



Topic: Self-Awareness	Unit: Mindfulness	Level: Primary
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What is SEL?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

5 Core Topics of SEL

Chart with brief, very brief definitions (Some type of graphic?)

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What is Mindfulness?

Definition

Mindfulness is a state of mind that we can put ourselves into by focusing on being aware of the present moment and focusing on what is happening right now. When we focus, we calmly notice and accept our feelings and thoughts.

Benefits & Applications

Mindfulness applied academically can lead to stronger test performance and content retention. When practiced daily, mindfulness has the potential to improve memory and focus as well as self-understanding. Activities such as bringing awareness to the body or awareness to the environment are easy ways to incorporate mindfulness in everyday life.

1 To 1 Exercises

1. The Listening Walk

<i>Materials</i> Recommended story, <i>The Listening Walk</i> by Paul Showers (read aloud found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLs4r8IHUSg)	<i>Setting</i> While taking a walk; going out on a walk in the neighborhood, walking a dog, walking around school, at the park, or through a store.
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In this exercise, go on a walk with the child and try to establish a setting of silence and calmness. Tell them that you will be playing a game that involves closely listening to all the things around you and describing what it is. For example, you might say, "I hear a bird singing a song. What do you hear?"

Help the child focus on walking, the way their feet are stepping on the floor, the different smells in the air and color of the sky.



The Listening Walk by Paul Showers is a great tool to read or view ahead of the walk, to prepare the child to focus and become mindful of what they feel and hear.

2. Breath of Fresh Candy

<i>Materials</i> Piece of candy, such as Hershey's kisses or hard candies; can also substitute small fruit like grapes Calming music (optional) Timer or clock	<i>Setting</i> Quiet room or area
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The goal of this exercise is to help the child practice mindfulness and focus. Give the piece of candy (or small fruit) to the child. Tell the child to place the food in their mouth but do not eat it for two minutes.

Say, "Close your eyes; no chewing or swallowing until two minutes are over. If other thoughts come up, pop them out and concentrate on the food and your breathing in complete silence."

After the exercise ask these questions:

What did you notice about you breathing?

How was it different from regular breathing?

What sensations did you focus on?

What helped you stay focused?

3. Body Scan

<i>Materials</i> relaxing music (optional)	<i>Setting</i> Anywhere, anytime. Preferable in a quiet area or maybe before a rest time.
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For this exercise, work with the child on deep breathing.

Say, "Close your eyes and take deep breaths in, and slow deep breaths out. Focus on your muscles, your arms and legs. Tighten your legs, hold for a second, then let it go. Tighten your belly hold your breath for two seconds; now slowly let it out. Now tighten your arms and chest, hold, now let go. Now tighten your face and let go of all the tightness in your body."

You are helping the child do a scan of their body. "You are doing a scan from your toes to your head while you breathe."

4. Some Senses

<i>Materials</i> None needed	<i>Setting</i> Before a task or in the morning
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For this exercise, have the child sit in a comfortable position and close their eyes, take slow, deep breaths. Take some time to relax. Have the child focus on things they hear, smell, and their breath. Have the child dictate how they feel and work on the breathing exercises.



First, focus on the sense of hearing and say, "Take time to focus on what you hear and only pay attention to what your ears are telling you. Hearing the sound going in your ears is all that matters."

Then, focus on the sense of smell. Say, "Now focus on what you can smell. If you can't smell anything, focus on your nose. Focus on the air around your nose. Is it warm or cold? Dry or humid?"

Next, say, "Now concentrate on how you feel. Are you relaxed, calm, comfortable? Enjoy breathing slowly, in and out."

Last, focus on the sense of sight. Say, "Slowly open your eyes and calmly look around. Look around you and keep breathing slowly. Concentrate on breathing and do not let what you see distract you from breathing."

Additional Resources

I Am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness by Susan Verde

A World of Possibilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness by Frank J. Sileo, PhD

Now by Antionette Portis

What Does it Mean to be Present? By Rana DiOro

Visiting Feelings by Lauren Rubenstien

The Listening Walk by Paul Showers

Helpful Tips

- Practicing mindfulness is not religious, but part of a healthy, growing mind and body
- Incorporating mindful practices on a daily basis can work to combat stress

Fascinating Details

Focusing on your breathing is a great way to become mindful. As you take a breath in, each one of your cells that make up your body also take a breath. When you breathe out, every one of your cells breathes out too. Your whole body follows your lungs. When you control your breathing, you are controlling every part of your body. No one else is controlling you. Remember, you are in control.

Just for Fun

Try the Body Scan exercise as a daily activity to improve mindfulness!

Module Layout & Design ideas for designer:

(Provide web pages that currently offer information similar to this module, keep in mind the specific grade level of the classroom)