

# Mindfulness Minute Toolkit

A VDSC Resource for Child and Youth Mental Health Day

## About This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to enable teachers to lead a short mindfulness minute with their class without any prior training. In just one to three minutes, you can give students a meaningful pause that eases stress, improves focus, and helps them re-engage with the day ahead.

Mindfulness is a state of being aware of the present moment – your thoughts, feelings, body, and surroundings – without judgment. Research shows that even short moments of mindfulness can lower stress, ease anxiety, improve focus and attention, support emotional balance, and help the body and mind reset during a busy day. A mindfulness minute puts that into practice: it is a short, guided pause that works well at the start of class, between transitions, or before high-stress moments like tests and presentations. Beyond easing stress, it gives students a chance to check in with where they are and intentionally prepare for what comes next.

**On Child and Youth Mental Health Day (May 7th), we hope that teachers can consider leading one mindfulness minute with their classes.** You can pick any script in this toolkit; each one is flexible enough to fit any classroom, subject, or grade level.

When leading a mindfulness minute:

- Ask students to put down pencils, close their laptops, and sit comfortably.
- Speak slowly in a calm, natural voice, and leave pauses between phrases.
- Students can take part fully, partially, or simply sit quietly. They can close their eyes or keep a soft gaze downward.
- Close intentionally by ending with a deeper breath and a clear transition, like "when you're ready, bring your attention back to the room."
- After the mindfulness minute, invite students to share one or two words about how they're feeling – especially meaningful when the day has felt heavy.

## Activities

### 1. Arriving in the Moment (1-2 min)

*Good for the start of class.*

"Take a deep full breath in... and a long, slow, exhale. Let your eyes gently close, or soften your gaze toward the desk. Another nice big breath in... and a long, slow, exhale, letting the body release. One more deep breath in... and on the exhale, allow yourself to fully arrive – into this body, this moment, this breath. *(pause)* Now let go of any control of the breath. Simply allow yourself to be here. Let go of all the effort it took to get here, and all the thoughts about what's still to come. *(longer pause)* When you're ready, turn your attention inward and ask: *how am I right now?* Label what's here in one or two words – tension, excitement, tiredness, readiness, whatever it is. Notice it with curiosity and kindness. Now take a fuller, deeper breath, and gently come back to the room."

### 2. Finding the Breath (1-2 min)

*Good for refocusing after a transition or a noisy moment.*

"Begin by finding and extending the breath in the body. Take a few deeper breaths, and then let your body find its own natural rhythm. Notice where you feel the breath most easily today – maybe at the nostrils, where cooler air comes in and slightly warmer air sweeps out. Maybe in the chest, rising and settling. Maybe in the belly, expanding and releasing. It doesn't matter where – just rest your attention there. *(pause)* Each time your mind wanders, and it will, gently bring your awareness back to the breath. *(longer pause)* Take a moment to notice what is here for you now. Label it in one or two words – no judgment needed. *(pause)* When you're ready, take a fuller breath, and come back to the group."

### 3. Body Scan (2 min)

*Good after long stretches of sitting or screen time.*

"Sit comfortably, with both feet on the floor. Take a few long, full, slow breaths. *(pause)* Now, slowly bring your attention through your body – starting at your brow, down through your face, neck, shoulders, chest, belly, legs, all the way to your feet. Notice any places of tightness, tension, warmth, or movement. The usual spots are the jaw, shoulders, chest, and belly. No need to change anything – just notice. Sometimes when we bring awareness to a tight area, it softens on its own... and sometimes it doesn't. Just be curious. *(pause)* In a word or two, label how your body is holding the day so far. When you're ready, take a fuller, deeper breath, and come back to the group."

#### **4. Noticing the Internal Weather (1-2 min)**

*Good before tests, presentations, or tough conversations.*

"Take a nice big inhale... and a long, slow exhale. Let your eyes close, or soften your gaze. Take a couple more full breaths. *(pause)* Now let your breath find its own rhythm. Even your body knows how to breathe all by itself. *(pause)* Gently scan through your thoughts, your emotions, and your body sensations. Be curious about your internal weather pattern in this moment – is it stormy, calm, cloudy, sunny, mixed? Whatever it is, notice it with kindness. There's no need to change it. *(pause)* When you're ready, find one or two words to describe what's here. Take a fuller breath, and on the exhale, come back to the room."

#### **5. Intention for What's Next (1 min)**

*Good at the start of class or before an important task.*

"Take one slow breath in... and a long breath out. Think about what's coming up – not your whole day, just the next hour in this room. Ask yourself: *what's one thing I want to bring with me into this class?* It could be focus, patience, courage, curiosity, kindness. Just one word. You don't need to share it. *(pause)* Hold that word in your mind. As you breathe in, silently say the word to yourself. As you breathe out, let go of anything getting in the way. *(pause)* Take one more breath, and when you're ready, open your eyes. Carry that word with you."

## 6. Five Senses Grounding (2 min)

*Good when the room feels scattered or anxious.*

"Take a slow breath in, and a slow breath out. I'll guide you through your five senses – you don't have to say anything out loud, just notice. First, notice five things you can see in the room. *(pause)* Now four things you can feel – your feet on the floor, the fabric of your sleeve, the desk under your hand. *(pause)* Now three things you can hear – near or far. *(pause)* Now two things you can smell, or imagine smelling. *(pause)* And one thing you can taste. *(pause)* Take one more slow breath, and come back to the group."

## Adapting for Your Classroom

- Younger students may prefer shorter activities (1 minute) with more movement, like the Body Scan Stretch.
- Older students often respond well to Intention-Setting and Anchor Word, which give them agency.
- Students who feel uncomfortable closing their eyes can always look down at their desk instead.
- If a student opts out, simply ask them to sit quietly so others can participate.

## A Note on Mental Health Support

Mindfulness minutes are a tool for everyday well-being, not a replacement for support when students are struggling. If you notice a student who may need more help, please connect them with the available community resources.

Mental health is an essential part of healthy schools. Thank you for being part of this work.

---

*Developed by the Vancouver District Students' Council (VDSC) for Child and Youth Mental Health Day, May 7th.*

*Adapted from [Kelty Mental Health at BC Children's Hospital](#) and [Hamilton Health Sciences](#) by VDSC.*