

## Pass the Marble

This activity is to show how messages are passed from one area of the brain to another and how they can be stopped by negative thoughts linked to situations which our primitive brain interprets as threatening. If we cannot intercept this interpretation by using our thinking part of the brain then we will fight, flight or freeze. You will need a cup/bowl and a marble/ball. The students stand in a line with a cup or bowl at one end. The marble/bowl represents a message. The cup/bowl represents the pre frontal cortex area of the brain - our thinking part. Pass the ball down the line to the bowl. If we are feeling ok then the pre-frontal cortex receives this message shown by the ball reaching the bowl. However, if we are scared then this may not happen (this can be shown by a child stepping out of line and pretending to be worried/scared of something and taking the ball with them so the message never reaches the pre-frontal cortex). If the message never reaches the pre-frontal cortex which helps you to think and ask for things that you need and want then you will react by fighting (fight), running (flight) or be frozen to the spot.



## Digital Detox

Mindfulness helps us to be in the present moment which can be difficult when there are distractions such as mobile phones and social media. Encourage your students to have regular digital detoxes from their mobile phones, laptops and social media. Encourage them to spend periods of time each day where they do not check their phones or engage with technology. Perhaps students could challenge themselves to see how long each day they can do this for.



## Mindful Colouring

There are many mindful colouring books available to purchase or pages to download from the internet. Encourage students to engage in mindfulness colouring as an activity to de-stress and to encourage focusing on the present moment. If students notice their mind wandering whilst completing their colouring remind them not to berate themselves but to acknowledge it and to bring their mind back to the colouring.



## Attention Game – Shout a Name

This game is called shout a name. This is a game which at first may appear easy but the faster the pace becomes, the more it requires attention. Ask your students to sit in a circle. Choose a student to start the game, they start by shouting the name of a famous person and then it moves onto the next person either by going round the circle or by them pointing to someone. Person 2 then has to shout the name of another famous person whose first name begins with the first letter of the surname of the previously mentioned famous person e.g. person 1: Chris Evans, person 2: Emma Watson, person 3: Will Smith.



# Mindfulness Resources

## Key Stage 3 / Key Stage 4



This booklet has been developed to introduce activities and ideas and to help embed mindfulness practice across school. There is a focus on the four main strands of mindfulness which are: curiosity, compassion, acceptance and openness helping to create an awareness of the present moment. Many of the ideas may not be new as mindfulness can be easily incorporated into everyday classroom activities and routines.

## Everyday Mindfulness

Encourage everyday activities to be completed mindfully for example mindfully walking around the classroom and tidying up. Activities outside of school can also be completed mindfully such as walking the dog, spending time with friends, having a warm bath, enjoying the first sip of tea in the morning.



## Daily Walking Meditation

Encourage students to let a bit of stress go with every step that they take, each time that they put their foot down they let a bit of stress go. This can be completed when walking to school, walking around school, or walking around the park.



## Positive Affirmations

Using magazines, newspapers or their own art work students find positive affirmations about themselves or positive feelings and stick these onto large pebbles/stones which can be varnished so that they can be held and looked at without wearing away.



## Practise Gratitude

Encourage students to reflect upon the day asking themselves – what has gone well? What am I thankful for? Who am I thankful to? Think about those around you for 1 minute and give silent gratitude to them.



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## Breathing

### Breathing and Smiling

Breathing gets you in touch with your body and the present moment. Smiling opens your mind and heart to be in the present moment whatever is happening. Smiling is like yoga for the face – it relaxes the muscles and sends positive signals to your brain. So by breathing and smiling whenever you are happy /sad/stressed or angry will help you to bring loving-kindness and self-compassion to the situation.



### Counting Breaths

- Count 1-1-1-1-1 when you breathe in, count 1-1-1-1-1 when you breathe out until you feel empty. Repeat counting with 2-2-2-2-2 in and out, repeat by continuing up the number line.
- Count from 1-10 as you in hale and exhale.
- Hold a number in your head as you sit and breathe to help you to focus on that moment.



### Calm

- C - Chest - Breathe in and allow lungs to expand open for a few breaths.
- A - Arms - Bring awareness to arms and any sensations you might notice.
- L - Legs - Feel grounded to the floor.
- M – Mind – Take a few breaths to allow your mind to settle.



### Sober breathing

- S – Stop
- O – Observe – is there stress present right now?
- B – Breathe – for 1 minute
- E – Expand – expand your awareness to your body sensations
- R – Respond – bring awareness/focus back to the activity at hand.

### STOP

- S – Stop what you are doing
- T – Take 3 breaths
- O – Observe
- P – Proceed mindfully



## Positive and Negative Coping

It is a good idea to have strategies that you can use to prevent you from feeling stressed or that you can go to when you first notice it to help to manage it before it escalates. With your students explore what strategies could be helpful and unhelpful and brainstorm ideas. Ask them to test them out and see what works for them.



## Loving-Kindness

By completing this activity with students they will focus on noticing feelings of loving-kindness. Ask the students to imagine a kitten/puppy or their own pet. They imagine holding it in their hands or it sat on their lap. They may notice feelings of nurture inside, a feeling of wanting to protect it, for it to be well, for it to be safe, feelings of warmth and love.



## Neural Pathways in the Brain

Neuroplasticity means the ability for the brain to change itself. This can be demonstrated by asking students to walk back and forth over sand or grass, across the same pathway several times so that they can see where they have walked. So like the path in the sand/grass the neural pathways get stronger and stronger in our brains with repetition and weaker and weaker with disuse. Mindfulness can help to rewire the brain and its effective way to create more healthy “pathways” in the brain.



## Hand Model of the Brain

This links to the fight, flight, freeze response that is an evolutionary inheritance. Discuss with students how having these in-built responses can be both helpful and unhelpful. Can they think of situations when they have felt each of them?

This activity will help to visualise the different parts of the brain and what they are used for and how they link together. While sitting or standing bend your left elbow so that your palm points upwards. The arm represents your spine and the wrist is the base of your skull. Your hand represents the different parts of the brain – the animal part of the brain links to the fight, fight or freeze responses. If you bend your fingers over they can represent our thinking part of the brain to think about what you would like/need, to help you to ask for things.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFTIjLo1bK8> This clip goes through the different parts of the brain and how they might make us respond.

