

Mindfulness in school

Why, what, how



Why mindfulness in school?

Children's mental health

- ▶ Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people. They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.
- ▶ Alarmingly, however, 70% of children and young people who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.
- ▶ The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/c/children-and-young-people



Adult mental health

- One in four adults experiences at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any given year. People in all walks of life can be affected and at any point in their lives. Mental health problems represent the largest single cause of disability in the UK.

www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/adults/



What is mindfulness?

- ▶ It is not religious!
- ▶ ‘A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.’
- ▶ Developed as a tool by Dr Jon Kabat–Zinn since 1979: ‘Mindfulness–based stress reduction’



Not being mindful:

Our mind takes flight, we lose touch with our body, and pretty soon we're engrossed in obsessive thoughts about something that just happened or fretting about the future. And that makes us **anxious**.



What does research say about mindfulness?

- ▶ It can affect the structure and neural pathways in the brain, helping with sensory and attention processing
- ▶ Helps with developing emotions such as compassion
- ▶ Helps to prevent brain-ageing
- ▶ Better stress regulation
- ▶ Improved relationships
- ▶ Evidence in both adults and children

Mindfulness report 2010

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Mindfulness_report_2010.pdf



What do we do in school?

- ▶ Watch videos
- ▶ Colour
- ▶ Listen to music
- ▶ Train children to focus attention
- ▶ Link to yoga
- ▶ Practice breathing techniques

Here are some examples:

Zen Den; Peace Out; GoNoodle; Cosmic Kids



What about teachers?

Teachers are also starting to practice mindfulness.

Training in some of the key concepts:

- ▶ *Being in the here and now*
- ▶ *Attentiveness*
- ▶ *Self-compassion*
- ▶ *Non-judgement*
- ▶ *Curiosity*
- ▶ *Non-attachment*



Do you want more information?

www.futurelearn.com

An online course entitled 'Mindfulness for Wellbeing and Peak Performance'

You can start tonight!

