GEM
GET EXPERIENCE IN MINDFULNESS
AN AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR AGES 10 & UP
Mindfulness

Mindfulness is...
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

Jon Kabat-Zinn Definition (Founder of Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction clinic at UMASS)
Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally
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<th>Mindfulness for Health and Wellness</th>
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**Physical Health**

- Improves immune system function
- Stimulates brain activity
- Helps regulate sleep
- Decreases pain sensitivity

**Emotional-Social-Mental Health**

- Decreases stress, depression and anxiety
- Increases attention and focus
- Improves balance and emotion and hormone control
- Reduces overall negative thinking and negative self-talk
1: Intentions and Goal Setting

Understand what mindfulness means and how it relates to health and wellbeing as a tool for stress management

2: Awareness and Attention

How to use mindfulness to focus attention and be aware in the present moment

3: Self-care: Stress Reduction and Relaxation

How to use mindfulness to take care of the body and mind by managing stress

4: Communication and Relationships

How to mindfully listen and communicate thoughts and feelings

5: Gratitude and Acceptance

How to practice gratitude and acceptance and how it relates to being mindful
Techniques

Mental Focus (Meditation)
Guided contemplation practices increase mental focus, self-regulation skills and body relaxation.

Strength and Flexibility Postures
Stretching in combination with the breath to increase the mind-body connection and decrease physical tension.
**Strength and Flexibility Postures**

**Mountain**
Stand straight with feet planted firmly on the floor. Feet should be parallel and slightly apart (about 2 fists in between). Ankles in line with the knees and knees in line with the hips. Lift and spread the toes then softly plant them back down. Balance weight evenly between both feet. Arms should be comfortable at sides with palms facing forward, face relaxed, and shoulders back and down. Imagine a straight line starting from the feet up through the crown of the head and lengthen with the tailbone toward the floor and the head toward the sky. Stay for 20 seconds breathing easily.

Challenge: Practice with eyes closed. Physically feeling the sensations of the body while in the pose.

Extended Mountain: Inhale and slowly raise straight arms above the head trying to get the elbows aligned with the ears. Palms facing each other.

**Waterfall**
From Mountain, inhale and reach up to the ceiling and then exhale and begin to reach fingers tips towards the wall behind. Aim to point fingers at the space where the wall and ceiling meet. Lead the stretch with the chest. Focus on not straining the neck or bending back too far where it is uncomfortable.

**Crescent Moon**
From Extended Mountain, stag hands together with pointer fingers raised pointing to the ceiling. Inhale and lift fingers towards the ceiling, exhale and slowly draw a curved line with the tips of the pointer fingers to the right to a point where it feels uncomfortable but not painful. Hold here for one breath and deepen the stretch on the exhale. Inhale to return back to the center and reach as high as possible, exhale and release down to the left. Repeat on each side three times.

**Forward Fold**
From Mountain, inhale and then exhale as you bend forward at the hips. With legs straight, cross forearms and hold the elbows, or if possible reach for the heels with the palms of the hands. Engage the thigh muscles inward. With each inhale, slightly lift and lengthen the front torso and with each exhale release a little more into the fold. Focus on trying to press the chest to the thighs.

Challenge: Lean slightly forward and lift up onto the balls of the feet.
Strength and Flexibility Postures

**Cat**

From Tabletop, exhale and begin to round the back like a cat, moving first the tailbone, then the spine, the neck and lastly the head. Tuck the chin in towards the chest and gaze towards the belly. Inhale as you move in the opposite way to Cow.

**Cow**

From Tabletop or Cat, inhale and begin to move the spine and chest forward towards the floor starting with the tailbone, spine, neck and then the head. Lift the chin and chest and gaze towards the sky. The body creates a U shape with the back and head. Exhale as you move in the opposite way to Cat. Repeat the cycle of cat and cow 35 times, moving with the breath.
Techniques

Breathing Exercise
Conscious breathing to increase mental focus, decrease physical tension and to connect to the present moment.

Mindfulness Immersion Technique (MIT)
Non-traditional but practical activities to demonstrate everyday application of mindfulness.

Reflection
Reflection and contemplation time to gain insight into how these skills can be used to manage stress.
MIT Example: Wellness Wheel
Wellness Wheel

Reinforces concepts of self-awareness and self-acceptance in the present moment

Introduces concepts of intentions and goal setting
Wellness Wheel

Please fill in the corresponding section in the wheel, for each dimension, to the degree or amount of which you feel the statement applies to your current lifestyle.
Social Wellness

How we relate and connect to others

Self-Assessment:

- I am aware of others feelings and can respond in an appropriate manner.
- I have at least 3 people with whom I have a trusting relationship.
- I am able to set and respect my own and others boundaries.
Spiritual Wellness

How we establish peace and meaning in our lives

Self-Assessment:

- I have a sense of meaning and purpose in my life.
- I trust myself and others and am able to forgive and let go.
- Principles, ethics and morals provide guides for my life.
Emotional Wellness

How we understand and cope with feelings and emotions

Self-Assessment:
- I express myself and feelings appropriately.
- I have a sense of control in my life and am able to adapt to change.
- I have a sense of fun and laughter.
Professional Wellness

How we feel fulfilled in work or education

Self-Assessment:

- I have a balance between school/work and other areas of my life.
- My beliefs and values about education/finances are harmonious with my behavior.
- I have educational/financial plans for the future.
Intellectual Wellness

How we seek out new experiences

Self-Assessment:

● I have goals to learn a new skill or study a particular topic.
● I would describe myself as a lifelong learner.
● I commit time and energy to professional and self-development.
Physical Wellness

How we maintain a healthy body

Self-Assessment:

- I eat a balanced nutritional diet.
- I exercise at least 60 minutes per day for youth or 2.5 hours per week for adults.
- I am generally free from common illnesses.
Environmental Wellness

How we take care of the global and our personal environments

Self-Assessment:

● I recycle plastic, glass and paper products when possible.
● I maintain a clean and organized room/home/desk.
● I spend time outdoors.
Self-Assessment

- Which section has the least color?
- Which has the most color?
- Is your wheel balanced?
Goal Setting

- Be positive and encouraging. Start your goal with “I will...”
- Add the action that you would like to complete. “I will practice meditation...”
- Include a frequency or amount of time that is reasonable for you. “I will practice meditation for 10 minutes...”
- Set a deadline for yourself to complete the goal. “I will practice meditation for 10 minutes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of next week.”
- Review your goal, and rate your confidence to achieve it from 1-10.
Visualization

This contemplation practice will help you achieve your goals.

Visualizing ourselves successfully achieving our goal makes us more likely to actually achieve it.
We collected data from over 1000 participants both youth and adults last year to show:

- **72% of participants increase knowledge of positive mindfulness-based stress management techniques.**
  - Learning how to identify personal stressors and ways to reduce them.
- **After the program, 75% of participants can set personal wellness goals and determine steps to reach them using mindfulness.**
- **Over 90% of participants plan to adopt at least one new positive mindfulness-based stress management technique** as a result of the program.
Some participants of the program have said:

“I really enjoyed it and it was such a calm and peaceful thing to do. My body felt so relaxed. I want to try to do the whole thing again at my house in the mornings because I enjoyed it and it made me feel relaxed.” - Youth at a DE middle school

“It is so beneficial for everyone. It made by back feel better. I wish I could start my day this way everyday.” - Teacher at a DE middle school

“I thought that the part where we [were laying] down and tried to stay still was my favorite part. I learned how to calm down when I am stressed out.” - Youth at a DE middle school
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GET EXPERIENCE IN MINDFULNESS

Authored by Breanna Banks and Sarah Bercaw, GEM (Get Experience in Mindfulness) is an Awareness and Acceptance Mindfulness-based Stress Management program for ages 10 and up! Through research based and theory driven techniques, youth (and adults) will learn how to establish a mind and body connection, creating an enhanced sense of self awareness and developing the ability to cope with difficult situations with ease and composure.

NOW AVAILABLE AT SHOP4-H.ORG/MINDFULNESS
USE CODE NEAFCS18 TO RECEIVE 25% OFF YOUR PURCHASE OF THE NEW GEM CURRICULUM!
THIS CODE IS VALID THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30TH

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