



**SELF-EMPOWERMENT
CURRICULUM
TRAINING GUIDE**



SAFE SPACE
OFFERING NURTURING,
CHOICE, AND RESPECT



RELEVANCY
GAINING BUY-IN BY
SHARING THE "WHYS"



EMBODIMENT
TEACHING THROUGH
YOUR OWN PRACTICE
AND MODELING

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 POPS participants cope with stress, increase attention, recognize emotions, self-regulate, build resilience, to 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 being aware of what's happening right now, with curiosity and kindness.

“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 does not require any special talents, props, or personality type. The most important thing to understand is that mindfulness is both a **skill** and a **practice**. It gets easier when repeated regularly for short periods of time, just like playing an instrument or a sport. **Two to three minutes of practice initially is enough.** It's okay if it's difficult for students to sit still or to not be distracted - they'll still derive a benefit. Let them know this is very common for when just beginning mindfulness.

NOTE: ALL LESSONS ARE ARRANGED IN SPECIFIC ORDER FROM THE INTRODUCTION MOVING TOWARD MORE IN-DEPTH PRACTICES. THE UN-NUMBERED LESSONS CAN BE OFFERED AT ANY TIME AFTER.

Important Teaching Guidelines

Establish a Safe, Trauma-Informed Space

- Ask your POPS students what would help them to feel safe while exploring mindfulness exercises. Don't leave out your own needs! Make agreements to establish a culture that is **nurturing, mutually respectful and supportive**.
- Participation in the exercises is **always optional** and you should strive to offer **choices** within each practice, such as eyes open or closed, and body position. 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 practice is a positive experience.

How do I run a POPS Self-Empowerment discussion?



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

Be aware of your own vocal tone and affect. You're modeling mindfulness!

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

“Be an invitation.” -Treleaven

- **All** of the adults in the room should **support the students by fully participating in the exercises, thereby modeling the value of the exercises.** With one exception...
- It is a good idea to have one of the volunteers **observe the students for anything that may be emotionally triggering.** Pay attention to how students 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 from an adult.

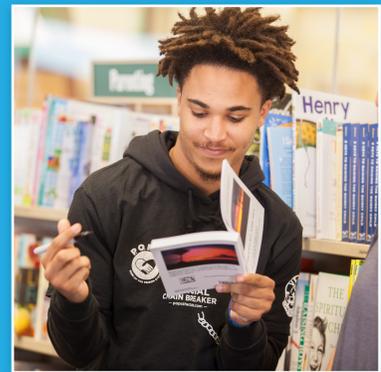
Self-Care and Personal Connections

- 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.
- **Be mindful of your own emotions,** impulses and responses. Maintain an awareness of your tone of voice, body language and general demeanor when communicating with students during a mindfulness exercise.
- There’s no **singular** right way to be mindful— it’s different for everyone, but please model respectful and empathetic behavior.

Establish Relevance

- Teens like to know **why** they are doing and learning things. If they understand **how they will directly benefit** from mindfulness skills, you will get buy-in. Some helpful ways to do this include sharing research on basic neuroscience and psychology, using simple, visual metaphors and relatable real-world scenarios as examples in the discussions.
- You can share that you’re teaching the POPS members a set of tools to empower themselves with more resilience, better self-regulation and richer intra (self) and inter-personal relations.
- 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.

How do I run a POPS Self-Empowerment discussion?



Reference song lyrics, sports, current events or teen-relevant issues (driving, etc.) to create connections to discussion topics.

Be willing to share your own experiences when appropriate.

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

Other Important Tips

- ALL GUIDELINES, values and rules covered in the POPS Training apply equally to POPS Self-Empowerment activities.
- KEEP IT SECULAR. **Avoid** using the word “**meditation**,” as some people associate the word with religious practice. These evidence-based mindfulness lessons are based on contemplative practices adapted and secularized for educational settings, and backed up by the latest scientific research. The value of mindfulness in overall health has been studied and proven in the scientific community. **Please avoid prayer flags, Tibetan bells, images, candles or any props that may have even remotely-religious connotations.**
- CELL PHONES ARE A DISTRACTION in general and especially to 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 will help you teach it in an authentic way. Try to anticipate any questions or issues that may arise in your particular POPS group.
- RITUALS for starting or ending POPS 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.
- CHOOSE ONE CONSISTENT POPS VOLUNTEER, if possible, to present the lessons. It helps to build continuity and trust.
- CULTIVATE A PERSONAL MINDFULNESS PRACTICE. Explore centers in your area for in-person mindfulness practice. In the past, POPS has secured volunteer discounts for on-line courses through Mindful Schools, and there are many resources for mindfulness included at the end of this guide. Please inquire with POPS HQ if you’d like to know more!
- IF YOU HAVE FEEDBACK or suggestions about the lessons, we’d love to hear from you! This is an evolving curriculum, so student and volunteer feedback helps us create meaningful lessons that serve you best. Please let POPS HQ know!

How do I run a POPS Self-Empowerment discussion?



Ask broad questions, such as “What was that like for you?”

Encourage thoughtful responses. Ask clarifying questions.

Listen with patience and empathy while allowing time for students explore their own thoughts and ideas.

Our Lesson Contributors

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is a Certified Mindfulness Teacher-Professional through the International Mindfulness Teachers Association. She's also an artist and educator who has taught at universities, in at-risk programs and public and independent schools for decades. Kate's own mindfulness practice led her to study with Mindful Schools, where she completed their year-long Teacher Training Certification in 2017, with a focus on teen curriculum. Additionally, Kate completed InsightLA's Facilitator Training program in 2018, where she currently teaches mindfulness to adults. As the founder of [Open Window Mindfulness](#), she teaches mindfulness in schools and businesses. She is a proud POPS the Club volunteer and Advisory Board member.

SONIA FAYE

POPS the Club's Director of Programs and Operations 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.

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Resources For Adults and Students

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/>

Calm meditation app www.calm.com

Ten Percent Happier <https://www.tenpercent.com/access>

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/>

Adult Resources

After seeing how stressed young teens can be, watch a Mindful Schools teacher instructing them in a lesson:
<http://www.mindfulschools.org/video/release-2/>

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

Trauma-Sensitive Checklist and Solutions:
<https://davidtreleaven.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TSM-Solutions-Checklist-v3.pdf>

Guidelines for Teaching Trauma-Informed Mindfulness to Teens:
<https://centerforadolescentstudies.com/trauma-informed-mindfulness-with-teenagers-9-guidelines/>

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>

Resources for your own personal practice:

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

Student-Centered Resources

Video links to share with students (watch them yourself, first!):

Mindfulness Without Borders video featuring Beastie Boys, Jay-Z, Kobe Bryant and others:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up3MZuYkf-g&sns=fb>

Three animated short films by Happify:

Why Mindfulness is a Superpower

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>

How Mindfulness Empowers Us - An ancient Story narrated by Sharon Salzberg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzKryaN44ss>

How to Defeat Negative Thinking:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XLY_XXBQWE

Dr. Dan Siegel's hand model of the brain:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>