



My nature connection

MINDFULNESS
EXERCISE

GRADES: K-12

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Bringing attention to the experiences occurring in the present moment in a gentle and non-judgment way.

ACTIVITY (40-50 minutes)

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Hat and gloves if it's cold outside

Comfortable shoes

Art materials: paper, pencils, markers, scissors, magazines for collage

1. INTRODUCTION

Ask everyone how they're feeling today. Ask if they've ever felt so angry, sad, anxious, or upset that they feel like they can't control themselves.

Ask what are some things that we can do to calm down when we feel overwhelmed. How can we soothe ourselves?

One of the ways that we can help ourselves before we get into the place of feeling overwhelmed is called mindfulness. What is mindfulness?

It's a practice that requires us to be present in the moment. Mindfulness makes us more resilient, thoughtful, calm, and open to growth.

To help practice mindfulness, we'll take part in 3 activities: a nature walk, a short breathing exercise, and an art activity.

SETTING

A comfortable and quiet space either indoors or outdoors.

2. NATURE WALK (20-25 minutes)

One great way to practice mindfulness is to spend time in nature. Go for a walk or wander around your yard. As of today (March 26), most Minnesota state parks are still open to the public. Please practice social distancing rules by maintaining 6ft of space between yourself and other people. Depending on the space that is available, your walk may take less time.

While you're on your walk, allow some time to pause and say things you notice. Here are some things to focus on while you're walking:

How the wind feels on your skin.

How the sun warms you up when you stand in it.

What noises do you hear?

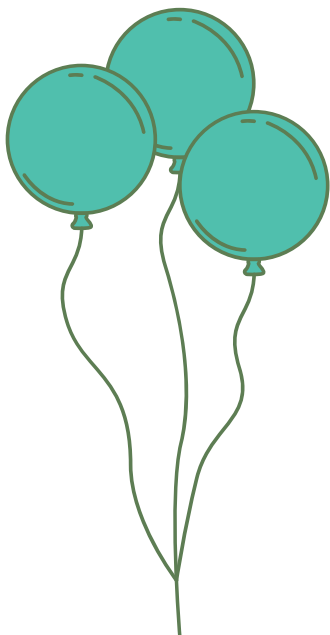
Look up and around you. Can you see or hear any birds or other animals?

End your walk at home or in an open space for playtime. Ask your youth how they can incorporate mindfulness into their playtime. Spend 10-15 minutes of free, active playtime. Once inside, gather together in a sitting area.

3. SHORT BREATHING EXERCISE

As a group, practice breathing like balloons:
Take a deep breath in through your nose, and then blow it out of your mouth like a balloon.

Repeat this several times.



4. ART ACTIVITY

Art promotes focus, creativity and curiosity – all important components of mindfulness. Allow youth to free draw for 20 minutes. If they are having trouble coming up with ideas, ask them to think back to what they saw, heard, or felt on their walk.

Our minds often wander while making art. That is O.K. Gently return your focus to your art-making.

CONNECTING WITH QUESTIONS

At the end of the lesson, ask everyone what they learned today. How can they take what they've learned today into their lives?

SURVEY FEEDBACK

Please help us and give us your feedback.

Take a short survey at:

campfiremn.org/mynatureconnection