

MINDFULNESS
WITHOUT
BORDERS

the mindfulness ambassador program.



The Mindfulness Ambassador Program - GLOBAL Participant Workbook

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Mindfulness Without Borders is a non-profit organization that brings best practices in mindfulness and social-emotional learning to youth and their communities. We offer educational programs that explore key strategies and tools to empower individuals with vital life skills they need to tackle the challenges of an increasingly complex world.

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Contents

preface

About the Mindfulness Ambassador Program - GLOBAL	4
About Social and Emotional Learning	5

program lessons

Session One: Mindfulness Basics	7
<i>Mindfulness Practice: TUZA</i>	
Session Two: Paying Attention	11
<i>Mindfulness Practice: Mindful Listening</i>	
Session Three: Discovering Inside	17
<i>Mindfulness Practice: TUZA</i>	
Session Four: Connecting Authentically	23
<i>Mindfulness Practice: Mindful Listening</i>	
Session Five: Practicing Gratitude	27
<i>Mindfulness Practice: Mindful Eating</i>	
Session Six: Mind-Body Connection	31
<i>Mindfulness Practice: Body Scan</i>	
Session Seven: Emotional Intelligence	35
<i>Mindfulness Activity: Journal Entry</i>	
Session Eight: Noticing Emotional Triggers	41
<i>Mindfulness Practice: Body Scan</i>	
Session Nine: Exploring Open-Mindedness	45
<i>Mindfulness Practice: Mindful Listening</i>	
Session Ten: Handling Conflict Skillfully	49
<i>Mindfulness Practice: Loving Kindness</i>	
Session Eleven: Nurturing Compassion	53
<i>Mindfulness Practice: Loving Kindness</i>	
Session Twelve: Being the Change	59
<i>Mindfulness Activity: Journal Entry</i>	

appendix

Key words	63
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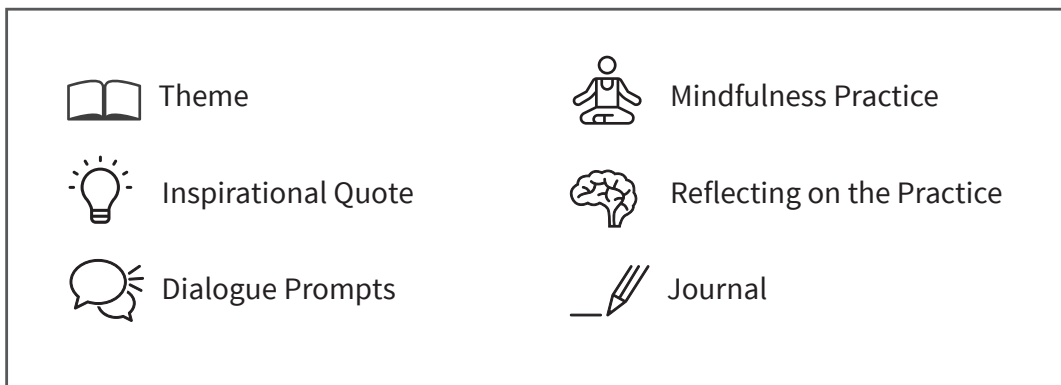
Preface

About the Mindfulness Ambassador Program

The Mindfulness Ambassador Program offers individuals a forum to meet face to face and learn about constructive ways for addressing personal, social and community challenges. At the heart of the program are basic mindfulness practices that help individuals access the wisdom within themselves and within the group. Essentially, the program establishes a common language based on sharing, modeling and practicing 12 principles that provide participants with tools to strengthen their well-being, think critically, act with compassion and develop resilience. As well, program participants pledge to develop the skills, knowledge and attitude to engage constructively in an increasingly interdependent world and to become messengers of mindful living within their families, peer groups and communities, hence *mindfulness ambassadors*.

Fundamental to the curriculum design is the integration of the council process as the way in which a shared learning environment is created. Central to the council process is the idea that deep listening and mutual understanding is core to building authentic and rewarding conversations among the group participants. The Mindfulness Ambassador Program draws from the practice and insights of The Ojai Foundation, a leading expert in the field.

The Mindfulness Ambassador Program is for those who care to connect, dare to rise above, and seek to be more. Participants are encouraged to speak from the heart, ask questions to discover their fullest potential, and explore possibilities that lead to a culture of mutual respect, collaboration and ethical concern for each other and the world.



About Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional competencies are skillsets that can be cultivated to help us prepare for personal, academic and professional success. The mastery of these essential skills promotes character and ethical development, self-discipline, prosocial behaviour and increases emotional balance. By strengthening these essential skills, individuals can experience better academic performance, improved attitudes and behaviours, greater motivation to learn and reduced emotional distress. (2015 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs—Middle and High School Edition)

Mindfulness Without Borders' educational content integrates the key elements of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning. CASEL is dedicated to advancing the science and practice of school-based social and emotional learning (SEL). It has identified five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies. Self-awareness and self-management are consistent with the *intrapersonal domain* whereas social awareness and relationship skills represent dimensions within the *interpersonal domain*. Responsible decision-making is both an individual and social process and therefore represents both domains.

The definitions of the five competency clusters for participants include:

self-awareness: The ability to accurately *recognize* one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

self-management: The ability to *regulate* one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

social awareness: The ability to *take* the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

relationship skills: The ability to *establish* and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.

responsible decision-making: The ability to *make* constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

Resource: 2015 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs—Middle and High School Edition

Program Sessions

Session One: Mindfulness Basics



Open the Session

Participants sit in a circle, introduce themselves by name and share one character trait or quality that they bring to the program. For example: “My name is Sam and I bring ‘curiosity’ into the circle.”



Program participants discuss, agree on and stick to the following council guidelines, including:

- Listen respectfully with an openness to multiple perspectives.
- Speak from the “I” voice and share personal experience.
- Speak only when you have the talking piece.
- Say just enough – you have the right to pass.
- What is shared in the program, stays in the program.
- Complete the Take Away Practices and come to meetings prepared to participate.

Can anyone think of any other guidelines?



“Mindfulness is the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally to the unfolding of experience.”

**—Jon Kabat-Zinn,
Founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction**



Theme: Mindfulness Basics

Mindfulness is a way of being and thinking. When we are mindful, we focus our attention on what is happening in our body, our mind and our environment in the moment.

With mindfulness, we live in the present, focused on what is happening right now. The intention is to see things as they are, rather than as they used to be or as we wish they could be. We notice when the mind is judging experiences as ‘positive’ or ‘negative’, ‘fair’ or ‘unfair’, to my ‘liking’ or ‘disliking’. Sometimes when we judge, we are resisting what is true in the moment; we may cloud our experience and create worry, stress and suffering. With mindfulness, we learn to notice these judgments, let them go, and observe the experience for what it is - clearly and accurately. With this quality of attention, we learn how to be present to anything — every gift and every struggle that life offers us.

Mindfulness exists inside every one of us, it is not something we need to create rather, it is a practice that we need to cultivate. The idea is to deliberately slow down and bring more awareness to the mind and body in the present moment. It’s about observing our thoughts, feelings and sensations that we are already experiencing, and acting on them with discernment, kindness and compassion. The objective is to view the experience with more focus and to reflect and respond with greater clarity and less reactivity.

On the other hand, when we are not focused in the present moment and preoccupied with thoughts about the past or the future, we are more likely to function on automatic pilot. On autopilot, we let our old stories and habitual actions govern our experiences and we may react thoughtlessly to a given situation without concern and compassion for ourselves, others and the environment.

Mindfulness is like the ocean. Even when there are big swells crashing on the surface, down at the bottom it is relatively still. With a mindfulness practice, we can learn to find this same stillness deep within ourselves, while the waves of emotion, thought and external experiences wash over us. With mindfulness, we are not trying to get rid of our thoughts and feelings. Rather, we are learning to look at the experience as it is unfolding moment by moment with more awareness and acceptance.



Inspirational Quote

“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.”

— Jon Kabat-Zinn, Founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction



Dialogue Prompts

- What does this quote mean to you?
- Tell a story of a time when you acted on autopilot. What would you do differently to be more mindful?



Mindfulness Practice: TUZA

Paying attention to the breath is a core mindfulness practice that helps us focus our attention in the present moment. We call this breathing practice TUZA, named by a mindfulness ambassador program participant in Kigali Rwanda. TUZA refers to the idea of slowing down before reacting. Like the anchor of a ship, TUZA can be used to help steady us in different situations. Even if big waves of emotions like anger, sadness, fear or excitement overcome us, we can use our breath to regain a sense of calm and balance. In time, and with practice, we can develop and strengthen our capacity to steady our mind and body in all conditions.

TUZA

Here's how:

- Sit in comfortable position. Allow both soles of your feet to connect to the floor.
- Rest your hands on your thighs and let your shoulders drop.
- Gently close your eyes or look for a reference point somewhere on the floor where you can return your eyes when they get distracted.
- Let your spine grow tall and noble like the trunk of a tall tree.
- Take a moment to notice how your body feels.
- Now, bring your attention to the flow of your breath.
- You don't need to breathe in a special way. Your body knows how to breathe.
- Simply notice each breath coming into the body with an in-breath, and leaving the body with an out-breath.
- If you notice your mind is caught up in thoughts, emotions or body sensations, know that this is normal.
- Notice what is distracting you and gently let it go, by redirecting your attention back to the breath.
- The idea is to not judge your experience. Rather, to be kind and compassionate to how you are feeling in the moment.
- Allow each in-breath to be a new beginning and each out-breath to be a letting go.
- When you are ready, slowly bring your attention back to your surroundings and let how you feel now guide you.



Reflecting on TUZA

Describe your experience practicing TUZA with one word or image.

Be Mindful: Take Away Practice

Practice TUZA once a day.

Practice TAKE FIVE if you find it hard to do TUZA.

TAKE FIVE

Here's How:

- Sit in a comfortable position and allow both soles of the feet to connect to the floor.
- Turn one hand palm up to the ceiling. This will be your counting hand.
- At the end of each breath cycle, fold one finger into the palm of your hand until all five fingers are folded.
- Simply, breathe in and breathe out, following the whole length of the breath for five times.
- Once your breathing practice is completed, take time to notice how you feel.
- Let how you feel in the present moment now inform and guide you.

Close the Session

Participants stand in a circle to close the meeting with a *Circle of Gratitude*. One person in the circle turns to the right and says to the person standing beside them, “Thank you for being here.” A genuine message of thanks is passed from person to person, until everyone in the circle has said and received thanks.

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