

MINDFULNESS



What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens.

The power of mindfulness with children

Whether your child is anxious or not, mindfulness will improve the behaviour and emotional well-being of *all children*.

Here are just a few amazing ways mindfulness will improve a child's behavioural emotional well-being.

Strengthens self-control

The goal of mindfulness is to intentionally focus your attention on the body and the breath, but because of the way we're wired, we naturally get distracted and often become restless & confused.

The 'magic moment' in mindfulness is the term used for the moment we realise we've lost focus (and likely started thinking about what we'll eat for lunch or if our friend is mad at us) and intentionally bring our focus back to our body.

When your child practices consciously shifting their attention, it is the equivalent of their brains self-control muscles lifting weights.

They are literally reinforcing and strengthening the neuropathways - sending signals- that underlie focus and self-control.

Lower's anxiety and stress

Sadly, in today's world, rates of anxiety in children are skyrocketing. Kids are more stressed than they've ever been due to fast-paced schedules, academic pressures and less time spent in play and outdoors.

When a child experiences anxiety, it activates the bodies protective stress response kicking the 'fight or flight' response into motion. It is the same when a child becomes overcome with anger.

Mindfulness exercises are an extremely effective way to stop the anxiety symptoms in children that result (stomach aches, rapid breathing, fast heartbeat etc) and re-regulate blood pressure, breathing and heart rate. Even better, practicing mindfulness consistently is one of the best ways to lower a child's anxiety by keeping your child's baseline stress level down.

Increases positive moods

Inherent to the practice of mindfulness is an acceptance of the present moment, just as is. Much of the anxiety and depression we experience as humans stems from the avoidance and resistance of our felt emotions.

It's easy to discourage your child from expressing their intense feelings (because it's uncomfortable!) but this is the most common mistake in raising an emotionally intelligent child.

Feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant are universal and the sign of an emotionally healthy human being! Mindfulness activities teach your child to accept their emotions and experiences in the moment, without critical or negative judgment, allowing them the space to be acknowledged, felt, and as a result, worked through.

Increases self-esteem

Many kids struggle with a negative self-image and are overly hard on themselves. Mindfulness-based interventions significantly raise self-esteem due to the emphasis of self-acceptance and self-compassion.

Improves health and body Image

Mindfulness practice has been found to not only improve physical health but also promotes a positive body image. Studies have shown that mindfulness-based interventions can help positively, impact our hearts, brains, immune systems and more!

Improves social skills and communication

Mindfulness exercises will help your children to get in touch with their thoughts and feelings. With increased awareness of how they're feeling in the moment, it encourages them to have a greater ability to listen & communicate more thoughtfully.

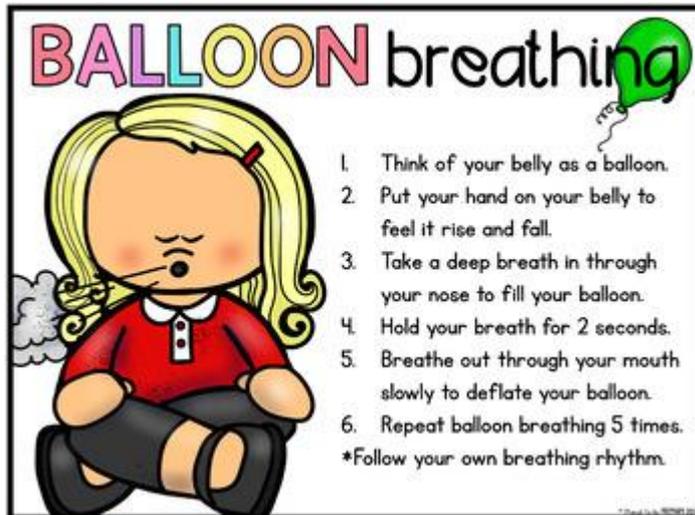


Mindfulness Ideas

Breathing

The first element to teach and get the children to master should be breathing.

'Belly balloon'



KS1 tip – Get the children to lie down and put a bean bag or toy on their tummy so they can see it going up or down.

Take 5 breathing exercise

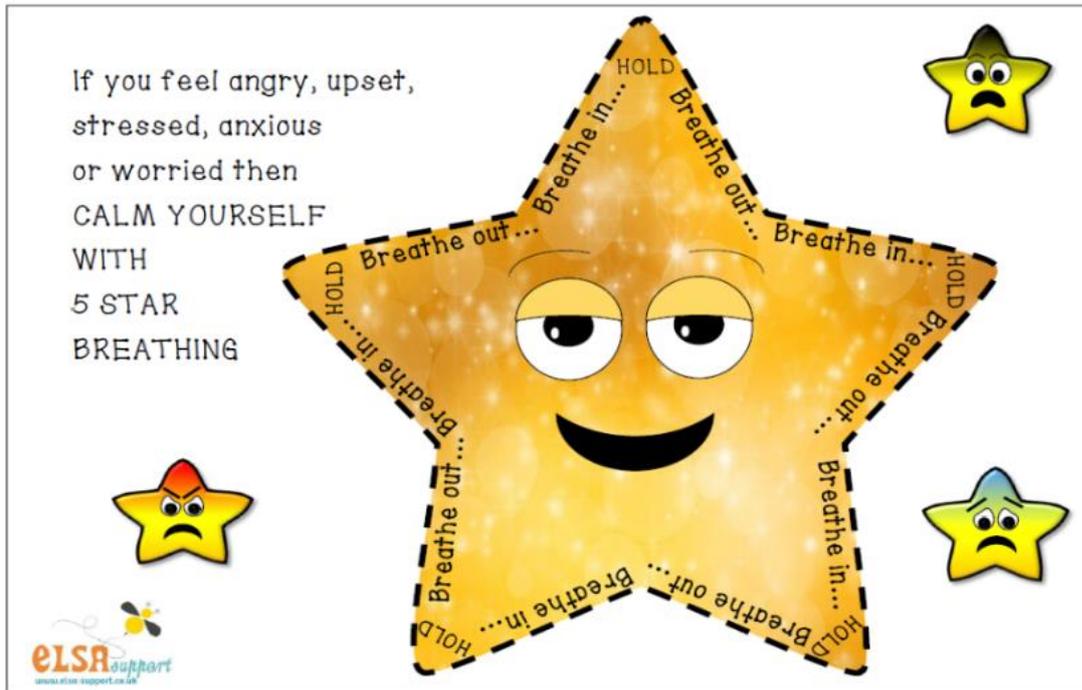
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sh79w9pn9Cg>

KS1 & 2 breathing exercises

https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/calm_breathing.pdf

Teaching Breathing exercises

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWbsexdah-c>



Flip your lid (getting angry) - explanation & strategies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bKuoH8CkFc&feature=youtu.be>

<https://youtu.be/y72xEUU4FHg>

<https://springwelllearningcommunity.co.uk/why-do-we-flip-our-lids/>

Self Confidence:

Superhero stance – teach them to stand legs apart, hands on hips, chin/head up. An open body is a confident body. Younger children might dress up in cape or mask. Tell yourself, your superheroes name & are your powers – hold for 2 minutes.



In as little time as two minutes, the superhero stance elevates confidence. It reduces stress and anxiety. Body posture influences our brains and, consequently, our feelings. According to science, if you pose like a super-hero, you'll think like a super-hero, and act like a super-hero

Meditation

One easy and fantastic way to practice mindfulness with children is the use of guided meditations.

Tense & release – clench their hands, tense shoulders and then release – repeat.

Yoga, mindfulness & active interactive adventures -

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>

Body Scan Meditation: <https://www.mindful.org/body-scan-kids/>

Meditation stories – take the children on a journey somewhere else e.g. beach (uses senses e.g sand to touch, water, wave music)

Kids yoga stories – Gratitude <https://www.kidsyogastories.com/grateful-yoga/>

Guided Imagery https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1-0JJw_IQ

Peace Out – relaxation session created by the Cosmic Kids yoga team.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAgUMTexJVs&list=PL8snGkhBF7njO0QvtE97AJFL3xZYQSGh5>

Other Mindful Activities

Other breathing activities – make and blow a pin wheel

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-tp-1298-mindfulness-summer-pinwheel-activity>

Bubble bottle & wand – pipe cleaners/straws

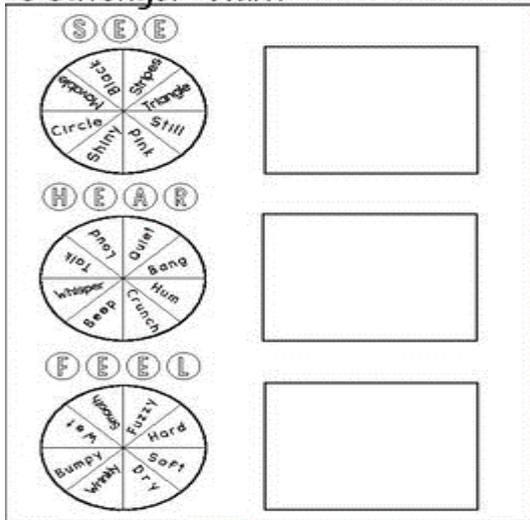
Make a stress ball – balloons filled with sand etc

Mindfulness colouring sheets – Twinkl

Glitter Jars/bottles <https://preschoolinspirations.com/glitter-jars/>

Mindfulness Scavenger Hunt

Mindfulness Scavenger Hunt SPIN Paperclip.
Find Match or Draw



Listen to a piece of music – how does it make you feel?

Inner weather forecast – use the weather to help describe your emotions e.g. sunny (happy)
rain (sad) stormy (angry)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/super movers/ks1-pshe-believe-with-naomi-wilkinson/zichd6f>

<https://www.fablefy.com/>

Resources that can be purchased:

Big Life Journal <https://biglifejournal.com/>

The Happy Self Journal - growth mindset & positive reflection www.happyselfjournal.com/

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Mindfulness-Scavenger-Hunt-Kids-appreciate/dp/B07B2Y3SWQ>

Share a mindful quote of the week – repeat at the end of every day

Quote examples:

MISTAKES ARE PROOF THAT WE ARE TRYING 😊

In today's rush, we all think too much, seek too much, want too much and forget about the joy of just being

Be the reason someone smiles today 😊



This idea was shared with us.



Keeping Well this April

'If you have to stay at home because of coronavirus (COVID-19), it's important to take care of your mind as well as your body. You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious. It is OK to feel like this – everyone reacts in their own way to challenging events and uncertainty. It's important to remember that staying at home may be difficult, but you are helping to protect yourself and others by doing it.'

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/ev-ery-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

We realise that our schools lie at the heart of our communities and in an effort to provide the little comfort we can at such challenging times, we have produced a wellbeing calendar to support our students and families as they begin their temporary learning journey.

April
2020

29 Plan Keep your brain active by creating a weekly timetable	30 Mindfulness Monday Is there a book that you've been meaning to read?	31 Check in Tuesday Make a list of the people you'd like to get back in touch with	01 'Wellbeing Wednesday' Take some time for you ☺	02 Thankful Thursday What three things are you thankful for today?	03 Film Fiesta What series or sequel could you binge watch tonight?	04 Snap it Saturday How about an indoor only photography challenge?
05 Sing it out Sunday Join Gareth Malone's online choir!	06 The Running Bee Foundation Check out Joe Wickes on YouTube at 9am to help keep active!	07 Check in Tuesday Who could you catch up with today?	08 'Wellbeing Wednesday' Take some time for you ☺	09 Thankful Thursday Could you create a poster for your widdow thanking our keyworkers?	10 Feel-good Friday Make a playlist of your favourite, uplifting tunes	11 Craftroom Take some time to get crafty!
12 Treasure Hunt Could you try an Easter egg hunt with some challenging clues today?	13 Go Outdoors Get outside and enjoy an hour long walk in the fresh air	14 Check in Tuesday Whose face haven't you seen in a while? Facetime/Skype a friend and cheer them up!	15 'Wellbeing Wednesday' Take some time for you ☺	16 'PJ Day' Just relax and watch your favourite TV programme or film in your PJs!	17 Feel-good Friday Make sure that you are taking the time to talk about how you are feeling	18 Challenge yourself Keep your brain active with a sudoku or some reading
19 Staying on Top https://www.nhs.uk/condi-tions/str-ess-anx-iet-y/-depression/moodzorg-mental-well-being-audio-guides/	20 Mindfulness Monday Take some time to relax with a guided meditation on YouTube	21 Check in Tuesday Why not write a letter to a relative who is perhaps isolated?	22 'THE BIG PEDAL' How many of you could go for a cycle today? Awarenessdays.com	23 Thankful Thursday Who could you leave a thankul post it note out for at home?	24 Feel-good Friday Make a bucket list of three things you would like to achieve by the end of 2020.	25 Yoga Check out Yoga with Adrienne for an introduction into this wellness practice
26 Ready, steady, cook! What can you make out of the most bizarre ingredients?	27 'National Gardening Week' What could you turn your green fingers to today?	28 Check in Tuesday Send an email or text message to someone to make them feel better?	29 'Wellbeing Wednesday' Take some time for you ☺	30 Thankful Thursday Who do you appreciate? Make sure they know it today!	01 Feel-good Friday Create a space that makes you feel good. Could you rearrange a room?	02 Spontaneous Quiz Maybe try creating your very own quiz?
03 Coming Soon	04 Coming Soon	05 Coming Soon	06 Coming Soon	07 Coming Soon	08 Coming Soon	09 Coming Soon

