

Breathing sticks — Mindfulness meditation

EXPLANATION:

Introducing meditation and mindfulness at an early age can build and nurture young students' mind development. Remembering to breathe intentionally, inhale and exhale many times throughout the day is essential for self-regulation. In this activity students make a bead stick to practice calming and thoughtful breathing.

YEAR LEVELS: Years 1–3

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole group discussion and individual meditations

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 30–40 mins

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

Learning Continuum of Personal and Social Capability

Self-awareness

This element involves students developing an awareness of their own emotional states, needs and perspectives.

Students identify and describe the factors that influence their emotional responses. They develop a realistic sense of their personal abilities, qualities and strengths through knowing what they are feeling in the moment and having a realistic assessment of their own abilities and a well-grounded sense of self-knowledge and self-confidence. Students reflect on and evaluate their learning, identify personal characteristics that contribute to or limit their effectiveness and learn from successes or failures. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- recognise emotions
- recognise personal qualities and achievements
- understand themselves as learners
- develop reflective practice.



SCOPE OF TASK:

Mindfulness meditation, in its most uncomplicated form, is paying attention to what is happening in the present moment. Students can use a range of materials to assist them to concentrate on the here and now – breathing sticks are just one tool!

1. Activate student's prior knowledge about mindfulness meditation. Ask students what they know. Questions could include:

- What is mindful meditation?
- What can you do to be mindful?
- Why is breathing important when we practise mindfulness?

If necessary, share with the students details about mindfulness meditation:

- Means to be fully present and engaged in the moment, aware of your thoughts and feelings blocking out other sounds, people and distractions
- Means paying full attention to something
- Means slowing down to really notice what you're doing
- Concentrating on just one thing

2. Inform the students that they are going to make a breathing stick to assist them with practising mindfulness meditation.

3. The steps for making the breathing stick can be displayed on the whiteboard for students to complete or each step can be conducted independently with the teacher assisting.

Steps for making a breathing stick:

1. Bend the pipe cleaner at the end so that beads do not fall off - twist the end into a ball bigger than the beads.
2. String 6 or 8 beads onto the pipe cleaner and bend/twist the other side when you are done.
4. With the students practise how to use the breathing sticks



- When holding the breathing stick move all the beads to one end of the pipe cleaner
- Tell the students to breathe in as they slowly move one bead to the other end of the pipe cleaner - matching movement and breath
- As the student breathes out (exhales) they move another bead from one end of the pipe cleaner to the other end
- Repeat with the remaining beads – breathing in (inhaling) and breathing out (exhaling)

5. After students have practised using the breathing stick inform them that they can use them during spare time in the classroom. Tell the students that the breathing sticks help them to regulate their breathing allowing them to re-focus on the present moment/time.

They can use them in the playground, at home – anywhere where they have a few moments to intentionally breathe and be mindful.

Breathing sticks can be left on desks or in lunch boxes or backpacks. The breathing sticks are an easy tool for use in any place or environment!

RESOURCES:

- Pipe cleaners
- Beads for threading