



Silence and sounds



What is the purpose of this activity?



What are the sounds you hear every day, but don't usually notice or pay attention to? In this activity, you will relax quietly while you listen to what is happening around you.

This activity will develop awareness and listening skills that can help you to cope with feelings of stress.

What will you need?



A place to lie down comfortably with your eyes closed without interruption for at least 5 minutes.



A piece of paper and a pen or pencil.



Step by step



In this activity you will lie with your eyes closed for about 5 minutes.

Read these instructions first so you know what to do while you are lying with your eyes closed. If you want, you can set a timer for 5 minutes or ask a sibling/parent to let you know when 5 minutes have passed so you know when to open your eyes again.



Find a comfortable place to lie down with your eyes closed.

Cover your eyes with your hands or a piece of clothing if that helps you to relax. Put your piece of paper and your pencil near you.



Try to let your breathing become slow and easy.

As much as possible try to draw the breath to your stomach. You might be able to hear your own breathing, or even your heart beating.



Lie quietly and listen to the sounds you can hear.

Listen to all the many different kinds of sounds you can hear, coming from different sources. Start with the loudest and most noticeable sounds, and then listen to the other sounds you notice.



Keep listening.

Are there any sounds you heard only once? Are there any sounds that you hear repeated? Are there sounds that you're unfamiliar with? Are they repeated in a steady rhythm, or at random times? Try to notice these patterns in what you hear.



After 5 minutes, open your eyes and sit up.

Find your piece of paper and your pencil or pen.



Write down all the sounds you heard.

Try to use creative language to describe them, such as words that sound like the noises you heard. If you want, you can try to write them in the order that you heard them, repeating those you heard often, and adding notes for periods of silence between sounds.



Create more

- Write/create a story, poem or song from the list of sounds you heard OR create a drawing or collage that illustrates the sounds you heard.
- Remember you can "create more" in any way you like. There is no right or wrong way to create more!
- Create a "detective" game for yourself or your household, by trying to find the source of every sound you heard – especially those you did not recognize at first!
- Keep your list and repeat the activity whenever you want and in other areas of where you live. Notice how the sounds you hear may be different. Repeat the activity whenever you feel stressed, overwhelmed or just need a little break.



Share

→ Online:

Send a text with the list of sounds you heard, or the story, poem or song you created to the chat group.

Look for more messages from the chat group to see what the others have created and participate in a discussion with them!

→ Everyone (Online and Offline):

Share what you heard and created with your household, but only if you want to do so.

Lead this activity with people from your household. See if their lists are the same as yours and create one long list.



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Try to let your breathing become slow and easy. As much as possible try to draw the breath to your stomach. You might be able to hear your own breathing, or even your heart beating.



Lie quietly and listen to the sounds you can hear. Listen to all the many different kinds of sounds you can hear, coming from different sources. Start with the loudest and most noticeable sounds, and then listen to the other sounds you notice.



Keep listening. Are there any sounds you heard only once? Are there any sounds that you hear repeated? Are there sounds that you're unfamiliar with? Are they repeated in a steady rhythm, or at random times? Try to notice these patterns in what you hear.



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Guide for parents and caregivers

1

Before your adolescent starts this activity

- Read the activity guide for Silence and Sounds so you understand the steps and what your adolescent will do.
- Help your adolescent to find a quiet place where they can lie down comfortably without interruption.
- Ask other members of your household to give your adolescent space, and time to participate in the activity without interruption.
- **Ask your adolescent how they would like to work on this activity:**
 - *Would you like it if I, or someone else in our household reads the instructions to you as you lie quietly and participate in the activity?*
 - *Would you like to try this activity alone, or would you prefer to try it together with me or other people in our household?*

Accept and support their answers to these questions. Once they have told you their preferences do not push them to try the activity another way. However, you may wish to offer them more encouragement and/or to remain available to support them if you think that will be helpful.

2

While your adolescent is working on this activity

- Depending on what they prefer, give them time and space to work on the activity on their own in a quiet space, or participate with other family members.

If they are confused about how to do the activity:

- Read the activity guide and try to explain it to them in your own words.
- Encourage them to try the activity again, or as many times as they wish.
- Remind them that there is not a “right” or “wrong” way to do the activity. The purpose of the activity is to help them to relax and experiment with hearing the sounds around them in a new way.

- Suggest examples of sounds they might hear. Remind them that they should only write down sounds they actually hear – and that they may hear sounds you did not suggest or expect!

If they need more encouragement or inspiration, ask:

- *What sounds did you hear, besides the loudest and most obvious sounds?*
- *Did you hear any sounds that you didn't expect to hear, or didn't realize you would be able to hear?*
- *Did you hear sounds coming from inside or outside our household, or both?*
- *Did you notice a pattern to any of the sounds you heard?*
- *Do you want to try again, at a different time, or in a different place?*
- *What can I do to make this activity work better for you if you try it again?*

3

After your adolescent is done with the activity

- Ask your adolescent to share what they created with you. If they do, share encouraging words about what they created. Do not force them to share it if they do not wish to do so.
- Invite them to tell you more about what they did or did not enjoy, learn, find interesting or find challenging about the activity. Accept what they say, and do not try to convince them to change their opinions.
- If you or other people in your household participated in the activity, share what you heard and created, and discuss your own experiences.
- If they are participating through an online/mobile phone facilitated group: Remind and encourage them to share what they have created with the facilitator, following the instructions from the facilitator. However, do not force them to share if they do not wish to do so.
- If they are participating through an online facilitated group: Encourage them to participate in the discussion that follows with the facilitator and other adolescents.



Facilitator guide

Activity Purpose

This activity will help adolescents to develop awareness and listening skills that can help you to cope with feelings of stress. Through this activity, they will practice your competencies for coping with stress and managing emotions; communication and expression. As with all activities, the most important purpose is to help adolescents to have fun and take a break from stress!

1

Preparing adolescents and families

- A few days in advance, announce* that adolescents will receive a guide for an activity. Repeat this announcement the day before adolescents should begin the activities. Encourage adolescents to have fun and give it a try!
- Explain that the activity will give adolescent a chance to practice skills for listening, and some creative writing. Remind them that the activity is meant to be fun and relaxing.
- Remind parents that they can support their adolescents by reviewing the adolescents' activity guide and the guidelines they receive, too. Remind adolescents that they can ask their parents for support, but they can also work on the activity independently if they prefer.
- Explain to the adolescents that they will need a piece of paper and a pen or pencil, but they will not need any fancy or special materials to participate in the activity.
- Inform them of the date by which they should finish the activity, and how they should share what they created.

*The announcement can be made over mobile phone through text messages, WhatsApp, Messenger, etc., through radio or TV programmes, or through offline community announcement channels.

2

When you share the activity guide:

- Repeat the information above, so adolescents (and parents) understand how to participate in the activity, and what to do next.
- Explain to adolescents (and parents) how they can communicate with you to ask any questions they may have.

- Send encouraging messages to remind adolescents (and parents) that you hope they are enjoying the activity and look forward to hearing about their experiences.

3

After the activity:

- Remind adolescents to share their experiences and any stories, poetry, songs or drawings they created, and explain how they can share these with you.
- Share encouraging reminders as adolescents share their feedback or creation.
- Share examples of the first drawings you receive with positive comments, as encouragement for other adolescents to share their drawings, too.
- Invite them to respond to the following questions, one at a time.
 - *What sounds did you hear, besides the loudest and most obvious sounds? Did you hear any sounds that you didn't expect to hear, or didn't realize you would be able to hear? Did you hear sounds coming from inside or outside our household, or both? What felt or sounded different as you listened in this new way?*
 - *What is another adolescent's post, poem or drawing that you enjoyed? Tell them what you liked about what they shared!*
 - *Will you try this activity again? Will you do it the same way, or try something new? Tell us more!*

Allow some time (possibly a day or so) between each question so the adolescents have time to respond.

- Send a closing message thanking them for participating. Congratulate them on their posts and creative work. If you will be sharing their posts and creative works in another way, inform them of this and ask for their permission to do so. Let them know if they should expect another activity.