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Basin Youth Network helps communities increase local activities and opportunities for youth, enabling them to learn skills like leadership and engage more with each other and their communities. ourtrust.org/youthnetwork.

Columbia Basin Trust supports the ideas and efforts of the people in the Columbia Basin. Learn more about Trust's programs and initiatives at ourtrust.org.

Introduction

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.”

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

Hello and welcome to the Mindfulness Toolkit!

We know that youth can sometimes feel they’re under incredible amounts of stress and pressure. We know they’re often too busy and too distracted to properly take care of themselves. We know they can be really hard on themselves at times, and sometimes feel their futures are uncertain.

We also know they are brilliant. We know they are wise and creative. We know they are curious and courageous and have an amazing amount of potential.

We created the Mindfulness Toolkit to give you some simple tools and exercises that can foster this potential and keep youth focused on the present.

Mindfulness is about cultivating an open, non-judgmental awareness of the thoughts, feelings and physical sensations we experience from moment to moment, and to be curious about them. The more we can become aware of our thoughts and feelings in a non-judgmental way, the more understanding and compassion we can develop for ourselves and others.

We are so excited to share some simple, easy-to-implement exercises that you can use in your programs to foster mindfulness, self-awareness and emotional intelligence. You’ll also find a list of recommended resources for both you and the youth you serve.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness means you notice your thoughts, feelings and physical sensations in the present moment without harmful judgment—and do so as often as possible.¹

It's one thing to notice your thoughts and feelings in any given moment, but the trick is to do it with an open mind, without judging yourself if you think, feel or do something you "shouldn't." Mindfulness allows for you to simply notice your habits and patterns, like a fly on the wall observes the space around it. From there, you can practise doing this as often in life as possible. This gives you space to get curious about your thoughts and actions and potentially make more conscious decisions moving forward.

WHAT IS SELF-AWARENESS?

Mindfulness and self-awareness are very similar: they both foster an understanding of thoughts, feelings and behaviours in a non-judgmental manner. Self-awareness is the ability to not only observe your feelings, but also build a vocabulary of words to describe your feelings. Self-awareness is taking the next step toward understanding the relationship between your thoughts, feelings and reactions.²

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence. In addition to understanding emotion and the relationship between your thoughts, feelings and reactions, emotional intelligence is the ability to deal with your feelings appropriately. This includes self-regulation, bouncing back from setbacks with more ease, controlling impulses and delaying gratification in order to achieve a goal. People with high levels of emotional intelligence also show empathy: the ability to understand others' feelings and take their perspectives.²

Identifying, understanding and managing your emotions and the emotions of others is a powerful tool in dealing with stress, working under pressure, navigating difficult conversations and building resilience in times of change and setbacks. You can see how this is an incredibly valuable tool as youth navigate this period of their lives!

WHEN COULD WE USE THESE EXERCISES?

The idea of meditation can often bring up images that seem inaccessible to youth. The cool thing is you don't need to sit on top of a mountain levitating (and meditating) in order to experience mindfulness.

The beauty of mindfulness exercises is that they only take a few minutes and can be really helpful. If you're doing a program with youth, you can do some of these exercises at the beginning of it, during it or at the end. Some of them will help you set the tone before your group begins, and others are great to use when you notice someone getting distracted or frustrated. There are also exercises you can use to bring things to a mindful close.

The exercises take five minutes or less, so you can incorporate them into any program without taking up too much time. On the other hand, if you like them and want to work longer with your group, check out the extended versions that take about 20 minutes.

WHERE CAN WE DO THIS?

You can do these exercises with youth in any space you have available. Once you and the youth have tried the exercises, they can be practised anytime and anywhere! No matter the activity and location, you will begin to get comfortable integrating these mindfulness practices with the youth you work with in order to help them stay in the present moment and notice what they're experiencing and feeling. You don't need any special equipment. No matter what, you are where your feet are—and that's the perfect place to practise mindfulness!

WHY PRACTICE MINDFULNESS?

Meditation and mindfulness have been used to help youth with challenges ranging from decreased attention span to anxiety and depression. That being said, the tools in this kit are by no means a replacement for professional treatment. However, there are still a number of possible benefits of learning mindfulness techniques. These include improved emotional regulation, realistic shifts in perspective, decreased stress levels, increased positive coping skills, increased sense of agency and self-confidence and an overall sense of improved health and well-being.¹

The legend included in this kit will help you understand what each exercise is most beneficial for. Some will help youth increase their senses of self-awareness, while others will increase emotional intelligence or empathy. Overall, the exercises will increase their abilities to be mindful, boosting awareness and potentially having the ripple effect of supporting any and all areas of their lives!



Myth 1:

Mindfulness is tied to religion

Although many religions have mindfulness aspects or rituals, mindfulness is a practice, not a religion. It's a way to engage in your life with more awareness and presence.

Myth 2:

Mindfulness = meditation

Mindfulness means observing thoughts, feelings and emotions in a non-judgmental way as often as possible. Meditation is one way to practice mindfulness, but mindfulness can be done anytime, anywhere, in many different ways!

Myth 3:

Mindfulness takes lots of time

You can practice mindfulness by simply observing one breath, one bite of food or one step! Of course, you can try longer mindfulness exercises too, but it can also be done in a few seconds if you don't have much time.

Myth 4:

Mindfulness means you must clear your head of all thoughts

It's actually quite the opposite. Mindfulness means bringing awareness to your thoughts, not trying to stop them. It's about cultivating acceptance and not judging or attaching yourself to your thoughts and feelings. By being aware of your thoughts, you can let them go and focus again on the breath.

Myth 5:

Mindfulness = bliss

Being mindful means bringing awareness to ALL your emotions. It means being in the present moment, and not all moments are pleasant. By bringing more awareness to moments of joy and happiness, as well as those of pain and heartache, you can cultivate more curiosity, understanding and kindness toward yourself and others.



NOTE TO FACILITATORS

Before you do the exercises with a group, try them on your own. It's great to notice what comes up for you, what you liked and what you didn't so you're prepared to engage in thoughtful conversations about the exercises with your participants.

The exercises are designed to stand alone and don't require much, if any, introduction. You can use them as icebreakers, check-ins or reflections during or at the end of your programs. If you'd like to use the longer mindfulness exercises, you might want to start the conversation by asking what your participants know about mindfulness. It's a great way to dispel any myths that crop up.







Mindfulness Exercises Quick Reference Guide

EXERCISE															
Situation	1. Take Five	2. Three Breaths	3. Minute to Arrive	4. Noting	5. Box Breath	6. Acceptance	7. Hands on "Chair"	8. Offering Kindness	9. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1-You're Grounded!	10. Pleasant Moments	11. One-word Check-in/ Reflection	12. Highs and Lows	13. 1, 2, 3-Press Refresh	14. STOP	15. The 5 Gs
Youth need a grounding exercise after an event has left them out of sorts.	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓						
There is a conflict, uneasiness or clashing of personalities.	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓			✓			✓	✓
Youth are zoned into technology and you'd like to redirect their attention or get them to focus.	✓				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Youth are showing a negative or "fixed" mindset.				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
It's a small group.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The youth don't know each other.										✓	✓	✓	✓		
The youth don't like the mindfulness exercises.					✓			✓	✓	✓		✓			✓

Mindfulness Exercises

LEGEND

This legend will help you choose which exercises to try, depending on your goal. Note that “When to try these exercises” are only suggestions and places to start. Mix and match the exercises, try them in conjunction with one another or try them at different times in your programs. Have fun!

When to try these exercises:		What they are most beneficial for:	
As a check-in		Mindfulness	
During programs		Self-awareness	
As a reflection or at the end of a program		Emotional intelligence	

1. Take Five

- Sit with one hand palm-up on your lap.
- With each full breath in and out, fold one finger into your palm until you have taken five deep breaths and all your fingers are folded.
- You can do this with your eyes open with a downward gaze or with eyes closed (*depending on the comfort level of the group or individual*).
- Use this any time you want to get centered or come back to the present moment.

Bonus exercise: After the exercise, ask the youth to share one word or image to describe how they're feeling.



2. Three Breaths

- You will be taking three full breaths.
- On the first breath, focus on the breath itself (how it feels, how deep it is, the air coming in and out, etc.).
- On the second breath, relax the body.
- On the third breath, mentally ask, “What’s most important?”
- Notice the answer that comes from your intuition.
- You can do this with eyes open or closed.
- This is helpful when you feel stuck, frustrated or not sure what to do next.
- It is also helpful when you are transitioning from one activity to another or have the urge to check your phone or social media.



3. Minute to Arrive

Take one minute at the beginning of the program to focus on the breath. Use this time to leave what has happened so far in your day in the past and focus on the present moment. Here are some things you can focus on: *(Sometimes it’s helpful to have a focus when this is new to someone.)*

- First notice the feeling of your body making contact with your seat, the floor, etc.
- Next, notice the quality of your breath (without changing anything): how deep it is, where the air travels (does it go to the chest? lungs? belly? shoulders?).
- The feeling of the air travelling in and out of your nose.

Good to know: As an alternative you can choose another focus. Sounds, smells or what you see in the room. Encourage youth to observe as if they are ‘a fly on the wall’. You can also use a timer, an hourglass or a snow globe. (Shake the globe and focus on the snow falling and becoming still again.)



4. Noting

At any point during the program, take notice of your thoughts and bring awareness to what types of thoughts they are. Are you rehearsing? worrying? planning? ruminating? After a while you may see a pattern. Once you notice patterns, you can get curious about them and potentially make different choices if those patterns aren't helpful. If so, ask your coordinator, youth counsellor, a parent or someone you trust to help you change them.

Good to know: Introduce this concept at the beginning of the program and check in at the end to find out what your participants noticed. If you have a group that enjoys silent sitting or walking meditations, you can try this as an 'add on' activity. In this case, introduce the concept before the meditation practice and debrief what patterns they noticed afterwards.



5. Box Breath

Both yogis and the military use Box Breath, also known as square breathing. Anyone who wants to feel calmer should use this breath. Try it!

- Inhale for a count of four.
- Hold the breath in for a count of four.
- Exhale for a count of four.
- Hold the breath out for a count of four.
- Continue as needed.

Good to know: See the Resource section for a box breathing app!



6. Acceptance

Whenever you're feeling stressed, breathe in and out for a few breaths and repeat to yourself: "Breathing in I do my best. Breathing out I let go of the rest." *(Introduce this exercise at the beginning of a program in which participants are working on something new or challenging.)*



7. Hands on "Chair"

When you start an activity, use touch as a cue to remind yourself how you want to show up. Use touch as a way to keep yourself connected to a set intention or goal. Any time you touch your chair, remind yourself of your intention or goal. You can change 'chair' to any object or cue to remind yourself how you want to show up. For example, putting your hands in your pockets could be a reminder that you want to push your comfort zone, try something new and be brave. You can use something tactile for this too, like a small stone or a coin. This is a great exercise if you want to keep a goal in mind, like "I am going to try my best," "I am going to accept where I am," "I am going to stay open-minded" or "I am going to keep trying." *(Use this in conjunction with any goal- or intention-setting you do with your group.)*



8. Offering Kindness

This is so fun! As you go about your program or day, mentally wish others love, kindness, a free ice cream cone, money on the sidewalk, etc. Get creative! The goal of this exercise is not to change how others treat us; it is to support us in having a more positive outlook toward others. It is amazing how this exercise lifts your spirits! Bonus points if you can send these great thoughts toward someone you have a challenging relationship with!



9. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1—You're Grounded!

This is a great exercise to use when you're anxious or stressed. It's also great when you're starting a new program, to feel focused and grounded. You use your five senses to come to the present moment.

- Start by taking a deep breath.
- Look around the room and name five things you see. *(If you're working with a large group, have them do this in partners or quietly in their heads.)*
- Name **four** things you feel. Notice your clothes on your skin, the surfaces you're touching, the air you breathe, etc.
- Name **three** things you hear.
- Name **two** things you smell. You can move around the room if you can't smell two things, or name your two favourite smells.
- Name **one** thing you taste. If you can't taste anything, name your favourite taste.
- Take a deep breath to end the exercise.



10. Pleasant Moments

During the program, take note of all the pleasant moments you experienced and share them with the group at the end. *(You can also use this as a check-in to share the good things that happened so far in their day.)* We often spend too much time focusing on what we want to change versus what is going well in our lives. This can foster acceptance and an attitude of gratitude.



11. One-word Check-in/Reflection

Share one word to describe how you're feeling as you arrive at or leave the program. *(This is a great exercise to promote understanding of others' feelings. Some may respond that they are excited, nervous or afraid. By hearing this, others can respond with empathy throughout the program, or it can give the facilitator more information on where to focus special attention.)*

Good to know: See Appendix A for a list of emotions. Feel free to print a few copies and use them until the youth build their emotional vocabulary.



12. Highs and Lows

Upon arrival, share a high and a low of your day. Or, at the end of the program, share a high and a low of your experience in the program. *(Like One-word Check-in/Reflection, this will support the group in gaining a deeper understanding of how others are feeling. You can also see the References to use Pits and Peaks or Whoops and Poops.)*



13. 1, 2, 3—Press Refresh

Try these three things when you get in a negative head space or find you're trash-talking yourself:

- Ask yourself, "What would I tell my best friend right now if he or she were going through the same thing?" We are often kinder to our friends than we are to ourselves. Self-compassion means talking to yourself like you'd talk to someone you love.
- Try to think of other people who have gone through, or are going through, the same thing as you. You don't have to know them personally. You *do* need to realize you are not alone in this experience. Others have felt this way too.
- Take three deep breaths and remind yourself that this too will pass. Feel the feelings but don't get stuck there.



14. STOP

Stop. Take a breath. Observe. Proceed. Use this when you have a negative thought or are feeling reactive. Taking a pause and a breath is a great way to avoid reacting. Take a few deep breaths (try box breathing!) or take a break. Observe your thoughts and bodily sensations: are you angry? tired? Take care of yourself if needed: have a snack or drink of water or talk to a friend. When you're back in the right frame of mind, move forward.

Good to know: This is a more complex exercise you could incorporate after the group has become accustomed to some mindfulness exercises. This is also a great guided exercise to do with an individual participant.



15. The 5Gs

Gratitude shifts your energy. Think of what you're grateful for—the more specific you get, the better. If you're grateful for your parents, what is it specifically that you're grateful for? That they drive you to the park? They bought you a skateboard? Try using this exercise in one or more of these ways:

- Give thanks for something you have done for yourself or another: "I am grateful I was patient with myself (or a friend)."
- Give thanks for something someone has done for you: "I am grateful that John showed me how to do that trick."
- Give thanks for one of your strengths or gifts: "I am grateful I am persistent."
- Give thanks for someone in your life and what he or she means to you: "I am grateful that my parents support my passion for skating."
- Give thanks for something you have in your life: "I am grateful for my board, the skate park and my friends."

Good to know: You don't have to use these specific prompts. It's even effective to simply ask participants to reflect, share or write down three to five things they are grateful for and why.



Extended Mindfulness Exercises

Some youth groups might want to try a longer mindfulness exercise. If you ever want to take a detour from your regular programs, try one of these with your group!

16. **Sitting Mindfulness Exercise (5–10 minutes)**

This is a great meditation to get centered and present.

- As you get comfortable where you're seated, notice what you're sitting on and the contact your body is making with the space around you.
- Take a moment to notice your body. Check in with how you are doing; notice if you're comfortable. Adjust if you need to. Notice where your hands are, where your legs are and where your feet are.
- If it feels okay for you, gently close your eyes.
- If you'd prefer to keep your eyes open, stare down toward the floor or at something that isn't going to move so you can focus on it. If you'd like, you can even partially close your eyes: look down toward the floor and relax your eyelids until they're almost closed.
- Notice the sounds in the room. Imagine you're a fly on the wall, aware of all the noises but not naming or judging them.
- Now, tune in and watch your breath.
- Without changing how you're breathing, notice on your next inhalation where the air is coming into your body: through your nose or through your mouth.
- On your next exhalation, notice where the air is coming out of your body: through your nose or through your mouth.
- Now, without changing your breath, notice as you breathe in how deep your breath is going. Notice if your shoulders move, if your chest rises and falls and if your belly expands and contracts. There is no right or wrong here. Just notice.
- On your next in-breath, without forcing, take a slightly bigger breath. Send the air a bit deeper into your lungs. Relax your shoulders and belly and allow the breath to travel down toward your belly. Keep doing this for the next few breaths. *(Give some space here for a few breaths.)*
- Imagine your heart and the core of your body as an anchor. Your heart and your breath are anchoring you to this moment. They are your reminders that you are here—right now. Thoughts may come and go from the past or about the future and this can be a message to you to come back to your breath—to this moment right now. The breath is a constant that you can turn to whenever you need to or want to.

- As you're sitting and becoming more aware of your breath, thoughts, feelings and physical sensations will come. Remember that fly-on-the-wall feeling and simply notice them.
- Without judgment, you can say to yourself, "Interesting, that's what I'm thinking right now," or, "Interesting, that's what I'm feeling right now." Then come back to noticing your breath and your breathing.
- Sometimes it's helpful to count the breath. You could try counting one on the in-breath and one on the out-breath, and continuing. *(Give some space here for them to try counting their breaths.)*
- Now, come back to my voice, your breath, this moment and the room.
- Continue to follow the flow of your breath, bringing in cool, calm air on your in-breath. Notice how the air feels in your nose or in your mouth.
- As you breathe out, release any tension in your body. If you notice tightness or stress, imagine it melting away on the out-breath.
- See if you can encourage the breath to go a little deeper. Without forcing, allow the belly to expand on the inhale and contract on the exhale. Let the shoulders relax.
- Now take a nice long inhale and hold it in for a count of four.
- Then slowly release the breath and hold it out for a count of four. Repeat this a few times. *(Give some space here for them to try this breath.)*
- Now go back to your regular breath and notice the difference between the previous breath and this regular breath.
- Welcome any thoughts, feelings and emotions that come up.
- Be kind to whatever comes.
- Welcome this information you are given. And come back to where you are in this room, with this breath right now. There is more right with you right now than there is wrong with you. You are enough. Just as you are.
- There are more good things in your life right now than not.
- Acknowledge the time you're taking right now for yourself. Notice what that feels like.
- On your next in-breath, imagine the breath coming in through the top of your head. Let the air travel from the top of your head, let it fill up your entire body and let it travel all the way down and out through the tips of your toes.
- Let the breath fill your blood with fresh oxygen. As it moves through your whole body, it is bringing clean, fresh air to every cell in your body. As you breathe out, release anything you choose.

- Notice how you feel right now.
- You can take any part or all of this with you for the rest of your day. It is your choice.
- Begin to wiggle your fingers or your toes. Bring your hands to your face and cup your palms over your eyes. Open your eyes under your cupped hands. Let your eyes gradually get used to the light in the room. Remove your hands and come back to the room and the group.

Good to know: Some youth groups shared that they hated the idea of meditation. Know your group! If you would like to try this exercise and your group is new to a sitting mindfulness exercise, feel free to shorten the exercise by taking out a few of the prompts. You could also try starting with the Walking Mindfulness Exercise (page 18), as this may feel less intimidating for those who are new to a sitting mindfulness exercise.



17. Walking Mindfulness Exercise (5–10 minutes)

Clear space about 10 feet long in a room or outdoors so participants can walk back and forth. Because they're encouraged to stop walking if they notice thoughts, feelings or distractions, it's best if they walk side by side, not in one line or a circle. They're also encouraged to focus on the act of walking, versus trying to get anywhere. If they like, they can go barefoot.

- Begin to walk slowly.
- Let your arms relax by your sides and move them in whatever way is comfortable.
- Notice the sensations of walking. Notice what it's like to lift your foot, shift your weight and place your foot back on the ground. Do this with the other foot.
- Notice what causes your foot to lift, the muscles flexing and extending in your different joints to support the movement.
- At the end of the path, pay as much attention to turning around as you do to walking.
- Bring awareness to any sensations you have in your body as you walk.
- If your mind wanders, simply notice. This is normal. This is what our minds do! When you become aware of a thought, feeling or distraction, stop walking. Pay attention to the thought, feeling or distraction without judgment. Then continue walking, returning your attention to the movements and sensations of your body moving through the space.
- There is no right or wrong way to do this exercise. Try not to judge or evaluate yourself.

Good to know: Many youth don't like the idea of a sitting mindfulness exercise. In fact, when talking to some youth, they preferred walking versus sitting as a way to practise being mindful. This might be a good exercise to start with if your group is hesitant to try a sitting meditation. You can use a timer for this exercise and set it for between five and 10 minutes, or any amount of time you feel is appropriate for your group.



18. The Five Senses (10 minutes, to your whole session)

This is a very versatile exercise that you can play with in many ways. You could use this as part of your regularly scheduled group, or you could do something different like go for a walk or go to a park.

- Today we are going to take notice of our senses. For the next *(however long)*, notice what you see: the colours, what's happening or anything that stands out to you. Notice the sounds you hear: the quality, the volume and what's making them. Notice what you touch: whether it's soft or hard, cold or hot, rough or smooth. Notice any smells or tastes you experience. We will share at the end.

At the end, have the youth discuss what they noticed. Try to encourage them to be specific. If it helps, they can fill out the chart in Appendix B.

Bonus exercise: This could also be played as a game: a scavenger hunt of senses. You could partner them up and give each group a chart to fill out, giving them several things they need to find for each category.



19. What's That Smell?!?! (10–20 minutes)

Beforehand, set up the five stations below. Divide the youth into partners. Ask them to rotate to each station, in any order, and experience each sense. Encourage them to discuss what they experience and how it makes them feel. (You can give them the list of emotions from Appendix A.) Other than the sight exploration, it's best to be blindfolded. If they aren't comfortable being blindfolded, encourage them to close their eyes or look away to focus on the sense being explored.

- Sight: *(Present the images in Appendices C and D.)* For Appendix C, decide if the images are close up or far away. For Appendix D, discuss what feelings the people in the images are experiencing. For both, how do the images make you feel?
- Sound: *(You can do this in a couple of ways. First way:)* Quietly listen for five or more different sounds in the room, identify them and consider how they make you feel. *(Second way: Appendix E provides a list of six links to different sounds; if you can access the internet, you can play the sounds for the participants.)* Name the sounds and how they make you feel.
- Touch: *(Collect objects of various textures: for example, rough tree bark, tinfoil or scouring pads; squishy playdough, marshmallows or water balloons; slimy cooked spaghetti or homemade slime; soft feathers or cotton balls; gritty sand or sandpaper. If participants aren't going to be blindfolded, put the objects in brown paper bags.)* Without looking at them, feel the objects, guess what they are, describe their textures and discuss how they make you feel.
- Taste: *(Collect foods that represent sweet, sour, salty and bitter: for example, raisins, lemons, chips or salt, and cocoa powder.)* Without looking at them, taste the objects, guess what they are, decide which of the four tastes they represent (sweet, sour, salty or bitter) and discuss how they make you feel.
- Smell: *(Collect things that smell: for example, orange peels, coffee, flowers, grass, evergreen needles, vanilla, onions and pencil shavings.)* Without looking at them, smell the objects, guess what they are and discuss how they make you feel.



20. Random Acts of Kindness

This is such a fun, feel-good exercise! Together, we're going to brainstorm ideas about what we could do to make a difference. Here are some ideas:

- Collect blankets, coats or hats for a shelter.
- Write compliments on sticky notes and hand them out.
- Play the Kindness game. (*This bingo-style game encourages random acts of kindness. Make your own or print this template: <https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/kindness-game-activity>.)*
- Make a "Take what you need" flyer with pull-off tags saying things like *joy, calm, love, grace, patience* and *healing* and hang them up.
- Do a clean-up in our community.
- Do a food drive.
- Bake for a local group or food bank.
- Bake cookies and randomly give them away.



21. Bonus Exercise: Mindful Word List

Cut up the Mindful Word List (Appendix F) and put the words in a hat. Tell each participant the following, and then debrief how it went at your next session.

- Pick one word. Now explore and practise this word until we meet again.

Resources

There are hundreds of ways to explore mindfulness, self-awareness and emotional intelligence. This toolkit offers a handful of them. If you've enjoyed playing with these exercises and would like more information and resources, we encourage you to check out some of the following:

WEBSITES

mindfulnessforteens.com
teenmentalhealth.org
keltymentalhealth.ca/mindfulness

BOOKS/WORKBOOKS

Gina Biegel, *Be Mindful & Stress Less: 50 Ways to Deal with Your (Crazy) Life* (Shambhala, 2018).

Gina Biegel, *The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness Skills to Help You Deal With Stress* (Instant Help Books, 2009).

Karen Bluth, *The Self-compassion Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness and Compassion Skills to Overcome Self-criticism and Embrace Who You Are* (Instant Help Books, 2017).

CARDS

Christopher Willard and Mitch Abblett, *Growing Mindful: A Deck of Mindfulness Practices for All Ages* (Growing Mindful Games, 2015). Offers short mindfulness exercises.

Bina Biegel, *Be Mindful Card Deck for Teens*. Offers 50 ways to be more mindful.

Theo Koffler, *Rethink Card Deck Mindful Conversation Starters*. Offers 56 questions to encourage compassion, shift perspectives and build connection.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Facebook: Like @TheMindfulTeen, @MindfulTeens or @themindfulteenireland for links to articles, memes and mindfulness inspiration.

Instagram: Follow #mindfulteens and #mindfulnessforteens for more inspiration on your social feed.

MOBILE APPS

Box Breathing Technique: For a small fee you can use this app to guide you in box breathing any time you need it.

Breathr: This free mindfulness app for youth was developed by the BC Children's Hospital.

Calm.com or Calm.com/schools: This free website and app offer guided meditation and relaxation exercises.

Stop, Breathe and Think: Voted "best health app," this app allows you to check in with your emotions and recommends meditations, yoga and videos depending on how you feel.

MindShift: This free app, developed by Anxiety Canada, provides tools based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to support teens with anxiety.

A Special Note Before You Go...

Mindfulness is about looking within ourselves. It is about paying attention to thoughts, feelings and behaviours, understanding ourselves and building self-compassion and tools in order to manage and deal with our emotions in healthy ways.

Sometimes looking within can feel scary. It can bring awareness to emotional and physical pain, and even trauma. You are a resource to the youth you are working with. Be sure to provide them with connections to professional support should they try these exercises and feelings or memories come up that feel overwhelming.

Thank you for exploring the kit!

Youth Help Resources

310 Mental Health Support at 310-6789 (no area code needed) for emotional support, information and resources specific to mental health.

Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 to speak to a professional counsellor, 24 hours a day.

Kids Help Phone – Live Chat:

<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/AskUsOnline/Chat-counselling.aspx>

Chat counselling lets you connect one-on-one, real time, with a Kids Help Phone counsellor, on the web or from a smartphone. Chats are for youth up to age 20. Available Wednesday to Sunday from 3pm to 11pm Pacific Time.

YouthinBC Online Chat:

<http://youthinbc.com/>

Get support, information and resources for youth in B.C. and Yukon. Online chat is available from noon to 1am Pacific Time.

Youthspace.ca Online Chat:

<http://youthspace.ca/chat/>

A community of volunteers who can provide emotional support, crisis response, and more. Available 6pm to midnight Pacific Time. Also available by text at **778-783-0177**.

Mental Health and Substance Use Supports in B.C.,

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/mental-health-support-in-bc>

Online resource of over 6,000+ mental health and substance use services.

HeretoHelp

<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/>

Provides information related to mental health and substance use, including a selection of personal stories, a library of self-help resources, and information about how to get help now.

References

1. Biegel, G. *What Is Mindfulness?* Retrieved from <https://www.stressedteens.com/what-is-mindfulness>
2. Goleman, D. (2006). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Dell.

MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

1. Take Five: Koffler, T. *Mindful Moments*. Retrieved from <https://www.rethinkdigitalkit.com/mindful-moments/take-five/>
2. Three Breaths: Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute.
3. Minute to Arrive: Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute.
4. Noting: Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute.
5. Box Breath: Scott, E, MS. (2018, November 5). *Box Breathing Techniques and Benefits*. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-and-steps-of-box-breathing-4159900>
6. Acceptance: Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute.
7. Hands on “Chair”: Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute.
8. Offering Kindness: Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute.
9. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1—You’re Grounded: Halloran, J. (2016, April 27). Coping Skills Spotlight: 5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Technique [Web log post]. Retrieved February 23, 2019, from <https://copingskillsforkids.com>
10. Pleasant Moments: Biegel, G.M, MA, LMFT. (2018–2019). *Stressed Teens Supplemental Instructor Manual*.
11. One-word Check-in/Reflection: Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute. Highs and Lows: Khwaja, A. (2014, March 4).
12. Highs and Lows, Pits and Peaks, Whoops and Poops [Web log post]. Retrieved February 23, 2019, from <https://www.naspa.org>
13. 1, 2, 3—Press Refresh: Neff, K. PhD. *The Three Elements of Self-compassion*. Retrieved from <https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/#3elements>
14. STOP: Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute.
15. The 5 Gs: Biegel, G.M, MA, LMFT. (2018). *Be Mindful and Stress Less*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

EXTENDED MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

All of the extended mindfulness exercises were inspired by Gina Biegel:

Biegel, G.M, MA, LMFT. (2018–2019). *Stressed Teens Supplemental Instructor Manual*.

Biegel, G.M, MA, LMFT. (2018). *Be Mindful and Stress Less*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

IMAGES

All images were free from unsplash.com

- A. Van Den Oetelaar, Max. Close-up photography of grey and orange stones. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/cAq3crYmgno>
- B. Anderson, Nathan. A drone view of the dark blue water and the shore in Silverthorne, CO, USA. Unsplash, https://unsplash.com/photos/P6_L4e0I9DI
- C. Matic, Velimir. Brown tree branch. Unsplash, https://unsplash.com/photos/kM77RRsl_sQ
- D. Culbertson, Raymond. Close-up of log. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/xnQaH8qF0Rc>
- E. Filipe, Joel. Microscope photography of red and black microorganism. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/rG1LNUFgJhl>
- F. Hasselmann, Wolfgang. Interesting lichen can be found in the Karoo, covering almost completely big rocks. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/ShCFvc4rjwM>

EMOTION IMAGES

Happy

Grote, Taylor. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/UiVe5QvOhao>

Viniciusa, Allef. Unsplash, https://unsplash.com/photos/C_1jjFJioWg

Pham, Mi. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/FtZL0r4DZYk>

Sad

Varela, Pablo. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/vCfxXxbQRX8>

Makagonova, Ksenia. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/ymtDjV7jkPI>

Winters, Brooke. Unsplash, https://unsplash.com/photos/68QEs_bkn2E

Angry

Duran, Mikail. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/TdQYl1psGXl>

Duran, Mikail. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/ujq7DpzzJ8E>

Yahya, Ali. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/UFYJ-thzMo8>

Others

Howard, Julian. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/CSNK8BXrhZk>

Ratushny, Dmitry. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/T8gLom6k8Jo>

Flores, Jorge. Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/photos/B5kFGSPBKeI>

Sounds

Water running: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqKb0sMti7s&t=9s>

Hyena: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQaSRKP8Dho>

Birds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKRScZYZAdc>

Crash: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zKI3PR9W-k>

Eating: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V65PJnRnr4o>

Womb sounds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xrnw9gNWjHU>

