

"We're so busy watching out for what's just ahead of us that we don't take time to enjoy where we are."

- Calvin & Hobbes



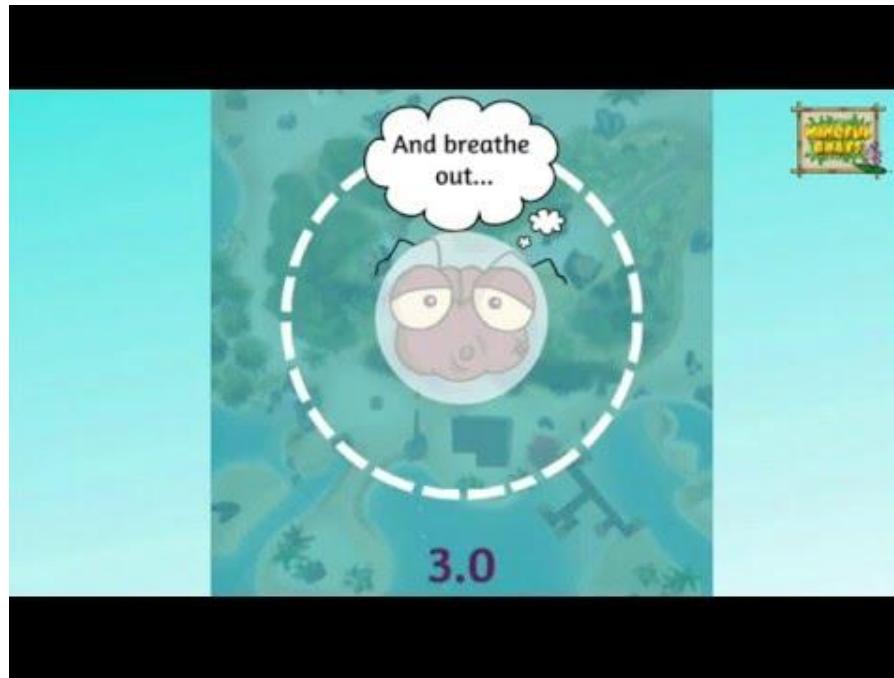
# **The Gift of Mindfulness**

**Mindfulness Based Practices to  
support academic performance and  
emotional well-being of students.**

# Objectives

- Provide an overview of mindfulness techniques/practices
- Discuss research regarding the effectiveness of mindfulness practices in overall well-being
- Experience various mindfulness practices
- Provide recommendations in developing their own mindfulness practices
- Provide various tools to teach students mindful practices to enhance personal well-being and academic success

# Visual-Breathing Exercises



# Mindfulness - WHAT is it?

“The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something”

“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...”

“An awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally” John Kabat-Zinn

**“Ability to know what’s happening in your head at any given moment without getting carried away by it”**

# Mindfulness - WHAT is it?

-Formal Practice: mindfulness of breath, body scan, loving-kindness meditation (e.g., yoga, meditation, t'ai chi, prayer, journaling, coloring)

-Informal Practice: “everyday mindfulness” bringing awareness to whatever it is that you are doing in that moment (e.g., tasting, movement, sounds, emotions, smells)

Mindfulness training allows one to stabilize their mind and quiet the continuous, often unconscious “chatter” that occurs when one is on “autopilot” or in a state of mindlessness

## Why do we need Mindfulness?

- Women are more stressed than men
- Men are less likely to manage stress than women
- Financial issues are the number one stressor, followed by work
- Using unhealthy stress management techniques (TV, internet, alcohol, napping)
- 43% of the population do not have emotional support

# Why do OUR STUDENTS need Mindfulness?

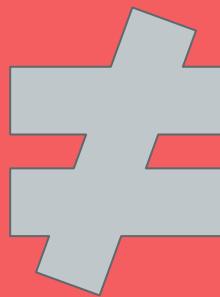
- Improve peer relations
- Have better physical health
- Improves classroom participation by supporting impulse control
- Supports readiness to learn
- Strengthens attention and concentration
- Reduces anxiety before testing
- Promotes self-reflection and self-calming



Mindfulness  
is a  
Superpower



Fall



Spring



## Benefits for our students

- Improve peer relations
- Have better physical health
- Improves classroom participation by supporting impulse control
- Supports “readiness to learn”
- Strengthens attention and concentration
- Reduces anxiety before testing
- Promotes self-reflection and self-calming

# Benefits for ourselves

- Engages executive functioning and improves working memory
- Decrease stress, anxiety, and depression
- Increase self-awareness and social competency
- Supports positive emotional reactions
- Changes the autonomic nervous system
- Enriches inter & intrapersonal relationships
- Increases optimism and motivations
- Increases ability to notice differences
- Increases quality of life

Learning how to respond  
WISELY to things that happen  
to you rather than reacting  
BLINDLY.

# Mindfulness - WHY do it?

- Promotes joy, interest, alertness, and other positive moods
- Decreases anxiety, anger and other negative feelings
- Reduces rumination, emotional reactivity and stress, enhanced working memory, more cognitive flexibility, open mindedness, and the ability to creatively adapt to changing situations

# Research Studies

- Mindfulness practices altered children’s perceptions of stress, allowing them to deal with stress more efficiently (Costello & Lawler, 2014)
- Meditation used with youth exhibiting learning disabilities decreased the level of anxiety, increasing academic levels and social skills (Beauchemin et al.)
- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) “offers protection against relapse/recurrence on par with that of maintenance antidepressant pharmacotherapy” (Young, S.N. 2011)
- Mindfulness is associated with lower anxiety, higher optimism, increased focus, greater empathy, improved self-regulations (Rectschaffien, 2014; Hassed & Chambers, 2015)

# **Byron Union School District**

- Initiated 2 class periods; 45 min/day, 5 days a week
- First quarter:
  - CHALLENGING – students complained, would intentionally pass gas or burp during mindfulness practice
- Third quarter
  - Students were practicing mindfulness for 10 to 15 minutes without interruption
  - Students began to take the lead in running “mindful minutes”
  - Students came into the counselor’s office on their own to practice

## **Byron Union School District**

- Students were able to separate themselves from the ruminating thoughts that were driving their agitation and return to the present moment
- Some students, who had really struggled the past couple of years, emerged as leaders
- By the end of the year, students expressed that they enjoyed the PASS class

(PASS): Promoting Academic and Social Success

# Elementary Study - 10 weeks

- 75 fourth grade students in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts participated in a project called “The Practical Effects of Teaching Mindfulness to Children”
- Ran by School Counselors in small group settings
- Ten lessons of approximately 30- to 45- minutes each
- Practices included:
  - Focusing on breath
  - Paying close attention while eating
  - Walking slowly and paying attention to what it feels like to move one’s body in a mindful way

# Elementary Study - 10 weeks

- End of each session, students received “Home Practice Cards”
- Students reported:
  - “I notice that I pay attention more, well, I used to look up at the ceiling in math. I used to daydream and now I pay attention.”
  - “In class I’ve been more focused because before, when we were reading Enemy in the Fort I would tell my teacher that I couldn’t concentrate and so I would go out in the hall and read by myself, and now I can stay in the class and read”
  - “I noticed that the group helped me not only to concentrate more, but for some reason it got me calmer and I did not have a lot of freak outs at home.”
  - “I’m not feeling guilty about being me.”

# Mindfulness - HOW to do it?

## INFORMAL PRACTICES:

- “Everyday mindfulness” - bringing awareness to whatever it is that you are doing in that moment (e.g., tasting, movement, sounds, emotions, smells); “moment-to-moment” awareness
- Does not require you to set a specific period of time to practice

# Mindfulness - HOW to do it?

## FORMAL PRACTICES:

- Mindful Breaks throughout the day
  - Mindful Walking
  - Mindful Breathing
  - Imagery
- Meditation - various apps to assist
- Coloring
- Journaling
- Exercising

# Mindfulness - HOW to do it?

## FORMAL PRACTICES:

- Mindfulness of breath
- Body scans
- Loving-kindness meditation
  - Yoga
  - Meditation
  - T'ai chi
  - Prayer

# Mindfulness - HOW to do it?

- Some helpful websites:
  - 10 Ways to be Mindful at Work (Mindful.org)
  - Mindful at Work (Mindful.org)
- Headspace (app)
- Insight Timer (app)

# Mindfulness - HOW to do it?

Keep in mind that with all or any practice:

- There is NO right or wrong way to do it
- Whatever you experience is yours

Whatever you're doing, keep doing it.

Make time for it.

# notice your ATTITUDE

Your intention and your attention will inevitably shift your attitude.

# Intentions

*“Your intentions set the stage for what is possible. They remind you from moment to moment of why you are practicing ... I used to think that meditation practices was so powerful ... that as long as you did it at all, you would see growth and change. But time has taught me that some kind of personal vision is also necessary.”*

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

# **Mindful Activities**

**Activities and Strategies  
for our Students**



## De-stress, Relax and Calm Down

Mind Yeti is a research-based tool that teaches children and their adults how to calm down, focus their attention, and connect better to themselves and to others.

# Mind Up Curriculum

**“Students participating in a social emotional learning program have a better chance of experiencing success.”**

- Each lesson offers easy strategies for helping students focus their attention, improve their self-regulation skills, build resilience to stress, and develop a positive mind-set in both school and life.



# Visual-Breathing Exercises



# SCRAM

S - Stop & Slow down

C - Calm your body

R - Remember to look at what is happening inside and out (label your emotions)

A - Act with kindness

M - Make a choice

# Practices with Students

# Mindful Games

(sample game from Mindful Games Activity Cards) Pass the Cup

- What will we have to pay attention to so that we don't spill any water?
- Now close your eyes!
- What types of things will we need to pay attention to if we can't talk or see?

# Mindful Games

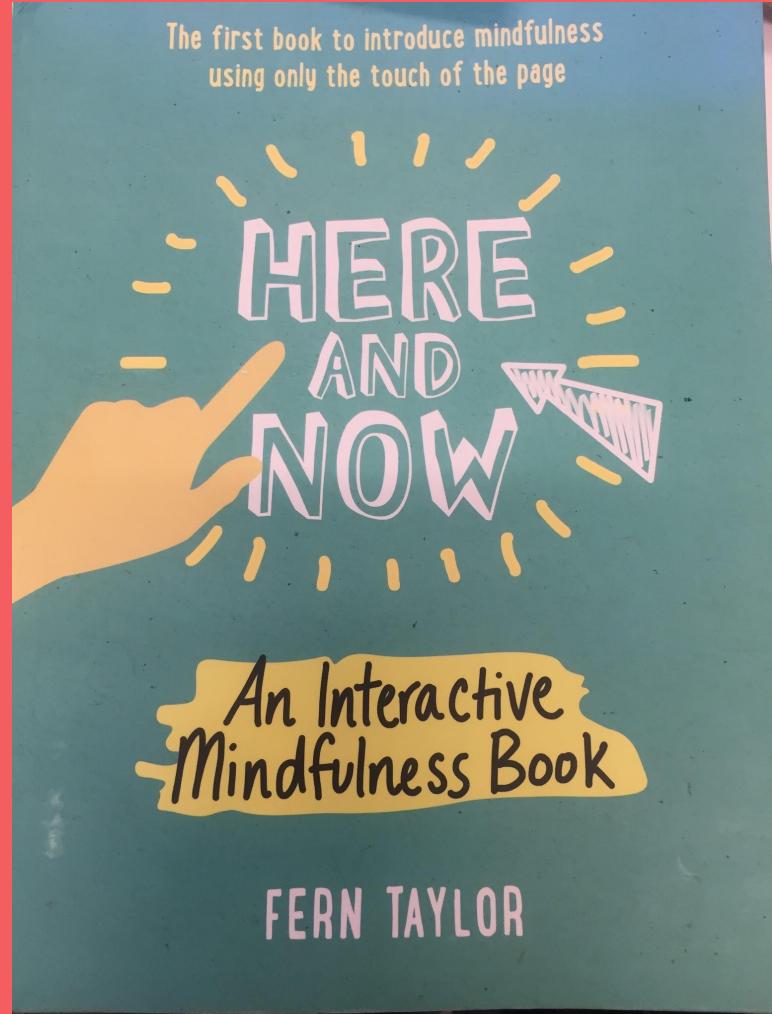
(sample game from Mindful Games Activity Cards) Pass the Cup

Allows the use of teamwork and paying attention to WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND US.

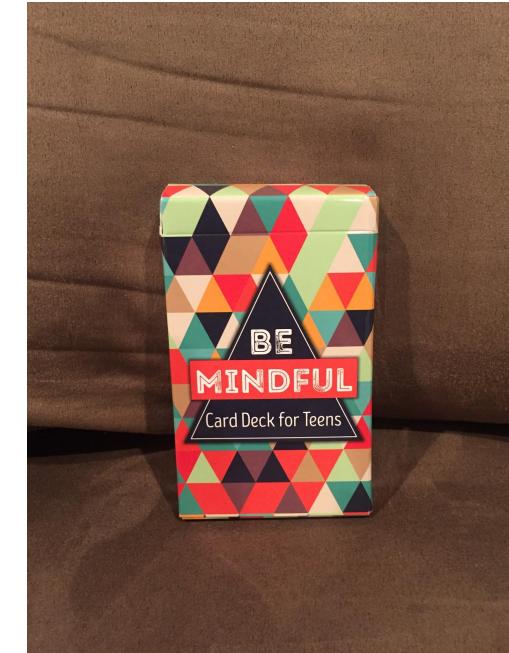
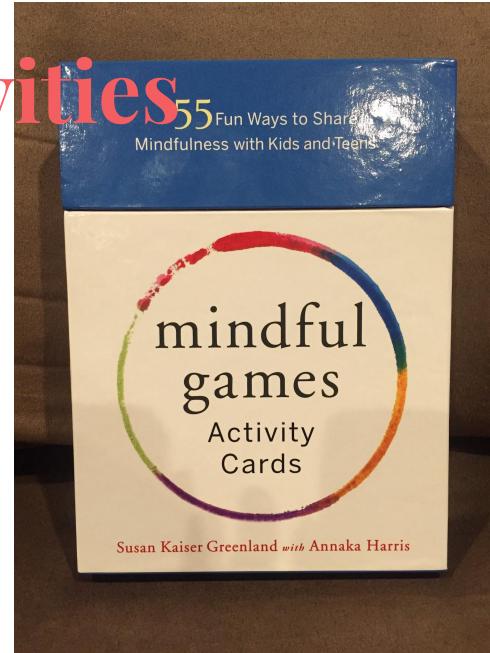
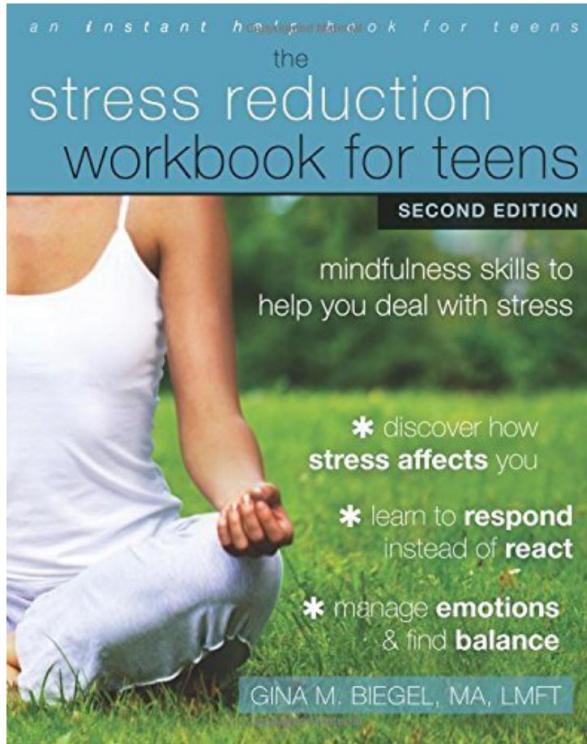
Works on the life skills of: FOCUSING, CARING, & CONNECTING

# Here and Now

An Interactive  
Mindfulness Book



# Other Go-To Activities



- Activity Balls (Thumb Balls)
- Coloring Pages
- Mindful Senses Cards (see handout)
- Letting Go balloons (see handout)
- Snowglobes (Here & Now book)

# How to practice with your students

# Mindfulness Activities

## Sky Study

- Put a blanket down on the lawn and spend 10-15 minutes staring at the clouds; notice how they move along

## Noticing Walk

- Go for a walk and ask the students to try to notice 10 things they've never really paid attention to before

## Slow-Fast-Slow

## Coloring books

# Mindfulness Apps

Mindfulness

Insight Timer

Headspace

Mind Yeti

Smiling Mind

# Mindful Movement Practice



## A mindful Minute

with cara bradley  
and [mindful.org](http://mindful.org)

A 2-minute movement practice to  
strengthen your mind and body



# How to practice as parents this holiday season

- 1. For five minutes, four times a day, stop briefly.** It's a simple way to practice just being instead of doing (or buying). Bring your attention to your own breath and body in the moment, just as they are. And no need to think about your to-do list—guaranteed, it will be there when you're done.
- 2. Try passing on a few invitations this year.** And don't be shy about ducking out of parties early. You might be surprised at the extra time you'll find for yourself, not to mention feeling like you're securely in the driver's seat of your own life.
- 3. Spread compassion around liberally this season** (and all other times of the year), but direct a bit of that holiday spirit your own way, too. Especially if you overcook the turkey or don't get someone the "perfect" gift.

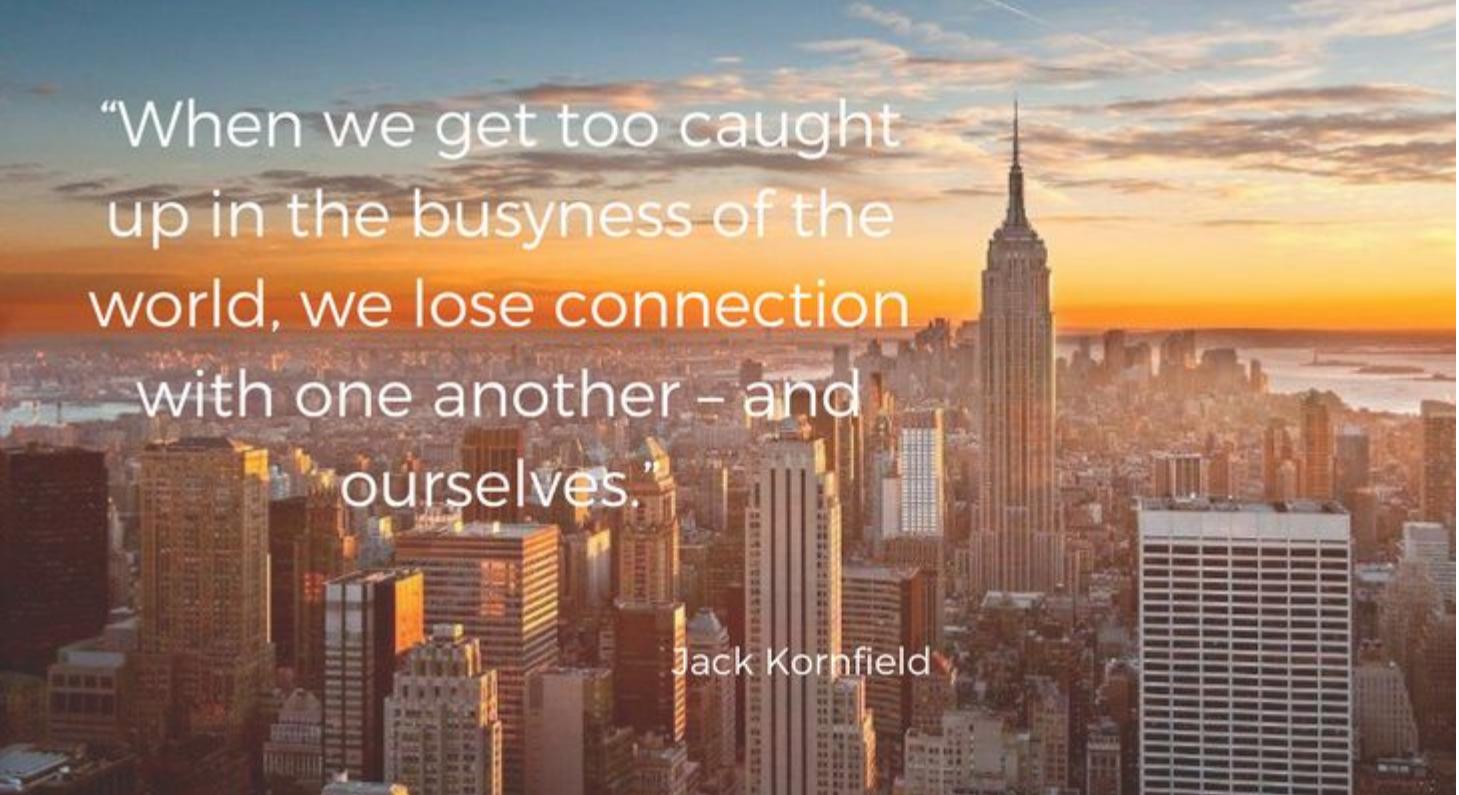
# 4-easy steps to practice mindfulness

Doing nothing can give space  
for great activities.

Doing nothing allows you to  
be more aware of the world.

HOW TO  
**Practice**  
**Mindfulness**





“When we get too caught up in the busyness of the world, we lose connection with one another – and ourselves.”

Jack Kornfield

# REFERENCES

- Bylund, J., Madrigal, S. & Robinson, L. (2016) Promoting Academic and Social Success (PASS). *CASP Convention 2016, Workshop-17*.
- Costello, E. & Lawler, M. (2014). An exploratory study of the effects of mindfulness on perceived levels of stress among school children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. *International Journal of Emotional education*, 6(2), 21-39.
- Makena, K. (2016). Mindfulness and Beyond: How to use Mindfulness Practices to Support School-Wide Needs. *CASP Convention 2016, Workshop-19*.
- Rechtschaffen, R. (2014). *The way of mindful education: Cultivating well-being in teachers and students*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company
- Young, S.N. (2011). Biologic effects of mindfulness meditation: growing insights into neurobiologic aspects of the prevention of depression. *Journal of Psychiatry & Neuroscience*, 2011 Mar; 36(2): 75 - 77
- [www.mindful.org](http://www.mindful.org)

**Giniena K. Tan, M.A., Ed., PPS**

[gtan@orangeusd.org](mailto:gtan@orangeusd.org)