

# CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS



**challenge  
to change**

## What is MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us.

It suggests that the mind is fully attending to what's happening, to what you're doing, and to the space you're moving through.

Mindfulness is right there to snap us back to where we are and what we are doing and feeling.



## Mindfulness Can...

add to the quality of our lives in numerous ways, from nurturing a sense of inner peace to becoming aware of how thoughts and emotions impact actions, from improving self-confidence to facilitating deeper and more meaningful relationships with others. In children specifically, mindfulness has been found to:

- Mitigate the effects of bullying. (Zhou, Liu, Niu, Sun, & Fan, 2016)
- Enhance focus in children with ADHD. (Zhang et al., 2016)
- Reduce attention problems. (Crescentini, Capurso, Furlan & Fabbro, 2016)
- Improve brain health and well-being.
- Improve social skills when well taught and practiced in children and adolescents.

It's important for caregivers and educators to provide age-appropriate mindfulness practices for children.

## Challenge to Change, Inc.

is located in Dubuque, Iowa. We offer yoga and mindfulness practices to teachers, students and community members. Challenge to Change offers a wide variety of instruction and curriculum options including: Live, Online & Licensure. Each 30-45 minute lesson comes from the organization's research-based curriculum.

At the core of the yoga and mindfulness curriculum are the five parts of practice, which include:

- 1 Seated Practice**
- 2 Movement**
- 3 Heart of the Lesson**
- 4 Guided Mindfulness Practice**
- 5 Close of Practice**

## Part 1 + SEATED PRACTICE

The goal of the seated practice is to help children connect their body and their breath. These practices help to calm the nervous system, refocus the brain, and relax the body. Sessions that begin with a seated practice help bring children into the present moment and tune out what happened before their practice, and what will happen after. These seated practices are grounding, connecting, and centering.

In each session children will learn breath techniques, mudras (yoga for the fingers) or mantras and then choose the practice that feels best for them. All three practices support social-emotional development by teaching children to quiet their minds, look inside themselves, determine what they are feeling and express that.



## Part 2+ MOVEMENT

The movement section often begins with the Sun Salutation, which is the the physical practice of moving the body, mind and breath together. It is important to bring these three realms together to be more present in the body. A song is used to accompany movement, empowering students and aiding them in recalling the order of yoga poses.

## Part 3+ HEART OF THE LESSON

This part of practice is the main focus of each lesson. It is here that students learn new social-emotional skills and mindfulness techniques. This part of the practice will be different each time and may incorporate breathwork, body movement, social engagement literature, music, and various other mindfulness tools.

## Part 4+ GUIDED MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

This is a safe time in which children can relax and release. A yoga story or song is utilized to encourage imagination and a gentle reset for the rest of the day.

Challenge to Change teachers often incorporate the use of eye pillows to promote an even deeper relaxation, but this part of practice can also be done without or in a seated position.

## Part 5+ CLOSE OF PRACTICE

This part of the mindfulness practice helps children complete and close all parts they have just learned. The repetition of simple words, phrases or songs support mindfulness, self-esteem, and self-regulation.

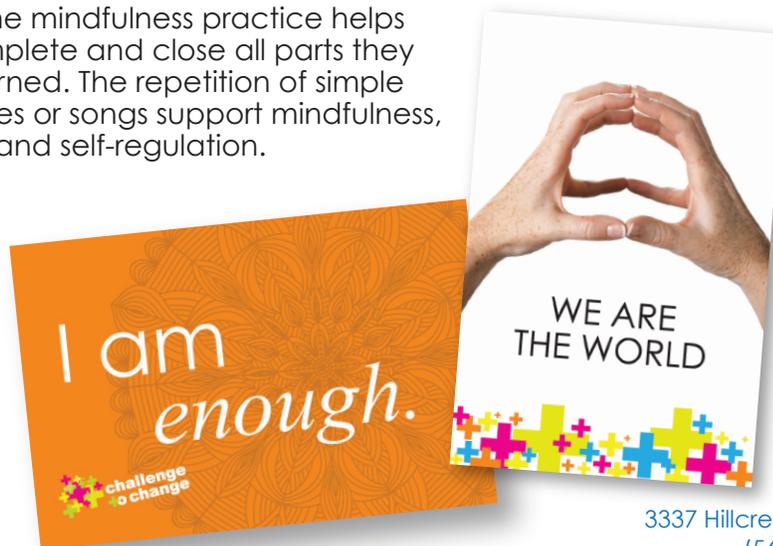
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