Mindful March

sound body sound mind

WEEK 5: GRATITUDE & MINDFULNESS REVIEW

A collaboration with

UCLA MINDFUL AWARENESS RESEARCH CENTER

UCLA Health | Sound Body Sound Mind
Mindful Awareness is the moment-by-moment process of actively and openly observing one’s physical, mental, and emotional experiences. Mindful Awareness Practices (MAPs) are tools and exercises such as meditation, yoga, and tai-chi that develop greater mind-body awareness and promote mindfulness in daily life.

**WHAT IS MINDFULNESS**

Mindful Awareness has scientific support as a means to reduce stress, improve attention, boost the immune system, reduce emotional reactivity, and promote a general sense of health and well-being.

**WHY MINDFULNESS**

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**MINDFUL MARCH**

**INTRODUCTION**

**WHAT IS MINDFULNESS**

**WHY MINDFULNESS**

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**IN EACH ISSUE**

**CONCEPTS**

- Introduction to mindfulness concepts to assist you with lesson implementation

**TEACHING TIPS**

- Reflection questions and mindfulness practice activities for you and your students

**LESSON PLANS**

- Two ready to instruct video lessons and plans in a plug and go format so you can easily send to students

**RESOURCES**

- Supplementary resources to complete your well rounded mindfulness instruction
HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES

- Each week we will provide you with two lessons that include their own guided videos and practice instructions. Find all past lessons here.

- There are sections titled "TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS" for you to copy and paste. These are specifically designed for you to easily assign through your learning management system to distribute to students.

- Each video has its own "LESSON PRACTICE INSTRUCTION." These are instructions for the mini practices that are discussed in the video. You can either copy and paste to send to students, or use it to better guide your own lesson instruction with students.

- Each video includes a mindfulness challenge based on the video's topic. These are written out in the "CHALLENGE" section.

- If you would like to expand on the lesson, there is an additional section titled "DIVE DEEPER." These are some prompts you can share with your students to facilitate more curiosity and discussion about the lesson.

- Each week there will be a series of reflection questions that you can assign as classwork or homework.

- Please note: these lessons were specifically designed for middle school and high school students. They may be modified for other classrooms based on instructor discretion.
WEEK 5: GRATITUDE & MINDFULNESS REVIEW

WEEK 5 TOPICS
Gratitude
Review of all past mindfulness topics

WEEK 5 OBJECTIVES
• Students should know the benefits of gratitude and how to practice it
• Students should know how to anchor to sounds and the body
• Students should know how to practice loving kindness meditation
WEEK 5: GRATITUDE & MINDFULNESS REVIEW

CONCEPT OVERVIEWS

GRATITUDE
Practicing gratitude decreases our negativity bias or our tendency to be on the lookout for danger, threats, and a general sense of lack. Thinking of things we are grateful for increases our happiness and our general health.

ANCHORING TO SOUNDS
Anchoring to sounds includes listening to sounds in our environment and bringing our attention back to sounds when our attention drifts away.

ANCHORING TO BODY SENSATIONS
Anchoring to body sensations includes the body scan practice. This includes noticing sensations like pressure and heat as we scan through different parts of the body.

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION
Loving kindness meditation involves bringing to mind people we care about and wishing them health, happiness, and ease.
Students, please put away anything else you may be working on so you can follow along. Make sure you have somewhere comfortable to sit. Today we are going to learn a new practice - gratitude.
LESSON PRACTICE INSTRUCTIONS

Find a comfortable seated position where there is some quiet so you can concentrate. Bring to mind the first three things you think about when you ask yourself, “what am I grateful for?” Now think of a specific person you enjoy having in your life. What qualities do they have that you appreciate? Now think about your neighborhood. What are some things you appreciate about it? Now bring to mind your own efforts. What did you do today that you feel grateful about? Maybe you feel grateful that you woke up and took care of some tasks or that you were patient with someone. Just take a few moments to notice how you feel as you spend time thinking of aspects of your life for which you are grateful. Maybe you feel calmer or happier, less stressed perhaps. This is a practice you can do at any time. It is especially helpful when you’re feeling negative or cranky.

CHALLENGE
Every day for three minutes practice gratitude using your favorite anchor.

DIVE DEEPER (OPTIONAL)
Set a timer for three minutes and ask students to reflect on what they are grateful for. Have them think on the question, “what am I grateful for today?” This practice doesn’t need to be forced, students can just see what comes to mind. If they are comfortable, have students share with the class what they are grateful for.
Put aside any distractions so that you can be fully present with today’s activity. Today we are going to review three main practices from the course. These include anchoring to sounds and body sensations, and practicing loving kindness.
Find a comfortable place to practice today. Start by closing your eyes or leaving them open and resting your gaze on a spot in front of you. Take a minute or two to listen to sounds all around you. Notice sounds that are close by and sounds that are farther away. When your attention drifts to thoughts or feelings, gently note them, then go back to listening to sounds. Now, pay attention to how your body is feeling overall. Do you feel tired, restless, maybe relaxed? At your own pace, begin to notice body sensations in your feet, your legs, your abdomen, chest, neck, and throat. Notice your arms and hands, your back, and head. Then notice any sensations you feel across your forehead, your cheeks, and around your eyes. Notice how your body may feel different after scanning through it. Finally, we will practice loving kindness toward ourselves. Bring to mind a positive quality that you have. This could be your kindness, patience, willingness to work hard or something else. As you read these phrases, send them to yourself, wishing yourself well:

- May you be happy
- May you be healthy and strong
- May you feel safe and secure
- May you feel calm and peaceful

You can wish yourself these phrases or ones that you make up as many times as you’d like. Stay with the feeling of the words without getting caught up in the words themselves. When you feel ready, take a nice slow stretch and open your eyes.

**CHALLENGE**

Think of someone who is easy to appreciate and send them kind wishes for two minutes every day.

**DIVE DEEPER (OPTIONAL)**

Have students write a loving kindness note, letter, or poem to themselves or another person. Have them write down as many kind wishes as they can think of, then have them imagine that the person or animal is feeling all the wishes that they made. They can share the wishes with the person that they made them to or they can keep them to themselves.
LESSON PLAN

PRACTICE REMINDERS

- Remind students that they can feel grateful for anything. There is nothing too small to feel grateful for and they can let go of any judgment toward what they feel grateful for.

- It’s important to emphasize that mindfulness is not about getting rid of thoughts or getting angry with ourselves for having thoughts during meditation. We are changing our relationship to our thoughts, being kind, open, and curious toward ourselves instead of judgmental.

- As always, remind students that sharing and practicing is optional and that they always have the option to rest during the practice.

- Some students may say that they felt self-conscious or awkward. Remind them that this is normal and something to just notice while they continue to practice curiosity.

TEACHING TIPS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What has been your favorite mindfulness practice?
2. How can mindfulness help you in your life?
3. Tell me about a person you feel especially grateful for and why. What qualities of theirs do you appreciate?
4. Which of your actions and efforts do you appreciate?
WEEK 5: GRATITUDE & MINDFULNESS REVIEW

LIST OF MINDFUL AWARENESS PRACTICES

ANCHORING
We talk to students about how we can anchor our attention to different aspects of the present moment including body sensations and our five senses. Anchoring allows students to return to the present moment when thoughts drift toward the past or the future, driven by difficult emotions.

BODY SCAN
Through the body scan practice, we teach students how to be aware of internal body sensations such as pressure and tingling with curiosity and openness. We start by inviting students to squeeze and release their muscles before starting the body scan which helps relax their bodies.

MINDFUL BREATHING
Mindful breathing means we are breathing naturally and paying attention to the sensations of our breathing in our abdominal area, our chest, or at our nose. Anchoring to sensations of breath promotes concentration, ease, and focus.

MINDFUL LISTENING
Mindful listening invites students to experience what it is like to pay attention to sounds in their environment as an anchor for their attention. It gives them the opportunity to pay attention on purpose, engaging executive functioning to choose what they attend to.

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LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION
This type of meditation invites students to bring to mind a person or animal that they like or love and to send them kind wishes. This practice helps students to feel connected with loved ones that they may miss and may inspire them to reach out to them and express their love or gratitude. In the practice we repeat phrases while imagining that we are sending them to our loved ones. Students can also send these kind wishes to themselves. We offer three general wishes (happiness, health, and peacefulness), but students can feel free to send whatever wishes feel natural and genuine to them. This practice can help students fall asleep at night and promote general relaxation and ease.

MINDFUL STANDING & WALKING
Mindfulness can be practiced while standing and walking. Slowing down on purpose can help regulate emotions when you are feel distressed or rushed.
LIST OF MINDFUL AWARENESS PRACTICES

CONTINUED

F.L.O.C.K.
Flock is an acronym to help students remember how to be mindful of their thoughts. “F” stands for **feeling**, which means noticing the emotions and sensations that arise with thoughts. “L” stands for **labeling**, which entails identifying thoughts as judgements, planning, remembering, and other categories. “O” stands for **observing**, which means to notice thoughts as if they are clouds moving through a wide open sky. “C” stands for **counting**, as students can count their thoughts as a way of observing them. Finally, “K” stands for **kindness**. This encourages students to be kind with themselves as they are practicing.

R.A.I.N.
R.A.I.N. is a technique that requires students to pause and notice their inner experience of emotions. “R” stands for recognizing or naming the emotion(s) that are present. Naming emotions has been shown to reduce their intensity and increase activation of the prefrontal cortex, the brain’s center for executive functioning, decision-making, and self-awareness. “A” stands for allow, which means to let go of changing or suppressing the emotion and instead allow it to move through you with acceptance. “I” stands for investigate, which means to scan through the body, noticing sensations like tightness or heat that arise with the emotion. Finally, “N” can stand for three concepts: non-identify, nurture, or neutral. Non-identify means to let go of judgement and remember that emotions are universal. They are temporary experiences moving through us, and they are not who we are. Nurture means to bring compassion and kindness to our inner experience. We can do this by softening toward our pain and realizing we are not alone. Neutral refers to bringing awareness to our five senses and connecting with the neutral, yet, peaceful aspects of our environment.

S.T.O.P.
S.T.O.P. is an acronym students can use to help them bring their attention to the present moment more often and deal with difficult emotions. “S” stands for stop what you’re doing to pause. “T” stands for take a deep breath. “O” stands for observe. Students can observe in a similar way to the investigate step in R.A.I.N. by noticing internal body sensations and emotions, or they can observe sensations (sounds, sights, tastes, skin sensations, and scents) in the present moment. And finally, “P” stands for proceed. You can invite students to find a cue to practice S.T.O.P. It could be something they do every day, like walking from their home to their car, or when they walk up steps.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DROP IN MEDITATION
Join MARC teachers in Weekly Virtual Meditation Drop-In Sessions. These 30-minute sessions will offer an online community of meditation support and teachings. No need to register, come as you are.

ARTICLE
Mindfulness-based interventions in schools—a systematic review and meta-analysis

TRAUMA TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATORS
Provides school administrators, teachers, staff, and concerned parents with basic information about working with traumatized children in the school system.
**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**CONCERTS @ HOME**

Concerts@Home is Camerata Pacifyca’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. Drawing from the ensemble's extensive video library of performances, Artistic Director Adrian Spence creates a program of music and interviews to be streamed every Sunday morning at 10 a.m. Pacific Time.

**TEEN LINE**

Teen Line is a non-profit, community based organization that provides emotional support to youth. Their mission to provide peer-based education and support before problems become a crisis, using a national hotline, community outreach, and online support.

**VIRTUAL YOGA**

Yoga therapy blends gentle physical postures with breathing techniques and meditation to achieve union of mind, body, and spirit. Practice from your home, office or outdoors. No mat needed. Free, every Thursday from 12-12:30pm. Register here.