

Lesson Plan 1: Mindfulness: Hit the Pause Button

In-Classroom Activity 1: Press Pause Before Reacting

- **Objective:** To build inner awareness by noticing thoughts and emotions linked to quick reactions, and to practice a mindfulness tool—the “pause button”—that helps students respond more calmly and thoughtfully in real-life situations, supporting healthier behaviors and relationships.
- **Instructions:**
 - Think of two or three recent moments when you reacted too quickly and you regretted it (e.g., blurting out in class, snapping at a friend, rushing through homework).
 - Write each situation on a separate sticky note—just a few words to remind you of the moment.
 - Sharing step: Feel free to choose one situation from your sticky notes and share it with the group, if you feel comfortable. You don’t need to share.
 - If someone else shares something similar, cluster the notes together into groups on a whiteboard or wall (e.g., school-related, friendship-related, family-related).
 - Take three slow breaths, and with each breath, picture pressing that button and giving your brain space to think and react differently next time.
- **Reflection Questions:**
 - Which situation do you think would change the most if you pressed the pause button first?
 - When you look at the clusters (school, friendship, family, etc.), which group had the most examples? Why do you think that is?
 - What thoughts or emotions came up as you imagined pressing pause?
 - How might taking three slow breaths help you respond differently next time?

In-Classroom Activity 2: Shake It Out!

- **Objective:** To enhance inner awareness by noticing bodily sensations during and after movement, and to introduce a playful mindfulness tool for releasing tension and resetting focus.
- **Instructions:**
 - Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Feel the ground beneath you—get grounded.

- Begin to gently bounce on your feet, letting your knees bend slightly.
 - Start shaking your body—begin with your right leg, then your left leg.
 - Shake your right arm, then your left arm.
 - Shake your whole body like a wet dog trying to dry off—let it be playful and free.
 - For the last 10 seconds, shake as intensely as you can!
 - Stop suddenly and stand still. Close your eyes or soften your gaze.
 - Notice what’s happening in your body—heartbeat, breath, tingling, warmth.
- **Reflection Questions:**
 - How do you feel now?
 - How do you feel compared to before the activity?
 - What sensations do you feel in your body right now?
 - How does your heart feel—fast, slow, calm?
 - Which part of your body feels most alive?
 - Did you enjoy the shaking? Why or why not?
 - **Reference:** Hawkins, K., (2021). The mindful teacher’s toolkit: Awareness-based wellbeing in schools: Activities for 4-18 year olds. Corwin. p. 67

In-Classroom Activity 3: Loosen Up with Movement

- **Objective:** To cultivate awareness of the connection between breath, movement, and emotional state, and to explore gentle movement as a mindfulness tool for calming the body and mind.
- **Instructions:**
 - Stand or sit comfortably.
 - Move one arm in a circular motion like a windmill, matching the movement to your breath—inhaling as the arm rises, exhaling as it lowers.
 - Repeat with the other arm.
 - Now move both arms in circles together, still following your breath.
 - Swing your arms gently forward and backward, again in rhythm with your breathing.

- Let your body stretch naturally—reach, twist, or bend in any way that feels good.
 - Place your hands near your belly and move them up and down slowly, following the rise and fall of your breath.
 - **Reflection Questions:**
 - How do you feel now?
 - What did you like the most?
 - What was new for you?
 - Which movement felt most natural or enjoyable?
 - How did your breath change during the activity?
 - Did you notice any tension releasing from your body?
 - What thoughts came up while you were moving?
 - Would you use these movements to calm down or refocus during the day?
 - What are you taking away from this exercise?
 - **Reference:** Hawkins, K., (2021). The mindful teacher's toolkit: Awareness-based wellbeing in schools: Activities for 4-18 year olds. Corwin. p. 72
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Out-of-Classroom Activity 1: Mindful Waiting

- **Objective:** To apply mindfulness in real-life waiting situations by tuning into bodily sensations, fostering present-moment awareness and emotional regulation during everyday transitions.
- **Instructions:**
 - While waiting (e.g., in line, at a bus stop, or before entering a room), pause and bring your attention to your body.
 - Notice how your feet feel against the ground—are they heavy, light, warm, or cool?
 - Observe the position of your arms and hands—are they relaxed, tense, moving, or still?
 - Tune into your posture—are you leaning, standing tall, slouching?
 - Scan your body slowly from head to toe and notice any tingling, warmth, tightness, or movement.

- Stay with these sensations for a few moments, simply observing without trying to change anything.
- **Optional Reflection:**
 - What part of your body felt most noticeable?
 - Did you discover any tension or comfort you hadn't noticed before?
 - How did this moment of awareness affect your mood or energy?

Out-of-Classroom Activity 2: Toothbrushing Awareness

- **Objective:** To build mindful attention during routine activities by focusing on sensory experiences, helping students strengthen their ability to stay present and calm in daily self-care moments.
 - **Instructions:**
 - While brushing your teeth, focus on the feeling of the brush on your teeth and gums.
 - Notice the taste, texture, and temperature.
 - If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the brushing.
 - **Optional Reflection:**
 - Was it easy or hard to stay focused?
 - Did you notice anything new about brushing?
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