

# Mindfulness for Youth, Families & Teaching Staff

## What is mindfulness?

- Awareness of this moment without judgement
- Noticing how we feel in our bodies and minds, right here and now
- Being present to each moment we experience with acceptance of what is, so that we can better take appropriate action for our best interest

## Who experiences stress?

- Everyone
- Every age
- Can be good stress too i.e. excitement about something
- Stress can show up in our mind (busy thoughts, unfocused), in your emotions (numb, exaggerated, displaced feelings) or our body (tension and strain forehead, jaw, neck, shoulders, back, appetite and weight, sleep disturbances and more)

## Benefits of mindfulness:

- Better relationship with ourselves, our bodies as well as increased interpersonal relationships, more compassion
- More Focus
- Increase Calm
- Problem solving skills increased
- Increased cognitive ability and much more
- Reduction of stress

## Different ways to practice mindfulness?

- Awareness breathing (taking slow and full breaths)
- Senses, notice surroundings, smells, sounds, colors etc
- Body scans -notice how your body is feeling and its needs
- Mind scan – notice thoughts and feelings that you are experiencing as well as those that are recurrent
- Yoga, walking, nature, meditation, getting still and noticing all that there is to notice

## What is growth mindset vs fixed mindset?

When we have a **fixed mindset**, we believe that our basic abilities, intelligence, and talents are fixed traits.

**Fixed thought examples:** *I can't do that. I always make mistakes.*

In a **growth mindset**, however, we believe our abilities and intelligence can be developed with effort, learning, and persistence.

**Growth thought examples:** *I can't do that, yet but with practice, I can learn. Everyone makes mistakes, but I am learning through my experience.*

## What are ways we can use growth mindset and mindfulness in our homes?

- **Show by example** – Not just telling your kids, but by showing by example. Share your thoughts. Share your feelings. Share your strategies for mindfulness, stress reduction and growth mindset.
- **Body- Mind connection** – if they are sad or worried about something, ask them where they feel it in their bodies i.e. *I am scared and my tummy hurts*. This assist us to understand that our thoughts and emotions can affect our physical being.
- **Check in** with each other at the end of day try “Wuzzy-Fuzzy”– share something that challenged you and how you plan to move through the challenge....share some that felt warm and fuzzy and why? Then their turn to share their wuzzy-fuzzy!
- **Digital Detox** – limit your own and your kids screen time for more social, present moment interaction
- **Silence is Golden** - Not just for parents, but kids too. In a society that has kid's schedules booked to the max, allow quiet time. Put on soft music and start small. For example “for the next 30 minutes we are just going to sit and relax, no talking, no noise. Start with 10 minutes and work your way
- **Be real** – we all want our kids to be happy but invalidating their emotions by saying things like “don't worry about it” or “just be positive” can be dismissive. Allow them to talk about how they are feeling and then problem solve with them to assist them to feel better. Understand their stress.
- **Discuss and Inquire:** Ask them about what they are thinking? Is it real? Or is it perceived? Explore thoughts and feelings that they are experiencing.