



**I Am So Stressed Out!!! ( 🌈 An Emotional Health Story)  
(4<sup>th</sup> Grade – 9-10 yrs.)  
Demonstration: Take a Breath**



**STORY CONNECTION SLIDE 15 (Approx Time: 5-10 mins)**

When you feel your emotional response (or your behavior) to a situation does not match the situation, then you are probably stressed out. One thing that we could do is to take a deep breath and try to figure out what is stressing you out. Then, try to figure out if it is a situation that you have some control over or one that you have no control.

**Materials needed:**

- Space for student(s) to move

**Preparation needed:**

- Select and secure a location for student(s) to have personal space and move as needed
- Review and familiarize yourself with the breathing exercises

**Instructions:**

1. In this activity, student(s) will learn several breathing techniques that they can use when they are in a stressful situation. The teacher/leader will be leading the exercises.
2. Have all student(s) stand with a comfortable amount of space between each other.
3. Encourage each student to participate as you walk them through the three breathing exercises.

**I: Belly Breathing**

1. Stand up straight with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Arms and hands are by your sides and relaxed.
3. Body is relaxed and eyes are closed.
4. Focus on lower abdomen (belly) and imagine a small balloon in that space
5. Breath in slowly and deeply through nostrils, imagining the balloon inflating (getting bigger/larger/growing) slowly, hold a few seconds.
6. Slowly exhale through the mouth, imagining the balloon gently deflating (getting smaller, shrinking); blow out of the mouth as if blowing out a candle.
7. Place a hand over the lower abdomen to feel it go up and down, and make sure you are not breathing with the chest
8. Repeat at least 10 times or until calm and relaxed.

**II: Starfish Breathing**

1. Take one hand and open it up like a starfish.
2. Take your other hand and hold up your pointer or first finger.
3. Using your pointer finger, start at the bottom of your thumb and slowly trace your starfish (hand) with your pointer finger.
4. Breathe in when you trace up and breathe out when you trace down.

5. Up and down, in and out for all five fingers on your starfish.
6. Do not go too fast or too slow. Find a pace that is good for you and calms and relaxes you.
7. Repeat as needed.

### III: **Box Breathing.**

1. Before starting, student(s) will get a piece of paper and a pencil.
  2. Have them draw a "start" button in the top left corner area of their paper and draw a line to the right to make the top of the box.
  3. Next, they will draw a line down, another line to the left, and then back up to their start button to make a box or square. If not using paper, they can simply trace the box on the desk with their finger or even draw their box in the air in the space in front of them.
  4. Put the pencil down and using their finger, they will start at the start button.
  5. Breathe in as the top line is traced.
  6. Hold the breath as the right side of the box is traced.
  7. Breathe out as the bottom line is traced.
  8. Hold the breath as the left side of the box is traced.
  9. Student(s) should go at a pace that is calming and relaxing for them.
4. In closing, remind student(s) that sometimes something as simple as taking some deep breaths can do wonders for helping them calm down and relax in stressful situations. When they are calm and relaxed, they can do what they need to do, and this is good for their emotional health and makes their brain healthy.

Activity Idea Credit: <https://www.edutopia.org/sites/default/files/resources/stw-glenview-stress-reduction-activities.pdf>

Stress Explained - Elementary Edition Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8FiAxAgqYE>