FAMILY ACTIVITY: ALOHA BREATH

In this activity, youth will be introduced to mindfulness and its connection to indigenous Hawaiian beliefs.

Aloha has many meanings— as most of us know Aloha means both Hello and Goodbye. However, the root words that make up Aloha also mean ‘presence in the breath’. In the Social Emotional Learning session, we will build on this meaning this week and explore deep breathing and mindfulness with our campers. Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, right now, without judgment (Jon Kabat-Zin). Practicing mindfulness can be a powerful tool to help notice and regulate emotions.

MATERIALS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Materials
- Blades of grass or flowers
  - If unavailable—Strips of paper

Instructions
1. Ask— does anyone know what Aloha means? (likely responses— hello and goodbye)
2. Summarize and connect: Aloha and Mindfulness:
   a. Aloha has another meaning that we will focus on today—‘presence in the breath.’
   b. This comes from the root words in aloha—‘alo’ means ‘presence in’ and ‘ha’ means ‘the breath’
   c. These words and many Hawaiian traditions are connected to the practice of mindfulness.
   d. Mindfulness is ‘Paying attention, on purpose, right now without judgement.’
3. Mindfulness activity
   a. Guide Aloha breaths (Alo— breathe in, Ha— breathe out) using a blade of grass
      i. Hold the grass in front of your nose and mouth and watch how it moves as you take these breaths
   b. Practice 5 Aloha breaths, run/get moving, 5 more breaths

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE
1. How are these breaths different from normal breathing?
2. Did they help you slow yourself down?
3. When else might you use Aloha breaths to slow your body down?