LESSON 7
Mindfulness
Prerequisite: Completion of Lessons 1-6

45min

Objectives  students will be able to...

* Describe and practice mindfulness.
* Identify situations when mindfulness is useful.
* Describe the effects of mindfulness.

*Digital Lesson: Mindfulness Maze

Materials

* A/V equipment for the video
* Breathing Strategies Cards
* Breathing Strategies posters
* 4 square page (1 per student): clipboards, scissors, pencils
* Chart paper
* Markers

Teacher Notes

Mindfulness is when you pay attention in a special way and live in the present moment (noticing your thoughts, feelings, surroundings, and your body). Mindfulness can lead to increased calmness, increased ability to regulate emotions, and is linked to empathy. Mindfulness techniques should be intentional and can include things like taking deep breaths or focusing your eyes on something specific. This lesson will focus on explaining what mindfulness is, how it’s helpful, and how to practice it.

Last time, we learned about what it means to show compassion to ourselves. We learned a mnemonic device ‘Self-CARE’ to help us remember how to show ourselves compassion. Turn and talk to a neighbor about these questions: What does ‘Self-CARE’ stand for? How can we show ourselves compassion? Have a couple of volunteers share out with the class. Today, we’re going to talk about what it means to be mindful or have mindfulness and why it helps us.

Mindfulness is when you pay attention in a special way and notice your thoughts, feelings, surroundings, and your body. It can help you be calm and work through strong negative emotions.

Let’s check out a quick video together to see how being mindful, also called mindfulness, can be helpful to us. In this video, look for someone who learns to use mindfulness and someone who shows compassion.

Show video: Breathe People, Breathe

In this video, we saw Brandon and Tye feel some strong negative emotions. We also saw Alex who used a mindfulness technique to help her friends work through their strong negative emotions.

Discuss as a class:

- What strong negative emotions did Brandon and Tye have? How do you know? (body language, facial expressions, words/sounds)
- Who had empathy for Brandon and Tye and showed them compassion? How?
- What mindfulness technique did Alex teach her friends? How did it help them?

Have students turn and talk to a partner:

- Can you think of a time when a mindfulness technique like balloon breathing would
Debrief Cont.

Activity: Mindfulness Practice

7-10 min
Format: Direct instruction, small group work

Debrief
5 min
Format: Class discussion

Closing
2 min
Format: Formalize learning with the whole group, partner share

Evaluation
5-10 min
Format: Assess with partners

Now that we've seen one mindfulness technique, let's learn a few more mindfulness breathing techniques. Remember that mindfulness is when you pay attention in a special way and notice your thoughts, feelings, surroundings, and your body. It can help you be calm and work through strong negative emotions.

Use the Breathing Strategies cards to teach students the 4 types of breathing.

- For each one, teach them that they should breathe in through their noses and out through their mouths.
- To help them be mindful, they should focus on their feelings, body, and surroundings as they breathe.
- They should also try to focus on “blowing away” their strong negative emotions.
- Demonstrate and quickly practice each one together as a class.

Divide students into 4 groups. Put one breathing strategy poster in each corner of the room. Have students rotate through each poster/corner for a few minutes and practice that breathing techniques with their group. As they rotate, have them take notes on the 4 square notes page. The page is scaffolded to facilitate discussion later.

Walk around and monitor/help students as they complete the activity.

Review what mindfulness is again and why it is helpful.

Discuss as a class each of the strategies that they tried, what they liked about each one, what was challenging about each one, and when they might use each one. Hint: If they are having trouble with times to use each one, steer them towards times they might feel strong negative emotions.

As they share, make an anchor chart: “When We Can Use Our Mindfulness Breathing Strategies”

Turn and talk: How can mindfulness help us manage strong negative emotions?

Have a few students share out after the turn and talk.

Discuss as a class:

- How can it help us get along with others?
- How can it help us show compassion to ourselves (remember Self-CARE)?

Have students share their favorite breathing strategy with a partner and practice it.
Extensions

* Display the breathing strategies posters permanently.
* Keep the breathing strategies cards in your “take a break spot.”
* Practice breathing strategies at morning meeting/closing meeting regularly.
* Additional whole-class mindfulness techniques included below that you could teach.
* Additional Suggested Reading for Students:
  * Breathe like a Bear by Kira Willey
  * Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Lauren Alderfer
  * Master of Mindfulness: How to Be Your Own Superhero in Times of Stress by Laurie Grossman and Mr. Musumeci’s 5th Grade Class

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Learners needing support:

Notes for next time

Learners ready for extentions
**Back To Back Breathing**

Find a partner and sit on the floor back to back. Sit tall and close your eyes if you want to. Decide who will start - that person begins by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly, and then continues to breathe slowly and deeply. Their partner should feel the expansion in their partner’s back each time they breathe in and then try to sync their own breathing so that both partners are breathing in time together.

**Tummy Breathing**

Lie on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on your stomach. Breathe in deeply though your nose and feel the stuffed animal rise, and then feel it lower as you slowly exhale through your mouth. Rock the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of your stomach.

**Elephant Breathing**

Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant’s trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

**Bubble Breathing**

Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Begin by imagining you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and then, as you breathe out slowly and gently, imagine you are blowing bubbles into the room. Imagine the bubbles are filled with peace or love or happiness and that you are filling the whole room with a peaceful, happy feeling. As you keep breathing slowly and blowing your imaginary bubbles, feel your body become calm and relaxed.
**Balloon Breathing**
Sitting in a comfortable position, place your hands around your mouth as if you were about to blow up a balloon. Take a deep breath in through the nose and, as your slowly exhale through your mouth, start to spread your hands out as if you are blowing up a great big balloon. Hold your hand position as you inhale again and then spread your hands further as you exhale. Once your balloon is as big as it can be, gently sway from side to side as you release your balloon up into the sky.

**Shoulder Roll Breathing**
Choose a comfortable sitting position. As you take a slow deep breath in through your nose raise your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe slowly out through your mouth, lowering your shoulders as you exhale. Repeat slowly, rolling your shoulders up and down in time with your breath.

**Take Five Breathing**
Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.

**Bumblebee Breathing**
Sitting comfortably, gently place the tips of your pointer fingers in your ears and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and then hum quietly as you slowly breathe out.
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