



Joyful Mind Project

Mindfulness for Schools & Families

What is Mindfulness?

Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program at the University of Massachusetts, tells us that mindfulness is “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experiences moment by moment.”

Mindfulness is a set of attentional skills working together. It's also the capacity of the heart to extend compassion in ever-widening circles. It includes an ability to act with others in mind and an awareness that allows us to self-regulate impulses and emotions.

Mindfulness has a long history. For more than 2,500 years contemplative traditions world-wide have used this practice to help reduce physical and emotional suffering. In the last thirty years, mindfulness has emerged as a research-based intervention in stress-reduction and now has applications in cognitive therapy, pain management, education, and more.

As Dr. Dan Siegel, Co-Director of the Mindful Awareness Research Center at UCLA writes, “Can you imagine a world in which this health-promoting, empathy-enhancing, executive-attention developing, self-compassion nurturing, affordable, and adaptable mental practice was made available in everyone’s life?”



History of Mindfulness

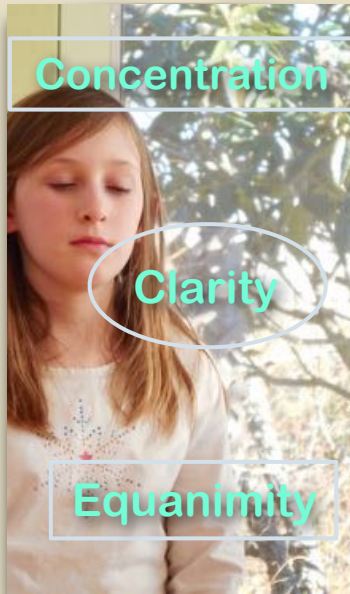
- Mindfulness can be traced back more than 2,500 years
- Introduced in secular applications 35 years ago through the work of Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts
- Now used in medicine, psychology, corporate settings (Google & Twitter), sports training (Golden State Warriors, NY Knicks, & Chicago Cubs), and education (Harvard, Brown, & Stanford University)
- 35 years of research showing:
 - ✦ increased self-awareness & impulse control
 - ✦ increased empathy and understanding of others
 - ✦ better focus and concentration
 - ✦ increased ability to settle and manage emotions
 - ✦ increased physical and mental well-being



Program content is always developmentally appropriate and available for faculty, staff, parents, and students in grades K-12

Mindfulness: A Growing Movement

Mindfulness is three attentional skills working together:



Concentration

The ability to focus on what you want, when you want.

Clarity

Increased awareness of thoughts, emotions, senses, and external behaviors.

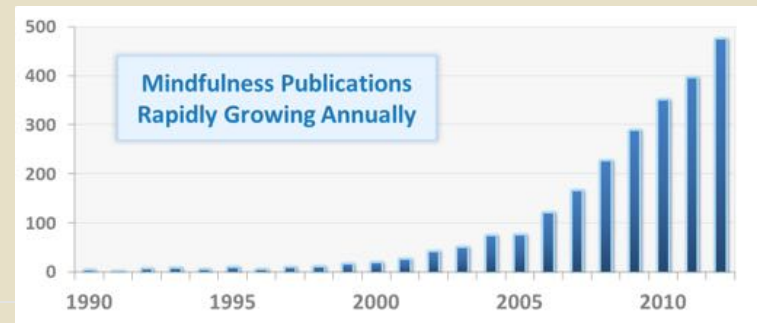
Equanimity

Non-reactivity. The ability to let sensory experience come and go without push or pull.

Just like music, art, or sports, mindfulness is a set of skills that we can practice.

Growing Momentum:

Introduced to medicine in 1979, mindfulness is used at hundreds of medical centers and hospitals around the world, with a rapidly growing research base that includes neuroscience and cross-disciplinary studies.



Feb. 2014 TIME cover story “**The Mindful Revolution**” described how mindfulness is being used in corporations, education, and medicine.

Mindful Schools was chosen to represent mindfulness in education.

Benefits of Mindfulness



Attention

Strengthens our “mental muscle” for bringing our focus back where we want it, when we want it.



Adaptability

Becoming aware of our patterns enables us to gradually change habitual behaviors wisely.



Emotional Regulation

Observing our emotions helps us recognize when they occur, to see their transient nature, and to change how we respond to them.



Compassion

Awareness of our own thoughts, emotions, and senses grows our understanding of what other people are experiencing.



Calming

Breathing and other mindfulness practices relax the body and mind, giving access to peace independent of external circumstances.



Resilience

Seeing things objectively reduces the amount of narrative we add to the world’s natural ups and downs, giving us greater balance.

Mindfulness Changes Brain Structure and Function

In a recent study at Harvard University, differences in brain volume in five regions in the brain was found after just eight-weeks of mindfulness-based programming.

An increase was found in four regions:

1. The posterior cingulate, involved in mind wandering.
2. The left hippocampus which assists in learning, cognition, memory and emotional regulation.
3. The temporo parietal junction, or TPJ, which is associated with perspective taking and empathy.
4. An area of the brain stem called the Pons, where regulatory neurotransmitters are produced.
5. Reduction in size was found in the amygdala, the fight or flight part of the brain which is important for anxiety, fear and stress.

The results suggest that participation in mindfulness based programming is associated with changes in gray matter concentration in brain regions involved in learning and memory processes, emotion regulation, self-referential processing, and perspective taking.

(Lazar, Harvard, 2011)

Mindfulness Increases Executive Function

“Executive Function” refers to the conscious direction of what we think, feel, and do. It is a set of mental processes, including attentional and inhibitory control, that enable us to plan, focus attention, regulate impulses, understand and fully experience emotions, and carry out instructions. They include:

- *Planning* - developing a strategy; consciously engaging thought
- *Self-Control* - staying on task in the face of distraction; regulating emotions; engaging the will
- *Cognitive Flexibility* - changing your mind and your actions as needed to adapt to external changes;
- *Working Memory* - the ability to remember and use relevant information while in the middle of an activity;
- *Self-Awareness* - conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires

A large body of research suggests that Executive Function strength is a greater indicator of academic success than I.Q. Nonjudgmental acceptance of thoughts and emotions, as practiced in mindfulness, is integral to the effective initiation of executive control.

(Zelazo, University of Minnesota, 2010, Temper and Inzlicht, 2013)

Emerging Evidence



The Largest Research Study to Date:

In the 2011-12 school year, Mindful Schools partnered with the University of California, Davis to conduct one of the largest randomized-controlled studies to date on mindfulness and children, involving 937 children and 47 teachers in 3 Oakland public elementary schools.

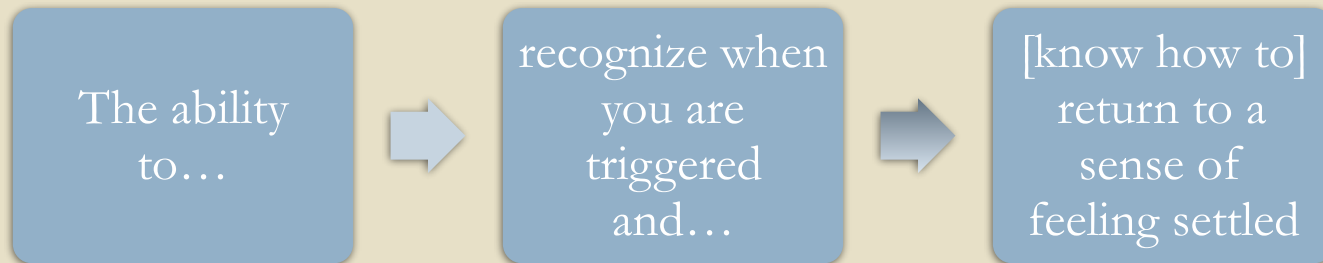
The Mindful Schools curriculum, utilized by Joyful Mind Project, produced statistically significant improvements in paying attention and participation in class activities versus the control group (*top left*). This was with just 4 hours of mindfulness instruction for the students – a very small, low-cost dose.



Teachers and Students Report:

These results (*bottom left*) are from a survey of 977 students and 58 teachers at 8 schools.

Simple Definition of Self-Regulation



“The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will... An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence.”

- William James

Mindfulness and Social Emotional Learning

What is the difference between mindfulness and SEL?

The answer is that one works from the outside-in—and the other works from the inside-out. When the two come together in the mind of a student, the effect can have even greater impact on both individuals and the world around us.

The difference between SEL and mindfulness:

To start, SEL uses an outside-in approach with a focus on teaching skills: a teacher introduces a skill and the students practice it for a set amount of time, and then the teacher moves on to the next skill. SEL assumes that this process is enough to enable students to use the skill in all relevant, real-life situations.

Mindfulness, on the other hand, works from the inside out, drawing on the premise that each person has the innate capacity for relationship-building qualities such as empathy and kindness—a premise that [research](#) now supports.

Mindfulness helps students become aware of and then embody the connection between their emotions, thoughts, and bodily sensations, so students are better able to regulate their emotions, which then impacts things such as their behavior, stress levels, relationships, and ability to focus.

Mindfulness practices connect students' inner and outer experiences and help them see the congruence between the two.

(From, "How SEL and Mindfulness Can Work Together," by [Linda Lantieri](#), [Vicki Zakrzewski](#), Greater Good Science Center, April 7, 2015)

School Programs

School Programs are always customized to meet specific needs. Here are some formats we recommend:

Create an Elective for Middle School or High School:

Suggested content includes Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Teens (MBSR-T), an evidence-based program with emphasis on identifying and working with stress and other challenges.

School-wide Integration: Support faculty, students, and parents with a year-long program. Customized wrap-around care to meet your school's unique needs.

Faculty First: Support teachers with stress-management, self-care, and foundational practices. Start with a half-day introduction or give teachers 8 full weeks of support.

Classroom pilot program: Introduce mindfulness with a 16-Lesson program in just 1-2 classrooms. Suggested content includes:

- Three 30-minute teacher support sessions
- A new lesson each week
- Teachers learn alongside students. No new content or curriculum to implement
- Each class receives a mindfulness bell
- Grades 5-12 receive journaling prompts and weekly challenges
- Grades K-4 enter practice through the door of the imagination.

Lesson Titles May Include:

- The Brain House, Basic Neuroscience
- Focused Attention, Mindful Breathing
- Open Awareness, Mindful Listening
- Exteroceptive & Interoceptive Body Awareness
- Mindfulness of Emotions, Letting Go
- Why Generosity Matters
- The Heart of a Champion, Self-Compassion
- The Negativity Bias
- Fostering Empathy
- Mindful Eating, Craving and Aversion
- Mindfulness of Thoughts, Judgment, and the Inner-Critic
- Why Gratitude Matters
- Communicating with Skill and Intention

Joyful Mind Project Community Programs:

- In addition to school programs, JMP offers weekly, monthly, and seasonal programs throughout the year.
- Private sessions and coaching are also available
- Many classes take place on an organic farm or retreat center in Sonoma County
- Content includes the Mindful Schools curriculum, MBSR-T, and traditional contemplative practices adapted for broader secular use
- Lessons are delivered through multicultural stories, engaging practices, games, movement, & artwork
- Each family receives a Parent Mindfulness Manual
- Annual Parent's Mindfulness and Tea Info Night
- Seasonal events help students attune to nature, allowing nature's rhythms to support mindfulness practice
- Students cultivate self-awareness, embody empathy, reduce stress, and increase executive function



Available Programs:

- Teens (*ages 13-17*)
- Youth (*ages 11-13*)
- Children (*ages 5-11*)
- Family Programs (*all ages*)
- Homeschool Program (*ages 5-11*)
- Seasonal Events
- Private Groups & Sessions
- Mindfulness for Mothers (*private coaching*)
- Mindfulness for Parents

Credentials & Cost

Credentials:

Joyful Mind Project utilizes the Mindful Schools curriculum, used with more than 1.5 million students nationally and internationally. Mindful Schools is the first mindfulness with youth program to complete a randomized control study. The study showed improvement in attention, impulse control, self-awareness, and care for others.

Additional content includes MBSR-T (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Teens), an evidence-based program modeled after University of Massachusetts Medical Center's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for adults, and adapted for teens by Gina M. Biegel, MA, LMFT.



Cost:

We aim to make our programs available to all students, families, and schools. For that reason, all programs are offered on a sliding scale.

Schools with a high percentage of students on free/reduced lunch are welcome to pay at the low end of this scale. We are also happy to pursue grant funding with your school.

Families may request tuition assistance at any time. Please inquire for details.

Frequently Asked Questions

How is a school program introduced to teachers?

With a 20-60 minute initial session introducing the practice, benefits, and potential outcomes. This could take place at an in-service meeting. The initial session is experiential with a focus on self-care and stress-reduction. Then teachers learn alongside students with 15-20 minute weekly sessions in the classroom.

What will the teacher training look like in terms of content and time?

This is a very teacher-friendly program with no new curriculum to learn or implement. Teachers receive three training sessions — one before the program begins in the classroom, one at the mid-way point, and one at the end. These are experiential and introduce the core concepts of our curriculum (stress, self-regulation, impulsivity, mindfulness, self-esteem, and quality of life). Throughout the program, teachers learn alongside their students, then practice daily for 1-5 minutes in the classroom.

When first implemented, what will the intro/training in the classroom be like in terms of content and time?

We deliver one new lesson each week to each grade/classroom. Lessons are approximately 15-20 minutes each. A new aspect of mindfulness is introduced each week. Teachers then practice that lesson daily with their students, for 1-5 minutes as mentioned above. Lessons include Focused Attention, Fostering Empathy, and The Basic Neuroscience of Mindfulness. More about our program content is available on page 11 of this booklet.

What will the program look like once implemented in terms of time and content?

Our programs build the capacity for schools to sustain outcomes independently after implementation. This looks like students and teachers leading short practices (1-5 minutes) daily in the classroom. We do recommend occasional follow-up check-ins with an instructor. This could look like 20 minutes integrated into a school-wide assembly each quarter or semester. Mindfulness is a great way to start all-school gatherings, helping students settle in for the rest of the assembly. It's also a great way to begin in-service meetings. Follow up sessions are affordably priced and we are happy to create a plan that meets your school's unique needs.

Will teachers and parents receive something in writing about the program?

Yes. Teacher manuals and parent manuals will be provided. These include ideas for integrating practice into home and classroom life.

For school programs, will there be any kind of measures of effect like in the research?

Yes. We use quantitative self-report measures addressing the core constructs in our curriculum (stress, self-regulation, impulsivity, mindfulness, self-esteem, and overall quality of life). Measures used could include the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, Teen Conflict Survey, Healthy Self-Regulation Scale, and Mindful Attention Awareness Scale.

About Chelsea:



Chelsea True holds two certifications in secular mindfulness, as a Mindful Schools Certified Instructor and in MBSR-T (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Teens).

She is the founder of Joyful Mind Project, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Sonoma County. She brings more than twenty years of mindfulness practice to her work with schools and families.

Chelsea aims to develop mindfulness content that helps young people reach their highest goals, to inquire and create, to learn on their own, and to carry that quest for understanding into the world in their own way, and in their own lives.

She is happy to share a presentation with your school or give a talk on mindfulness to your existing group. In recent years, she has enjoyed teaching mindfulness at Sonoma State University, Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm, The Healdsburg School, and Sonoma Academy.

***The mission of
Joyful Mind Project***
*is to increase the well-being of
youth, families, and
communities through the
practice of secular mindfulness.*

*With a whole-child perspective,
Joyful Mind Project offers
mindfulness education to
schools and families in the San
Francisco Bay Area*

*Program content includes the
Mindful Schools evidence-based
curriculum, MBSR-T, and
traditional contemplative
practices adapted for broader
secular use.*

A new beginning...

“Every moment is a new beginning, another opportunity for tuning in, and perhaps coming – in that very moment – to see and feel and know ourselves and our children in a new and deeper way.”

- Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, University of Massachusetts Medical School