

ASD Nest Program Kick-off 2014: Mindfulness and Schools

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Mindfulness Exercises:

1. Movement:

- A. Movement exercises increase mindfulness if they coordinate movement with breath. This means that one should inhale for the full duration of one movement (i.e. moving arms up) and then exhale for the full duration of the opposite movement (i.e. bringing arms down at the sides.) Staying in a given position for several breaths also increases mindfulness as long as the person is breathing deeply and focusing on the breath.
- B. Forward bends can be calming and grounding. These are best to use when agitation is present such as with anxiety or trauma. These may not be the best choice for depression or lethargy.
- C. Twists calm the adrenal system which means they decrease frustration, anxiety and fear. These are good for all types of emotional and internal states, but are not a good idea for children or adults with back problems.
- D. Coordinating movement with breath improves focus and mental quiet. This is helpful for everyone but particularly those with difficulties attending or maintaining focus.

2. Breathing

- A. **Three Part Breathing** involves placing a hand on the belly, breathing there for several breaths, placing one hand on the belly and one on the ribs and breathing first into the belly and then into the ribs for several breaths, placing one hand on the ribs and one hand on the chest and breathing first into the ribs and then into the chest for several breaths, and then breathing into the belly ribs and chest for several breaths. This oxygenates the body and trains the body to breathe deeply. This is helpful for most people.

3. **Simple Meditation Exercise:** Inhale one, exhale think “let go.” Continue up to ten, at which point you will begin again at one. When your mind wanders simply bring it back to the breath. You will have a clue that your mind has wandered if you don’t know what number you are on, or if you find yourself at a number higher than ten.

Findings From Research:

Mindfulness is helpful with anxiety. Useful studies:

Biegel, Brown, Shapiro & Schubert (2009). Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for the treatment of adolescent psychiatric outpatients: A randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77, 855-866.

Sample R.J., Lee, J., Rosa D., & Miller, L.F.(2010). A randomized trial of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for children: Promoting mindful attention to enhance social-emotional resiliency in children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19, 218-229.

Kabat-Zinn J, Massion AO, Kristeller J, Peterson LG, Fletcher KE, Ebert L, Lenderking WR, Santorelli SF. (1992.) Effectiveness of a meditation-based stress reduction program in the treatment of anxiety disorders. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 149, 936 – 943.

Koszycski, Benger, Shlik & Bradwein (2007). Randomized trial of a meditation-based stress reduction program and cognitive behavior therapy in generalized social anxiety disorder. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 45, 2518-2526

Vollestad, Silvertsen & Nielsen (2011). Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for patients with anxiety disorders: evaluation in a randomized controlled trial. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 49, 281-288

Mindfulness is helpful with mood regulation. Useful studies:

Teasdale, Moore, Hayhurst, Pope, Williams & Segal (2002). Metacognitive awareness and prevention of relapse in depression: Empirical evidence. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 70, 275-287.

Ma, H.S. & Teasdale, J.D. (2004). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: Replication and exploration of differential relapse prevention effects. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 72, 31-40.

Semple R.J., Lee, J., Rosa D., & Miller, L.F.(2010). A randomized trial of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for children: Promoting mindful attention to enhance social-emotional resiliency in children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19, 218-229.

Biegel, Brown, Shapiro & Schubert (2009). Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for the treatment of adolescent psychiatric outpatients: A randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77, 855-866.

Marks, Sobanski & Hine (2010). Do dispositional rumination and/or mindfulness moderate the relationship between life hassles and psychological dysfunction in adolescents? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 44, 831-838.

Raes, Griffith, Van der Gucht & Williams (2013). School-based prevention and reduction of depression in adolescents: A cluster-randomized controlled trial of a mindfulness group program. *Mindfulness*, Online Publication.

Mindfulness is helpful with attention. Useful studies:

Semple R.J., Lee, J., Rosa D., & Miller, L.F.(2010). A randomized trial of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for children: Promoting mindful attention to enhance social-emotional resiliency in children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19, 218-229.

Napoli, Krech & Holley (2005). Mindfulness training for elementary school students: The attention academy. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 21, 99-125.

Zylowska, Ackerman, Yang, Futrell, Horton, Hale et. al (2007). Mindfulness meditation training with adults and adolescents with ADHD. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 11, 737-746.

Singh, Singh, Lanconi, Singh, Winton & Adkins (2009). Mindfulness training for parents and their children with ADHD increases children's compliance. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, published online.

The research shows that successful mindfulness interventions:

- **Take place regularly over at least 8 weeks**
- **Include mindful movement, breathing and attention for adults**
- **Include movement, shorter breathing and meditation exercises and a focus on sensory experience for kids**
- **Work best when taught by adults with their own mindfulness practices**