



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS

Introduction

What is peace?

What is Mindfulness?

Check In

Mindful Breathing



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

INTRODUCTION

The Mission of Tools for Peace is to inspire people of all ages to develop kindness and compassion in everyday life. We envision a world where everyone is connected by kindness and compassion, and have created our programs to help make that vision a reality.

Life can bring us endless ups and downs. In the busyness of our daily lives we often experience difficulties and stress. While we can't always control the situations we find ourselves in, nor the people who surround us, we can change our relationship to them, and experience a greater sense of peace and wellbeing. In other words, rather than feeling like a passenger, we can learn how to get back into the driver's seat and grab hold of the wheel.

Documented studies have shown that kindness and compassion have many positive effects. They lead to increased wellbeing, happiness and good feelings, a strengthened immune system and a healthier heart, in addition to more positive interactions and relationships. Mindfulness and meditation have been proven effective in managing stress, anxiety and depression, which can interfere with our ability to be kind, and can negatively impact our relationships and our performance at school or at work.



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

WHAT IS PEACE?

Directions: In the circle below, write all of the words that relate to peace.

PEACE



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

WHAT IS PEACE?

In this program, 'peace' is defined as:

An internal state of calmness and openness, an inner sense of wellbeing that exists regardless of what is going on around us; a lasting, confident happiness that helps us be healthier and less vulnerable to the ups and downs of life.

DISCUSSION

- What does this mean to you?
- Have you experienced this?

EXPERIENCE OF PEACE JOURNAL

Recall a time when you experienced PEACE as it is defined above. What were you doing?

What about this activity brings you peace?

What are you thinking and/or feeling during this activity?



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

EXPERIENCE OF PEACE CHART

ACTIVITY

STATE OF MIND

DISCUSSION:

- What if you could feel that sense of peace no matter what you were doing?
- What if you could carry that sense of peace with you at all times?



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION?

Two of the most powerful tools to develop our experience of peace are mindfulness and meditation.

Mindfulness goes hand in hand with meditation, where we rely on our mindfulness to stay focused and present. Both can help us cope with stress, anxiety, depression, and any other difficulties.

Stop, Breathe & Think introduces two aspects of meditation:

Active Thinking Meditation

Where thoughts and the imagination are intentionally directed by thinking positive thoughts, visualizing positive images, using positive words, and feeling positive feelings.

Resting the Mind

Letting go of thoughts, images, and feelings.

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to what is happening right now, by observing what's going on inside (your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations) and outside (your interactions and surroundings) with an open mind and without judging.

Mindfulness has a sense of curiosity, openness, and acceptance.



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

CHECK IN

NAME _____ DATE _____

How are you? Take a deep breath and think about how your mind and body feel.

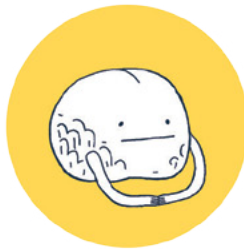
I'M MENTALLY...



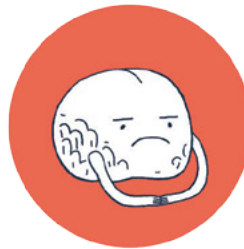
GREAT



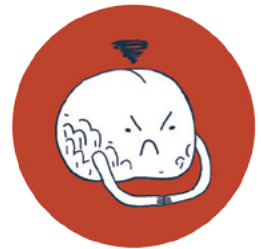
GOOD



MEH

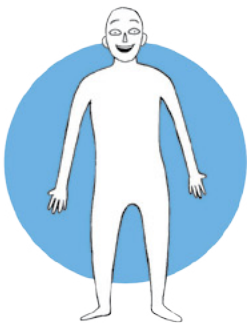


POOR

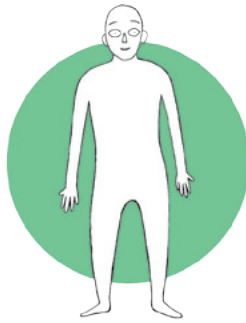


ROUGH

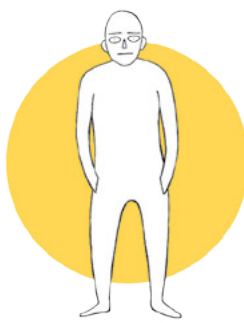
I'M PHYSICALLY...



GREAT



GOOD



MEH



POOR



ROUGH



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

CHECK IN

NAME _____ DATE _____

Circle at least 3 words that describe how you are feeling.

I'M EMOTIONALLY...

Appreciative
Encouraged
Content
Enthusiastic
Excited
Fulfilled
Grateful
Glad
Hopeful
Happy
Proud
Joyful
Satisfied
Relieved
Thankful

Balanced
Caring
Compassionate
Concerned
Empathetic
Loving
Kind
Non-judgmental
Equanimous
Open-hearted
Open-minded
Trusting

Afraid
Anxious
Clingy
Concerned
Conflicted
Hesitant
Guarded
Judgmental
Nervous
Panicked
Torn
Suspicious
Uneasy
Relieved
Worried

Alienated
Ashamed
Defeated
Depressed
Despairing
Discouraged
Disappointed
Disconnected
Helpless
Guilty
Embarrassed
Heartbroken
Insecure
Homesick
Hurt
Insulted
Isolated
Lacking Confidence
Lonely
Powerless
Rejected
Unhappy
Sensitive
Sad
Vulnerable
Remorseful

Angry
Closed-minded
Arrogant
Defensive
Disgusted
Competitive
Envious
Frustrated
Full of Contempt
Full of Dislike
Grumpy
Impatient
Irritated
Jealous
Pessimistic
Judgmental
Resentful



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

WHAT TO EXPECT

All sorts of things come up when you practice mindfulness and meditation—thoughts, feelings, sounds, and physical sensations.

Sometimes it can feel uncomfortable, other times it goes really smoothly and feels great. Don't worry—it's all part of the experience. The point is to notice and observe what's going on with an open mind, and to learn not to get hung up on anything in particular. If you get stuck, just bring your attention to something neutral, like your breathing.

The meditations throughout this curriculum are intended to encourage and inspire thinking and acting in positive ways. They give you a chance to broaden your perspective, which can help you settle yourself down when you are upset or stressed. It may not happen right away, but be confident that, with practice, it will!





STOP, BREATHE & THINK

FINDING YOUR POSTURE

To help you become present and comfortable, you can experiment with your posture:

- Try leaning from side to side, forward and back, back to the center.
- Now, roll your head slowly forward, to the left, to the back, to the right, and then up and back to center.
- Experiment with different ways to hold your body, head, and shoulders until you find a comfortable, balanced way to sit.

FINDING YOUR BREATH

Now take a quiet moment to focus on where you feel your breath. Take three slow breaths and while you are breathing, try to notice where you feel your breath the most.

- Put your hand up to your nose and notice what your breathing feels like.
- Put your hand up to your chest and notice what your breathing feels like.
- Put your hand on your stomach and notice what your breathing feels like.

MINDFUL BREATHING

Now that you are present and connected to your body and breath, begin the mindful breathing exercise.



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

MINDFUL BREATHING JOURNAL

Were you able to find a comfortable posture? What worked best for you?

Were you able to keep your attention on your breathing?

While you were breathing mindfully, what thoughts, emotions or physical sensations came up for you?

What challenges did you experience while practicing Mindful Breathing?



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

ACTIVITY

Draw four different ways you experience peace below.

1.	2.
3.	4.



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

QUICK CHECK-IN PRACTICE

While you are going about your day, try to remember to pause every once in a while to Stop, Breathe & Think:

STOP

Just pause for a moment – you can stop what you are doing, or you can just pause for a moment in your mind.

BREATHE

Take a few deep breaths, paying attention to your breath as it goes in, and out.

THINK

With openness, curiosity and without judgment, just notice the thoughts that are running through your mind, and the quality of your inner dialogue. Become aware of any emotions or physical sensations you may be feeling. If you notice any tension in your face, shoulders, hands or body, just take a moment to breathe, let go of the inner dialogue, and relax your muscles.

Then, just go back to whatever you were doing. This simple practice can be done as much as you like, and whenever you remember.

PRACTICE ANYTIME

You can practice mindfulness anytime, anywhere, and people don't even have to know you are doing it. You can do any of these things mindfully just by noticing your breathing, what your body feels like, what you are thinking and what you are feeling.

Try practicing mindfulness while walking, taking the bus, riding a bike, playing sports, opening a book, answering the phone, or getting out of your chair.



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

TIP OF THE WEEK

Embracing Mindful Moments

“A smooth sea never made a skillful sailor.” —English Proverb

If you are like most people, it can seem like your mind wanders the most when you sit down to breathe mindfully. Rather than getting frustrated, try to view it as a great opportunity. No matter how little or how often your mind wanders, each time you become aware of your mind wandering and choose to bring your attention back to your breathing, you are strengthening your mindful muscles.

Practice Makes Perfect!

You're not going to be a Master of Mindfulness right away. The more you do it, the better you get. Just like lifting weights to make your body stronger, you're practicing mindfulness to help strengthen your brain.

Making Time to Practice

- Schedule it in. Often the best way to make room for practice in our busy day is to put it on your calendar.
- Try small steps. Set your goal each day, even it's for a short period of time, or decide that you are going to do a quick check-in every time the phone rings, or the signal turns red, or every time somebody honks.
- Be patient and open. Try to set realistic expectations, and always take a moment to appreciate whatever benefits that come, however small.