

Learning Activity 1

A Mindful Minute

Time (minutes)
5

Organization
Students seated in the middle of the play area.

Activity Progression:

Introduce the health. moves. minds.™ program and the concept of the Being Mindful, Being Kind lessons and what students will be focusing on over the next few weeks (see the description at the top of page 1). Tell students they are going to be practicing ways to take care of their mind and body because that is an important part of being healthy overall.

Example script:

“Over the next few weeks we are going to learn ways that we can take care of our minds and bodies by practicing mindfulness. [You may opt to use the term self-awareness in place of mindfulness throughout the lesson.] Being mindful is when you pay full attention to what you’re doing. You’re taking your time. You’re focused and relaxed. We are going to explore how we behave or treat others and think about ways we can be nice to others. Taking care of our minds and bodies makes us healthier. When we are mindful of how we treat others and mindful of our own feelings it can help us demonstrate kinder behavior. Today we are going to learn one way to help us be more mindful.”

Use a color or an emoji rating scale for students to rate how they are currently feeling. You will then have them rate how they’re feeling again at the end of class.

Example script:

“First, I would like you to take a look at this emoji scale and pick an emoji based on how you feel right now. At the end of class, I will ask you again how you are feeling. [You can decide if you would like students to keep how they are feeling to themselves as a self-assessment or share by holding up the number of fingers that matches the emoji they are feeling like currently.] Sometimes when we feel mad, sad, scared or overwhelmed it can make us behave differently than we normally would act. I want you to take a few seconds to think of how you feel when you are either mad, sad, scared or overwhelmed. Do you act differently? How do you act differently? Do you want to be alone? Do you cry? Do you yell? Share with someone sitting next to you something you do when you feel mad, sad, scared, or overwhelmed.”

Next, introduce the concept of a Mindful Minute.

Example script:

“It is okay to feel sad, mad, scared or overwhelmed sometimes and in fact everyone feels those feelings at times. Over the next few lessons we are going to learn ways we can help our minds and bodies when we feel those feelings. The first thing we will learn is a Mindful Minute. A Mindful Minute is when you sit quietly with your eyes shut, clear your mind and focus on what you notice around you.”

Direct students to sit quietly with their eyes closed. Have students focus on what they hear around them and what they notice, this will help them to begin to clear their mind. Have students do this for 20 seconds. After 20 seconds, have students open their eyes and ask them how they feel. Tell them this is a great way to help make them feel calm and eventually we will work up to sitting quietly with our eyes closed for one minute.

Cues:

- Mindfulness (or Self-Awareness)
 - Paying full attention
 - Slowing down to notice what you’re doing
 - Focused and relaxed
- Mindful Minute
 - Closing your eyes
 - Focus on breathing
 - Noticing what is around you
 - Takes practice – it’s okay for the mind to wander; bring your mind back to your breathing

Modifications/Differentiation:

- Replace overwhelmed with stressed, worried or anxious.
- Allow students the option to sit or lay quietly, walk around the room quietly or use a fidget quietly.
- Individuals with autism have difficulty understanding emotions and expressions. They learn best through concrete real-life experiences. You may show the student an emotions picture board. The teacher should show the picture to the student of the student’s current emotion and allow the student to look into a mirror.

Checks for Understanding:

- The teacher should circulate and listen to conversation.
- Ask students to turn to someone next to them and share how they might behave when they feel overwhelmed/anxious/stressed.
- Have students act out being sad, anxious, overwhelmed, mad, happy.