15 Simple Mindfulness Activities to do with Your Students

**Research confirms that for children, Mindfulness can:**

* Mitigate the effects of bullying
* Enhance focus in children with ADHD
* Reduce attention problems
* Improve mental health and wellbeing
* Improve social skills when well taught and practiced with children and adolescents

**Tips for Teaching Mindfulness to Kids and Teenagers**

When you are trying to teach your kids or young clients about Mindfulness and its benefit, we recommend you begin with a few guidelines:

1. Make sure they are ready to give mindfulness a try; if they are full of energy and itching to run and play, it may not be the best time for practicing mindfulness for the first time.
2. Explain what Mindfulness is. *A moment-to-moment awareness of one’s experience without judgment.*
3. Explain the benefits of Mindfulness. *Decreased stress and depression, increased mental clarity, greater resilience and well-being, improved overall health, sense of calm.*
4. Debrief after each Mindfulness activity.

**15 Simple Mindfulness Activities to do with Your Students**

1. Kind Thoughts. In pairs, practice kind thoughts by prompting your students to think of 5 people they’d like to send kind wishes to.
2. Bang on a pot/pan and invite students to signal to you when they no longer hear the sound ‘hanging’ the air.
3. Squeeze and let go, tensing different muscles in the body for 5 seconds and then slowing releasing.
4. Have a ‘mindful’ snack by describing the smell, texture and taste of the food. This can be done with a chocolate chip, raisin, etc.
5. Explore textures in nature, take a walk to collect several different objects and observe/describe how each feels.
6. Practice noticing with art. Have students choose an item in the class. Explain that this activity is all about ‘seeing’ the item. Have them sketch it.
7. Take a mindful walk. Periodically stop and ask students to listen for as many sounds as they can hear.
8. Learning to listen. In pairs, have students sit with their backs to each other. One student is given an object by you and must describe it without naming it for their partner to draw.
9. Buddy breathing (with younger students can be done with a stuffy). Have students lean back in their chairs and rest a pen or pencil on their chest. Invite them to take slow breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth, watching the pen/pencil rise and fall.
10. Listen to some music and see how many different instruments you can each hear.
11. Explore gratitude. In pairs, have students go back and forth (for as long as they can!) to name as many things possible that they are grateful for.
12. Deep breathing. Breathe deeply in and out. Notice how the breath feels as it moves in and out of your body. Notice how the air feels on your skin. Pay attention to any sensations that you notice or any sounds that you hear.
13. Five-finger starfish meditation: Have students hold up one hand in a starfish position (fingers spread wide) while they gently trace up and down each finger with the other hand, focusing on regular breathing at the same time.
14. Square breathing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFdZXwE6fRE>
15. Mindful colouring. Invite students to relax and be more in the moment with mindful colouring. https://www.betweensessions.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/mindfulness-coloring-book-4\_25-16.pdf

*For more information and access to resources that other teachers are finding useful in our district, please contact drew.williams@sd72.bc.ca to join our Mindfulness Team.*