

# Inside Out – Disney Pixar

## A relaxation lesson

Inside Out has been a huge hit and as an adult a fascinating representation of the changes which occur as we grow up. It is a wonderful way to introduce even very young children to emotions. What a perfect way to introduce relaxation too.

### Introduction

Many children will be familiar with the story but for those who aren't you could either watch the film for a treat or give them a brief summary.

### Brief Summary

Inside Out is the story of Riley, an 11 year old girl, who struggles to settle in a new city when her family have to move when her Dad gets a new job. The film follows Riley on her first day at school and ice hockey try outs, but most of the film is seen from the perspective of the little people in Riley's head, her emotions, who sit in Riley's Head Quarters and are in charge of her control panel. Joy is in control and makes sure that Riley is happy, most of the time, and her memories are mainly happy. Things start to go wrong for Riley when Joy, Sadness and all Riley's core memories are sucked out Head Quarters when Joy and Sadness have an argument. The rest of the film watches as Joy and Sadness try to get back to Riley's Head Quarters and return her core memories. They have to find their way through Riley's long term memory, travel on the "train of thought" and get Riley's imaginary friend Bing Bong to help them restore order in Riley's life.

### Lesson Content

Go through the following exercises with your class before reading the script:

#### **Child Pose/Sadness**

Begin this pose by kneeling up on the floor, slowly lower your head onto the floor in front of your knees as you slide your hands back towards your feet, and just stay there and breathe deeply.

#### **House of Cards**

This pose can be tricky so can be done in pairs. Ask the children to sit opposite their partners a little distance apart. They can then lift their legs and place the soles of their feet against the soles of their partner's feet and hold hands.

#### **Joy**

Imagine you are holding a memory ball between your hands, gently, play with the ball, roll it between your hands, pass it out to the side, balance it on one hand, whatever you like, but slowly and carefully because memory balls are very precious.

## **Dragon Breathing/"Train of Thought"**

This is a very simple breathing exercise where you breathe in to the count of 7 and then as you slowly breathe out you make a "Hhhhaaaa" sound as if you were trying to fog up a mirror. For the purposes of this story we are going to make a "hoohooooo" sound like a train whistle.

## **Balloon Breathing**

Hold your hands together in front of your mouth with your palms together, take a big deep breath and as you blow out imagine you are blowing up a balloon between your hands, take three breaths to blow up your balloon, making your hands wider with every breath. When you have blown up your balloon release it to the sky.

## **Belly Breathing**

Lying on the floor ask the children to place their hands on their stomach and feel their tummy rise as they breathe in and fall as they breathe out.

Once you have practised these exercises it is time to read the story in a more mindful way.

Read the following script to help you read the story in a more mindful way. Be aware of the speed you are reading and the tone of your voice, imagine you are reading a bedtime story rather than a class story. Leave the children doing each relaxation pose/exercise for as long as you feel is appropriate, there is no right and wrong.

Ask the children to lie on the floor in their "**Sadness pose**" to begin the session.

We join the story with Joy and Sadness wandering around Riley's long term memory. Joy is worrying because Riley is losing her islands and they can't get back to Head Quarters.

"Come on!" bounced Joy, "We have to get back to Head Quarters before Riley loses any more islands!"

"I'm tired" moaned Sadness, I just want to stay here. Joy was not happy. She played with the memory ball in her hand while she tried to work out what to do next, (ok, slowly stand up and pick up your imaginary memory ball, remember what we did when we practised "**Joy**"?).

As Joy was thinking, she heard a noise coming from behind the shelves. A moment later a big fluffy pink elephant appeared. Joy recognised him instantly as Bing Bong, Riley's imaginary friend.

"Bing Bong!" shouted Joy excitedly, "you must know the best way for us to get back to Head Quarters.

"Is everybody sitting comfortably with their partner?"

Ok then I'll begin.

Brilliant, now sit down in front of your partner ready to do the **House of Cards pose** when I say the word "boat" remember you are going to put your feet flat against your partners feet and hold hands.

Of course I do," replied Bing Bong, "Follow me!".

He took them past the **“House of Cards”** (pause for a little while to allow the children to form the “house of cards” and sit in it for a few seconds, minimum).

They carried on through long term memory and stumbled across Riley’s dream production centre. Before they knew what was going on Bing Bong was causing a fuss and the TV bosses carried him off and through him into a balloon prison. (Can you help blow up some balloons to make Bing Bong’s prison? Remember how we blew up the balloons?).

Joy and Sadness helped Bing Bong escape and they ran off towards the **“Train of Thought”** (remember how we did the train breathing “hoohoooo”, do several rounds of train breathing). They jumped on the Train of Thought and it took them back to Head Quarters where Anger, Disgust and Fear were all so pleased to see them. It had been a tiring day for everyone though so they took a few minutes to just lie down and think how lucky they were to be all back together again.

Ok, make sure you have room to lie down flat on your back with your hands on your tummy, I would like you to do the **belly breathing** we learned, feel your tummy go up and down.

**Leave the children lying with their hands on their tummies feeling relaxed and calm for a few moments then ask them to slowly sit up.**

### Conclusion

Ask the children questions about how different they feel after the second time you read the story.

- Do they feel more relaxed?
- Do they feel sleepy?

Suggest times that they could use some of the breathing they have learned to help them stay calm.

- If they are feeling worried?
- If they can’t sleep at bedtime?
- If someone is making them cross?

These are wonderful skills for them to learn and for you as a teacher too. We all need tools to help us stay calm and focused, mindfulness is a wonderful way to do that and the younger we learn these vital life skills the more natural it is to use them when we feel the need in life outside the classroom.