

Learning Activity 1

A Mindful Minute

Time (minutes)
5

Organization
Students seated in the middle of the play area.

Activity Progression:

Introduce the health. moves. minds.™ program and the concept of the Empowered Mind & Body lessons and what students will be focusing on over the next few weeks (see the description at the top of page 1). Tell students they are going to be practicing ways to take care of their mind and body because that is an important part of being healthy overall and can help empower them to make better decisions.

Example script:

“Over the next few weeks we are going to learn ways that we can take care of our mind and body by practicing being mindful and being kind. We will also learn how taking care of our mind and body empowers us. Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident. Being mindful is when you pay full attention to your thoughts, emotions, body and environment. It’s also about focusing on the present. The past* already happened, and the future isn’t here yet.

[*Consider your students’ background or past experiences, this statement may be a trigger for students who have experienced trauma. Work with your school’s counselor/psychologist for responding to triggers.]

Taking care of our mind and body makes us healthier and empowers us. When we are mindful of how we treat others (and ourselves) and mindful of our own feelings it can help us demonstrate kinder behavior and help us make healthier decisions. Today we are going to learn one way to help us be more mindful.”

Use the emoji rating scale for students to rate how they are currently feeling. You will then have them rate how they’re feeling again at the end of class.

Example script:

“First, I would like you to take a look at this emoji scale and pick an emoji based on how you feel

right now. At the end of class, I will ask you again how you are feeling.” [You can decide if you would like students to keep how they are feeling to themselves as a self-assessment or share by holding up the number of fingers according to the emoji they have selected.]

“Sometimes when we feel 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? Share with someone sitting next to you something you do when you feel anxious, angry or overwhelmed.”

Next, introduce the concept of a Mindful Minute.

Example script:

“It is okay to feel anxious, angry, sad, scared or overwhelmed sometimes. In fact, everyone feels those feelings at times. Over the next few 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. Tell them this is a great way to help make them feel calm and we will continue to practice this daily as well as learn other mindfulness skills throughout the unit.

Cues:

- **Empowerment** is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one’s life and claiming one’s rights.
- Mindfulness (or Self-Awareness) is paying full attention to our
 - thoughts
 - emotions
 - body
 - environment
- Focusing on the present
 - the past already happened
 - the future isn’t here yet
- Mindful Minute
 - Closing your eyes
 - Focus on breathing
 - Noticing what is around you
 - Takes practice – it’s okay for the mind to wander; bring your mind back to your breathing

Modifications/Differentiation:

- Allow students the option to sit or lay quietly, walk around the room quietly or use a fidget quietly.
- Individuals with autism have difficulty understanding emotions and expressions. They learn best through concrete real- life experiences. You may show the student an emotions picture board. The teacher should show the picture to the student of the student’s current emotion and allow the student to look into a mirror.

Checks for Understanding:

- When would be a time that a Mindful Minute would be useful?
- Why would using a Mindful Minute be healthy for a person?