

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means paying full attention to something. It means slowing down to notice what you are doing, such as breathing, walking, or eating. It may be what you are feeling, hearing, or anything else you notice. By teaching children meditation and mindfulness skills we help them increase their well-being and enable them to manage the stresses of the world, supporting them to have the skills to be able to self-regulate.

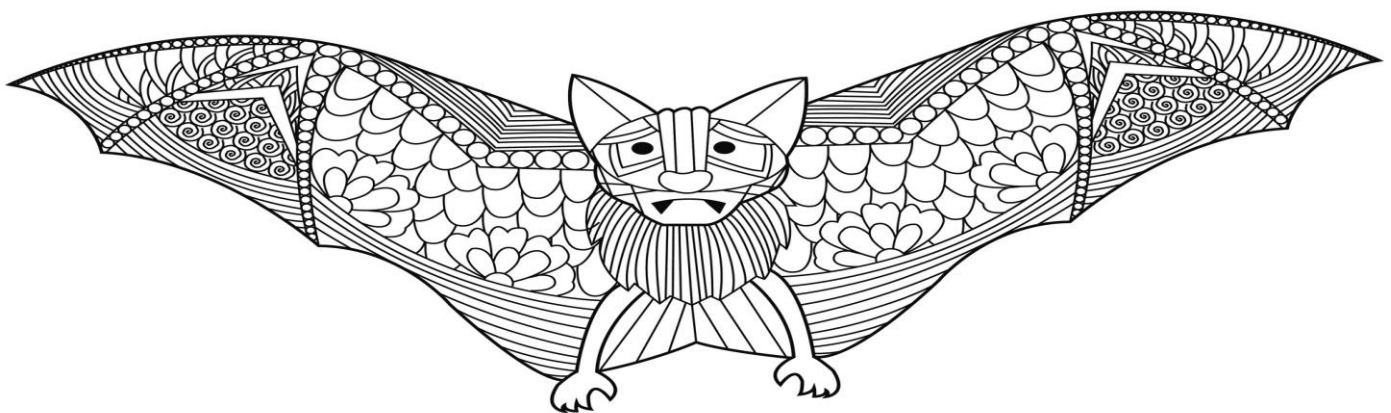
Research shows mindfulness to be an effective coping strategy for anxiety, reducing common behavioural, psychological, and physical problems often linked with children with special educational needs (Hwang & Kearney, 2015) (Weisbaum, 2016).

Mindful Breathing: (5 minutes)

Students can stand or sit for this activity. Ask students to put both hands on their stomachs. Students should close their eyes or look down at their hands. Guide students in taking three slow deep breaths in and out to see if they can feel their hands being moved. You may like to count “1, 2, 3” for each breath in and “1, 2, 3” for each breath out, pausing slightly at the end of each exhale. Encourage students to think about how the breath feels, answering the following questions silently, in their minds. What is moving your hands? Is it the air filling your lungs? Can you feel the air moving in through your nose? Can you feel it moving out through your nose? Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out? Can you hear your breath? What does it sound like?

Stomach Buddies: (10 minutes) Ask students to bring in a small stuffed toy, or provide a class set of small, lightweight objects such as small bean bags or wooden blocks. Students lay on their backs and place the toy or object on top of their belly buttons. Take students through the guided breathing activity above, asking them to watch the object as it moves up and down with their breath.

Mindfulness colouring:



Body Scan: (10 minutes)

This is a fantastic activity that students can “take home” with them. It can be particularly useful to do a body scan to help relax before sleep

Students lay on the floor, with their eyes closed if they are comfortable (or they may prefer to look at the ceiling).

Encourage students to pay attention to their feet for 5 or 10 seconds.

Questions to ask during a body scan: How does this body part feel? Is it cold or warm? Does it feel tight or relaxed? Is all or part of that body part touching the floor? Or clothing? What does that feel like?

Move on to their toes, then ankles, then calves and knees. Continue body part by body part until you reach the head.

Question how each part of the body feels to bring students’ awareness of their body now.

If there is tightness or stress, imagine breathing the stress out of that part of the body with each exhale.

Spidey-Senses: (5 minutes)

Spidey-Senses is a fun way to frame this traditional mindfulness exercise.

Ask students to switch their senses up to a superpower level, just like Spiderman.

At this moment,

- What can they hear?
- What can they see?
- What can they taste?
- What can they smell?
- What can they feel?

Guide students as they stay in this Spidey state for 2-3 minutes.

Useful References and Links

<\\ccc.cambridgeshire.gov.uk\data\OCYPS Support4Learning\Shared\2020-2021\SP working party\working folder SEMH\Emotional Resilience\Resources>

- Mindfulness and gratification journal
- Mindfulness colouring in bat
- Mindfulness colouring in butterfly
- Mindfulness colouring in elephant
- Ollie and his Superpowers – mindfulness bingo