



NATIONAL  
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# GEM

GET EXPERIENCE IN MINDFULNESS

AN AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE  
STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
FOR AGES 10 & UP

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## THANK YOU

Thank you to the University of Delaware.



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# GEM

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**The GEM (Get Experience in Mindfulness) Program is an awareness and acceptance mindfulness-based stress management program.** This program places an emphasis on stress management taught through practical and interactive mindfulness-based activities to facilitate experiential learning. The program is a research based and theory driven program that meets National Health Education Standards. The GEM program has been designed for participants ages 10 and up.

**This mindfulness and healthy living program is designed to:**

- Integrate mind and body awareness
- Increase focus and attention
- Improve stress management skills
- Improve self-monitoring and social behavior
- Develop goal setting and skills in 7 areas of wellness that include:
  - Social, Spiritual, Emotional, Professional/Educational, Intellectual, Physical, and Environmental Wellness

**Participants of the program will learn :**

- What mindfulness is and how to integrate it into daily life
- Alignment and form for over 25 strength and flexibility poses adapted from yoga poses
- Technique for 5 breathing exercises
- The basics of visualization and contemplation practice
- Relaxation techniques

## Using the GEM Guidebook

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This interactive guidebook has been developed to act as a complete series or as single, stand-alone lessons. Each lesson builds off of the previous one, making the complete series the most effective form of training.

The guidebook consists of 5 lessons. Each lesson takes 45-60 minutes to complete. The GEM program lessons follow an interactive model that involves direct participation, reflection and application of mindfulness-based stress management skills. The activities within each lesson follow a specific theme to emphasize the various concepts involved in mindfulness.

### The lesson topics include:

#### **1: Intentions and Goal Setting**

*Understand what mindfulness means and how it relates to health and wellbeing as a tool for stress management*

#### **2: Awareness and Attention**

*How to use mindfulness to focus attention and be aware in the present moment*

#### **3: Self-care: Stress Reduction and Relaxation**

*How to use mindfulness to take care of the body and mind by managing stress*

#### **4: Communication and Relationships**

*How to mindfully listen and communicate thoughts and feelings*

#### **5: Gratitude and Acceptance**

*How to practice gratitude and acceptance and how it relates to being mindful*

## Using the GEM Guidebook

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All of the classes follow a similar format by having the activities in a consistent order each time. This continuity and routine enhances the effectiveness of the program so it is not recommended to change the order of activities. The guided interactive activities in each lesson are designed to educate program participants on what it means to be mindful and empower participants to experience mindfulness, both during the training and following the training.

The lessons are structured to take about one hour each. Take home activities should also take about a minimum of one hour in total. Therefore, this program provides participants with over 6 hours of guided learning in mindfulness-based stress management. The lessons are designed for ages 10 and up. The recommended group size is about 10-25 participants.

Discussing stress and emotions with others can be a sensitive topic so remember to keep an open mind and create a safe and comfortable space for both the instructors and the participants. There is no proper or correct way to think or feel when practicing the mindfulness activities. As long as participants feel comfortable and relaxed during the lessons, they are building mindfulness traits and skills. The most important goal of the program is for participants to be aware of present emotions and feelings and to learn to accept them and how to act in daily life from that awareness and acceptance.

The lessons are centered around attention and awareness, so distractions should be kept to a minimum, meaning:

- Recommend participants and all instructors use the restroom and get a drink of water, if needed, prior to the session.
- Shoes can be removed if allowed, and kept off to the side to eliminate potential distraction. While removing shoes is not required to participate in the lessons, it can enhance the relaxing experience for participants and can make the strength and flexibility poses feel more comfortable.
- Clothing should be comfortable to allow movement for the poses.
- Cell phones and electronics should be turned off or on silent and kept off to the side.

## Using the GEM Guidebook

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All instructors are highly recommended to have received some form of training in mindfulness and have also established a personal daily mindfulness practice for themselves before learning the curriculum and then guiding the program for others.

The program was designed with the concept of having two instructors present at each session but is not required. Two instructors allows for the participants to get a more well-rounded experience in the training. It helps with facilitation when one instructor guides the activity and the other instructor models the activity for participants. If two instructors are present, it is highly recommended that one instructor physically demonstrates the strength and flexibility poses while the other verbally communicates them. It is also recommended to alternate between instructors teaching the various activities. Headset wireless microphones can be highly beneficial with this type of program in large venues.

Instructors will want to make sure that the location of the program is well lit, where lights can potentially be dimmed if necessary to enhance certain activities. A space where no loud noises or distractions are present is highly beneficial. Participants will be instructed to lay on mats or blankets on the floor for various activities so making sure the floor is clean is also highly beneficial for the program. Space for participants to move around in the strength and flexibility poses is necessary.

For further questions, please feel free to contact the program developers:

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## The Class Outline (Master Format)

### Pre-class Preparation:

- Suggest participants use restrooms or get a drink of water before class if needed
- Request that all shoes and belongings be placed in a location where they will be out of the way
- Set up in one large circle or in two rows facing each other

### Chiming in:

- Use a chime to signal the start of the session. Chime 3-5 times to remind participants to listen to the sound and be present and aware.

### Guided Mental Focus Exercise:

- *Intention Attention Practice (1), Body Scan (2), Kindness Visualization (3), Sound Meditation (4), Gratitude Contemplation (5)*

### Posture Practice (Strength and Flexibility Poses):

- Warm-Up: Mountain, Extended Mountain, Crescent Moon left side/right side, Mountain, Extended Mountain, Crescent Moon right side/ left side, Waterfall, Forward Fold, Table Top, Cat/Cow (3 times each), Table Top, Child's Pose
- 1: Plank, Downward Dog, Chair
- 2: Standing Head to Knee, Dancer, Eagle, Revolved Chair, Tree
- 3: Butterfly, Knees to Chest, Chill
- 4: Partner Forward Fold, Partner Boat, Partner Downward Dog
- 5: Warrior, Star, Victory

### Breathing Exercise:

- *Breath Counting (1), 4-7-8 Breathing (2), Bunny Breath (3), Bumblebee Breath (4), Whale Breath (5)*

### Mindfulness Immersion Techniques (MIT):

- *Wellness Wheel with Goal Setting (1), Geometric Shape , Labyrinth Creative Practice and Glitter Jar Visualization (2), Hand Massage and Mindful Mindmap (3), 5 Senses Experience and Communication Challenge (4), Pod Pow-wow, Post-evaluation and Closing Reflection (5)*

### Self-Reflection or Mind Training Practice

### Take-home Activity:

- *Share a personal goal with someone you trust (1), Mindfully listen when having a conversation (2), Practice a breathing exercise (3), Demonstrate a strength and flexibility pose to a friend or family member (4), Start your mindfulness journal (5)*



## LESSON 1

# Intentions and Goal Setting



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## GOAL

Understand what mindfulness means and how it relates to health and wellness as a tool for stress management

## OBJECTIVES

- Define mindfulness and how it relates to our wellbeing
- Practice basic strength and flexibility poses
- Perform a focusing breathing technique
- Establish a personal intention and goal related to wellness
- Evaluate a personal wellness goal using a visualization technique

## BACKGROUND

During both intention and goal setting, individuals are taking the time to be more mindful about the mental, emotional and physical self. Intentions help to give actions a purpose and help to motivate individuals. Intentions and goals are a mental tool that can be used to enhance wellness.

## TIME

45 minutes – 1 hour

## MATERIALS

Speaker (*for music, optional*)

Chime

Microphone

Poses Handout

Wellness Wheel Handout

Markers (*7 different colors*)

Towels/Blankets/Fitness Mats

Tape

Post-It Notes



# 1: Intentions and Goal Setting



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## Energy Focus Practice

### Activity

Chiming In and Mindfulness Introduction

### Duration

1-2 minutes

### Instructor

Use a chime to signal the start of the session. Chime 3-5 times to remind participants to listen to the sound and be present and aware.

Mindfulness is a state of living in the moment with awareness and acceptance. Awareness involves recognizing the thoughts, feelings, sensations and surroundings that may be experienced in a particular moment. Acceptance involves not passing judgement or being critical of those thoughts, feelings, sensations and surroundings in that moment and not comparing oneself to others. This way of thinking allows people to fully experience life in the moment-to-moment. In this program, skills will be learned and practiced to get in a mindful mental state and practice will demonstrate how it can be a useful tool to manage stress.

## Intention Setting

### Activity

Intention/ Code word

### Duration

1-2 minutes

### Instructor

Recommend that participants select one word or a short phrase to be their intention or “Code word” for the practice today. Intentions/Code words are used to remind participants of their commitment to bettering themselves in a personal way. Code words do not need to be shared, but can be. When participants seem out of focus, simply remind them to think back to their code word to regroup.

**Sample Intentions/Code words:** Aware, Accepting, Relaxed, Strong, Open, Flexible, Warrior, Happy, Friendly, Fun, Generous, Independent

# 1: Intentions and Goal Setting



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## Mental Focus Practice

### Activity

Intention Attention Practice

Code word Contemplation

### Duration

3-5 minutes

### Instructor

Tell participants to sit or lie in a comfortable position and close their eyes if they would like to. Read the instructor's text aloud.

Speak slowly and pause in between each of the following prompts:

- Close your eyes and make sure you are comfortable.
- Take a big breath in and as you exhale through your nose with mouth closed, let your body relax as much as possible.
- What is a word or phrase that can help you focus on our activities today?
- This word or phrase will now become your “code word”.
- Think of the code word that you just came up with.
- As you take your next breath in, say the word in your head.
- Do this three more times on your own.
- Think about the reason you chose this word today.
- What does it mean to you?
- When you think of this word, what do you picture?
- What do you feel?
- Concentrate on that image for a moment as you take a few more big breaths in and slowly exhale out.
- When you are ready gently open your eyes and come up to a seated position.

### Reflection Questions

1. How do you feel after doing that activity?
2. Could everyone come up with a code word?

Give the option for some of the participants to share their code word.

# 1: Intentions and Goal Setting



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## Posture Practice

### Activity

Strength and Flexibility Poses

### Duration

15-20 minutes

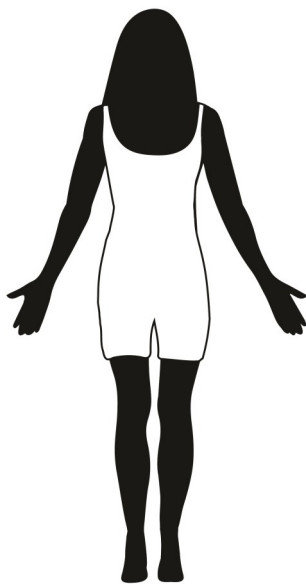
### Background Information

A practical mindfulness based stress management technique that is a universal tool is stretching. Whoever or wherever you are, stretching is a great way to practice awareness and acceptance. Taking moments of the day, to move and stretch, helps to increase blood flow and further enhance focus and concentration. Stretching is another great technique to reduce your overall stress levels and function at full potential.

Stretching in specific positions or poses can increase muscular strength and flexibility in the body.

### Foundation Warm-Up

#### Mountain



Stand straight with feet planted firmly on the floor. Feet should be parallel and slightly apart (about 2 fists in between). Ankles in line with the knees and knees in line with the hips. Lift and spread the toes then softly plant them back down. Balance weight evenly between both feet. Arms should be comfortable at sides with palms facing forward, face relaxed, and shoulders back and down. Imagine a straight line starting from the feet up through the crown of the head and lengthen with the tailbone toward the floor and the head toward the sky. Stay for 30 seconds breathing easily.

**Challenge:** Practice with eyes closed. Physically feeling the sensations of the body while in the pose.

**Extended Mountain:** Inhale and slowly raise straight arms above the head trying to get the elbows aligned with the ears. Palms facing each other.