Grade 9 Sample Lesson Plan: Unit 14 – What is Mindfulness? Introduction to Meditation

SOLs

- 9.2 Q Develop a personal system for coping with distress and stress.
- 9.2 R Identify appropriate coping and resiliency strategies to manage symptoms of stress, anxiety, loss, and depression.

Objectives/Goals

- Students will be able to explain the benefits of mindfulness
- Students will practice a meditation technique to help reduce stress and anxiety
- Students will identify 5 positive coping skills that work for them

Materials

- Mindfulness Presentation
    - https://spark.adobe.com/page/XUxv6Cp4gRmIA/
- Feelings Scale
- Positive Coping Skills [printed class set]
- White Screen and Projector or Large Monitor

Procedure

Step 1

- [Entire lesson ranges from 45-50 mins]
- As the students walk into class have the feelings scale on the projector. Ask the students to privately rate their stress level to themselves on a scale of 1-5 (do not share it out loud).
- 5- “I Need Some Help!”
- 4-”I am really upset”
- 3-”I’ve got a problem”
- 2-”Things are pretty good”
- 1- “Feeling Great”

Remind students of Objectives for the day:

- Students will be able to explain the benefits of mindfulness

- Students will practice a meditation technique to help reduce stress and anxiety
- Students will identify 5 positive coping skills that work for them

Step 2

- Show students Test Your Awareness: Do The Test (1:08 min) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4
- You might play the video a few times so all students can see the moonwalking bear.

  Questions:
- How many of you saw the moonwalking bear? How many passes does the team in white make?

- Today we are going to discuss mindfulness and mediation. "Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment" (Mindfulness, 2017).

- For those who carefully counted the passes the team in white made or saw the moonwalking bear, those are qualities of being mindful.

Step 3

- Show TED Talk: Why aren't we teaching mindfulness? (14:26 mins) https://youtu.be/-yJPcdiLEkI
- After watching the TED Talk have the students get out of their seat and do a quick Pair/Share.

  Question to discuss:

- What are the benefits of mindfulness?
- Show on the projector Mindfulness Presentation (scan to "+ Changes in the Brain Structure")
- Mindfulness & Brain Key Points:
  Amygdala
  - Studies have shown that the amygdala, known as our brain's "fight or flight" center and the seat of our fearful and anxious emotions, decreases in brain cell volume after mindfulness practice.

  Anterior Cingulate Cortex
  - Functions as self-regulatory processes, including the ability to monitor attention conflicts, and allow for more cognitive flexibility.

  Prefrontal Cortex
  - Increase grey matter

  Hippocampus
  - Limbic system that governs learning and memory, and is extraordinarily susceptible to stress and stress-related disorders like depression or PTSD.

- Now put the Positive Coping Skills Worksheet on the projector. Pass out Positive Coping Skills Worksheet. Explain what a positive coping skill is. Also discuss negative coping skills like overeating, drug and alcohol use. Discuss that having positive coping skills to deal with stress can positively impact their health. Have the students get out of their seat and read the worksheet with a partner.

Questions:

  - Have the students identify 5 positive coping skills they are willing to try on the list or not
- Collect worksheet and have the students return to their seats. Turn off the lights and put the meditation sign on the door. Tell the students they get to relax and close their eyes for a few minutes and be able to focus on their breath. Share with them that one positive coping skills is practicing meditation. Choose Guided Meditation that would fit the mood and time left in class. There are many meditations ranging from 3-10+ minutes.

- After the meditation ask the students to rate their stress levels privately based on the Feelings Scale

Step 4

- Exit Ticket:

Written Reflective Questions:

  - What is mindfulness in your own words?
  - What are the benefits of mindfulness?
  - Would you try the meditation we did today in class? Why or why not?
  - How do you rate your stress levels after the meditation?
  - What are 5 positive coping skills that you are willing to try?

References

- Free phone app resources
- Quick Mindfulness Activities

- Test your Awareness: Do your Test
  March 10, 2008
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4

- TED Talk: Why aren't we teaching mindfulness?
  - TEDx Talks May 21st, 2015
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yJPcdiLEkI

- Mindfulness for Teens: Discovering Your Inner Strength: Guided Meditations
  http://mindfulnessforteens.com/guided-meditations/ Dr. Dzung Vo

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Handout

The next page includes a handout for the lesson. The handout is designed for print use only.

Feelings Chart

	How I Feel	What I can do:
5	**I need some help!**	❑ Talk it out with a trusted adult. ❑ Ask to take a break ❑ Use your favorite positive coping strategy
4	**I'm really upset.**	❑ Talk it out with a trusted adult if needed ❑ Take a deep breath and count backwards from 10 ❑ Ask to take a break ❑ Walk it out

3	**I've got a problem.**	❑ Take a deep breath and count backwards from 10
		❑ Identify the problem
		  ❑ Find a positive solution to your problem
		  ❑ Is it something that can wait or do you need to solve it now?
		❑ Still need help solving the problem ask a trusted adult

2	**Things are pretty good.**	★ Be in the moment. ★ Remember in life all humans experience ups and downs.
1	**Feeling Great!**	★ Enjoy the feeling! ★ Be in the moment. ★ Identify how your body feels when you are feeling great!

Please do not disturb
Meditation
in Session

Quick Mindfulness Activities

Mindful Eating Try this during a snack or lunch break. Before you take a bite, look at the food, feel the textures in your mouth, smell it and notice how your body reacts to it. When you take the first bite of any meal, just take a moment to really pay attention to the taste.
You don't need to keep this up all the way through the meal, but use it every now and then to focus your attention.

Mindful Mini-break How often do you find yourself checking email, or your cellphone when you get a quick break in the day? Try something different, at least once each day. Turn away from the computer/tablet/smartphone and sit for 30 seconds to 1 minute, noticing the sensations in your mind and body. How do you feel? What can you hear? Try to be present in that moment. If your mind wanders off to tasks that you have to complete or starts working over things that happened yesterday, say to yourself, "Thinking," let it go and gently bring your mind's focus back to the present.
Remember: mindfulness is not about trying to make sense of, or change anything, it's about attention to that moment.

Mindful Listening We get used to a lot of the sounds that are around us and quickly tune them out. Or we assign each sound the quality of pleasant or unpleasant. If you live in the city, there might be police sirens, or birds singing, people sneezing, children playing, the sound of traffic, a song playing on a radio in the distance. What can you hear right now?
This is not about judging the sounds as bad or good, it's about bringing your attention to the present moment.

Mindful Breathing At any time during the day, take a moment to focus on your breathing. First, deeply breathe in, then breathe out.
Focus your attention on how this feels, where you notice the air moving, how your chest and abdomen move. You may even want to place your hand on your stomach to feel it rise and fall with your breath. Do you notice any changes in how your body feels as you do this? Now return to breathing normally and naturally, just noticing the sensations for 3-5 breaths.

You're not looking for a revelation from these experiences; think of it as exercise for your mind.

Bonus Tip for those stressful days (when you have an important meeting, a test, presentation, etc.) - The moment you walk into the room, take a moment to bring your attention to the present moment. Look around you, notice the room. Take a deep breath in and breathe out, noticing the sensations

in your body. If you notice tension in your body, release it with your breath. Notice the temperature in the room, the light. Notice any sounds you hear without judging them. As you sit down, do you usually cross your legs? Try uncrossing them and place your hands gently in your lap, or on the desk for one moment. As the teacher gives instruction, try to give him/her your full attention without judging the words or adding meaning. If you have a comment or question, do your best to speak clearly and directly, without charge.

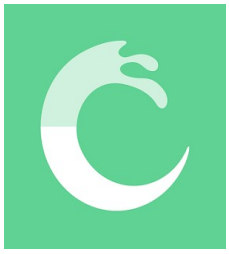
If you are trying this before a test, continue to take brief breaks during the test if you find yourself anxious, or forgetting important information. Direct your attention to sensations in your body, and fully focus on one full breath cycle (slowly inhale and exhale).

May all of your present moments be joyful.

Free Phone App Resources

Mindshift
This app is designed for teens and young adults who want help with feelings of anxiety. The language and interface is simple, it provides some useful information about what anxiety is and helpful strategies to try and tackle it. There is also a nice quick tips section for use in panicky situations. Rather than trying to avoid anxiety, you can make an important shift and face it.

SAM: Self Help for Anxiety Management
SAM is an app designed to help people manage their anxiety. Users can record their anxiety levels and identify different triggers. The app includes 25 self-help options to help users cope with the physical and mental symptoms of anxiety. Users can create a personalized anxiety toolkit, adding in the features of the app that they find most useful for easy access. The app also has a social cloud feature that allows users to anonymously share their experiences with other SAM users.



Pacifica
Stress and anxiety can get in the way of you living your life. Pacifica gives you beautiful tools based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, relaxation, and wellness, to address anxiety every day. Stress and anxiety are caused by an ongoing cycle of fear. Fearful thoughts causes physical feelings which cause actions. Your heart starts racing, so you think you're in danger, so you want to escape. Pacifica attempts to break this cycle using tools that target each of its components via Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Day-by-day, you'll learn to manage stress and anxiety at your own pace.

Optimism
Optimism is a mood charting app that helps you develop strategies for managing depression and other mental health conditions.

Stop, Breathe, and Think
A friendly, simple tool to guide people of all ages and backgrounds through meditations for mindfulness and compassion.

Breathe 2 Relax
Breathe2Relax is a portable stress management tool which provides detailed information on the effects of stress on the body and instructions and practice exercises to help users learn the stress management skill called diaphragmatic breathing. Breathing exercises have been documented to decrease the body's 'fight-or-flight' (stress) response, and help with mood stabilization, anger control, and anxiety management.

Headspace
At Headspace, we're way more than a meditation app. But it's important to us that the Headspace journey is accessible in as many ways as possible. So our mobile app makes practicing simple mindfulness techniques easy, from a variety of systems – helping fulfill our mission of a healthier, happier world, one mobile device at a time!

30/30
This task-managing app actually helps with time management. It is easy to set up, fully customizable, and sends helpful reminders to keep you on task towards your goal.

Crisis Text Line
Text START to 741741 any time about any type of crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor will respond quickly. The Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment and help you create a plan to stay safe and healthy.

ReliefLink
A suicide-prevention app that includes mood tracking, reminders and safety plans. A Map Locator helps you find the nearest hospitals and mental health treatment centers. Includes personalized coping mechanisms and assistance for finding therapists and support groups.

7 Cups of Tea
7 Cups Of Tea can help you out when you just need someone to talk to, fast. The app connects you with a trained counselor (or "listener") to talk about pretty much anything.You can connect to the first available listener, or one by topic (e.g., bullying, LGBTQ, grief, anxiety, ADHD, stress)

Circle of 6
With Circle of 6, you can connect with your friends to stay close, stay safe, and prevent violence before it happens. The Circle of 6 app makes it quick and easy to reach the 6 friends you choose. Need help getting home? Need an interruption? Two touches lets your circle know where you are and how they can help.

POSITIVE COPING SKILLS

Talking

- Talking with a parent or other family member
- Talking with a trusted staff member at school
- Calling a friend
- Calling a crisis line or helpline

Writing

- Writing in a journal or diary
- Writing with a stream of consciousness (writing all things you are feeling without stopping to think about what you're writing)
- Write poetry
- Writing a song (or lyrics to your favorite song)
- Writing a letter to a friend
- Writing a story

Exercise

- Go for a run
- Go for a walk
- Go skateboarding or rollerblading
- Do push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups or jumping jacks
- Play a sport
- Try yoga
- Lift weights
- Hit a punching bag
- Go for a bike ride
- Go swimming
- Download a fitness app

Artistic Expression

- Sing
- Dance
- Draw or paint a picture
- Sculpt an object (using play-doh)
- Make a collage that shows how you feel
- Play a musical instrument
- Create music on an app or program
- Taking pictures of nature, friends, family of you

Relaxation

- Deep breathing
- Try a meditation app
- Listening to music
- Watching tv
- Laying in the sun
- Counting to ten backwards
- Taking a bath or shower
- Gripping a 'stress ball'
- Reading an inspirational book magazine or comic book

Miscellaneous

- Walking your dog
- Playing a board game
- Playing video games or go online
- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Yelling into the wind