

MINDFULNESS IN SCHOOL

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Background

- Mindfulness concept derives from Buddhist meditation practices (Van Gordon et al., 2016)
- The concept of mindfulness became popular through the work of Kabat-zin, who developed the MBSR programme at the University of Massachusetts medical centre .
- The aim of MBSR was to reduce stress and psychological pain associated with patients' ailments .
- The MBSR programme popularized the concept of mindfulness as a secular practice in the West.
- Mindfulness concept has widely spread in many fields, including education, healthcare, psychology, sports, etc.

Definition and meaning of mindfulness

- Mindfulness is defined as “paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (Kabat-zinn, 1994, p.4)
- It means being fully attentive to and aware of what is happening in the present moment- thoughts, feelings, sensations, and surroundings without trying to alter or react to them.
- Mindfulness is not a relaxation or mood management technique, but rather a form of mental training to reduce cognitive vulnerability (Shapiro et al., 2008).

Key features of mindfulness

- **Intention** : purposefully directing one's attention rather than letting it wander.
- **Motivation**: knowing why one is paying attention.
- **Acceptance** – being nonjudgmental toward whatever arises in the present moment. The sensations, thoughts, and emotions are not judged as good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant; they are simply noticed as “happening,” and observed until they eventually pass.

Mindfulness in schools

Why mindfulness in schools?

- Some children lack the skills to effectively deal with psychosocial ordeals that might arise in school or with peers, which affect their physical and mental health (Compas, et al., 2001; Twenge, 2000, 2011).
- Children need to be equipped with skills to able to :
 - regulate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in the classroom and with their peers (*behaviour and emotion regulation*)
 - thoughtfully respond to situations rather than react impulsively or enact behaviours that could be harmful to themselves.

Mindfulness in school cont'd

- understand, manage, and express their emotions, as well as the ability to perceive and respond effectively to the emotions of others in a mindful and compassionate way (*social-emotional competence*)
- Mindfulness helps to reduce anxiety and aggression (Biegel, et al., 2009; Broderick & Metz, 2009; Mendelson et al., 2010; Napoli, Krech, & Holley, 2005; Saltzman & Goldin, 2008; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010).

Mindfulness in school cont'd

- Children's ability to regulate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the classroom and with their peers
- thoughtfully respond in situations rather than react impulsively or enact a behavior that could be harmful to themselves
- Social–emotional competence (refers to the ability to understand, manage, and express one's emotions, deal with positive and negative emotions as well as the ability to perceive and respond effectively to the emotions of others in a mindful and compassionate way.)
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Mindfulness in school cont'd

- Mindfulness education reduces depression, anxiety, aggression, and feelings of discomfort among children (Biegel, et al., 2009; Broderick & Metz, 2009; Mendelson et al., 2010; Napoli, Krech, & Holley, 2005; Saltzman & Goldin, 2008; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010).

Mindfulness techniques

- Mindfulness education involves a number of practices. Some of them include :
 - body scan,
 - mindful movement,
 - settling the mind (settles gross level of distraction in mind),
 - resting the mind;
 - Grounding the Mind (becoming aware of bodily sensations, so as to anchor oneself in the present and reduce distractions or wandering thoughts);
 - Mindfulness support using sound;
 - Mindfulness support using breath;
 - Etc.

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