



MINDFULNESS CURRICULUM

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND



CALIFORNIA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND MINDFULNESS CURRICULUM

LETTER TO EDUCATORS

In schools across the country, mindfulness is being infused into social-emotional learning programs, to support self-regulation, and to promote staff and student wellness. Research has supported the use of mindfulness in schools, with studies showing academic and mental health gains in students who participate.

Although there are many mindfulness programs available for schools, the majority are designed for typically developing students. While they may be effective for whole-class implementation in a general education program, they do not consider the needs of students or educators in special education. Our mindfulness curriculum addresses this very issue.

The California School for the Blind's mindfulness curriculum was designed from the bottom up with the needs of students with visual impairments in mind. It blends mindfulness principles with aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum - most notably Sensory Efficiency, Self-Determination, Social Interaction, and Recreation and Leisure. This way, TVIs and other educators can integrate mindfulness principles into their teaching, without taking time away from other important programming and IEP goals.

The curriculum is designed to be implemented by a TVI in conjunction with at least one additional staff member. During our pilot of the program at the California School for the Blind, a School Psychologist and Speech-Language Pathologist led lessons with the support of the classroom teacher. Lessons also took place in a space set up outside of the classroom for the first 6 lessons, with a later transition to the classroom environment for generalization. This is recommended where possible, as students can learn the skills in a specialized environment and slowly learn to integrate them into lives.



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We hope this curriculum will support your ability to integrate mindfulness into your own work with students with visual impairments! Should you have any questions or recommendations, please do not hesitate to reach out to our school!

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USING THIS CURRICULUM

Prior to implementing this curriculum, we recommend reading through this document its entirety to understand the main principles and how the lessons build to develop the skills of interest:

- ✓ The curriculum is designed for use with students with visual impairments.
 - ✓ Often, mindfulness curricula can encourage students to focus on what they see. This language is avoided in our curriculum and instead other senses are the focus (e.g., smell, taste, touch, hearing).
 - ✓ Guided meditations often rely on visual experience in different environments and settings. Our guided meditations focus on imagination and/or highlighting other senses instead.
 - ✓ Topics of the Expanded Core Curriculum are infused in the lessons, most notably: sensory efficiency, self-determination, social interaction, and recreation and leisure.
- ✓ The curriculum is designed to be implemented by a TVI in conjunction with at least one other adult. This could be a mental health professional or special educator, but it could easily be a general education teacher, an administrator, or even a volunteer.
- ✓ Teachers' personal experiences with mindfulness practices and/or meditation can create a strong starting point. Consider trying meditation on your own for several weeks before implementing the curriculum. Apps and online video/audio recordings are an accessible starting point. Having your own personal practice will help you to implement these lessons with authenticity, as well as to learn these simple but profound skills along with your students.



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WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

This program is not based on any particular spiritual traditions or meditation lineages. Instead, we have opted for a very simple view of mindfulness -- mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening right now. So many times in our lives, we are focused on ruminating over the past or anxiously anticipating the future. Sadly, this is even true for our students! Engaging in a mindfulness practice can keep us focused on the present. Simple exercises like breathing and self-talk can encourage us to remain present even when our minds are trying to focus on the past or future.

The lessons of this curriculum expose students to a variety of mindfulness techniques, including breathing exercises, guided meditations, simple yoga sequences, sensory engagement, and self-talk strategies. Some may resonate with you or your students more than others, and this is normal! We hope that by the end of the program, students will have an arsenal of techniques available and will be able to recognize when and how they can be implemented in times of need.

The lessons can be returned to time and again. You may find certain concepts are more difficult for students, and may repeat a lesson several times with a few tweaks. Feel free to adapt the curriculum as you wish for the particular needs of your group.

Our implementation of this curriculum involved weekly lessons with a group of students on the California School for the Blind campus. Weekly lessons seemed to work for our group - they were regular enough to build skills meaningfully, but spaced far enough apart to practice the skills. Consider timing and pacing in your own implementation.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Our initial lessons took place in a private, quiet space on the California School for the Blind campus. We arranged sofas and armchairs in a circle. A small table was placed in the center, on top of which we placed a small



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lamp and essential oil diffuser. The room was darkened and all doors were closed to create a feeling of containment. Instructors often entered the space several minutes before the students to ground ourselves in the present.

To implement the curriculum, we recommend having:

- ✓ A private space with comfortable seating for the group
- ✓ A music-playing device
 - We used a laptop with internet connection for youtube playlists.
- ✓ An essential oil diffuser and a variety of essential oils
 - Sets can be found on amazon or other online retailers for about \$30.
- ✓ A small lamp
- ✓ A pitcher
 - Flavored waters and herbal teas are used throughout the program. Our students preferred citrus water (water infused for several hours with lemon, lime, or orange slices) and some fruity herbal teas. Consider allergies in choosing your beverages.
- ✓ A high-flavored snack
 - We used the snack for sensory focus and also as a reward. Pistachios were a hit with our group. Consider allergies in choosing your snack.

We also added a few props when we transitioned to the classroom in Lesson 7:

- ✓ A small sand tray/rock garden with a small rake
- ✓ A small indoor water fountain
 - Both can be found on amazon or other online retailers for about \$20 each.

Of course, you will also need a space in the children's classroom (or a place they can access as needed) starting in Lesson 7.



IMPLEMENTING THE LESSONS

You will see reference to the term “Calming Den” throughout our lessons. Early on, one of our pilot students introduced the term and it stuck for our group. If you like it, use it! If your students come up with a different term, go with their suggestions.

In each lesson, there are sub-sections for structure. You’ll see a description of items needed at the beginning of each lesson, but these are fairly consistent throughout the curriculum.

Verbiage that we used in our lessons is provided for you, should you feel more comfortable working from a script. All scripted language is noted within quotation marks. Adapt for your group as you wish.

All instructions outside of quotation marks indicate actions and suggestions. These are also noted in italics.

CONCLUDING THE CURRICULUM

At the end of the curriculum, the goal is for students to have access to a space in their classroom or nearby that can act as their “calming den.” They should leave the lessons with a set of strategies they can use to self-regulate and stay present. The final lessons focus on how to use the new space effectively and encourages students to identify rules and guidelines for the space.

You may find a need to return to the lessons in the future with your group. After the curriculum has been implemented, feel free to pull individual lessons as necessary for a refresher for your students or as new students join your program.

INTEGRATING INTO THE IEP

Many concepts covered in this curriculum can be translated into Special Education friend terminology. For example, the program touches on 4 areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum: sensory efficiency,



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self-determination, social interaction, and recreation and leisure. It also addresses self-regulation, self-awareness, executive functioning, anxiety, and emotional awareness.

Goals written in any of these areas can be at least partly addressed by participation in this curriculum.



LESSON 1

Paying attention to what's happening now

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Comfortable seating (e.g., sofas, chairs with armrests)
- Music-playing device (we recommend a computer with speakers)
- Essential oil diffuser with a pleasant diffuser blend
- Extra essential oils
- A small lamp
- Pitcher of flavored water (e.g., with lemon slices or herbal tea)
- Healthy, high-flavor snack

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME:

Cue up computer with a youtube video or spotify station of "spa music."

'Hand out healthy, high-flavored snack

"Here is a healthy treat, as a thank you for coming to a new place and being willing to start something new."

"We're here to learn about 'mindfulness.' I notice I feel calmer and more relaxed when I sit down in this space. Does anyone notice whether they feel differently than they did before they sat down?"

Take student responses. Validate and engage in reflective listening to each student and/or staff member's feedback.

ENGAGING THE SENSES:

"Does anyone notice anything in the room? What sense are you using to notice it?"

- "Smell anything?" *Essential oils*
- "Feel anything?" *Soft sofa below you*
- "Taste anything?" *Salty pistachio*
- "Hear anything?" *Spa music*



ENGAGING THE SENSES INTENTIONALLY:

“That’s what our group is all about: Paying attention to what is happening right now. Sometimes, we’re so busy and distracted that we’re thinking about something that happened before, or something that will happen next. Mindfulness helps us notice what is happening right now. Let’s try some more things to help us pay attention to what we’re feeling now.”

Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they’d like to use. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student’s describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?

Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search youtube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments. Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound. Do this three times total.

Distribute flavored water. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don’t like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don’t like how the water tastes. That’s ok. You don’t need to drink any more.)

GUIDED MEDITATION:

“Now we’re going to read you a guided meditation. This helps you keep practicing focusing on what is happening right now.

“Close your eyes and take in a very slow, deep breath. Continue breathing deeply and feel the cool air come in through your nose and flow all the way down to your belly. Feel your belly expand out as you breathe deeply.



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“Notice how the breath feels as it softly flows in through your nose, into your throat, and further and further down it goes. Make sure your belly is moving slowly up and down as you inhale and exhale.

“Isn’t it nice to feel this calm and quiet after the wonderful active day you’ve had?”

“It’s really good for our bodies and our minds just to feel this calming breath flowing in and out. When we learn to pay attention to our breathing, we’re actually practicing meditation.

“Meditation helps us focus and it gives us peace. Everyone wants to be peaceful! Meditation is simply being very focused and calm within.

“Now for this moment, just listen very carefully to all the quiet sounds outside of you and all around you. You may hear outside noises. You may hear cars, birds, or perhaps something else. It’s perfectly okay. We’re just learning to pay attention... so just listen. (Pause)

Now, turn your focus inward. Listen very carefully and quietly to what you hear happening within your body. Can you hear your heart beating?
(Pause)

“Can you hear your breath as you breathe slowly and calmly in and out?”

“Maybe your tummy is making noises; maybe everything is very, very quiet. Whatever is going on inside, just take the time to listen very carefully and notice everything that’s going on, on the inside. (Pause)

“Paying attention to the sound of your breath, it’s almost magical. You’re whole body is alive and feels so good!”

“You know this breath is very special. It’s part of the energy that flows in and out of us and by working with our whole body, it keeps us feeling so good inside and out.



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“Allow the breath to fill up your whole body now and enjoy as the energy goes into each and every cell, each and every muscle of your body. Imagine that your happy breath is bringing a big beautiful smile to every place in your body. Does that feel good? It feels good to me!

“Try to spend a little each day just imagining this. You’ll be really amazed at how good it will make you feel all over.

“Now when you’re ready, you can open your eyes and give your body a big stretch. You’ve done a wonderful job and I can just imagine all that happiness you’ve spread everywhere in your body. I’m really proud of you for your meditation today.”



LESSON 2

Paying attention to the body

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Comfortable seating (e.g., sofas, chairs with armrests)
- Music-playing device (we recommend a computer with speakers)
- Essential oil diffuser with a pleasant diffuser blend
- Extra essential oils
- A small lamp
- Pitcher of flavored water (e.g., with lemon slices or herbal tea)
- Healthy, high-flavor snack

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW:

Hand out healthy, high-flavored snack

"Here is a healthy treat, as a thank you for coming back to practice mindfulness again."

"Who can remember a definition of mindfulness?"

See if students can recall a definition or provide one of their own.

ENGAGING THE SENSES INTENTIONALLY:

Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they'd like to use. Consider trying different scents than you did in previous lessons. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student's describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?

Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search youtube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments. Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound. Do this three times total.



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Distribute flavored water. Consider trying a new flavor. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don't like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don't like how the water tastes. That's ok. You don't need to drink any more.)

PREVIEW ADDITIONAL SENSES:

“Last week we talked about mindfulness: paying attention to what is happening right now. We talked about paying attention to what we see (like lights and colors), what we smell (like essential oils), what we feel (like soft, squishy couches or carpeted floors), what we hear (like music or breathing), and what we taste (like salty pistachios or flavored water).

“This week, we’re going to learn about other senses, senses that help us know about where our body parts are and what they’re doing.”

SIMPLE MOVEMENT/YOGA SEQUENCE:

Sunshine Breath

1. Bring your hands together so that your palms touch.
2. As you breathe in, keep your hands together and lift your arms up towards the ceiling.
3. As you breathe out, separate your hands out to the side and bring your arms down to your sides.
4. Continue with this breathing pattern for 5 breaths.

Reaching Mountain Pose

1. Come to standing.
2. Lift your arms up towards the ceiling, strong and straight.
3. Feel your belly get bigger when you inhale.
4. Blow out and feel your belly come down.
5. Have the student breathe in and out for 3-5 breaths.



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Moon Pose

From standing with your arms above your head

1. Hold your hands together. Interlace your fingers. (Use other words such as “glue your hands together” if those concepts work better).
2. Lean over to the left.
3. Breathe in, feel your belly get bigger.
4. Breathe out, feel your belly come down.
5. Have the student breathe in and out for 3 breaths.
6. Keep your hands together, arms strong and straight, and lean over to the right.
7. Breathe in, feel your belly get better.
8. Breathe out, feel your belly come down.
9. Have the student breathe in and out for 3 breaths.

GUIDED MEDITATION:

“Now we’re going to read you a guided meditation. This helps you keep practicing focusing on your body and how it feels.

“Gently close your eyes and softly repeat, ‘I am still.’

“Notice your body relax instantly and easily. Allow your body to sink down in your seat further and further, as your muscles become soft and limp. It feels so comfortable.

“Your body just seems to relax more and more with each and every word you hear.

“Imagine now a small sparkle somewhere deep inside your heart. This small sparkle begins to glow brighter now, and you feel it reaching up and expanding out.

“The glow becomes brighter and brighter filling up your chest. You feel the warmth spreading out touching your tummy, your shoulders.... getting bigger and bigger.... getting brighter and brighter, glowing all the way down



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to your toes.

“Now feel your whole body glowing like a radiant star shining out. This wonderful light is your light – your shining light – your personal brilliance. It is all the love in your heart. It is the sum of your possibilities – and your possibilities are endless.

“Shine your light wherever you go. Sharing your light makes others happy, and it makes you happy as well. It’s a wonderful feeling to share your light, and by doing so, you become a good example to them.

“When you shine your light brightly, it lets others know that it is okay for them to shine their light brightly too. When we all do this, it makes the world a more beautiful, peaceful place.

“Sharing your light can be as simple as sharing your smile, or doing a kind deed. Hold a happy thought about someone, or send a happy wish to someone who is feeling sad. It can mean helping someone who is younger than you, or not as strong as you.

“All of this is shining your light, and you will discover a wonderful warm, fuzzy feeling inside your heart when you do this.

“This wonderful feeling comes from doing what you were created to do – feeling and spreading love and joy. Sharing your light means sharing the real you and being who you truly are. It means standing up for what is right and making the choices that feel right in your heart.

“Now, allow that bright light inside to become like a gentle shower of fireworks.

“See how beautiful and amazing you are? You light up the sky!

“As the fireworks sizzle and flare down, imagine your brilliant light touching the heart of every person you know and will meet. They feel happier just because they know you. How wonderful and blessed life is!



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"Now take in a deep breath and bring back all the good feelings you have right now with you as you slowly stretch your body. Open your eyes when you're ready. You've done an amazing job!"



LESSON 3

The Calming Den Inside Us

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Comfortable seating (e.g., sofas, chairs with armrests)
- Music-playing device (we recommend a computer with speakers)
- Essential oil diffuser with a pleasant diffuser blend
- Extra essential oils
- A small lamp
- Pitcher of flavored water (e.g., with lemon slices or herbal tea)
- Healthy, high-flavor snack

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW:

Hand out healthy, high-flavored snack

"Here is a healthy treat, as a thank you for coming back to practice mindfulness again."

"Who can remember a definition of mindfulness?"

See if students can recall a definition or provide one of their own.

OPENING MEDITATION:

"Welcome back to the Calming Den. Let's sit for a moment and let our senses wake up while our minds calm down.

"Feel the soles of your feet on the floor. How firm and supportive the floor is.

"Feel the sofa/seat underneath you. Feel how your body is supported by the firm surface of the chair/sofa.

"Feel your breath going in and out of your body. Feel it go in through your nose, down into your chest and then into your belly. Feel it flow out of your body by the same route: from your belly through your chest and throat, out



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of your nose.

“Place your hands together in front of your heart, pressing the palms and fingertips together. Take in a full breath, feeling your chest and belly fill with the breath. Imagine you are smelling the sweetest of flowers. Then imagine yourself on your birthday, blowing out the birthday candles. Gently blow your breath out, over the candle flames.

“Keeping our hands together in front of our hearts, we’re going to take 3 full breaths that smell the flowers and then blow out the birthday candles (3 breaths follow).

“Now press your palms together equally so that you can feel each hand pressing into the other. Feel the pressure, then relax the palms, keeping your hands together.

“Press them together again. Then relax them. Feel the difference between the pressure and the relaxation.

“Press them together again and then release.

“Now relax your hands into your lap or at your sides. Let them be still. Feel their stillness. Take one last long breath in, breathe in this special place we’ve created together with its special smells and tastes, breathe in the Calming Den. Then let the breath out, leaving a little calming den down at the bottom of your breath, in the center of your body. Your own little calming den can stay there, quiet and still, deep inside of you.”

ENGAGING THE SENSES INTENTIONALLY:

Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they’d like to use. Consider trying different scents than you did in previous lessons. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student’s describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?



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Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search youtube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments. Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound. Do this three times total.

Distribute flavored water. Consider trying a new flavor. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don't like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don't like how the water tastes. That's ok. You don't need to drink any more.)

SIMPLE YOGA SEQUENCE:

Review Rainbow breath emphasizing Breath and Movement going together. Try to coordinate movements in unison.

Sunshine/Rainbow Breath:

1. Bring your hands together so that your palms touch.
2. As you breathe in, keep your hands together and lift your arms up towards the ceiling.
3. As you breathe out, separate your hands out to the side and bring your arms down to your sides. (Teacher's note: Have the child place their hands on either the ground or the seat of the chair).
4. Continue with this breathing pattern for 5 breaths.

Reaching the Mountain

1. Come to standing. (You can stand behind your chair, desk, or table if you were just sitting.)
2. Lift your arms up towards the ceiling, strong and straight.
3. Feel your belly get bigger when you inhale.
4. Blow out and feel your belly come down.
5. Have the student breathe in and out for 3-5 breaths.



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Revise Moon Pose to “Leaning Tree”

1. Hold your hands at the side of your body, with your hands pressing against your hips or thighs.
2. Lean over to the left. Let your left arm graze the left side of your body, getting closer and closer to your knee as you lean.
3. Breathe in, feel your belly get bigger.
4. Breathe out, feel your belly get smaller.
5. Have the student breathe in and out for 3 breaths.
6. Now come back up to straight with your hands pressed against your hips or thighs.
7. Lean over to the right. Let your right arm graze the right side of your body, getting closer and closer to your knee as you lean.
8. Breathe in, feel your belly get bigger.
9. Breathe out, feel your belly get smaller.
10. Have the student breathe in and out for 3 breaths.

CLOSING GUIDED MEDITATION:

“Now we’re going to read you a guided meditation. This helps you keep practicing focusing on your body and how it feels.

“Let’s get comfortable and focus on our breath.

“Breathe in very slowly and then, breathe out. Continue breathing calmly and evenly for five long breaths. This gets our bodies very relaxed and feeling good.

“As you breathe in, allow your tummy to inflate like a balloon. Fill up your tummy with your breath.

“Imagine the air going down into your tummy has a color. I wonder what color it is.

“Exhale now, and feel how your tummy gets smaller and smaller, until it’s flat again. The magical thing about breathing this way is that anytime you feel



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stressed, upset or even a little nervous. It feels so good and it signals our bodies that everything is okay, no matter what is going on around us.

“From now on, every morning before school, I’d like you to focus on your breathing while you imagine having a really wonderful day, all day long. Take time to imagine yourself listening well in class, learning new, interesting things, having fun with friends and remembering everything you learn.

“Learning becomes so easy and fun! You can imagine how each day you are learning more and enjoying each and every moment. Think to yourself how happy you will be when you meet up with your friends and learn from your caring teachers.

“When we take the time each day to imagine a wonderful day, you might be surprised to know that we do end up having a great day! This is called setting our intention for the day. An intention is what we intend or desire to happen. If you intend for positive things to happen, they almost always do! That’s called a positive attitude.

“It’s fun and makes life so interesting and exciting! Positive things are always happening to positive people because they always look for the good. We all want to be very positive in life!

“There is just so much to see, do and explore. You can do all of it! You’ve done a wonderful job listening and imagining today. You’ve learned how deep belly breathing can calm you at any time during the day. You’ve visualized yourself being successful at school and enjoying each moment. And you’ve learned the very important skill of setting your intention for each day.

“Take in a deep breath now and when you’re ready, open your eyes, stretch your body and know how fantastic each day at school, and at home, is going to be.”



LESSON 4

The Calming Voice and the Negative Voice

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Comfortable seating (e.g., sofas, chairs with armrests)
- Music-playing device (we recommend a computer with speakers)
- Essential oil diffuser with a pleasant diffuser blend
- Extra essential oils
- A small lamp
- Pitcher of flavored water (e.g., with lemon slices or herbal tea)
- Healthy, high-flavor snack

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW:

Hand out healthy, high-flavored snack

“Here is a healthy treat, as a thank you for coming back to practice mindfulness again.”

“Who can remember a definition of mindfulness?”

See if students can recall a definition or provide one of their own.

Welcome back to the Calming Den. Let’s sit for a moment and let our senses wake up while our minds calm down.

ENTRY MEDITATION:

“Feel the soles of your feet on the floor. How firm and supportive the floor is.

“Feel the sofa/seat underneath you. Feel how your body is supported by the firm surface of the chair/sofa.

“Feel your breath going in and out of your body. Feel it go in through your nose, down into your chest and then into your belly. Feel it flow out of your body by the same route: from your belly through your chest & throat, out of



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your nose.

“Place your hands together in front of your heart, pressing the palms and fingertips together. Take in a full breath, feeling your chest and belly fill with the breath. Imagine you are smelling the sweetest of flowers. Then imagine yourself on your birthday, blowing out the birthday candles. Gently blow your breath out, over the candle flames.

“Keeping our hands together in front of our hearts, we’re going to take 3 full breaths that smell the flowers and then blow out the birthday candles (3 breaths follow).

“Now press your palms together equally so that you can feel each hand pressing into the other. Feel the pressure, then relax the palms, keeping your hands together.

“Press them together again. Then relax them. Feel the difference between the pressure and the relaxation.

“Press them together again and then release.

“Now relax your hands into your lap or at your sides. Let them be still. Feel their stillness. Take one last long breath in, breathe in this special place we’ve created together with its special smells and tastes, breathe in the Calming Den. Then let the breath out, leaving a little calming den down at the bottom of your breath, in the center of your body. Your own little calming den can stay there, quiet and still, deep inside of you.”

ENGAGING THE SENSES INTENTIONALLY:

Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they’d like to use. Consider trying different scents than you did in previous lessons. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student’s describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?



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Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search youtube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments. Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound. Do this three times total.

Distribute flavored water. Consider trying a different flavor. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don't like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don't like how the water tastes. That's ok. You don't need to drink any more.)

GARDEN MEDITATION:

"We are standing outside in a beautiful place. You can feel the breeze playing on your cheek and smell sweet flowers. There's the smell of damp green growing things too.

"You put out your hand and feel a garden gate. You walk through it and the scent of flowers grows stronger. You feel the presence of trees and hear their rustling leaves. The ground is springy under your feet and you begin to hear a fountain with flowing water. It seems to be saying words: I will be OK, I will be OK, I will be OK. The sound is soothing and your chest and stomach feel warm and relaxed. You walk towards the fountain, attracted by the peaceful sound. Suddenly OH! You trip on a tree root, and go down, hitting your right knee HARD. You feel a burning pain in your knee. Oh no, Oh no, Oh no. But the calm voice of the fountain doesn't stop, it keeps murmuring: I will be OK, I will Be OK, I will be OK. It breaks through the knee pain and you feel lighter. I will be OK, The calm voice of the fountain is there. Leading you back to peace, lessening the pain. You can hear this voice anywhere, really, It takes you to the calming den, the place where you are truly OK."



SCENARIOS:

"You can hear the calm voice of the fountain in the calming den. You can hear it anywhere, really. I will be ok. I will be ok. I will be ok.

"Sometimes, things go wrong, and negative voice start to drown out the true voice.

"Let's pretend you're at home and your mom or dad prepared something you really, really don't like for dinner. ADULT 1 is going to pretend to be a negative voice, and ADULT 2 will pretend to be the calm voice.

ADULT 1: Ewww that's disgusting!

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: You always make food I don't like

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT1: You don't even think about what I want to eat.

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I HATE FISH.

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I am not eating that.

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: No way, It's too disgusting!!!

ADULT 2: (softly) wait..... wait.....wait.....I will be ok.

ADULT 1: Deep breath - I will be ok!

Let's pretend you're at school and your teacher just finished a math lesson. When you try to do some problems on your own, you really don't understand how to do them. ADULT 1 is going to pretend to be a negative voice, and ADULT 2 will pretend to be the calm voice.

ADULT 1: Ugh I hate math!

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I never understand this stuff.

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I just never get math lessons.



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ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: Why do we have to do this stupid stuff.

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I HATE MATH.

ADULT 2: (softly) wait.... wait.....wait..... I will be ok.

ADULT 1: Deep breath - I will be ok!

“So what happens when that voice “wait” breaks in?” *Pause for student answers.*

“The “wait” gives you a chance to hear the calming voice inside you. Why is it important to hear the calming voice inside you?” *Pause for student answers.*”

“So you don’t make the problem worse. Do you think it’s possible to do an experiment this week, and try to find your calming voice when you are upset? When are some times that you anticipate that you might get upset this week?” *Take student answers. Discuss.*

CLOSING YOGA SEQUENCE:

Abbreviated yoga poses

Sunshine/Rainbow Breath (3 times)

1. Bring your hands together so that your palms touch.
2. As you breathe in, keep your hands together and lift your arms up towards the ceiling.
3. As you breathe out, separate your hands out to the side and bring your arms down to your sides.
4. Continue with this breathing pattern for 5 breaths.

Revise Moon Pose to “Leaning Tree” (3 times)

1. Hold your hands at the side of your body, with your hands pressing against your hips or thighs.
2. Lean over to the left. Let your left arm graze the left side of your



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- body, getting closer and closer to your knee as you lean.
3. Breathe in, feel your belly get bigger.
 4. Breathe out, feel your belly get smaller.
 5. Have the student breathe in and out for 3 breaths.
 6. Now come back up to straight with your hands pressed against your hips or thighs.
 7. Lean over to the right. Let your right arm graze the right side of your body, getting closer and closer to your knee as you lean.
 8. Breathe in, feel your belly get bigger.
 9. Breathe out, feel your belly get smaller.
 10. Have the student breathe in and out for 3 breaths.

One full deep breath, on the exhalation say "I will be ok" (3 times)



LESSON 5

Learning to Listen to the Calming Voice

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Comfortable seating (e.g., sofas, chairs with armrests)
- Music-playing device (we recommend a computer with speakers)
- Essential oil diffuser with a pleasant diffuser blend
- Extra essential oils
- A small lamp
- Pitcher of flavored water (e.g., with lemon slices or herbal tea)
- Healthy, high-flavor snack

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW:

Hand out healthy, high-flavored snack

“Here is a healthy treat, as a thank you for coming back to practice mindfulness again.”

“Who can remember a definition of mindfulness?”

See if students can recall a definition or provide one of their own.

Welcome back to the Calming Den. Let’s sit for a moment and let our senses wake up while our minds calm down.

ENGAGING THE SENSES INTENTIONALLY:

Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they’d like to use. Consider trying different scents than you did in previous lessons. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student’s describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?

Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search youtube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments.



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*Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound.
Do this three times total.*

Distribute flavored water. Consider trying a new flavor. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don't like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don't like how the water tastes. That's ok. You don't need to drink any more.)

INTRO TO ROLEPLAY:

“Let’s sit for a moment and let our senses wake up while our minds calm down. Let’s sit quietly and see if you can be still for a full 30 seconds.

“We asked you last week ‘Do you think it’s possible to do an experiment this week, and try to find your calming voice when you are upset? When are some times that you anticipate that you might get upset this week? What sorts of things upset you in the last week? Were they the things you expected? Were you able to find your calming voice during any of those upset moments?’”

Discuss with students.

SCENARIOS:

This week, we want to keep practicing “the wait strategy” that we showed you last week. ADULT 1 and ADULT 2 will act out another scenario where listening to your calming voice is very important. In this scenario, imagine someone did not invite you to their birthday party.

ADULT 1: I can’t believe my friend is having a birthday without me

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

Adult 1: I thought they liked me, but I guess not



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ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I bet they have delicious cake that I won't get to try

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: And fun games that I won't get to play.

ADULT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I guess nobody likes me after all.

ADULT 2: (softly) wait..... wait.....wait.....I will be okay. I will be okay.

ADULT 1: (Take a deep breath), I WILL be okay.

“Did you notice that when ADULT 2 was playing the calming voice, she always said ‘wait’ in a calm, serious, quiet voice? The calming voice never yells or acts silly, but it’s always a calm reminder that’s always there.

“So let’s take turns being the calming voice. We will act out scenarios with ADULT 1 as the upset voice and it will be your job to remind her to wait. Let’s start with STUDENT 1. STUDENT 1, in this scenario, ADULT 1 will pretend to be upset about having to switch schools.

ADULT 1: Switching schools? Why do I have to leave my school behind?

STUDENT 1: (softly) wait.... (ADULT 2 cue as needed)

ADULT 1: I really like my teacher, she’s nice and helps me a lot

STUDENT 1: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I’m going to miss my friends and the playground here.

STUDENT 1: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: My parents and teachers are always making decisions about my life without asking me what I want!

STUDENT 1: (softly) wait..... wait..... wait..... It will be ok. It will be ok.

ADULT 1: (Deep breath). It WILL be ok.

Excellent job, STUDENT 1! See, you must have the calming voice inside you too.

Now STUDENT 2, it’s your turn. In this scenario, ADULT 1 will pretend to be a student who feels left out by her friends at recess.

ADULT 1: I can’t believe it. They don’t want me to play with them.



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STUDENT 2: (softly) wait.... (ADULT 2 cue as needed)

ADULT 1: They just took the soccer ball and won't let me play with them

STUDENT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: They told me I run too slowly and they don't want me on the team

STUDENT 2: (softly) wait....

ADULT 1: I thought they were my friends. I guess they don't like me after all.

STUDENT 2: (softly) wait..... wait..... wait..... It will be ok. It will be ok.

ADULT 1: (Deep breath). It WILL be ok.

Excellent job, STUDENT 2! See, you too must have the calming voice inside of you.

Now it's STUDENT 3's turn! In this scenario, ADULT 1 will pretend to be a student who is very nervous about taking a test at school.

ADULT 1: Oh no, I have to take that big test today!

STUDENT 3: WAIT (ADULT 2 cue as needed)

ADULT 1: It's going to be so hard. My mind always goes blank when I start writing a test.

STUDENT 3: WAIT

ADULT 1: "Last time I forgot everything and got a really bad grade."

STUDENT 3: WAIT

ADULT 1: I guess I'll never be smart enough.

STUDENT 3: WAIT. WAIT. WAIT. It will be ok. It will be ok.

ADULT 1: (Deep breath). It WILL be ok.

Excellent job, STUDENT 3! See, you too must have the calming voice inside of you.

"Do you ever think thoughts or feel feelings like ADULT 1 was saying in these scenarios? Are these thoughts and feelings familiar to you?" *Discuss.*

"Do you think the calming voice is right when it tells us that we will be okay?" *Discuss.*

"Happiness and sadness can come and go. Sometimes you're happy;



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sometimes you're sad. But underneath it all, there's a calm place where you're always Okay. That's what the Wait voice is trying to remind us of."

GUIDED MEDITATION:

"Let's close now with calm breath and calm hands.

"Sit up so you can feel your spine in your straight back. Set your hands on your thighs palms down.

"Feel your breath going in and out of your body. Feel it go in through your nose, down into your chest and then into your belly. Feel it flow out the same way: from your belly, through your chest and throat, out your nose. Let's do 3 breaths: 1-2-3 in, 1-2-3 out.

"Feel your hands resting on your legs. They are a little heavy as you feel their weight on your thighs. Let your hands be still. Feel their stillness. Your hands are always so busy, but now they are resting, safe and still on your thighs.

"Take one last long breath in, breathe in the Calming Den; then let the breath out, leaving a little piece of the Calming Den at the bottom of your breath, in the center of your body. This calm piece rests deep inside of you."



LESSON 6

Take the Calming Den with you

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Comfortable seating (e.g., sofas, chairs with armrests)
- Music-playing device (we recommend a computer with speakers)
- Essential oil diffuser with a pleasant diffuser blend
- Extra essential oils
- A small lamp
- Pitcher of flavored water (e.g., with lemon slices or herbal tea)
- Healthy, high-flavor snack

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW:

Hand out healthy, high-flavored snack

“Here is a healthy treat, as a thank you for coming back to practice mindfulness again.”

“Who can remember a definition of mindfulness?”

See if students can recall a definition or provide one of their own.

Welcome back to the Calming Den. Let’s sit for a moment and let our senses wake up while our minds calm down.

ENGAGING THE SENSES INTENTIONALLY:

Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they’d like to use. Consider trying different scents than you did in previous lessons. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student’s describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?

Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search youtube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments.



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*Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound.
Do this three times total.*

Distribute flavored water. Consider trying a new flavor. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don't like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don't like how the water tastes. That's ok. You don't need to drink any more.)

INTRODUCTORY MEDITATION:

"Let's sit for a moment and let our senses wake up while our minds calm down. Let's sit quietly and see if you can be still for a full 30 seconds.

"We asked you last week 'Do you think it's possible to do an experiment this week, and try to find your calming voice when you are upset? When are some times that you anticipate that you might get upset this week?' What sorts of things upset you in the last week? Were they the things you expected? Were you able to find your calming voice during any of those upset moments?"

Discuss

TRANSITION:

Give each student an item to take to the classroom calming den space (e.g., lamp, oil diffuser, pitcher for flavored water). Encourage a walk that is mindful and carries the feeling of calming containment to the new space.



CLOSING GUIDED MEDITATION

Meditation for our new Calming Den

“Our calm and peace are now here, in our new calming den. We carried the calm and peace from our former spot, just as we carried the diffuser that makes lovely smells, the round light, our scented water pitcher, and the essential oils.

“Now they have a new home.

“Let’s breathe our peace and calm out into this new home. Sit up so you can feel your spine in your straight back. Set your hands on your thighs palms down.

“Feel your breath going in and out of your body. Feel it go in through your nose, down into your chest and then into your belly. Feel it flow out the same way: from your belly, through your chest and throat, out your nose. Let’s do 2 more breaths: 1-2-3 in, 1-2-3 out.

“You still carry your own calming den down in the center of your belly where your breath goes. WAIT and feel how steady and warm it feels. It waits too, keeping you calm and steady even when things seem to go wrong.”



LESSON 7

Introducing the Classroom Calming Den

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Calming music (search youtube or spotify for “spa music”)
- Essential oil diffuser with a pleasant diffuser blend
- A small lamp
- Comfortable seating (e.g., sofas, chairs with armrests)
- Pitcher of flavored water (e.g., with lemon slices or herbal tea)
- Extra essential oils
- Healthy, high-flavor snack

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW:

Hand out healthy, high-flavored snack

“Here is a healthy treat, as a thank you for coming back to practice mindfulness again.”

“Who can remember a definition of mindfulness?”

See if students can recall a definition or provide one of their own.

Welcome back to the Calming Den. Let’s sit for a moment and let our senses wake up while our minds calm down.

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Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they’d like to use. Consider trying different scents than you did in previous lessons. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student’s describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?

Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search youtube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments.



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*Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound.
Do this three times total.*

Distribute flavored water. Consider trying a new flavor. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don't like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don't like how the water tastes. That's ok. You don't need to drink any more.)

INTRODUCE NEW CALMING DEN PROPS:

Introduce students to the props, practice turning on/off, discuss appropriate use of the props. Each child should have an opportunity to handle the items. Discuss appropriate use of the classroom calming den and new props. What might happen if items are mishandled? Discuss how to choose items effectively.

GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM CALMING DEN:

“How have you used the calming den in the last few days?”

“How would you know it was a good time to use the calming den? What kinds of situations might arise in the classroom?”

“How can you let your teacher know you need to use the calming den?”

“How long should you be able to stay in the calming den?”

“How would you know that you're ready to leave the calming den?”

Discuss.



CLOSING GUIDED MEDITATION

Meditation for our new Calming Den

“Our calm and peace are now here, in our new calming den. We carried the calm and peace from our former spot, just as we carried the diffuser that makes lovely smells, the round light, our scented water pitcher, and the essential oils.

“Now they have a new home.

“Let’s breathe our peace and calm out into this new home. Sit up so you can feel your spine in your straight back. Set your hands on your thighs palms down.

“Feel your breath going in and out of your body. Feel it go in through your nose, down into your chest and then into your belly. Feel it flow out the same way: from your belly, through your chest and throat, out your nose. Let’s do 2 more breaths: 1-2-3 in, 1-2-3 out.

“You still carry your own calming den down in the center of your belly where your breath goes. WAIT and feel how steady and warm it feels. It waits too, keeping you calm and steady even when things seem to go wrong.”



LESSON 8

Maintaining the Calming Den

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Comfortable seating (e.g., sofas, chairs with armrests)
- Music-playing device (we recommend a computer with speakers)
- Essential oil diffuser with a pleasant diffuser blend
- Extra essential oils
- A small lamp
- Pitcher of flavored water (e.g., with lemon slices or herbal tea)
- Healthy, high-flavor snack

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW:

Hand out healthy, high-flavored snack

“Here is a healthy treat, as a thank you for coming back to practice mindfulness again.”

“Who can remember a definition of mindfulness?”

See if students can recall a definition or provide one of their own.

Welcome back to the Calming Den. Let’s sit for a moment and let our senses wake up while our minds calm down.

ENGAGING THE SENSES INTENTIONALLY:

Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they’d like to use. Consider trying different scents than you did in previous lessons. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student’s describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?

Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search youtube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments.



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*Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound.
Do this three times total.*

Distribute flavored water. Consider trying a new flavor. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don't like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don't like how the water tastes. That's ok. You don't need to drink any more.)

INTEGRATING WHAT WE'VE LEARNED:

"Imagine some new students are joining your class. If you were going to teach them about the calming den and mindfulness, what would you tell them? Use lots of detail. What strategies would you want to teach them and how would you teach them these strategies?"

"What types of students would like these lessons, and what type of students would not? Who do you think needs a calming den? Do you think some people don't need a calming den?"

"Does your home have anything like the calming den? If not, could you make something similar?"

Discuss

CLOSING GUIDED MEDITATION

Meditation for our new Calming Den

"Feel the calm and peace right here, in the calming den and in yourself-- that place in your belly at the bottom of your deep breath . This is a place to set down stress, frustration, angry feelings and even sadness. Being present in our senses-- aware of what we smell, taste, hear, see, and feel-- we



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become more mindful of ourselves and our surroundings. Listen to the movement of water in our fountain, it's easy flowing. Peace is here, in the simple sensory experiences of this time and place.

"Breathe the peace and calm into your body and then out into the calming den. Sit up so you can feel your spine in your straight back. The energy flows up and down your spine just like the water flows in our fountain. Quietly set your hands on your thighs palms up, ready to receive a glowing gold light.

"Feel your breath going in and out of your body. Feel it go in through your nose, down into your chest and then into your belly. Feel it flow out the same way: from your belly, through your chest and throat, out your nose. Let's do 2 more breaths: 1-2-3 in, 1-2-3 out.

"You still carry your own calming den down in the center of your belly where your breath goes. WAIT and feel how steady and warm it feels. It waits too, keeping you calm and steady even when things might seem to go wrong."



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**THANK YOU FOR USING
OUR CURRICULUM!**

We hope your mindfulness journey has been a rewarding experience!

Sincerely,
Amanda McKerracher, Ph.D.
Maureen Green, M.S.
Curriculum Authors