

Mindfulness - Wellness Week

Step 1: Watch one of the following videos on stress and how our body sets us up to prepare to respond to stressors.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kO5I0p3IuiQ> – Suggested junior level (grade 8-9).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnpQrMqDogE> – Suggested senior level (grade 10-12).

Step 2: Brainstorm things that causes us to activate fight, flight or freeze response as a class.

Suggested answers:

- a test in school
- giving a presentation or having to answer a question in class
- getting into a fight with a friend or family member
- being in a class without anyone you know
- job interview
- asking someone out on a date

Step 3: What is mindfulness - share mindfulness definition with students.:

Any practice that allows you to be in the present moment, without judgement. This means that you are not thinking about a fight that you might have had with a friend in the past or about your presentation that you have coming up next week. You are completely focused on what is going on in the present moment.

Step 4: Explain how practicing mindfulness can be helpful: the why of mindfulness.

There have been numerous studies done all around the world on the positive impacts of mindfulness. As we saw in the video and from our brainstorming, we all have experienced situations that cause our brain to activate our fight, flight or freeze response. We may have had the feeling of “going blank” when you’re writing a test or having the feeling our hearts beating super-fast and feeling our palms and maybe armpits get sweaty as we get ready to deliver a presentation in front of the class. We may have said something hurtful to a friend or family member when we were upset and regretted afterwards. Mindfulness can help us deal with all of these situations a little bit better.

When we stop and take a few deep breaths or take some time to colour and destress, our brain deactivates the fight, flight or freeze response and allows us to better respond to the stressful situations that we face in our everyday lives.

Step 4: How do we do mindfulness? – share these activities with students, or perhaps, try one as a class!

- a) **Mindful Breathing** - breathing is something we do every day but knowing how to control our breathing is a very important part of mindful breathing.

Benefits:

- allows us to clear our mind
- reduces stress and anxiety
- allows us to be present
- allows us to have gratitude

How To Do It:

- find a silent or peaceful location
- unplug from all headphones and focus on your surroundings
- keep your back upright and hands resting where they feel comfortable
- let your body relax
- exhale completely through your mouth
- inhale through your nose for 4 counts
- hold your breath 7 counts
- exhale completely for 8 counts
- repeat this 4-7-8 pattern for at least 2 minutes

- b) **Mindful Colouring** – a creative mindful technique.

Benefits:

- helps you feel more present
- appreciate colours and calms your mind

How To Do It:

- find a peaceful setting
- gather materials (colouring sheet and colouring markers/pencils).
- begin colouring while focusing on your breathing
- try to let your mind stay in the moment and focus on the colouring rather than wandering off

- c) **Set an Intention** – reminding yourself what you want for the day will help your set goals and provide direction for the day. It can be big or small.

Examples:

1. *Today I intend to be kind to all those around me.*
2. *Today I intend to study for my science test for 1 hour after school.*

Benefits:

- more likely to achieve our goals
- keeps us grounded in the moment
- positive intentions lead to a positive attitude
- provides us direction

How To Do it:

- when you wake up in the morning, before reaching for your phone ask yourself how you feel
- verbally express what your intention is for the day – **say it out loud!**
- repeat this intention while focusing on your breathing
- **optional** – write down your intention or share it with a friend

Step 5: Share these mindful apps with students. Ask students if they have used any mindful apps or techniques in the past that have worked well for them.

- Headspace
- Calm
- My.Life
- Smiling Mind
- Insight Timer
- Three Good Things