

Frameworks EQ COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER™

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ) & MINDFULNESS MATTERS



HOW DOES BEING MINDFUL MATTER?

by Brian Schank, Senior Education Program Specialist

The definition of mindfulness is: “A mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment while acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.” Mindfulness works together with social and emotional learning, and when they are taught and utilized together, they have significant impact on individuals and the world around them. To highlight the two more, social and emotional learning works from the outside-in with the teaching of skills to recognize emotions and learn to manage and regulate the impact or behaviors from emotions. Mindfulness works from the inside-out, focusing on our internal capacity for relationship building, and practicing empathy and kindness. When we as adults and students become aware of and internalize the connection between our emotions, thoughts, and bodily sensations, we are then better equipped to regulate our emotions which help to alter behavior, stress levels, relationships, and our ability to focus. Mindfulness practices connect our inner and outer experiences and help us see the connection between the two.

EARLY LEARNING

Mindfulness can begin with our youngest children. From birth, newborns can sense when the adults around them are having feelings of anxiety, frustration, and stress. Instilling mindfulness in our children begins with our parents and caregivers. When we intentionally approach children with a calm tone and relaxed body, they are more likely to pick up on our relaxed state and take in our mindfulness attitude. Adults and children co-regulate each other. Before approaching a child in distress, the adult should pause, take a few deep breaths, observe what is happening, and proceed. This exercise helps regulate our emotions and projects a calm, peaceful attitude towards the child. The most effective way to bring mindfulness to our youngest children is to embody it.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As children grow older, they are able to truly practice the art of mindfulness with the guidance of a trusted adult. Meditating is an extremely useful mindfulness tool. It allows children to focus on the “here and now” and how their mind and body are responding to the present moment. Instead of having children use mindfulness techniques in times of need, we should be teaching them they can use mindfulness in their daily routine. Mindfulness exercises can be a regular part of their daily routine, helping children explore new feelings and sensations, including those feelings that are exciting, neutral, or unfamiliar. Teaching children how to acknowledge their big feelings helps them to become more comfortable in discussing, recognizing and accepting their emotions. Children who see trusted adults do simple mindfulness exercises are also more likely to stay in the present moment and not get caught up in fleeting emotions or experiences.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school is a big transition for students, they are shifting from childhood to adolescence and begin to face the challenges of increasing academic pressure, relationship struggles, hormonal changes, and self-image issues. Mindfulness is a tool in the Emotional Intelligence toolbox that helps students cope with the difficulties they face daily. Being present in the moment helps students to identify their emotions (self-awareness) and cope with those emotions (self-management, responsible decision-making). Using mindfulness will help to improve relationships, increase self-esteem, improve decision-making skills, and decrease stress and pressure. Mindfulness is a tool that is used for the rest of their lives.

HIGH SCHOOL

High School offers new stresses and pressures from tests and homework to preparing for college or the workforce. As students work through this transition, they seek ways to help them cope with their daily life stressors and plan for their future. Practicing mindfulness helps to reduce stress, improve physical and mental health, boost cognitive performance, increase empathy, effective emotion regulation, and increase social skills. When young adults practice mindfulness the easier it becomes to choose healthy coping strategies, and the classroom will transform into a community in which there is a sense of harmony and clarity.

COPING SKILLS & ACTIVITIES



CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS

by Mabel Filpo
Community Programs Specialist-
Early Childhood

Cultivating mindfulness helps strengthen self-awareness, become more present, and increase curiosity. This allows you to be more flexible with what is happening today in your life and more focused on future goals. Mindfulness focuses on the present moment, instead of dwelling on the past. It allows for proactive coping of emotions and thoughts and helps plan for future stressors. Mindfulness is accessible to us through different practices such as meditating, taking the time to reflect on your thoughts and feelings, or just taking a deep breath. It is a way to show kindness to yourself and continue strengthening your Emotional Intelligence (EQ). Here are some ideas to become more strategic about planning your mindfulness moments:

1. **Practice growth mindset:** Instead of focusing on limitations, focus on the positive.
2. **Self-care starts today:** Make self-care goals for yourself.
3. **One-minute-deep breathing:** Start your day with mindful breathing.
4. **Start small:** Take 1 minute to reflect on your biggest emotion of the day. What was the emotion? What was your physical reaction? How did I manage the emotion? Was that the best approach to manage it?

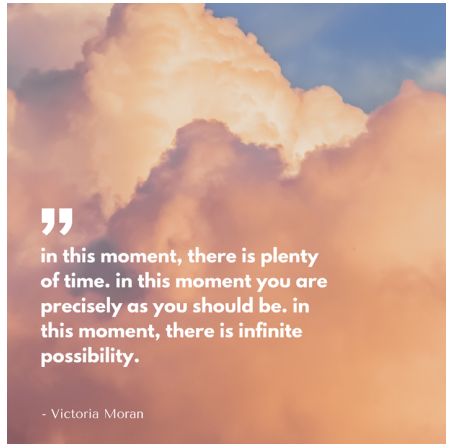
RESOURCE AND READINGS

by Elizabeth Molitor
Education Program Specialist



As the school year begins take a few minutes to model mindfulness for your kids. Whether in the classroom or at home it is important to step back and notice your surroundings. Look at all the changes that have been made in such a short amount of time! Our kids are resilient and so are we. Slow down and take stock of everything you have learned and adapted to in just a few short days. In the next few weeks focus on being present in the moment. Observe your thoughts and feelings as you go throughout your day. Make time for mindfulness for both you and your kids.

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/integrating-mindfulness-in-classroom-curriculum-giselle-shardlow>



MINDFULNESS CAN BE FUN

by Siomara Bridges-Mata
Director, Community Initiatives
& Advocacy

Practicing mindfulness doesn't have to only be about breathing exercises or sitting in silence, it can be energetic and fun! You can practice mindfulness during ordinary activities or even adapt familiar games to engage your family members and/or students. Mindfulness is about being present. Here are some fun activities you can try this week:

1. **Doodling:** Gather markers, a sheet of paper, put on some music, and doodle on the paper without stopping for 2-3 minutes.
2. **Dance:** Have a "one-song only" dance party at the start or end of the day, where all participants can't stop moving/dancing until the song is over.
3. **Balance:** Stand on one leg and keep your gaze on a focal point, have a conversation with someone or you can make it more challenging by closing your eyes.
4. **See, feel, hear:** Pause where you are, see 3 things, feel (touch) 3 things, 3 things, and listen for 3 different sounds. Write it down or share it with a friend.
5. **Taste test:** Use a blindfold and experience eating small food, like raisins, grapes, crackers, cranberries, as if were your first time.
6. **Take a walk:** Look up and look down and see what you notice.

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