

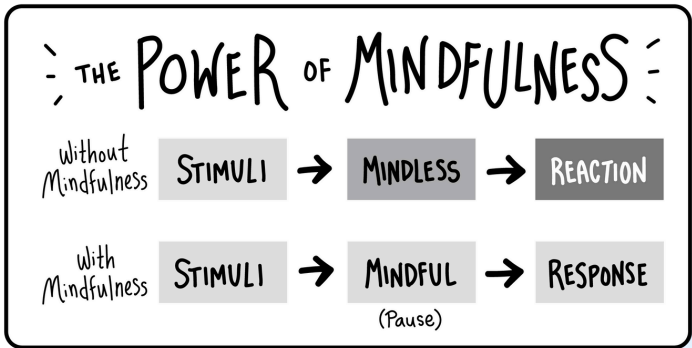
Mental Health Matters

What is mindfulness and how can it help me?



MINDFULNESS CAN HELP PEOPLE BECOME MORE AWARE OF THEIR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS, AND THAT INCREASED INSIGHT CAN OPEN DOORS TO NEW CHOICES. A CENTERPIECE OF MINDFULNESS IS OBSERVING THE PRESENT WITHOUT JUDGMENT—LEARNING TO MEET ONESELF WITHOUT JUDGMENT CAN BUILD COMPASSION AND KINDNESS. IN TODAY’S WORLD OF FAST-MOVING MEDIA, CONCENTRATION CAN BE DIFFICULT. MANY MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES ENCOURAGE SUSTAINED FOCUS, WHICH CAN ASSIST IN DEVELOPING THIS SKILL. RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS FOR TEENS:

- INCREASES OPTIMISM
- IMPROVES SOCIAL BEHAVIORS
- IMPROVEMENTS IN ATTENTION
- IMPROVES SELF-CONTROL
- REDUCES BULLYING
- DECREASES TEEN STRESSORS AND TEEN ANXIETY
- IMPROVES COMPASSION TOWARD ONESELF
- IMPROVES EMOTION REGULATION
- IMPROVES SCHOOL BEHAVIOR



THE FIRST FIVE

HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

Imagine that you are sitting by an airplane window, looking out at the clouds. Picture the soft, fluffy clouds floating peacefully below you. Focus on the different shapes and sizes of the clouds. Are they big and puffy, or thin and wispy? Are they moving slowly or quickly? Match your breathing with the movement of the clouds. Inhale as you imagine the clouds gently rising, and exhale as the clouds slowly drift away.

Mindful STOP

STOP is a way to create a “mindful moment” when you need it most, a way to turn your brain off “autopilot mode.” It’s easy to get caught up in all the stresses and activities of daily life. STOP is a ritual where we pause, check in with ourselves, and move on with more intention.



Stop

whatever you’re doing. Just pause for a moment.



Take a few breaths

Your breath is an anchor to the present moment. Let it draw your attention to right here, right now.



Observe

your experience just as it is. Notice where your mind is, what you feel, what you’re doing.



Proceed

mindfully, with intention. Use what you learned during your check-in to *respond* instead of *reacting* to what’s happening.



Learn more
tinyurl.com/calmingstrategiestoolbox

