

MindUP Lesson 2

Mindful Awareness

Grades 3-5

Lesson 2: Mindful Awareness is the second video in a virtual series of MindUP programming for the 2020-2021 academic year. Based in neuroscience, MindUP teaches the skills and knowledge children need to manage stress, regulate emotions and face challenges with optimism, resilience and compassion.

Length of Lesson: 15 minutes including worksheet

Objective: Students will be able to define and describe the difference between mindful and unmindful behaviors. They will be able to apply the concept of mindful awareness to their own lives.

Materials:

- Mindful or Unmindful Worksheet
- Pen or Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue Stick or Tape

Preparation: Have child sitting at a desk or table before starting the lesson.

Key Words:

- **Unmindful behavior** is a *reaction* that happens before allowing the mind to process and think about it. Many times, this results in poor decision making.
- **Mindful behavior** is a thoughtful *response* that happens after our mind takes time to consciously process the input allowing the prefrontal cortex time to analyze, interpret and prioritize information – this allows us to pick the best course of action.
- **Mindful awareness** is described as “focusing without judgement.” It is being fully aware and tuned in to what is going on right now, in the present moment. Having children analyze behaviors helps them make connections to their own lives and understand the importance of stopping to think and breathe before making a decision.
- **Mindful Listening** is listening closely and paying attention to the sounds around you.

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Mindful Awareness at Home:

Below you can find some helpful ideas that you can practice at home.

(1) Thought Awareness

- Switch the thought! If you notice your child is struggling with a task, help them replace negative self-talk with encouraging language that can help them keep going to complete the task.

(2) Emotion Awareness

- Give language to emotion! Take advantage of playtime and conversations to help explore new words to describe and identify emotions.
- Pay attention to your body! Take time to talk about how our bodies are responding to certain situations. For example:
 - “I see your fists are clenched tight from your sister taking your ball, can you feel what your hands are doing?”

(3) Reflect and Journal! Get matching journals for you and your child so that you may engage in one of the following activities below:

- Take 10 minutes out of your night to write down your favorite memory of the day
- Create a gratitude journal and write 3 things you are grateful for each day

(4) Talk to your kids! Have mindful awareness conversations with your children about decisions you/they make on a daily basis.

- Explore
 - Have children see the difference between mindful and unmindful behavior.
 - Give children a chance to explain their reasoning.
- Reflect
 - Ask children to share stories about times when they were mindful and feel free to share your own stories.
 - Reassure children that all of us are occasionally unmindful, and that through practice we can more often make mindful choices that will help ourselves and the people around us.

REFERENCES

- The Hawn Foundation. (2011). The MindUP Curriculum Grades Pre-K - 2: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living (pp. 34 – 41). New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Mindful Activities for Families. Tracy. (2015) Retrieved from <https://heartmindonline.org/resources/mindful-activities-for-families>