

# Mindfulness: Defining & Utilizing This Concept Inside & Outside of School

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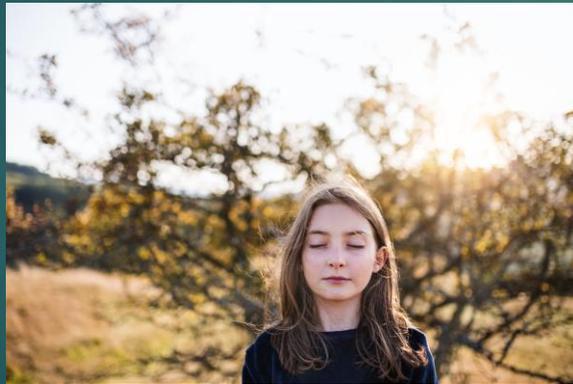
BUNKER HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL



# What is Mindfulness?



- ▶ **Definition:** "Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us."  
(Source: [Mindful.org](https://www.mindful.org))
- ▶ Mindfulness is commonly practiced through meditation and yoga; and we will discuss both of those concepts later in the presentation as well



# How to Practice Mindfulness

## How to Practice Mindfulness

mindful  
mindful.org

- 1** **Take a seat.** Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.
- 2** **Set a time limit.** If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as 5 or 10 minutes.
- 3** **Notice your body.** You can sit or kneel however is comfortable for you. Just make sure you are stable and in a position, you can stay in for a while.
- 4** **Feel your breath.** Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes out and as it goes in.
- 5** **Notice when your mind has wandered.** When you get around to noticing this—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath.
- 6** **Be kind to your wandering mind.** Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back.



By Mindful Staff

# Tips for Mindfulness

- ▶ You don't need to necessarily buy anything to practice mindfulness
- ▶ It is common for your mind to wander while practicing this concept; but it is important that you attempt to refocus yourself again to the task at hand
- ▶ Mindfulness takes time and practice to master
- ▶ What works for one person may not work for another; you may need to trial and error which approach works best for you



# Mindfulness Activity

- ▶ Right now, we will do a 3 minute mindfulness/meditative activity
- ▶ Please click on this link and follow along: [3 Minute Breathing Space](#)
- ▶ **Self-reflection:**
  - ▶ Let's take about 30 seconds to stop and silently think about how we feel now vs how we felt prior to completing that exercise



# Benefits of Mindfulness

- ▶ Mindfulness enhances the social-emotional skills of **self-regulation** and **self-awareness**:
  - ▶ These skills teach students how to recognize their thoughts, emotions, and actions
- ▶ Can alter brain structure in a way that can improve a student's reaction to stress
- ▶ Can positively influence the areas of the brain that influence perception and reasoning
- ▶ Can help reduce feelings associated with anxiety and depression



# How Mindfulness Relates to School

- ▶ **Students have a lot of responsibilities:** they juggle a full day of courses, different classroom expectations, assignments and assessments, and have their lives outside of school as well
- ▶ Learning the concept of mindfulness and incorporating this concept can offset the stress students may experience from school and home pressures
- ▶ Application of mindfulness can allow students to be more engaged and concentrated to the task at hand



# Mindfulness Activities: School Setting

- ▶ Students can use mindfulness in a daily capacity to:
  - ▶ Utilize Mindful Breathing
  - ▶ Count to 10
  - ▶ Practice gratitude
    - ▶ Students can take a bit of time to reflect internally about what they are grateful for
  - ▶ Body Scan
    - ▶ Check-in questions about how a student is physically feeling in that moment (Ex: "How is my breath? Is it shallow or deep?")

# Mindfulness Resources For The Classroom

- ▶ [Pinwheel Breathing](#) helps students practice deep breaths using a pinwheel
- ▶ [Muscle Relaxation](#) shows children how to start practicing mindfulness centered around how tense or relaxed their muscles are
- ▶ [Five Senses Exercise](#) shows children how they can use their five senses to be mindful
- ▶ [The Present Moment Worksheet](#) shows students what it really means to be present
- ▶ [Teaching STOP Mindfulness](#) demonstrates the main focuses of mindfulness
- ▶ [Breathing Boards](#) have students follow lines with their fingers while they practice breathing
- ▶ [Mindful Glitter Jar](#) gives students a visual of how thoughts settle after utilizing mindfulness
- ▶ [Being Mindful of Anger](#) can help students to reduce their stress when they are feeling overwhelmed
- ▶ [Draw Your Breath](#) is an art exercise that can help students become more self-aware of their breath and apply that knowledge to become more relaxed

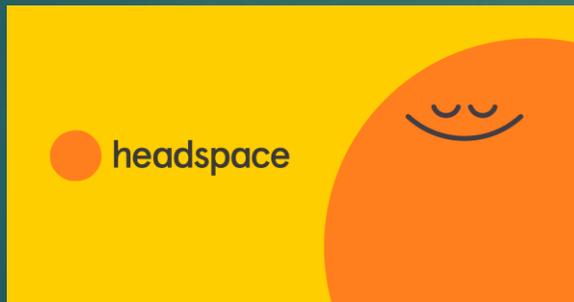


# Everyday Mindfulness Activities For Youth/Teens

- ▶ **Yoga/Meditation** (I.e. Practicing Poses/Mindfulness Meditation, Movement Meditation)
- ▶ **Listening to Music** (I.e. Taking the time to check emotions before hitting play, Reflecting on feelings after a song is done )
- ▶ **Deep Breathing** (I.e. Box Breathing)
- ▶ **Movement/Exercise** (i.e. Participating in a sport, Taking a walk, Doing an at-home workout, Dancing)
- ▶ **Puzzles** (i.e. Jigsaw puzzles, Crossword puzzles, Sudoku, Word Finds, Spot the Differences, Riddles, etc.)
- ▶ **Art** (I.e. Sketching, Drawing, Coloring, Painting, Sculpting)
- ▶ **Mindful Eating** (I.e. Eating according to your hunger, Taking the time to experience the taste, flavors, and textures)

# Mindfulness Apps

- ▶ [Sitting Still](#) is for teens and anyone interested in mindfulness
- ▶ [Headspace](#) teaches both parents and children about meditation for different age levels
- ▶ [Calm](#) provides mindfulness and sleep stories for children of different ages
- ▶ [Three Good Things: A Happiness Journal](#) allows children to practice gratitude each day



Graphic: Headspace.com



Graphic: Calm.com

# What is Meditation?

- ▶ A practice where we focus on our sensations, our emotions, and our thoughts
- ▶ Because meditation can only take a few minutes to make you feel more centered, in control, and balanced, it is easy to implement
- ▶ Let's now take a moment to do a quick Meditation Activity. Before doing so, please take a minute to grab a piece of a paper and a pen/pencil!



# Benefits of Meditation

- ▶ Can improve students' working memory capacity
- ▶ Can help you understand your relationship to mental and physical pain
- ▶ Helps you pay better attention when in the midst of a conversation
- ▶ Can improve your immune system via decreasing your stress level
- ▶ Can reduce your mind from wandering
- ▶ Can also improve sleep, compassion, and self-esteem level



# What is Yoga?

- ▶ Yoga began as a spiritual practice rooted in Indian philosophy that has since become a popular method of promoting both physical and mental well-being
- ▶ Yoga, as practiced in Western civilization today, puts emphasis on physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation
- ▶ Yoga can range from gentle to physically demanding in practice



# Benefits of Yoga

- ▶ Yoga may:
  - ▶ Reduce stress
  - ▶ Relieve anxiety
  - ▶ Help manage depression
  - ▶ Reduce lower back pain
  - ▶ Improve brain function
  - ▶ Help prevent heart disease



# Sources Used in This Presentation

- ▶ [Education First](#)
- ▶ [Kids Yoga Stories](#)
- ▶ [Headspace](#)
- ▶ [Healthline](#)
- ▶ [Mindful.org](#)
- ▶ [Mindfulness Everyday](#)
- ▶ [Psychology Today](#)
- ▶ [The Mindful Word](#)
- ▶ [The New York Times](#)
- ▶ [Waterford.org](#)



# Additional Resources in School

- ▶ School counselors are available in each middle school building to assist students with academic and social/emotional struggles they may be having, and this would include the items we discussed tonight



# Community Resources

- ▶ [WTPS School Counseling Department Community Resources](#)





**Thank you for attending my webinar this evening!**

Now, we will open up the webinar to any questions you may have.