**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 I 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

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-OJJw_IQ

Peace Out – relaxation session created by the Cosmic Kids yoga team. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAgUMTeJVs&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
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/supermovers/ks1-pshe-believe-with-naomi-wilkinson/zjchd6f

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.