

## Bringing Mindfulness Into School

*The TREP Project works to connect research on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral consequences of developmental trauma with the realities of school and classroom management. We focus on schools serving communities coping with high levels of concentrated poverty and social disorganization, such as housing and food instability, household and neighborhood violence, and drug dependence. We aim to create schools and classrooms that can meet the socioemotional and academic needs of not one or two children who have been exposed to traumatic levels of chronic stress, but the needs of a classroom of traumatized children.*

*“We ask an awful lot of teachers these days... Beyond just conveying the course material, teachers are supposed to provide a nurturing learning environment, be responsive to students, parents and colleagues, juggle the demands of standardized testing, coach students through conflicts with peers, be exemplars of emotion regulation, handle disruptive behavior and generally be great role models. ...the problem is we rarely give teachers training or resources for any of them.” ~Patricia Jennings*

Mindfulness is a practice that can be implemented school-wide to improve outcomes for both teachers and students. By building brief moments of dedicated time for easy-to-learn mindfulness practices into the school, students **and teachers** become more calm, focused, and responsive, while also experiencing less stress and anxiety. Mindfulness builds cognitive and emotional self-regulation, and by doing so, also builds behavioral self-regulation.

Research shows that teachers who regularly practice mindful meditations have a higher sense of well-being and teaching self-efficacy. Additionally, these teachers are better able to manage classroom behavior and maintain supportive relationships with students. For students, mindfulness can lead to reductions in exhibiting challenging behaviors and greater compliance with teacher requests.

TREPEducator.org

**For the greatest impact on school climate mindfulness has to be integrated pro-actively rather than invoked reactively.**

Suggested Citation:

TREP Project (August, 2018). Bringing Mindfulness into School. Practice Brief #9.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

MORE MINDFULNESS BENEFITS.....	2
FINDING P.E.A.C.E.....	3
MINDFUL TEACHING.....	4
LINKS TO MINDFULNESS RESOURCES.....	5
GUIDED MINDFULNESS PRACTICES	6
MINDFUL MOMENTS.....	7
MORE MINDFUL MOMENTS.....	8
REFERENCES .....	9

## MORE MINDFULNESS BENEFITS

Research also shows that regular engagement with mindfulness practices is associated with increased academic achievement. This is likely because, as many studies have found, self-regulation is a critical factor in academic success, and self-regulation is highly influenced by stress induced emotional arousal.

We advocate integrating mindfulness into schools through pre-recorded audio and video tracks. By using pre-recorded tracks, you are able to participate along with your students, by either closing your eyes along with the students or focusing on a specific spot/object while the track is playing. This allows you to integrate mindfulness into your beginning of class routine without doing any additional curriculum development work.

**Using pre-recorded audio and video tracks enables mindfulness practices to be continued when substitutes are managing the class.**

We have included links to several recommended mindfulness tracks for various grade levels as well as links to resources where you can find more. Teachers and students need both variety and repetition in their mindfulness practices. Enough repetition so that the skill can be internalized, and enough variety so that one is not bored. Variety also increases the likelihood that mindfulness skills will be generalized from the classroom to real-world situations.

**Plan ahead for students who come late! Be aware of whether all students are in the classroom before beginning mindfulness, and either be waiting at the door or place a sign on the door informing students that they need to wait 5 minutes before entering because mindfulness is in progress.**

## FINDING P.E.A.C.E.

Engaging in mindful activities does not exclusively mean listening to guided meditations or taking five to ten minutes of time away from instructional time. There are small but significant practices that take seconds but are effective in redirecting both teachers and students from a reactionary mindset to one that allows for more productive decision making and action. At the start of a difficult or frustrating situation find P.E.A.C.E. using the model in the chart below.

		Definition	Action
P	Pause	<b>Pause</b> when you become aware of a difficult situation.	Stop everything you are doing, close your eyes, and take a big deep breath.
E	Exhale	When you pause to breathe <b>Exhale</b> a sigh, groan, or moan. Then inhale and continue to breathe.	Exhale each breath with an audible sound. Then breathe again.
A	Acknowledge Accept Allow	<b>Acknowledge</b> and recognize the situation as it is, whether you like it or not. <b>Accept</b> the situation and your reaction to it without judgment. <b>Allow</b> the experience to happen.	Observe your situation and your reaction from a bird's eye view without judgment. Simply let it happen without getting mad at yourself for your actions or feelings.
C	Choose Clarity	<b>Choose</b> how you will respond to the situation and your emotions with: <b>Clarity</b> about what you want	It's okay to take minutes, days, or weeks to choose how you will react to the situation or your emotions. There may be times that you have to make your choice sooner as opposed to later, but always lay out your expectations ad limits, be strong with compassion, and do not forget to laugh.
E	Engage	<b>Engage</b> with people, with the situation, and with life again.	If you feel you cannot do this alone, find someone you trust to help you.

Adapted from Ernest Solar's *An Alternative Approach to Behavior Interventions: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction*.

## MINDFUL TEACHING

As educators intentionally train their minds to become more aware of their inner and outer experiences, both their instructional and behavior management practices improve. It is easy to become focused on whether instruction is progressing as planned and on what is coming next in the instructional plan, both of these thoughts draw your attention away from the present moment's interactions with your students and can induce stress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety increases emotional volatility and may increase the likelihood that students' off-task behaviors will be taken personally and responded to in ways that set-off a negative teacher-student interaction.

### CONSIDER THIS...

- *Mindfulness is not a religious practice, but is a way to develop the ability to pay attention to both thoughts and feelings.*
- *Mindfulness is a skill that teachers and students will have to develop. For students, the minimum expectation is that they will sit quietly and not disrupt others. Students who do not want or cannot participate can be given the option to quietly complete another activity such as coloring.*

A critical part of finding P.E.A.C.E. is experiencing both the situation as it is and your emotional reaction to the situation. When you become mindfully aware of both your positive and negative reactions to students' behaviors, and develop the practice of taking a few belly breaths to breathe through your emotional reactions, you will be better able to respond thoughtfully instead of reacting emotionally. Doing so will increase your ability to create teachable moments in response to students' challenging behaviors.

**Practicing mindfulness can help educators to recognize and identify their triggers and emotional response patterns. Mindfully understanding ourselves is the first step to proactively regulating how we behave with students and colleagues.**

It is important that you find ways to take mindful moments throughout your day. One way is to use regular parts of the school day such as the ringing of the bell between classes. Use this reminder to take just a few seconds to observe yourself, scan your body, your emotions, and your thoughts while you inhale and exhale three belly breaths. Imagine the breath traveling through your body, passing through points of tension, and exiting out into the present moment.

## LINKS TO MINDFULNESS RESOURCES

### Advance Your Learning on Mindfulness

1. What Is Meditation - Why There's So Many Benefits  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmhkmlFc74E>
2. Why Mindfulness Is a Superpower  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>
3. Meditation 101: A Beginner's Guide  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-kMJBWk9E0>

### Develop Your Mindfulness Practice

1. Daily Calm Introduction  
<https://www.calm.com/player/6px9D85Lp>
2. Resilience  
<https://www.calm.com/player/RLqeMI8bM>
3. Gratitude  
<https://www.calm.com/player/OW5zPE46n>
4. Letting go  
<https://www.calm.com/player/ALiK9R4JQ>

### Introducing Mindfulness to Your Students

1. Grades Pre-K- 3
  - a) Get Your Mind Ready with Mind Yeti  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNtmUlze0Jg>
  - a) Belly Breathing with Elmo  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZbzDQpYIA>
2. Grades K-5
  - a) Belly Breathing  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykhMJU7bYLo>
  - b) The Mind Jar  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gKkFWiwr4>

### Introducing Mindfulness to Your Students

3. Grades 4-8
  - b) What does being present mean?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmWYD6aHLhg>
4. Grades 9-12
  - c) Observing A Train of Thoughts  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOSWMI Cwtm0>

### Examples of Mindfulness Working in Schools (Great To Share With Students)

1. Baltimore students get meditation, not detention  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpjWb9teKSY>
2. CNN Profile of Baltimore School  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Adg-S2hY07w>
3. Mindfulness at Mission High School  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0akzga2hao>

### UCSD Center for Mindfulness: Guided Audio Meditations

<http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/programs/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx>

### Mindful Schools

[www.mindfulschools.org](http://www.mindfulschools.org)

### Helpful Apps for Mindfulness Practices

[www.headspace.com](http://www.headspace.com)  
[www.simplehabit.com](http://www.simplehabit.com)  
[www.adventuresofsuperstretch.com](http://www.adventuresofsuperstretch.com)  
[www.calm.com](http://www.calm.com)  
[www.teachthought.com/technology/10-meditation-apps-classroom](http://www.teachthought.com/technology/10-meditation-apps-classroom)

## GUIDED MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

### Grades Pre-K- 2

1. Calm: Belly Breaths  
<https://www.calm.com/player/QPvJrNPQg>
2. Calm: Blowing Candles  
<https://www.calm.com/player/kw1pb37Yz>
3. Stop, Breathe & Think: Butterfly Body Scan  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56\\_8aK3cLEA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56_8aK3cLEA)
4. Stop, Breathe & Think: Bulldog Finds His Quiet Place  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKDLEdpRIRE>
5. Stop, Breathe & Think: Fading Tone  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzuaKhkwskw>

### Grades 3-5

1. 3 Minutes Body Scan Meditation  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihwcow\\_ofuME](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihwcow_ofuME)
2. 5 Minute Body Scan Meditation  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9A0S54yAgEg>
3. Calm: Body Radar  
<https://www.calm.com/player/YLABK0QZA>
4. Rainbow Breath  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O29e4rRMrv4>
5. Melting  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcZm2oJ7DKE>

### Grades 6-12

1. Calm: Loving Kindness  
<https://www.calm.com/player/ld4n8GpZ6>
2. Calm: Breathing Space  
<https://www.calm.com/player/bj3A89ARa>
3. Calm: Focus  
<https://www.calm.com/player/93Vm7Gz1M>
4. Be Kind to Yourself  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEk9KvPXKEQ>

### Grades 6-12

5. Relieve Anxiety  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2iF7lCevkM>
6. Manage Frustration  
Requires space for movement
7. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIE\\_PHKORHA&t=36s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIE_PHKORHA&t=36s)
8. Present Moment Guided Mindfulness  
<https://youtu.be/dEzbdLn2bjc>

### Quick Mindfulness Practices (All Ages)

1. Mindful Minute  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZME0JKiweL4>
2. Calm: Emergency Calm (2, 5, 10 min)  
<https://www.calm.com/program/11Rtx5FscQ/emergency-calm>
3. One Minute Breathing Exercise  
<https://youtu.be/b0FZIT3Uk30>
4. One Minute Mindfulness Meditation  
<https://youtu.be/TbzZuGlSe8Y>
5. Two Minute Visual Meditation  
<https://youtu.be/RIOZ02HgAnE>
6. Three Minute Mindful Breathing  
<https://youtu.be/SEfs5TJZ6Nk>
7. Two Minute De-stressing Mindfulness  
<https://youtu.be/Jholcb8Gz0M>

### Spanish Language Videos

\*we will continue to search for high quality Spanish language videos.

1. Breathing Butterfly  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwwPiZN7X0M>
2. El Tren de la Calma  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSqVggDDRYE>
3. Meditación guiada de 10 minutos  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTb0s7sgsBA>

## MINDFUL MOMENTS

In addition to guided mediation video and audio recordings, there are many short mindful activities that teachers can lead their students in. The following are some examples of mindful moment scripts that focus on sight, senses, and breathing in order to bring students to a calmer state. These scripts require few resources and can be read directly from the page.

### MINDFUL MOMENT: WITH OUR EYES

#### DO IN ADVANCE

Fill a clear jar, like a Mason jar, almost all the way to the top with water. Next, add a big spoonful of glitter glue or glue and dry glitter to the jar. Put the lid back on the jar and shake it to make the glitter swirl.

#### INSTRUCT THE CLASS

Imagine that the glitter is like your thoughts when you're stressed, mad or upset. See how they whirl around and make it really hard to see clearly? That's why it's so easy to make silly decisions when you're upset – because you're not thinking clearly. Don't worry this is normal and it happens in all of us, including adults.

Now watch what happens when you put the jar down in front of you and be still for a couple of moments. Keep watching. See how the glitter starts to settle and the water clears? Your mind works the same way. When you're calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle and you start to see things much clearer."

The next time you are upset in class, take the jar shake it up, put it down in front of you and calm yourself down while you watch the glitter settle.



## MORE MINDFUL MOMENTS

### MINDFUL MOMENT: WITH OUR SENSES

#### DO IN ADVANCE

Place individually wrapped candies in center of each table.

#### INSTRUCT THE CLASS

We are going to use this candy to take an opportunity to be mindful. Select a candy. Now, unwrap the wrapper, what does it sound like? Focus on the sound.

Now, look at the candy and turn it over in your hand, what does it look like?

What does it feel like? How does it smell?

Put the candy in your mouth how does it taste? What is the texture like? What does it feel like on your teeth? What does it feel like in your mouth?

Take a minute to focus and reflect on the experience of eating the candy.



### MINDFUL MOMENT: WITH OUR BREATH

#### INSTRUCT THE CLASS

Stand up straight with your feet shoulder width apart. Rest your arms at your sides. Relax your shoulders. Relax your arms and hands. Take a breath and if it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, choose a spot on the floor or on the wall to look at.

Focus on your belly and imagine that inside is a small balloon. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose and try to slowly fill up the balloon. Imagine it getting bigger and bigger as you breathe in. Hold that breath for a few seconds. (pause) Now, slowly let the air out through your mouth, imagining the balloon slowly getting smaller and smaller. Let the air hiss out of your mouth you are welcome to make an audible hissing sound as the balloon deflates.

Repeat this exercise 4-5 times.



## REFERENCES

- Bakosh, L. S., Snow, R. M., Tobias, J. M., Houlihan, J. L., & Barbosa-Leiker, C. (2016). Maximizing mindful learning: Mindful awareness intervention improves elementary school students' quarterly grades. *Mindfulness, 7*(1), 59-67.
- Black, D. S., & Fernando, R. (2014). Mindfulness training and classroom behavior among lower-income and ethnic minority elementary school children. *Journal of child and family studies, 23*(7), 1242-1246.
- Felver, J. C., Celis-de Hoyos, C. E., Tezanos, K., & Singh, N. N. (2016). A systematic review of mindfulness-based interventions for youth in school settings. *Mindfulness, 7*(1), 34-45.
- Jennings, P. (2015). Seven Ways Mindfulness Can Help Teachers. *Greater Good Magazine*. [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/seven\\_ways\\_mindfulness\\_can\\_help\\_teachers](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/seven_ways_mindfulness_can_help_teachers)
- Meiklejohn, J., Phillips, C., Freedman, M. L., Griffin, M. L., Biegel, G., Roach, A., & Isberg, R. (2012). Integrating mindfulness training into K-12 education: Fostering the resilience of teachers and students. *Mindfulness, 3*(4), 291-307.
- Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Oberle, E., Lawlor, M. S., Abbott, D., Thomson, K., Oberlander, T. F., & Diamond, A. (2015). Enhancing cognitive and social-emotional development through a simple-to-administer mindfulness-based school program for elementary school children: A randomized controlled trial. *Developmental psychology, 51*(1), 52.
- Semple, R. J., Droutman, V., & Reid, B. A. (2017). Mindfulness goes to school: Things learned (so far) from research and real-world experiences. *Psychology in the Schools, 54*(1), 29-52.
- Sharp, Jennifer E., and Patricia A. Jennings. 2016. "Strengthening Teacher Presence Through Mindfulness: What Educators Say About the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) Program." *Mindfulness 7*(1): 209-218
- Singh, N. N., Lancioni, G. E., Winton, A. S., Karazsia, B. T., & Singh, J. (2013). Mindfulness training for teachers changes the behavior of their preschool students. *Research in Human Development, 10*(3), 211-233.
- Solar, E. (2013). An alternative approach to behavior interventions: Mindfulness-based stress reduction. *Beyond Behavior, 22*(2), 44-48.
- Eisler, M. (2017) 3 Kid-Friendly Meditations Your Children Will Love. The Chopra Center. <https://chopra.com/articles/3-kid-friendly-meditations-your-children-will-love>