

Mindfulness



WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY IS OCTOBER 10TH

Sometimes, we can get overwhelmed by the challenges we face throughout the day. It can feel like our responsibilities are piling up and our brains feel jumbled up and cloudy. In times like these, practicing mindfulness can help us clear our minds and teach us to take things one step at a time.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means paying full attention to something. It means slowing down and taking time to really notice what you're doing. Being mindful is the opposite of rushing or multitasking. When you're mindful, you're taking your time.

Why is it important?

Mindfulness allows us to think more clearly, take the time to slow down and calm our minds and bodies, and thoroughly think about what we say or do in different situations. It also allows us to get in touch with ourselves, others, and the world around us! When things get stressful or overwhelming, mindfulness can prevent us from feeling burnt out. This can be helpful when you have a lot of school work to complete or you're experiencing big changes in your life.

How often/how long should I practice this?

We can practice mindfulness every day! In times of high stress or frustration, when we want to really enjoy a moment with our loved ones, or when we want to focus on an important task. Mindfulness can be applied to all situations and can help us think more clearly, tackle tasks we need to complete, and put more thought and time into our plans and actions!

What is mental health and why is it important to take care of our brains?

Like eating healthy or taking care of our hygiene, it's also important that we take care of our brains too! Some ways we can take care of our mental health are: unwinding after a stressful week by doing something we enjoy, talking about our feelings with friends and family, or journaling our thoughts throughout the day. Our mind and body work together to keep us healthy and happy, so we must take care of our brains just as much as we do with the rest of our bodies!

Breathing Through Bubbles

Daisies and Brownies

Using a super bubble solution, we are going to try out some different types of breathing! This breathing experiment will highlight different types of breathing and how each of them makes us feel. For example, when a person is feeling anxious or worried, they may use a deep breathing technique to calm themselves. This exercise allows us to get in touch with how our breathing affects our minds and how our body and mind are connected!

Materials: Liquid measuring cup, a gallon container, disposable plastic water bottle, 6 cups of water, 1 cup of dish soap, 1 tablespoon of glycerin or corn syrup

Steps to make your super bubble solution:

1. Add six cups of water into one container
2. Pour one cup of dish soap into the water
3. Stir slowly until the soap is mixed in, but try not to let the bubbles form as you stir
4. Finally, add your glycerin or corn syrup to the container and stir until the solution is mixed together. You can use bubble solution right away, but to make your bubbles even better, put the lid on the container and let your super bubble solution sit overnight!
5. For your bubble wand, with the help of an adult, take your plastic water bottle and cut it in half through the middle. Once the water bottle is cut in half, you may recycle the bottom half and keep the half with the cap as your wand. Remove the cap and dip the wide open end into your bubble solution and slowly pull it out. Wait a few seconds, and then blow through the top!

Now that you have your super bubble solution, let's try out some different types of breathing and see how they affect our body and mind!

1. Take short quick breaths when blowing your bubbles and record how many bubbles you blow and how that type of breathing makes you feel.
2. Take normal resting breaths when blowing your bubbles and record it.
3. Take deep long breaths when blowing your bubbles and record that as well.

After you finish these exercises, reflect on each type of breathing. How did they make your mind and body feel? How could you use different breathing techniques in times of stress?

Types of Breathing	Number of Bubbles	Feeling

How can you use these different breathing techniques in times of stress?

Glitter Jars to Gather Your Thoughts

Juniors and Seniors

Think about how your thoughts can get jumbled throughout the day or in times of conflict. How can stillness allow stability in the mind and give us an opportunity to think about what to say/do next? How does taking a moment to settle our mind help us think more clearly?

This glitter jar is going to show us how we can think more clearly by being still and giving our thoughts some time to settle! This jar can also be used as a “calm down jar.” In times of conflict between you and friends or family, shake the jar and allow the glitter to settle before sharing what you have to say next. This gives you an opportunity to really think about what you want to say and how it will impact the person you are speaking to!

Materials: Mason jar, spice jar, or plastic water bottle. Glitter, different color beads, or Lego pieces. Food coloring and water.



Steps to make a glitter jar:

1. Fill your container of choice to the top with water
2. Pick three colors of glitter, beads, or Lego pieces. One color will represent thoughts, one will represent feelings, and one will represent behaviors or urges. Drop a few items of each color glitter into the water. Each color represents an element of your mind. Seal the jar and add a few drops of food coloring. Seal the jar with its lid or duct tape.
3. Ask yourself what kinds of things will make the glitter swirl. Think about events that may stress you out or frustrate you. Think of positive events. Think of events in the foreground and events in the background. With each event, continue to swirl the jar to see how it becomes difficult to keep track of our thoughts, urges, and feelings.

You might find yourself shaking and swirling the jar throughout the day. Maybe we are running late? Swirl the jar. Our big sister eats the last pancake for breakfast, and it leads to a fight? Shake the jar. We hear scary things on the news in the car ride to school? Swirl the jar. We get to school and find out we aced the test? Shake the jar.

Record your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors below and circle whether you swirled, shook, or left the jar still.

Thoughts: _____	Swirl	Shake	Still
Feelings: _____	Swirl	Shake	Still
Behaviors: _____	Swirl	Shake	Still

What is one thing we can do to get the glitter to settle and see clearly again?

Does the glitter disappear when our jar is still? How does the glitter at the bottom of the jar represent our thoughts, feelings, and urges? _____

Grounding in the Greenery

Cadettes and Ambassadors

This is an opportunity to use your five senses in nature to connect with ourselves and the world around you. When doing this, you are taking the time to notice different parts of the area you are exploring that you wouldn't normally pay attention to. Don't be afraid to ask questions of those enjoying this nature walk with you!

Materials: Comfy clothes and shoes, a pen and paper if you wish to record what you notice during your nature walk, a disposable or reusable bag to collect any treasures you see along the way!

Steps:

1. Before beginning your nature walk, take three or more deep breaths to notice how you're feeling. How do you feel about going on this walk? Are you excited? Calm? Feel the bottoms of your feet and listen to your surroundings. What do you hear that stands out?
2. Although you naturally may want to run, climb, and explore your environment, make sure to bring your attention back to your surroundings. Make observations of the size, color, shape, texture, smell, or sound of any of the things you're noticing. Through your observations, take notice of some of the natural treasures you may find. Collect them to share with those with you on your nature walk! Be sure to take deep breaths to give yourself time to take in your findings and share them with others.
3. Before ending the walk, allow time to unpack the events of your nature walk! Check in on your breathing, notice your feet, and reflect on how your mind and body are feeling after the nature walk. What were some of the things you felt, saw, heard, smelled, or noticed? What stands out the most about your nature walk?
4. As you prepare to leave, make sure you leave no trace and collect all of your belongings. An important lesson of your nature walk is to take care of the environment and leave our surroundings as we found them.

Record your nature findings and thoughts below:

Sources:

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