Educator Guide: Mindfulness Lesson

Recommended for Grades:

4th grade

Time:

4 minutes

National Health Education Standards:

This activity aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: shapeamerica.org.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Identify at least two things they can do every day to stay mentally healthy.
2. Demonstrate one way of being mindful.

Lesson Description:

In this lesson students will learn what mindfulness is and different ways they can be mindful. There is a lesson worksheet for students to complete as they go through the lesson.

Pre and Post-Test Question:

Use the following question with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool, etc.) You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. What is mindfulness?
    a. Thinking about your future so you are prepared
    b. Studying hard for an upcoming test so you get a good grade
    c. Paying full attention to what you're doing so you're fully present in the moment

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Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself or your students as you complete the Mindfulness Lesson. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs.

- Mindfulness – a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations
- Stress – feeling worried, nervous, or uncomfortable about something, which can be caused by different situations, pressures or events
- Yoga – a form of exercise originating in India that involves holding postures that stretch the muscles, doing breathing exercises and using meditation techniques to calm the mind

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Mindfulness Lesson Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this worksheet as you move through the Mindfulness Lesson.

1. List three ways being mindful can help you.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

2. What is mindful eating?

3. List two different ways you could be mindful throughout your day.

   a. _____

   b. _____

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Mindfulness Lesson Worksheet Answer Key

1. List three ways being mindful can help you.

   Answers will vary, but could include any of the following: pay attention better, stay calm under stress, listen better, be more patient, get along with others better, feel happier and enjoy things more, etc.

2. What is mindful eating?

   Mindful eating is paying attention to how your food feels in your hands, how it smells, how it looks, and how it tastes.

3. List two different ways you could be mindful each day.

   Answers will vary, but could include any of the following: mindful eating, yoga, breathing exercises, using a mindful jar, etc.

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Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.

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Anxiety Disorders in Children

What Are Anxiety Disorders?

Children with anxiety disorders have too much fear and worry that lasts a long time. Children with anxiety often have problems at school or home because of it. A small amount of anxiety is normal in childhood. At different ages, some fears are common like fear of being away from parents and fear of the dark. Children can also have anxiety when they are in new or stressful situations.

Children can have so much anxiety it causes problems. Some children:

- Have aches and pains, like headaches or stomachaches
- Feel restless, tired or tense
- Have trouble focusing or sleeping
- Can also have tantrums or meltdowns because of anxiety

What Causes Anxiety Disorders?

There are many reasons why a child may have anxiety. It can run in families and start at birth. It can also start after exposure to stressful events and problems meeting developmental milestones.

What Are the Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders?

Children with anxiety may:

- Be very upset when caregivers leave them
- Be very shy and quiet in new situations and with people not in their family
- Stay away from places or activities that make them feel nervous
- Worry a lot about many things (They may not be able to control the worry and may often talk about or ask questions about the things they worry about.)
- Not talk in stressful places, but talk easily at home
- Feel very scared of certain things like animals, heights, being in an airplane, or seeing blood

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How Are Anxiety Disorders Treated?

Anxiety will not get better without help. Treatment for mild anxiety starts with psychotherapy. In psychotherapy, a health care provider helps your child by understanding how they think and feel about things. Children will learn to:

- Replace their anxious thoughts with helpful ones
- Control their anxious feelings with coping skills

Your child will need to practice what they learn outside of sessions. This is an important part of therapy. Parents are often part of therapy sessions so they can help their child practice the skills. Psychotherapy is usually done by psychologists, mental health counselors, and clinical social workers.

- Medicine can help decrease feelings of anxiety. Medicines may be prescribed to help your child's anxiety.
- For moderate to severe anxiety, treatment that uses psychotherapy and medicine together may be most helpful.

How Can I Help My Child's Anxiety?

- Be with your child and support them during stressful times. If your child gets anxious remain calm. Have them take deep and slow breaths. They can pretend they are blowing up a balloon. Do not let your child pass up things that raise their anxiety.
- Ask your child to talk about their worries. You can tell them what you saw that made you think they were anxious. For instance, if their body shakes when they are anxious. This is called a non-verbal cue. Do not tell your child not to worry.
- Have a daily routine or use a schedule so your child knows what to expect.
- Praise your child for facing fears and being brave in stressful situations.
- Talk with your child's school to let teachers know how they can help your child practice using their coping skills. If anxiety causes problems for your child at school a special plan called a 504 Plan or IEP may be needed.

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Mental and Emotional Health Resources

- 988 Lifeline, 988lifeline.org, call or text 988
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America, adaa.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/
- Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, chadd.org
- Children's Wisconsin, childrenswi.org/find-care/mental-behavioral-health
- KidsHealth, kidshealth.org
- Mental Health America, mhanational.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), nami.org
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), nimh.nih.gov
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (Student Services/Prevention and Wellness), dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health

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Transcript

Slide 1

Zoe: One thing that can help us stay calm under stress, and help us deal with our emotions in a healthy way, is learning to be mindful.

Miguel: I'm guessing many of you have heard of mindfulness before, but may not know exactly what it means. Well, mindfulness means slowing down and paying full attention to what you are doing, so that you are fully present in the moment.

Zoe: It's the opposite of rushing, or multitasking. We're going to learn all about mindfulness and ways that we can be mindful throughout the day. But first, make sure you open the worksheet and either save it or print it. Complete this worksheet as you move through this lesson.

Slide 2

First, let's talk about how being mindful can help you. Mindfulness helps you pay attention better, stay calm under stress, listen better, be more patient and get along with others better. Plus you'll feel happier and enjoy things more!

Sounds great, doesn't it?! Being mindful helps people in just about every part of life.

Slide 3

You need to practice mindfulness to get good at it though. The more you practice, the better you get. Practicing makes mindfulness feel more natural when you need it in your everyday life. This can help you when you're stressed, when you have to do something difficult, or when you need to focus your attention on something.

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Slide 4

Miguel: Let's take a minute to do a simple mindfulness activity. First, sit in a relaxed, comfortable position. We're going to focus on our breathing. If you want, you can close your eyes.

Zoe: Breathe normally, and simply pay attention to your breath. As you breathe in and out, just notice each breath.

Miguel: Your mind may wander away from paying attention to your breathing. You might start thinking about what's for lunch, or what you're going to do after school. Whenever you notice your mind wandering, gently remind yourself to pay attention to your breathing again.

Zoe: Relax and pay attention to your breathing. Can you feel the place where the air tickles your nostrils? Do you notice how the breath gently moves your body? Can you feel your belly or your chest moving as you breathe?

Miguel: All right, great job everyone. Try to work your way up to doing this for 5 minutes at a time.

Slide 5

There are other ways to be mindful throughout your day too. For example, you can be mindful while you eat. If you're having an orange or an apple for a snack after school, instead of rushing to eat it, pay attention to things like how it feels in your hands, how it smells, how it looks, and how it tastes. People are often in such a rush that they don't pay attention to the food that they're eating. Mindful eating can help you enjoy your food more, and it can help you make healthier choices too!

Slide 6

Another way to be mindful is to practice yoga. Yoga can help you feel calmer when life is busy and stressful. It allows you to stretch your body, slow down your breathing and relax your mind. Practicing yoga is a chance to learn stretching, breathing and thinking skills that you can use to calm yourself down the next time you're feeling worried or overwhelmed.

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Slide 7

Miguel: We do yoga sometimes in Miss Blume's class, and I really like it.

Zoe: And we made mindfulness jars in art class the other day. When I get really overwhelmed I can shake it and just focus on all the glitter slowly falling to the bottom of the jar.

Miguel: There's so many different ways to practice mindfulness…so even if you don't like yoga or mindfulness jars, you'll find something you like!

Zoe: And remember that it takes some practice. Try to practice some form of mindfulness every day, and pretty soon you'll be a pro!

Miguel: Well, we've gotta run. See you later!

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