



**SELF-EMPOWERMENT  
CURRICULUM  
TRAINING GUIDE**



**SAFE SPACE**  
POPS MEMBERS ARE  
NURTURED, PROTECTED,  
AND RESPECTED



**ANONYMITY**  
PRIVACY IS RESPECTED.  
PARTICIPATION IS  
VOLUNTARY



**HEALING**  
FOSTERING SELF-CARE,  
EMPOWERMENT, AND  
RESILIENCE

# MINDFUL | LESSONS



## Welcome! POPS The Club Self-Empowerment

This program offers empowering mindfulness-based activities. Each lesson introduces different tools designed by trained mindfulness educators to help all participants and guides cope with stress, increase attention, recognize emotions, self-regulate, build resilience, make healthy choices and to find more joy, social competency, and connection in their daily lives.

### REMINDER

**All POPS the Club  
guidelines and  
rules apply to Self-  
Empowerment**

# What is Mindfulness?

Here are some working definitions...

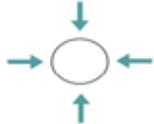
“Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

—Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of the Center for Mindfulness Medicine, Health Care and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School

Mindfulness is noticing what’s happening right now, with curiosity.

Shinzen Young explains that mindfulness is three skills working together:

**Concentration Power**



the ability to focus on what you want, when you want  
credit: Shinzen Young

**Sensory Clarity**



the ability to detect sensory events, and untangle all the elements of sensory events

**Equanimity**



the ability to let sensory experience come and go without push and pull

Mindfulness does not require any special talents, props, or personality type. It’s okay if it is hard to sit still at first. Let them know it’s normal and common for people just beginning a mindfulness practice. The most difficult thing for people to grasp is that mindfulness is both a **skill** and a **practice**. It needs to be repeated regularly for short periods of time, just like playing an instrument or a sport. Two to three minutes of practice initially is enough.

THE LESSONS IN THIS CURRICULUM ARE ARRANGED IN SPECIFIC ORDER FROM THE INTRODUCTION MOVING TOWARD MORE IN-DEPTH PRACTICE.

*How do I run a POPS Self-Empowerment discussion?*



Ask a broad question and then listen to the students’ answers.

Ask clarifying questions.

Listen with empathy and let students explore their own thoughts and ideas.

Encourage thoughtful and kind responses.

# Important Teaching Guidelines

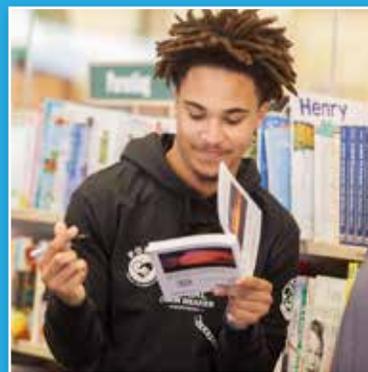
## Establish a Safe Space

- You know your school community best. Work with your school's POPS team to establish a culture that is **nurturing, empathetic and supportive**.
- Participation in the exercises is **always optional**. Students who do not wish to participate can sit quietly. It is important not to disturb the students who are participating. Simply witnessing a mindfulness event is a positive experience.
- The adults in the room should **support the students by participating in the exercises**.
- It is a good idea to have one of the volunteers **observe the students for anything that may be emotionally triggering** for a student. Pay attention to how your POPS club members are reacting to the material. If anybody seems to be struggling during an exercise, that student may want to step outside for a moment, speak with a counselor, or receive some extra support and empathy.

## Self-Care and Personal Connections

- Be **yourself** and **take care of yourself first**. These are “embodied” teachings, and as such, you are *demonstrating* mindfulness in your manner as much as you are teaching it in the lessons. Establishing your own mindfulness practice is a great way to fully embody the teaching. Most importantly, being your authentic self is the best gift you can give to POPS students. Feel free to use your own words when administering the lessons. They are guidelines for instruction and exploration.
- **Be mindful of your own emotions**, impulses and responses. Maintain an awareness of your tone, volume and general demeanor when communicating with students during a mindfulness exercise.
- There's no **singular** right way to be mindful— it's different for everybody. Please model respectful and empathetic behavior.

*How do I run a POPS Self-Empowerment discussion?*



Notice your own emotions, impulses and responses and attend to them.

Use current events to bring relevance to your discussion topics.

Reference song lyrics or recognizable elements from media to create connections.

# Important Teaching Guidelines

## Establish Relevance

- Teens like to know **why** they are doing and learning things. If they understand how they directly benefit from mindfulness you will get buy-in. Using relatable real-world scenarios as examples in the discussions is helpful. You are teaching these students how to respect and empower themselves and one another.
- There is a "Facts" section included in every lesson that you're encouraged to share with students. You will also find many fun videos, apps, books, on-line talks and valuable articles in the "Resources" section at the end of this training newsletter.

## Other Helpful Tips

- **ALL GUIDELINES**, values and rules covered in the POPS Training apply equally to POPS Self-Empowerment activities.
- **CHOOSE ONE CONSISTENT POPS VOLUNTEER**, if possible, to present the lessons. It helps build continuity and trust.
- **KEEP IT SECULAR**. Avoid using the word "meditation" as some people associate that word with a religious practice. Although mindfulness lessons are based on ancient, contemplative traditions, they have been adapted and secularized for educational settings and the value of mindfulness in overall health has been studied and proven in the scientific community. Please avoid prayer flags, Tibetan bells, singing bowls, or any props that may have religious connotations.
- **CELL PHONES ARE A DISTRACTION** in general and completely interrupt a mindfulness practice. Decide how best to deal with cell phones. They can be collected, or silenced and put away during the lessons. A vibrating cell phone will still interrupt the practice so achieving a space as quiet as possible is ideal. This is the real world so noises and interruptions happen. Just do your best.
- **BE PREPARED**. Read through each Self-Empowerment lesson fully before presenting it to the students. Knowing the material

*How do I run a POPS Self-Empowerment discussion?*



Feel free to use your own language and paraphrase lesson material so it is authentic to you.

Be willing to share your own experience when appropriate.

Use metaphor, myth and story to help engage students in discussion.

will help you teach it and also anticipate any questions or issues that may arise in your particular POPS group.

- **IF YOU HAVE FEEDBACK** or suggestions about the lessons, please let POPS know. This is an evolving curriculum, so student and volunteer feedback helps us create meaningful lessons.
- **RITUALS** for starting or ending club meetings are a great way to set the tone or close out a club session. A short mindfulness practice can be one way to begin or end a meeting.
- **CULTIVATE A PERSONAL MINDFULNESS PRACTICE.** Some local centers for in-person mindfulness practice include Against the Stream and Insight meditation centers. POPS can also offer a discount for on-line coursed through Mindful Schools. Please inquire with POPS HQ if you are interested. There are many resources for mindfulness included at the end of this guide.

## Our Lesson Contributors

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### **KATE SAVAGE**

is an artist and educator who has taught at universities, in at-risk programs and public and independent schools. Kate's own mindfulness practice led her to her work with Mindful Schools where she completed their year-long certification in 2017. Kate is also a POPS the Club volunteer and Advisory Board member.

### **SONIA FAYE**

POPS the Club's Deputy Director has a performing arts background in music and theater and has been a volunteer in Los Angeles for most of her adult life. As founder of The Art of Light, Sonia practices Lightwork, a form of energy therapy that assists people in releasing fear, trauma and grief, emotionally and physically.

MANY OF THE INDIVIDUAL LESSONS WERE ADAPTED FROM THE MINDFUL SCHOOLS ADOLESCENT CURRICULUM AND WE THANK THEM FOR THE INVALUABLE SOURCE MATERIAL.

**Thanks so much for your work with POPS!**

## Adult Resources

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Watch a mindfulness teacher instructing young teens through a lesson:  
<http://www.mindfulschools.org/video/release-2/>

Some peer-reviewed research papers on benefits of Mindfulness for youth:  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3195513/>  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10826-009-9282-x>  
<http://cjc-rcc.ucalgary.ca/cjc/index.php/rcc/article/view/1547>  
<http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00281/full>

Atlantic Article on Mindfulness in Education:  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/08/mindfulness-education-schools-meditation/402469/>

### Resources for your own personal practice:

- Mindful Schools, online courses (Contact POPS HQ for a discount!) <http://www.mindfulschools.org> and Mindful Schools' Resource page with lots of books, videos, etc: <http://www.mindfulschools.org/resources/explore-mindful-resources/>
- UCLA MARC (Mindful Awareness Research Ctr) offers training, online and in-person classes: <http://marc.ucla.edu/>
- UCSD Center for Mindfulness <https://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/Pages/default.aspx>

### Books and magazines:

Mindfulness for Beginners by Jon Kabat-Zinn,  
 Real Happiness, The Power of Meditation by Sharon Salzberg  
 Mindfulness for Teachers by Patricia A. Jennings  
 Mindful magazine <https://www.mindful.org/magazine/>

## Student Resources

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Video links to share with students (watch them yourself, first!):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up3MZuYkf-g&sns=fb>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzKryaN44ss>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_XLY\\_XXBQWE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XLY_XXBQWE)

Dr. Dan Siegel's hand model of the brain:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>

### Apps

Stop, Breathe and Think (this is a great one for beginners!) <https://www.stopbreathethink.com/>  
 Insight Timer <https://insighttimer.com/>  
 Headspace <https://www.headspace.com/>