps together.

First, sit somewhere comfortable with your feet flat on the ground. Lay your hands gently on your lap, on the arms of a chair, or by your side.

Pay attention to your breathing. Notice how it feels as you take a slow breath in. Then, breathe out slowly. Notice how it feels as the air leaves your body.

Take a moment to look around you. Name five things you see.

[Images of five items in a room: a lamp, a book, a stuffed animal, a family photo, and a pillow.]

I see my lamp, a book, a stuffed animal, a family photo, and a pillow.
Pick one object and describe what it looks like. What color, what size, and what shape is it?

My lamp is yellow, round, small, and the light is bright.

Now look for four things you can touch.

My stuffed animal and my blanket.

I can touch my pajamas, the carpet...

Pick one of those items to touch. Describe what it feels like. Is it soft or scratchy, thick or thin?

My blanket is soft and smooth.

Next, name three things you can hear. At first, it might seem like there isn't much to hear but listen carefully.

I hear my clock ticking, my fan, and Dad snoring.
Focus on one sound and describe it. Is it loud or quiet? Does the sound start and stop, or is it constant?

SNOOOORRE

Dad’s snoring is loud, and it comes and goes.

Now, look for two things you can smell.

I smell the lotion on my nightstand, and I can smell my clean pajamas too.

Focus on one smell. Can you describe it? Is the scent strong or is it hard to smell?

My lotion has a strong smell. It smells like flowers.
Finally, find one thing you can taste.

I can taste my toothpaste from brushing my teeth before bed.

Focus on what the toothpaste tastes like. Describe how it tastes. Is it minty or fruity?

It tastes like peppermint.

Now how do you feel? Hopefully, it helped you focus on what’s happening now and less on what’s worrying you.

I feel a little better.

That’s great! In fact, it’s a good idea to practice a couple of minutes every day. Just like learning to read or ride a bike, it takes practice to become comfortable with mindfulness 5-4-3-2-1.

Mindfulness
5-4-3-2-1
It might not work right away, but once you get the hang of it, you'll find you can do it more quickly. And more importantly, you can do it anytime, anywhere!

So, the next time you're feeling really scared or worried — or any time really — focus on the here and now using your five senses.

**Seeing**

**Hearing**

**Tasting**

**Touching**

**Smelling**

Now that you've learned how to use mindfulness 5-4-3-2-1, explore other skills in this series that can be helpful to you.
THIS RESOURCE WAS DEVELOPED BY ICF, AN INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY CONTRACTOR, WITH OVERSIGHT FROM A GROUP OF EXPERTS* ACTING IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES CONVENED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE AND WITH FUNDING FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC, 200-2011-38807/75D30120F00087). ANY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, OR CONCLUSIONS IN THIS RESOURCE ARE NOT NECESSARILY ENDORSED OR ADOPTED BY THE EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS, THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES, THE CDC, OR ICF.

THESE TOOLS ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE, DIAGNOSIS, OR TREATMENT. ALWAYS SEEK THE ADVICE OF YOUR PHYSICIAN OR OTHER QUALIFIED HEALTH PROVIDER WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING A MEDICAL CONDITION. NEVER DISREGARD PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE OR DELAY IN SEEKING IT BECAUSE OF SOMETHING YOU HAVE READ ON THIS WEBSITE.

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP OF EXPERTS, GO TO HTTPS://WWW.NATIONALACADEMIES.ORG/OUR-WORK/PROMOTING-EMOTIONAL-WELL-BEING-AND-RESILIENCE
1. WHY AND HOW WERE THESE TOOLS DEVELOPED?

WHY? MANY CHILDREN AND TEENS STRUGGLE WITH FEELINGS OF STRESS, ANXIETY, AND DEPRESSION, PARTICULARLY DURING THE PANDEMIC. THESE TOOLS WERE CREATED TO PROMOTE THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH — DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND BEYOND.

HOW? THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE (NASM) MADE THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE WITH FUNDING FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC). NASM BROUGHT TOGETHER A GROUP OF EXPERTS TO DEVELOP WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DIFFICULTIES THEY FACE EVERY DAY. TOGETHER WITH EXPERTS AT ICF, THEY CREATED TOOLS, BASED ON COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT), TO HELP REDUCE STRESS, ANXIETY, AND DEPRESSION. THE TOOLS ARE MEANT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH DIRECTLY, AND FOR PARENTS TO HELP CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH STRESS, ANXIETY, AND DEPRESSION. TEACHERS AND OTHER CAREGIVERS MAY ALSO BE ABLE TO USE THESE RESOURCES.


2. WHAT IS COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)?

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT) WORKS BY HELPING A PERSON NOTICE HOW THEIR THOUGHTS AFFECT HOW THEY FEEL AND BEHAVE. CBT HELPS THEM TURN UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS AROUND TO MORE HELPFUL THOUGHTS SO THEY FEEL BETTER. EXPERTS TELL US THAT CBT IS THE GOLD STANDARD OF THERAPY FOR CHILDREN, TEENS, AND ADULTS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING STRESS, ANXIETY, AND DEPRESSION.

THE WORD “COGNITIVE” REFERS TO WHAT WE THINK, AND THE WORD “BEHAVIORAL” TO WHAT WE DO. CBT CAN HELP CHILDREN AND TEENS...

• “CATCH” THOUGHTS THAT ARE NOT HELPFUL, “CHECK” THEM, AND “CHANGE” THEM TO FEEL BETTER.

• LEARN TO NOTICE AND DO THE THINGS THAT HELP THEM FEEL BETTER.

• LEARN HELPFUL SKILLS LIKE DEEP BELLY BREATHING AND MINDFULNESS.

CBT WON’T BE ABLE TO FIX ALL THE THINGS THAT MAKE SOMEONE FEEL STRESSED, ANXIOUS, OR DEPRESSED, BUT IT CAN HELP THEM COPE WITH THOSE FEELINGS AND FEEL BETTER.

THESE TOOLS DON’T TEACH EVERY PART OF CBT, ONLY SOME OF THE MOST TESTED AND EASY-TO-USE SKILLS. ALTHOUGH THESE TOOLS CAN’T TAKE THE PLACE OF A MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER, THEY CAN HELP CHILDREN AND TEENS LEARN HOW TO BETTER COPE WITH EVERYDAY STRESS AND ANXIETY.

NOTE: IT TAKES TIME TO LEARN A NEW HABIT, USUALLY 30 TO 60 DAYS, SO IT’S IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS TO KEEP PRACTICING THESE SKILLS REGULARLY. THEY WILL NOT ONLY BENEFIT TODAY, BUT WILL BUILD RESILIENCE AND HELP MANAGE FUTURE STRESS THROUGHOUT LIFE’S JOURNEY.
3. Why are the pronouns “they,” “them,” or “their” used to refer to a single person in these tools?
The language we use to describe people and experiences is important. It signifies how we express ourselves and how other people see us. Many times, in English or Spanish, we use different forms of nouns, pronouns, or adjectives that are based on assumptions about a person’s gender. Many people may not view this as a problem, but, for some people, assumptions about gender are not accurate, and can be harmful. Gender inclusive language is used throughout the modules to ensure that all children and teens can connect to our scenarios. They, them, and theirs are pronouns frequently used to refer to a single person when we are not aware of the person’s gender, and/or when a person does not identify as a boy/man or a girl/woman. For example, if a person notices that someone left an item in a classroom but the person does not know who it belongs to, the person might say “oh no, someone left their water bottle” using “their” as a gender neutral pronoun. In Spanish, gender inclusive language is sometimes created using an -e, rather than a feminine -a or a masculine -o.

4. Where should I go if I need additional resources or help?
If you or your child or teen are in need of immediate support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States. You can call (800) 273-8255 or text 741741.

If you are looking to find a provider who can support you or your child’s mental health, you can call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s national helpline at (800) 662-HELP (4357) or visit their website: https://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment.


For additional help, visit our resources page.