LA COUNTY LIBRARY

DIY Library Program

ADULT 101: PERSONAL WELL-BEING

PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

Recommended for Ages 12 - 17

Mindfulness is learning to focus attention on one thing and about being able to bring our attention back to that one thing when the mind gets distracted. The other parts of mindfulness are about the attitude you bring when paying attention - being open, non-judging, and being curious about what you are focusing on. Learning to be mindful now will prepare you to better handle the common, and not so common stressors that will come your way in life.

Let's say you have a big test on Friday. You have studied all week and are prepared, but you are still anxious about it. If you take a minute or two to focus on your breathing, this will help reduce anxiety and distress**,** improve concentration, and increase productivity. If you practice this breathing technique daily it can create a sense of calmness, give you more energy, and enhance awareness and creativity.

Here's another example: you have been home all weekend for a long 3-day weekend and it had been raining. You feel restless since you have been indoors the whole time and you don't have the energy to do anything. Try and be in the moment by listening to the rain outside, maybe open the window and smell the rainy day. This is mindfulness!

These two examples illustrate the benefits of mindfulness:

- Reduce anxiety and distress
- Improve concentration
- Increase productivity
- Create a sense of calmness
- Enjoy more energy
- Enhance awareness and creativity
- Learn how to relax and regulate emotions
- A sense of empathy and connectedness
- Health and sleep

INSTRUCTIONS

As already mentioned, mindfulness is learning to focus attention on one thing and about being able to bring the attention back when the mind gets distracted. The core concepts of mindfulness are being present, open, and curious.

1. **Present** - paying attention the present moment; being in the now.
2. **Open** - being open to what is happening in the present time.
3. **Curious** - being curious about your present experience and what it will bring.

Practice being present.

Using your phone timer, or other type of timer, time yourself for 1 minute. Sit up in a comfortable chair with your feet planted on the floor. If you would like, you can close your eyes. During that minute focus on your breathing and feel the rise and fall your chest. If you start thinking about other things, that is okay, just go back to the breathing. You are practicing being in the here and now. Try this practice daily and over time you will be a pro!

Practice being open.

Using a timer, time yourself for 1 minute. Sit up in a comfortable chair with your feet planted on the floor and notice what is happening in that present moment. Can you feel your feet touching the ground? Can you feel your back against the chair? If it is a rainy day, can you hear the raindrops hitting the roof? There are many things you can be aware of in the present moment. Also remember that you are noticing these things as they are and not judging them in any way. For example, if you can hear your little brother in the other room notice that you can hear him and refrain from judging what he is saying or doing. Just like the present activity, try this daily and over time you will be a pro!

Practice being curious and kind.

Let's say you are having a conversation with your best friend. Are you listening to them or scrolling through your phone? Listening to them means you are curious about what they are saying and value what they are saying. If you are scrolling through your phone, your attention is elsewhere, and you are not listening nor are you being curious. Stay mindful! You can also practice this with your family members!

It is important to know the difference between mindfulness and mindlessness.

Mindfulness: Enjoying a slice of pizza *without* Instagramming a picture of your food. Notice the taste and texture of the food. Stay present and mindful!

Mindlessness: Eating lunch or sipping a delicious Boba tea, without tasting a single thing; Walking from school to home and then suddenly realizing you don't actually remember seeing what color the traffic lights were or how you got home. Mindlessness is like being on auto pilot when we're going through the motions in our mind and we're disconnected from our body. Step out of mindlessness and be present!

Now that you're a Mindful Master, let's make a DIY Mindfulness Jar!

DIY MINDFULNESS JAR

Materials Needed:

Mason jar or water bottle
Warm water
Clear gel glue (if doing the glitter option)
Glitter or cooking oil
Food coloring (optional)

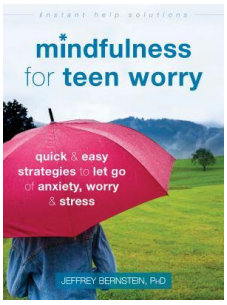
1. Fill up your jar or water bottle with warm water close to the top.
2. Add clear glue to the jar or water bottle.
    - For cooking oil option: Add cooking oil to the jar or water bottle.
3. Add in glitter (if you would like, add food coloring) to the jar or water bottle.
4. Tighten the jar or water bottle.
5. Shake up the jar or water bottle.
6. Relax and watch the glitter fall to the bottom. While you are watching the glitter fall to the bottom, try and focus on the glitter falling. Don't think about that weird thing that happened a few days ago. Be present, open, and curious about the glitter falling.
    - Cooking oil option: Relax and watch the cooking oil settle. Don't think about that weird thing that happened a few days ago. Be present, open, and curious about the cooking oil.
7. Enjoy!

If you happen to have a snow globe at home, that will do that same at the mindfulness jar.

DIGITAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH LA COUNTY LIBRARY

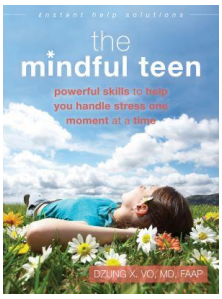
eBooks & Audiobooks

LA County Library offers numerous resources that can help you learn more about mindfulness and managing stress. Here are just a few, all of which are available as eBooks on OverDrive and Libby:



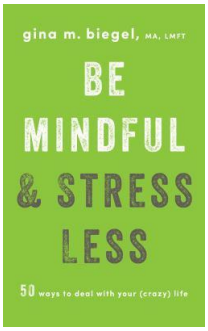
Mindfulness for Teen Worry: Quick and Easy Strategies to Let Go of Anxiety, Worry, and Stress **by Jeffrey Bernstein**

In this book, a clinical psychologist offers quick, easy-to-learn mindfulness skills teens can use anytime, anywhere to stop worries from growing and taking over. You'll learn powerful and easy-to-use mindfulness skills to manage the four most common worry struggles teens face: school pressure, coping with friendship and relationship problems, improving body image, and handling family conflicts.



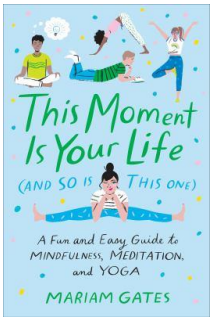
The Mindful Teen: Powerful Skills to Help You Handle Stress One Moment at a Time **by Dzung X. Vo**

Written by a pediatrician specializing in teen and adolescent medicine, this book offers a mindfulness program to help you deal with stress in healthy ways, improve communication, and reduce conflicts with family and friends.



Be Mindful & Stress Less **by Gina M. Biegel**

This book provides simple accessible mindfulness- based practices such as paying attention to your senses, self-care, and being aware of responses and actions.



This Moment is Your Life (and so is this one): A Fun and Easy Guide to Mindfulness, Meditation, and Yoga for Teens and Tweens ***by Mariam Gates***

A hands-on guide to mindfulness for teens, with focus on yoga, breathing, meditation, and everyday practice.

Online Courses

Universal Class

Search for courses on “Mindfulness in the Workplace” and “Relaxation 101” on this online learning platform full of instructor-led online courses.

Lynda.com from LinkedIn

Search for classes on “Mindfulness” and “Managing Stress” on this online learning platform that helps anyone learn business, software, technology and creative skills to achieve personal and professional goals in courses taught by recognized industry experts.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

YouTube Videos

- Made Mindfully (0:15)
- Mindfulness Animated in 3 minutes (3:25)
- 3 Minutes Body Scan Mediation – Mindfulness for Kids And Adults (3:26)

Websites on Mindfulness

Mindful Hub – www.mindfulhub.com/teens
Smiling Mind – www.smilingmind.com.au

Free Mindfulness Apps (Available for Apple and Android)

UCLA Mindful App
Smiling Mind App