

Mindfulness Activity Cards



Mindfulness 101

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practise of paying attention to the present. Too often, we are distracted by worries, by planning for the future, by rerunning past events in our minds, and more. Mindfulness is a way of clearing the mind to be in the current moment without judgement. Practicing mindfulness allows us to be fully present in our life and work, and improve our quality of life.

What are the benefits of Mindfulness?

Study after study shows the many benefits of Mindfulness for adults and children alike.

A few of the benefits include:

- The ability to regulate ones own emotions
- Increased resiliency (academically, socially, and emotionally)
- Increased ability to manage stress
- Increased motivation to sustain difficult tasks

Why should I use it in my classroom?

Our students' lives are becoming more and more complex. Academic and social pressures have changed drastically over the last few decades, as has technology's influence on student lives. Mindfulness gives students the tools to help themselves when things become overwhelming or difficult.

Melt downs and extreme behaviour are more present in our classrooms than ever before. Rather than blaming societal changes, we need to help equip our students with the tools to embrace the challenges in their lives and rise above them.

How should I introduce it to my students?

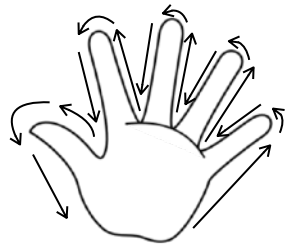
There is no one way to introduce mindfulness. However teaching mindfulness should be very explicit. Students need to know WHY they are doing mindfulness, otherwise they will not be as open to it. I also believe it is important to teach by example. As a teacher you should be practising mindfulness yourself.

I try to teach mini lessons about the brain so students get a better idea of how we are trying to “train our brain”. I teach about neurodiversity, neuroplasticity, parts of the brain (and their function), and more.

Best of luck on this incredible journey. If you have any questions about how mindfulness can be used in the classroom please send me a comment or question through TPT.

FIVE FINGER BREATHING

Put one hand on your desk with your fingers spread wide. Close your eyes. With your other hand, trace each finger. As you trace up one side of the finger breathe in. As you trace down the finger, breathe out. Continue tracing all of your fingers. Switch hands and repeat.



BALLOON BREATHING

Place your hands on your stomach and close your eyes. Imagine there is a balloon inside your belly. Breathe in, try to fill up the balloon as much as you can. Breathe out and try to deflate the balloon completely. Try to make sure that you are breathing into your belly and not just your chest.

PRAYER POSITION BREATHING

Place your palms together in front of your heart. As you exhale soften your hands so your fingers curl down. Next, inhale and push your palms strongly together. Repeat 10 times.

CIRCLE BREATHING

Draw a large circle in the air in front of you. As you draw the top half of the circle, breathe in. As you draw the bottom half of the circle, breathe out. Make sure to draw the circle and breathe as slowly as you can. Continue 10-15 times.

MUSH TO MOUNTAIN

Sit tall and strong like a mountain as you take a deep breath in. If someone were to gently push you, you should be strong enough not to waiver. As you exhale, let all of your muscles fat loose so your body turns to "mush". Continue to inhale and rise up to a mountain sit, and exhale down to a relaxed mush. Repeat 5-10 times.

MUSCLE MINDFULNESS

Sit in a chair and close your eyes. Beginning with your feet, squeeze all of your muscles as you inhale and let all of the muscles loose like jelly when you exhale. Next, do this tightening and loosening as you breathe with your legs, then your lower legs, and move all the way up your body.

feet > lower legs > thighs > stomach > hands
> arms > shoulders > face.

COUNTING YOUR TEETH

Close your eyes and your mouth. Use your tongue to count each of your teeth. Count the top row first, then the bottom row. Make sure to touch each tooth with your tongue and count slowly. Repeat if you like.

TUCK SIT

Sit on the floor with your knees tucked into your chest. Close your eyes. As you breathe in, squeeze your knees into your body. As you breathe out, let your knees loose. Repeat 10 times.

FOLLOWING THE BREATHE

Close your eyes and breathe deeply and slowly. As you breathe, visualize the path of the air as it moves through your body.

Follow the air as it goes in your nose, down your throat and into your lungs. Then follow the air as it leaves your lungs, travels up your windpipe to your throat, and out of your nose or mouth. Follow this path 5-10 times.

TARGETING ANGER

When you are feeling angry, sit and think about where in your body you are feeling that anger. It may be in your stomach, shoulders, jaw, hands, etc. It can be anywhere. Now, close your eyes and breathe deeply. Imagine the breath moving through your body to the place where your anger lives. Now exhale. Continue breathing into that area, and out, until the anger feels less strong.

BALL OF LIGHT

Close your eyes and picture a bright ball of light. As you inhale picture the ball growing and expanding. As you exhale, visualize the ball shrinking down to a tiny pinhole. Repeat 5-10 times or until you are feeling calmer/less angry

PARTNER MINDFULNESS

Partner A closes their eyes with one arm outstretched. Partner B should slowly trace their finger in squiggly lines on A's arm beginning at the wrist up to the direction the shoulder. Partner A must concentrate and try to tell Partner B to stop when he/she has reached the elbow crease. Switch partners.



CHAIR PUSH

Sit on a chair with your hands gripping the sides of the seat. Take a deep breath in. When you exhale try to list your body off of your seat by pushing down. Repeat 5-10 times.

CHAIR TWIST

Sit on a chair with your feet hanging down and your hands on your knees. Take a deep breath in as you sit up taller. When you exhale, twist your upper body to the right and try to grab on to the back of the chair. When you inhale, return to regular seated position. Exhale twist your body to the left and try to to grab the back of the chair. Inhale and return to normal. Repeat 5-10 times.

CHAIR LEAN

Sit on a chair with your feet hanging down and your hands on your knees. Take a deep breath in as you sit up taller. When you exhale, lean your right ear to your right shoulder. As you inhale sit back straight. Alternate sides. Repeat 10 times.

CHAIR ARM STRETCH

Sit on a chair with your feet hanging down. Hold your hands loosely behind the back of your chair. Breathe in slowly, as you exhale stretch your arms back and upwards. You should feel a stretch, but no pain. Repeat 10-15 times.

CIRCLE DRAWING

On a blank piece of paper draw or trace 8 circles (of any size). The circles should overlap in some places. Using one colour, a pen, or a pencil, draw a different design in each space.

INITIAL DRAWING

On a blank piece of paper write the first initial of your name. Rewrite this letter all over the page in different sizes, and styles. You can draw dotted lines, squiggly lines, zig-zags, bubble letters, block letters, etc. Make sure you are writing in a quiet space and try not to get distracted by what is going on around you.

SHADED DRAWING

Take a blank piece of paper and fold it 5 times. The folds do not have to be even, or straight. They can go any way. Unfold the paper. Using only a pencil, try to colour each box of the paper a different shade by adding more or less pressure to the pencil. Try to stay inside of the folded lines.

BLIND DRAWING

Choose something in the classroom you wish to draw. Look at it's shape, the lines that create it, and the space around it very carefully. Begin drawing the object, but do not look down at your paper. Look closely at the object, as you draw its various parts, but do not look at the paper until you are done.