



**MINDFULNESS**  
education exchange

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### Mindfulness:

- “Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”  
-Jon Kabat Zinn
- “Brining awareness to one’s experience—mindfulness can be applied to our sense, thoughts, and emotions by using sustained attention and noticing our experience, without over-identifying.” –Mindful Schools
- “Noticing what’s happening right now.” –student

### Relaxation and Grounding:

#### **Tense and relax** (*adapted from Progressive Muscle Relaxation*)

Either sitting or lying down, tense different groups of muscles for a period of time (e.g. 5 seconds) and then relax those muscles, paying close attention to the feeling of the tension and the feeling of the relaxation. One way to do this is to begin with the feet and progressively move upwards through the body.

#### **Focus on movement—tic, toc** (*from “The Mindful Child”*)

“Starting from an upright seated position, children slowly swing their bodies to the right (keeping their bottoms firmly [seated]) and then slowly swing back through their center to the left. You can set a rhythm by beating a drum [or other instrument] or having the children sway to the phrase, ‘Tic, toc, like a clock, until we find our center.’ Right on ‘tic,’ left on ‘toc,’ [right with ‘like a,’ left with, ‘clock,’ right with ‘until,’ left with ‘we find,’ right with ‘our,]’ and returning to settle into a sense of our centers with the word ‘center.’” (pgs. 83-84)



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### **Crazy 6's**

Stand up. Begin counting down from 6 to 1 while shaking an upraised hand with each count. Once you get to 1, put the first hand down and raise the other hand to shake it while counting down from 6. Then raise a foot and do the same, followed by the other foot. This is one round. Having completed a round, begin a new round whose starting number is one less than the starting number of the last round (e.g. starting with 5 for the second round). The first round should be soft and slow, with each progressive round getting faster and louder. As you finish off the final round (counting one shake for each limb) then you can reverse the process, increasing the numbers again while getting slower and quieter with each round.

### **Breath experiments**

- Deep breathing in nose/out mouth
- Squeegie breath
- Flower and candle (breath in sweetness of a flower, blow out the candle)
- Inhale through nose, HISSING out mouth
- Bunny breath: three quick inhales through nose, one long exhale out nose

### Positivity:

#### **Gratitude jar**

Write down expressions of gratitude and place them in the class gratitude jar. The topic of gratitude can shift based on class activities, and the notes can be used in various ways (e.g. picked at random and shared anonymously, or even used for art projects).



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### **Secret observer kindness notes**

Hand out a small piece of paper to everyone. They write their name on it and hand it back. Randomly redistribute these papers, making it clear that students cannot let others know the name on the paper that they receive. If someone gets their own name, have them simply raise their hand and you'll trade it out. Students should put the pieces of paper somewhere private and safe. For the rest of the class (or any set period of time), students are to secretly pay attention to the person whose name is on their paper and notice positive details about them. Remind them throughout the class to maintain their awareness of that person. At the end of the class, they will write something positive about their secret person on the back of the piece of paper with the secret person's name on it *while being mindful of how it feels to do so*. They can then hand the piece of paper directly to their secret person or give it to the teacher to hand out anonymously. They should try to be mindful of as much of the following as possible: how it feels to receive a compliment; how their secret partner reacts to receiving a compliment; and how it feels to have been the cause of that reaction.

### **Failure ta-da** (from *Ted DesMaisons' blog, tedwordsblog.com*)

Volunteers come to the front of the room one at a time.

"That person shares with pride a made-up failure of theirs. Once they've shared the 'failure', the rest of the group gives them a wild and rousing ovation in celebration. The person on stage should take a grand and vigorous, deep 'ta-da!' bow, soaking in the applause to full effect. The game finishes when everyone's had the chance to celebrate having 'failed.'"



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**Change the channel** (*adapted from the “Mindfulness Skills for Kids and Teens” workbook*)

Introduce the parallel between channels on a TV and mood/state shifts in our own minds. Then students put their heads down on their desks. Gradually guide them through imagining themselves in a place they like; doing an activity they really love; and being surrounded by people/characters/animals they love. Have them mindfully check in with how this simple imaginary act makes them feel. Let them know that this will be their positivity channel, which they can “click” into at any point by again imagining positive settings/ activities/ companions. You can have them practice this by instructing them to go into different channels (e.g. annoyance or boredom. It’s best to avoid vulnerable ones like sadness or fear) and then “clicking” back into the positivity channel.

Focus and Awareness:

**Focus on sound** (*adapted from the MindUp curriculum and Mindful Schools curriculum*)

With eyes closed or looking downwards, simply be aware of sounds in the environment, attempting to perceive them as clearly and in as much detail as possible. To provide a more concrete focal point, you can ring a chime or bell (including via a computer). Students listen as carefully as possible to identify the moment they cease to hear the ringing, at which point they raise their hand.



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### **Focus on breath** (*adapted from the MindUp curriculum and “The Mindful Child”*)

Have students sit upright with shoulders and face relaxed. After close their eyes or looking downwards, they will pay attention to the sensations associated with the breath wherever they are clearest (usually the nose, chest, or belly). Younger children can keep their eyes open and use a pinwheel to make their breathing more obvious and exciting. Another alternative for young children is to lie on their backs with legs flat on the floor and place a stuffed animal (or bean bag) on their belly. They can then imagine that they are rocking the stuffed animal to sleep with their breath. As they breathe in the animal rises, and as they breath out the animal drops.

### **Three corners**

Ask basic “how are you feeling” questions, and then give students several seconds to mindfully check-in with their experience in that very moment. Designate three different corners (generally something like yes, no, in-between), and when you give a cue students will indicate their response by moving to the appropriate corner. Examples of questions and responses: Do you feel hungry (yes, no, a little); do you feel restless (restless, calm, in-between); do you feel tired (yes, no, a little); do you feel clear-headed (clear, fuzzy, in-between); etc.

### **Quick-pic**

Participants get into pairs. In each pair, the partners decide who will be Person A and who will be Person B, noting that it doesn’t matter much since both partners will be in both of the game’s roles. In round one, Person B closes her/his eyes and Person A holds him/her by the wrist and leads Person B



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(carefully!) around to take some “snapshots” of the surroundings. In other words: Person A leads Person B to a place; by moving her/his hand up or down the arm of Person B, Person A has Person B “zoom” in or out by leaning forward or leaning back (hand moves up the arm=zoom out, and vice versa); when Person B is in the right position, Person A does a quick squeeze of Person B’s wrist and person B opens her/his eyes for a split second and then closes them again. This repeats for a number of “snapshots,” where Person A can show Person B all sorts of images, both up close and from a distance. After several minutes, round two begins and the partners trade roles.

#### Connection:

##### **Mirror images**

Participants get into pairs. In each pair, the partners decide who will be Person A and who will be Person B, noting that it doesn’t matter much since both partners will be in both of the game’s roles. In round one, Person A moves slowly and in-place, and Person B does their best to mirror every movement made by Person A. After a little bit of slow moving, you can instruct Person A to move at different speeds. Then round two begins and the partners trade roles.

##### **Kindness circles**

Students form two concentric circles of even numbers, with the inner circle facing out and the outer circle facing inwards. Have the different circles rotate until you say freeze, and then whichever people are across from each other share something kind or positive about each other.