



Mindfulness

During the Mindfulness mini-lessons, students are learning the benefits of mindfulness and being self-aware of thoughts, emotions, their body and the environment. They will explore different strategies to determine which strategies will help them best in daily lives. The key message is learning about emotions and strategies to appropriately manage them helps us make healthier choices.

Lesson Name: Mindfulness and a Mindful Minute

Unit Name: Mindfulness

Grade Level: 9-12

Lesson Length: 15 minutes

Before beginning, teachers should offer accommodations specifically mentioned in a student's IEP to support their ability to participate in the lesson. A sample list of common accommodations and modifications to aid you in selecting appropriate supports for students can be found under "Additional Resources" [here](#).

Lesson Objective(s):

Students will be able to define mindfulness and identify how it can be used in their personal lives to improve emotional and physical health.

Students will practice a Mindful Minute for 60 seconds as a tool for managing stress and other complex emotions.

Essential Question (related to objective):

How can using mindfulness improve my emotional and physical health?

National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K-12 Physical Education:

Standard 3: The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.

- S3.H14 Stress management

National Health Education Standards & Performance Indicators:

Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

- 7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of health practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.

Equipment Needed:

- How am I feeling? Daily Check-In poster

CASEL Core SEL Competency:

- Self-awareness
 - Identifying emotions
- Self-awareness
 - Stress management
 - Self-discipline
 - Impulse control

Lesson Overview:

Teachers will introduce the concept of mindfulness or being self-aware to improve emotional and physical health. Students will be introduced to a Mindful Minute as a tool for stress management or when feeling other complex emotions in their life. Teachers should aim to connect how taking a moment to pause is a healthy strategy before making decisions, especially when under stress or feeling other strong, complex feelings.

Mini-Lesson Name: Mindfulness and a Mindful Minute Unit Name: Mindfulness Grade Level: 9-12

Definitions:

Mindfulness is

- Paying full attention to your:
 - thoughts
 - emotions
 - body
 - environment

- Focusing on the present.
 - The past already happened. *(Consider your students experiences and traumas they may have had before choosing to share this portion of the definition.)*
 - The future isn't here yet.
- Without judgement.
 - Be kind to yourself (*compassion*).
 - It is what it is – nothing more nothing less.

Self-awareness is:

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.

Self-management is:

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations.

Activity Progression:

As students walk in have them check in using the “How am I feeling? Daily Check-In poster”.

Example script: “Before we get into today’s mini-lesson, I would like you to do a mental check-in and place a sticky note next to the heart you feel best describes how you’re feeling right now. Write your name on the back if you want me to check in with you. At the end of class, I will ask you again how you are feeling.”

Introduce the concept of mindfulness to students.

Example script: “Who has heard of the term mindfulness? [Allow for students to share out.] Today we are going to discuss mindfulness and being mindful or self-aware. And we are going to practice a mindfulness strategy called a Mindful Minute.”

Discuss the definition of mindfulness below. Explain to students that being mindful is simply slowing down and paying full attention and focusing on the present. Additionally, mindfulness is a great way to help us when we are feeling strong emotions like anxiety, stress or anger.

Example script: “Mindfulness is slowing down enough so that you are paying full attention. You are paying fulling attention to your thoughts, full attention to your emotions, to your body and to your environment. In addition to paying full attention, you are focusing on the present moment, not thinking about what has already happened or what will happen in the future. And you’re acknowledging what you’re noticing without any judgement, you’re being kind to yourself and accepting that it is what it is – nothing more, nothing less. What’s great about mindfulness is it’s really a way for us to be more self-aware. The more self-aware we are, the better health-related decisions we can make. That’s part of the reason why I want us to start doing daily check-ins using the How am I feeling? Poster. In health and PE, we learn about taking care of our bodies, we want to be sure we are taking care of our minds as well.”

Example script: “Sometimes when we feel strong or complex emotions like being anxious, angry or overwhelmed it can make us behave differently than we normally would act. I want you to take a few seconds to think of how you feel when you are either anxious, angry or overwhelmed. Do you act differently? How do you act differently? Do you want to be alone? Do you cry? Do you yell? Do you eat something you enjoy? [Allow students time to reflect internally. If they feel comfortable, they can share out.] Mindfulness also helps us with self-management. If we are feeling a strong emotion like anger, we can learn to better regulate it when we are in different scenarios.”

Next, introduce the concept of a Mindful Minute.

Example script: “As humans we are going to feel all kinds of emotions throughout our lifetime. It is okay to feel anxious, angry, sad, scared or overwhelmed sometimes. In fact, everyone feels those feelings at times. Over the next few mini-lessons we are going to learn ways we can help our mind and body when we feel those feelings. We will also explore how taking care of ourselves when we feel those feelings helps us overall. The first thing we will learn is a Mindful Minute. A Mindful Minute is when we sit quietly with our eyes shut, focusing our attention on our breathing. At first, our mind will wander and that’s okay. We will keep practicing and eventually it will get easier.”

Direct students to sit quietly with their eyes closed. Have students focus on their breathing for 60 seconds. After 60 seconds, have students open their eyes and ask them how they feel. Reassure students that sometimes it can feel awkward or even weird or uncomfortable to be so quiet and still. That's what makes this skill great, because it continually takes practice and eventually you will be able to go longer than 60 seconds. In addition, tell them this is a great way to help make them feel calm and they will continue to practice this daily as well as learn other mindfulness skills throughout the unit.

Please note, that based on some students' past experiences or cultural norms, it may be uncomfortable or may feel unsafe for them to sit with their eyes closed. In these cases, provide the option for them to sit with their eyes open.

At the end of class have students check in with themselves again. You can allow students to change their sticky note if they want to. Explain to students that physical activity is another way to enhance our mood. Have students use the How am I feeling? Daily Check-In poster each class to begin learning to be self-aware by identifying their current state.

Modifications/Differentiation:

- Put students in pairs to share answers.
- Allow students to share their responses to you orally.
- Allow students to write their responses on a small piece of paper and place it in a basket. Pull from the basket and share anonymous responses.
- Paraphrase questions or only provide a few questions at a time.
- Allow students to sit with their eyes open or walk around the room quietly during a Mindful Minute.

Checks for Understanding:

- How do you think mindfulness can be a benefit in someone's life?
- When could you see a person using a Mindful Minute to help themselves?