

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Put simply, mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present: aware of what we are doing, as opposed to worrying about what might happen in the future or ruminating about what has already happened.

Mindfulness can help us to be more aware of any tendencies to be reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us, grounding ourselves in those moments when they arise. We do this through simple practices whilst sitting, walking, standing, or moving, bringing mindful awareness into everyday life. These practices help us develop an inner resource to deal with everyday worries and stress, but also to be able to notice and really appreciate the 'good stuff' that we might otherwise miss.

What's the point of mindfulness?

If you hear somebody claiming mindfulness is a cure for everything then please be wary! Nevertheless, there is a body of increasingly robust research which points towards tangible benefits.

In adults, mindfulness training has been shown to significantly improve health and wellbeing.

Having taken a mindfulness course, people have reported that they are able to learn new information more effectively, think more clearly and feel calmer and less anxious. Specific mindfulness courses are now recommended by the **National Institute of Clinical Excellence**, and GPs are referring adults on to eight-week mindfulness courses to reduce stress and help prevent recurrent depression. It is increasingly being used in the workplace to improve staff wellbeing and satisfaction, in sports training to improve performance, and with children and young people to enhance wellbeing, learning, and behaviour management.

Is mindfulness difficult?

Mindfulness is learned through direct experience of practices. We gradually learn to direct our attention in a more focused way to whatever is actually happening - whether it be our breathing, the sensations in our body, thoughts and feelings, or everyday activities such as walking and eating.

At first the mind tends to wander constantly, but with practice we learn to sustain our attention and direct it more skillfully. This helps break the grip of unhelpful mental habits, judgements and impulses, making way for greater calm, and for more helpful, kinder and rational thinking about all aspects of life. However, it takes practice!

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS FOR CHILDREN ...

FLOURISHING

Mindfulness can help young people to achieve their potential and to flourish.



ANCHORING

Mindfulness can help young people to feel grounded, safe and free to choose how they respond.



MENTAL HEALTH

Mindfulness can help with; depression, low mood, stress, anxiety, wellbeing, happiness, and resilience.



BEHAVIOUR

Mindfulness can help with; self-regulation, impulse delay, oppositional behaviour, aggression, and ADHD.



LEARNING

Mindfulness can help with; attention, concentration, planning, memory, attainment, performance.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Mindfulness can help with; heart rate, blood pressure, cortisol & immunity, eating problems, and sleep quality.



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL

Mindfulness can help with; relationships, self-esteem, optimism, self-regulation, and caring & compassion.



AND FOR STAFF ...

8-week mindfulness programmes have been shown to:

- Reduce teacher burnout
- Improve regulation of stress
- Increase self-compassion
- Increase teaching efficacy

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