

## 2021 Student Profile:

- **Name:** L.E. (pseudonym)
- **Age:** 14
- **Grade:** 9th
- **Gender:** Female
- **Background:** L.E. comes from a family where mental health support and therapy are not acknowledged or encouraged due to religious beliefs. Her family held traditional views that do not align with the concept of mental health care or therapy, which made seeking professional help outside of the home difficult.

## Presenting Issues:

L.E. presented with significant emotional challenges, including depression, suicidal thoughts, and a pattern of self-harm. These issues were affecting her overall well-being, as well as her academic performance and school attendance. L.E. had a history of missing school, sometimes as much as three days a week, and her academic performance was in decline, with grades that were consistently failing. She exhibited emotional numbness, frequently expressed feelings of hopelessness, and struggled with a lack of motivation.

## Intervention:

Given the family's reluctance to pursue traditional therapy, a tailored mindfulness-based intervention was introduced. The approach was designed to meet L.E.'s needs without conflicting with her family's values. The goal was to empower her to manage her mental health using mindfulness techniques that could be practiced independently and privately.

## Mindfulness Tools and Techniques:

1. **Meditation:** L.E. was introduced to mindfulness meditation, which included guided breathing exercises and focusing on the present moment. This practice was designed to help her manage overwhelming emotions and become more aware of her internal thoughts and feelings.
2. **Breathing Techniques:** Breathing exercises, particularly deep abdominal breathing, were introduced as a way for L.E. to regain control during moments of anxiety or emotional distress. This tool helped her activate her parasympathetic nervous system and calm herself during moments of heightened stress.
3. **Positive Affirmations:** L.E. was encouraged to use daily positive affirmations to counteract her negative self-talk. These affirmations were designed to build her self-esteem and challenge her belief that she was unworthy or incapable. She wrote down affirmations that resonated with her personal goals, such as "I am worthy of love" and "I am capable of making positive change in my life."
4. **Movement:** Gentle movement and yoga-based practices were incorporated into L.E.'s routine. This served both as a method of releasing tension stored in her body and as an alternative to the self-harming behaviors she had previously engaged in. Movement

allowed her to connect with her body in a positive way, improving her overall mental and physical health.

5. **1:1 Focused Sessions:** Weekly one-on-one sessions were designed to create a space for L.E. to reflect on her thoughts and feelings. These sessions provided a sense of safety and support while offering opportunities to explore and deepen her mindfulness practices. Discussions included goal-setting, overcoming challenges, and celebrating small wins.

### **Progress and Outcomes:**

1. **Improved School Attendance:** Over the course of the intervention, L.E. began to show dramatic improvement in her school attendance. Initially, she was missing an average of three days a week, which hindered her ability to keep up with her coursework. After consistently practicing mindfulness tools, L.E. reduced her absences to only three days per month. This improvement in attendance allowed her to regain momentum in her studies and feel more connected to her school community.
2. **Academic Improvement:** L.E.'s grades, which had previously been failing, began to improve as she developed better focus, emotional regulation, and a sense of self-worth. Through her mindfulness practices, she found herself more motivated to complete assignments, engage with her peers and teachers, and apply herself in class. Within a year, her grades increased significantly, rising to a consistent 75+ average.
3. **Reduction in Suicidal Thoughts:** One of the most profound changes was the reduction in L.E.'s suicidal thoughts. Initially, she experienced these thoughts on a daily basis, but as she incorporated mindfulness into her routine, she began to regain a sense of hope and purpose. By learning to center herself and regulate her emotions, L.E. found that her negative thought patterns gradually dissipated, and she developed a more resilient mindset. Over time, her suicidal thoughts were replaced with a renewed will to live and engage in life.
4. **End of Self-Harming Behaviors:** L.E. had previously engaged in self-harming behaviors as a way to cope with her emotional pain. As mindfulness practices became a regular part of her life, she found healthier ways to manage her stress, emotions, and physical tension. By redirecting her focus on breathing, movement, and journaling, she was able to replace self-harm with these constructive methods of self-care.
5. **Increased Sense of Well-Being:** Through daily practice of meditation, journaling, affirmations, and movement, L.E. began to report an overall improvement in her mental and emotional well-being. She started to feel a greater sense of balance, self-awareness, and control over her life. The combination of these mindfulness tools allowed her to foster a deeper connection to herself and her environment, creating a positive feedback loop of growth and healing.

### **Conclusion:**

L.E.'s journey exemplifies the power of mindfulness tools in fostering resilience and mental well-being, especially in situations where traditional therapy may not be an option due to cultural or familial beliefs. By integrating mindfulness techniques such as meditation, breathing

exercises, affirmations, movement, and one-on-one support, L.E. experienced profound changes in her mental health, academic performance, and overall quality of life.

Over the course of a year, L.E. transformed from a student struggling with depression, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm to one who was more grounded, optimistic, and engaged in her daily life. Her academic performance and attendance improved significantly, and she no longer experienced suicidal thoughts or engaged in self-harm. These positive changes not only improved her immediate mental health but also set her on a path toward long-term well-being and success.

This case highlights the effectiveness of mindfulness practices as a holistic and culturally sensitive alternative to traditional therapy, especially for students like L.E. who may not have access to or seek conventional mental health support. Mindfulness, when practiced consistently, can offer valuable tools for emotional regulation, self-compassion, and resilience, leading to lasting improvements in mental health.

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#### **Student Profile:**

- **Name:** C.B. (pseudonym)
- **Age:** 16
- **Grade:** 11th
- **Gender:** Male
- **Background:** C.B. was facing significant emotional stress due to his parents' divorce. As a result, he began experiencing frequent panic attacks, which severely impacted his ability to function both academically and socially at school. The anxiety from his family situation manifested in physical symptoms, including shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, and an inability to control his emotions, particularly during school hours.

#### **Presenting Issues:**

C.B.'s panic attacks became increasingly disruptive to his daily life. He would often experience them during class, leading to shortness of breath, heart palpitations, and an overwhelming sense of fear. These episodes left him feeling physically and emotionally drained, making it difficult for him to focus on his studies, attend school regularly, and engage with peers. The constant fear of another panic attack made it harder for him to participate in school activities or maintain friendships, ultimately affecting his grades.

At the time of our first meeting, C.B. was experiencing panic attacks almost daily, which made it challenging for him to stay engaged in his schoolwork or maintain his usual level of social interaction. His academic performance was slipping, and he began isolating himself from friends.

## **Intervention:**

Due to the impact of the panic attacks on C.B.'s mental health and school performance, we introduced a mindfulness-based approach to help him manage his anxiety and regain control over his emotional and physical responses. Our goal was to equip C.B. with tools that he could use both during and outside of the panic attack episodes to bring a sense of calm and clarity to his mind and body. The intervention was focused on creating a supportive space for him to learn mindfulness techniques that could help regulate his emotions, breath, and thoughts, especially during moments of heightened anxiety.

## **Mindfulness Tools and Techniques:**

1. **Breathing Techniques:** The first and most immediate tool we worked on was using deep, controlled breathing to manage his physical symptoms during panic attacks. C.B. was taught to use diaphragmatic breathing (deep belly breathing) to slow down his heart rate and bring more oxygen to his brain. We practiced a simple technique called the "4-7-8" breath, where C.B. would inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and exhale slowly for 8 seconds. The goal was to focus on his breath, allowing him to center himself and break the cycle of overwhelming physical sensations that were contributing to his anxiety.
2. **Meditation for Emotional Regulation:** To help C.B. address the emotional intensity that often accompanied his panic attacks, we introduced meditation as a tool for emotional regulation. C.B. began practicing mindfulness meditation, focusing on the sensations in his body and the thoughts in his mind without judgment. The meditation practice helped him become more aware of his emotional triggers and allowed him to create a mental space between his thoughts and reactions. Over time, C.B. learned how to observe his feelings of fear or anxiety without immediately reacting to them, which allowed him to regain a sense of control.
3. **Positive Self-Talk:** As part of the mindfulness intervention, we worked on reframing the negative thought patterns that would often escalate into full-blown panic attacks. C.B. learned to practice positive self-talk to counteract his automatic, fearful thoughts. He began using affirmations such as "I am safe in this moment" and "This feeling will pass" whenever he felt the onset of panic. These affirmations were meant to challenge the narrative in his mind that the panic attack was insurmountable, and instead, he learned to approach the situation with a more compassionate and calm mindset.
4. **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR):** To help C.B. release physical tension associated with anxiety, we incorporated progressive muscle relaxation exercises into our sessions. C.B. was taught to systematically tense and relax different muscle groups in his body to release built-up tension. This helped him become more attuned to how his body responds to stress and gave him another tool to use in moments of anxiety.
5. **Regular Mindfulness Practice:** We established a consistent mindfulness practice for C.B., which involved daily short sessions of meditation, breathing exercises, and journaling. This practice allowed C.B. to strengthen his ability to self-regulate his emotions outside of stressful situations, building resilience over time.

## Progress and Outcomes:

1. **Reduction in Panic Attacks:** Over the course of a year, C.B. experienced a significant reduction in the frequency and intensity of his panic attacks. Initially, he was having panic attacks almost every day, especially during stressful school situations. After consistently practicing the mindfulness techniques, he was able to reduce these episodes to only rare occurrences. The breathing techniques, meditation, and self-talk tools became ingrained in his response to anxiety, allowing him to stay grounded and regain control during moments of panic.
2. **Improved School Attendance:** One of the most significant changes C.B. experienced was an improvement in his school attendance. His anxiety was no longer preventing him from attending school regularly, and he began to feel more confident in his ability to manage his emotions in the classroom. He no longer feared the onset of panic attacks during class, which allowed him to stay engaged in his lessons and participate more actively in school activities.
3. **Academic Improvement:** With the reduction in panic attacks and the ability to stay in class, C.B.'s focus and academic performance improved. He was able to complete assignments on time and began to participate more in class discussions. As he gained confidence in his ability to manage his anxiety, his grades improved, and he regained a sense of accomplishment in his studies.
4. **Social Re-engagement:** Social isolation had been a major concern for C.B. at the beginning of our work together. He was avoiding interactions with peers out of fear that a panic attack might occur in front of them. As his panic attacks became less frequent, C.B. was able to begin reconnecting with his friends. He attended social events at school, such as lunch with peers and group activities, and his social life began to improve. C.B. reported feeling more confident in his interactions and less afraid of what might happen during social situations.
5. **Increased Sense of Control and Well-Being:** As mindfulness became a regular part of C.B.'s routine, he began to feel a greater sense of control over his life. The daily practice of mindfulness helped him develop a more balanced perspective on his emotions, especially in the context of his parents' divorce. C.B. reported feeling more at ease in his body and mind, and he experienced an overall improvement in his emotional well-being.

## Conclusion:

C.B.'s journey demonstrates the powerful impact mindfulness techniques can have on managing panic attacks and improving mental health. By incorporating breathing exercises, meditation, positive self-talk, and other mindfulness practices, C.B. was able to reduce the frequency of his panic attacks and regain control over his emotions and reactions. These tools not only helped him manage his anxiety in the moment but also contributed to his overall sense of well-being, academic success, and social re-engagement.

Through consistent mindfulness practice, C.B. was able to transform a situation that initially left him feeling powerless into one where he felt equipped to navigate his emotional challenges. This case highlights the value of mindfulness as a practical and effective strategy for students

experiencing anxiety, particularly in the context of stressful life events, such as family changes. By learning to manage his emotions with mindfulness, C.B. regained a sense of balance and control in his life.

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### **2019 - Student Profile:**

- **Name:** E.B. (pseudonym)
- **Age:** 17
- **Grade:** 12th
- **Gender:** Female
- **Background:** E.B. is a dedicated student athlete, involved in a highly competitive sport at the high school level. Over time, she developed bulimia as a response to pressures related to body image, athletic performance, and academic expectations. Despite excelling in her sport, E.B. struggled with negative self-perception and poor body image, which led her to engage in cycles of binge eating and purging. As the eating disorder became more ingrained, it began affecting her academic performance, social relationships, and overall mental health.

### **Presenting Issues:**

E.B. initially presented with a combination of low self-esteem, body dysmorphia, and bulimic behaviors. Her eating disorder manifested in frequent episodes of binge eating followed by purging. E.B. often felt a deep sense of shame around her body, believing that her worth as an athlete and as an individual was directly tied to her appearance. Despite her outward success in sports, she struggled with an internal conflict that left her feeling isolated and disconnected from herself.

As the disorder progressed, E.B.'s physical and emotional well-being were increasingly impacted. She felt trapped in a cycle of emotional eating, guilt, and self-punishment, and her mental health began to deteriorate. Although E.B. had not yet sought therapy, she expressed a desire to heal and was open to using mindfulness tools to support her recovery.

### **Intervention:**

Given the complexity of E.B.'s struggles with bulimia, our work together focused on integrating mindfulness tools in collaboration with traditional talk therapy. E.B. was seeing a therapist on a weekly basis, and our mindfulness work aimed to complement this therapy, providing her with practical tools to manage her emotions, challenge negative thoughts, and rebuild a healthy relationship with food and her body.

The goal of our intervention was to help E.B. develop emotional regulation skills, foster self-compassion, and reframe her negative self-talk, while supporting the therapeutic process. We worked together for a year, incorporating a variety of mindfulness practices, including

positive self-talk, affirmations, meditation, and body awareness exercises, which she integrated into her therapy work.

### **Mindfulness Tools and Techniques:**

1. **Positive Self-Talk:** A major challenge for E.B. was her tendency toward harsh self-criticism. She believed that her self-worth was tied to her body size and performance, leading to negative thoughts about herself. We worked on replacing these critical thoughts with positive self-talk. E.B. learned to challenge the thoughts that led to bingeing and purging and instead practiced self-acceptance with affirmations like, "I am worthy of love and respect, regardless of my body size," and "I can nourish my body with kindness." These new thought patterns began to replace the internal dialogue of shame, which was central to her bulimia.
2. **Affirmations and Self-Compassion:** E.B. created personalized affirmations that focused on self-compassion and self-worth. These included statements such as, "I am strong, and my body is capable," and "I honor my body by treating it with care." Each day, E.B. would practice repeating these affirmations, especially when she felt overwhelmed by negative thoughts or the urge to engage in disordered eating behaviors. These affirmations helped her reconnect with her intrinsic worth beyond her appearance and performance in sports.
3. **Mindfulness Meditation:** Meditation became an essential part of E.B.'s daily routine. We introduced mindfulness meditation as a tool for emotional regulation, teaching E.B. how to observe her thoughts and feelings without judgment. She began to practice both guided and unguided meditation, focusing on body awareness and breath. This practice helped E.B. stay present in the moment and cope with stress in healthier ways. Meditation also provided her with a deeper sense of peace and calm, allowing her to let go of the guilt and anxiety that had previously fueled her bulimia.
4. **Body Awareness and Mindful Eating:** To address E.B.'s relationship with food, we integrated mindfulness into her eating habits. E.B. began to practice mindful eating, focusing on the physical sensations of hunger and fullness, as well as savoring the taste and texture of each bite. By slowing down and being present with her meals, she learned to listen to her body's true needs rather than relying on external cues or emotional triggers. We also included body scan meditations to help E.B. reconnect with her body in a positive, non-judgmental way, gradually reducing the disconnection that had been at the core of her eating disorder.
5. **Integration with Talk Therapy:** Throughout the year, E.B. worked closely with her therapist to explore the emotional and psychological roots of her eating disorder. Together, we used the mindfulness tools to support the deeper therapeutic work. E.B. would often share her mindfulness practice experiences in therapy, where they were explored and expanded upon. For example, the mindfulness meditation sessions helped E.B. recognize patterns of negative thinking, which she could then work through in therapy. Mindfulness techniques also allowed her to process difficult emotions more effectively, which was a critical component of healing.

### **Progress and Outcomes:**

1. **Recovery from Bulimia:** Over the course of a year, E.B. made significant progress in her recovery from bulimia. She went from engaging in regular cycles of binge eating and purging to experiencing very rare occurrences of these behaviors. The mindfulness practices provided E.B. with the tools to manage her emotional triggers, reduce her impulsive behaviors, and develop a healthier relationship with food. By combining these practices with talk therapy, E.B. was able to address both the emotional and behavioral aspects of her eating disorder, ultimately leading to a full recovery.
2. **Improved Self-Perception:** E.B. experienced a major shift in her self-perception. Through the use of affirmations and positive self-talk, E.B. gradually replaced her negative beliefs about her body with a more compassionate and balanced view. She reported feeling less focused on her appearance and more connected to her intrinsic value as a person. E.B. also became more comfortable with her body, acknowledging its strength and ability, rather than judging it solely for its size.
3. **Enhanced Emotional Regulation:** As a result of the mindfulness tools, E.B. developed greater emotional resilience. She learned to observe and manage her emotions without resorting to disordered eating behaviors. When faced with stress or difficult emotions, E.B. used mindfulness techniques like deep breathing, meditation, and positive self-talk to stay grounded. This emotional regulation allowed her to navigate the challenges of high school, her athletic career, and personal relationships without falling back into the cycle of bulimia.
4. **Improved Athletic Performance:** E.B.'s relationship with her sport also improved. As her eating disorder resolved and her mental health improved, E.B. was able to approach her athletic training with renewed focus and energy. She reported feeling stronger, more present in her body, and less preoccupied with how her body appeared during performance. This shift in perspective allowed her to enjoy her athletic pursuits without the overwhelming pressure to conform to an idealized body type.
5. **Sustained Recovery and Maintenance:** After a year of working together, E.B. felt confident in her recovery. She continued to use mindfulness practices as part of her ongoing self-care routine, and her collaboration with her therapist was essential in maintaining her mental health. E.B. reported that she felt more empowered and capable of managing her thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in a healthy way. She had developed a sustainable, mindful approach to life that would continue to support her in her future endeavors.

## **Conclusion:**

E.B.'s case illustrates the profound impact that mindfulness tools can have when integrated into the treatment of eating disorders. Through consistent practice of positive self-talk, affirmations, meditation, and mindful eating, E.B. was able to break free from the cycle of bulimia and improve her self-esteem. By combining mindfulness with talk therapy, E.B. was able to address the emotional and behavioral components of her disorder in a holistic and sustainable way.

This case highlights the importance of a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to mental health, especially in the treatment of eating disorders. By incorporating mindfulness practices into her recovery, E.B. was able to develop a healthier relationship with her body, manage her



emotions more effectively, and fully recover from bulimia. The integration of mindfulness tools into therapy provided her with lifelong skills for emotional regulation, self-compassion, and resilience.

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## **2024 - Student Profile:**

- **Name:** G.V. (pseudonym)
- **Age:** 14
- **Grade:** 8th
- **Gender:** Non-binary
- **Background:** G.V. has struggled with depression, low self-confidence, and substance use, particularly marijuana and nicotine vaping. Their home environment has been challenging, as their mother is a drug addict, and G.V. has been exposed to substance abuse at an early age. As a coping mechanism for their emotional pain, G.V. began using marijuana and vaping, leading to a cycle of self-sabotage. They expressed feelings of hopelessness and lacked motivation to engage in school, social activities, or self-care.

G.V. was referred for 1:1 support, and after meeting with the school social worker, it was decided that incorporating mindfulness tools, alongside talk therapy, would help them manage their mental health challenges and build a more positive outlook.

## **Presenting Issues:**

G.V. displayed signs of depression, including low energy, poor academic performance, social withdrawal, and a lack of motivation. They reported feeling like they had no control over their emotions and expressed a sense of hopelessness. Their substance use, including recreational marijuana use and nicotine vaping, served as a way to cope with these negative emotions, but it also exacerbated their feelings of self-sabotage and low self-worth.

G.V. struggled with a severe lack of self-confidence, often feeling disconnected from others and doubting their abilities. They also expressed shame and guilt related to their substance use but felt trapped in the cycle of using substances as a form of emotional relief. In addition to their emotional and behavioral challenges, G.V. lacked a consistent self-care routine and often found it difficult to engage in activities that might support their well-being.

## **Intervention:**

The intervention focused on using mindfulness techniques to help G.V. develop healthier coping mechanisms, improve self-esteem, and reduce reliance on substances. A collaborative approach was taken, with G.V. working 1:1 with me and also receiving ongoing support from the school social worker. Mindfulness strategies such as journaling, positive self-talk and

affirmations, meditation, and breathing techniques were incorporated to address G.V.'s depression, self-sabotage, and substance use.

Our goal was to help G.V. develop a more positive self-image, cultivate emotional regulation skills, and find healthier outlets for their emotions. By integrating their interests, such as art, into the process, we aimed to provide G.V. with meaningful activities that could replace the reliance on marijuana use and nicotine vaping.

### **Mindfulness Tools and Techniques:**

1. **Journaling for Emotional Release:** We introduced journaling as a tool for emotional release and self-reflection. G.V. began writing daily entries, where they could express their feelings, frustrations, and experiences. Journaling became a safe space for G.V. to process their emotions without judgment. It helped them gain clarity on their mental state, identify triggers for their depressive thoughts, and explore alternative ways of coping. This practice also allowed G.V. to reflect on their progress and recognize the positive changes over time.
2. **Positive Self-Talk and Affirmations:** Given G.V.'s low self-esteem, one of the core areas of focus was changing their internal dialogue. We worked on developing positive self-talk to replace the negative, self-critical thoughts that fueled their depression and low confidence. Affirmations were used as a tool to help G.V. internalize positive beliefs about themselves. Examples of affirmations included: "I am worthy of love and respect," "I am capable of growth and change," and "I have unique talents that make me special." These affirmations were practiced daily, especially during moments when G.V. felt overwhelmed or inadequate.
3. **Meditation for Emotional Regulation:** Meditation was incorporated as a tool for emotional regulation, allowing G.V. to develop the ability to observe their thoughts and emotions without getting caught up in them. We practiced mindfulness meditation, focusing on the breath and body sensations. Meditation sessions helped G.V. calm their mind, reduce anxiety, and become more aware of their emotional triggers. Over time, G.V. began using meditation as a tool to manage stress and avoid turning to substances as a coping mechanism.
4. **Breathing Techniques to Manage Anxiety:** We introduced breathing exercises to help G.V. manage moments of anxiety, stress, or cravings. Techniques such as deep belly breathing and the 4-7-8 method were practiced regularly. These techniques helped G.V. create a sense of calm in moments of emotional overwhelm, reducing the urge to self-sabotage with substance use. Breathing exercises were also helpful in breaking the cycle of negative thinking and bringing G.V. back into the present moment.
5. **Finding a Healthy Outlet: Art and Painting:** A key turning point in G.V.'s recovery came when we explored their interest in art. G.V. discovered that they had a natural talent for painting, which became a powerful outlet for emotional expression. Painting allowed G.V. to channel their emotions into a productive and creative activity, helping them stay present and focused on something positive. We encouraged G.V. to use painting as a tool for self-care, providing them with a meaningful alternative to substance

use. As G.V. spent more time painting, their confidence grew, and they began to find joy in creating art.

### **Progress and Outcomes:**

1. **Reduction in Substance Use:** Over the course of the year, G.V. showed significant progress in reducing their substance use. Their nicotine vaping decreased as they started using breathing exercises and meditation to cope with stress. Marijuana use also decreased significantly, as G.V. found healthier ways to manage their emotions through mindfulness techniques and creative outlets like painting. By focusing on self-care and engaging in activities that aligned with their values, G.V. was able to distance themselves from substances and break the cycle of self-sabotage.
2. **Improved Mental Health and Decreased Depression:** G.V. reported feeling less depressed and more emotionally balanced by the end of the year. Through journaling, positive self-talk, and meditation, they developed a deeper understanding of their emotions and began to shift their mindset from one of self-doubt to self-compassion. As G.V. became more consistent with mindfulness practices, they also experienced fewer episodes of feeling overwhelmed or hopeless. They expressed feeling more confident in their ability to manage difficult emotions and handle challenges without resorting to negative behaviors.
3. **Increased Self-Confidence:** One of the most notable outcomes was G.V.'s improvement in self-confidence. As they continued to work on affirmations, positive self-talk, and emotional regulation, G.V. began to recognize their strengths and talents. Their confidence grew as they learned to challenge their negative self-beliefs and replace them with more affirming and realistic perspectives. G.V. also found new pride in their artistic ability, which further bolstered their self-esteem and sense of self-worth.
4. **A New Passion for Painting:** Painting became a transformative outlet for G.V., providing them with a healthy way to express their emotions and creativity. Over time, G.V. began to dedicate more time to painting, even participating in a local art show and gaining recognition for their work. This newfound passion helped them build a sense of purpose and direction, which reduced their reliance on substances and improved their overall well-being. The joy they found in painting also helped them feel a stronger sense of self and achievement.
5. **Development of a Self-Care Routine:** G.V. made significant progress in developing a consistent self-care routine. This routine included daily journaling, regular mindfulness meditation, breathing exercises, and time spent painting. G.V. learned to prioritize their emotional health and engage in self-care even during moments of low motivation. By establishing this routine, they were better able to cope with stress and maintain balance in their life, which helped them stay focused on their recovery.

### **Conclusion:**

G.V.'s case highlights the positive impact of mindfulness tools on managing depression, addiction, and low self-confidence. Through a combination of journaling, positive self-talk, meditation, breathing techniques, and creative expression, G.V. was able to break free from the

cycle of substance use and self-sabotage. Their progress over the course of a year was remarkable, as they quit vaping, reduced their marijuana use, and developed a more positive self-image.

Most importantly, G.V. discovered a passion for painting, which provided a meaningful and healthy outlet for their emotions. This newfound talent gave them a sense of purpose and contributed to their overall healing process. G.V.'s journey shows that with the right support and tools, students can develop healthier coping mechanisms, build self-confidence, and find positive outlets for emotional expression, leading to lasting improvements in mental health and well-being.

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#### **2024 - Student Profile:**

- **Name:** E.P. (pseudonym)
- **Age:** 13
- **Grade:** 7th
- **Gender:** Male
- **Background:** E.P. had been struggling with frequent anger outbursts and getting into physical fights at school. His behavior was disruptive, and he faced significant consequences in the form of detention and conflicts with peers. Upon further investigation, it became clear that his anger and aggression were largely rooted in his challenging home life. E.P.'s mother struggled with bipolar disorder, which sometimes led to unpredictable behaviors at home. Additionally, his father had difficulty allowing E.P. to express his emotions, contributing to the student's frustration and emotional volatility.

E.P.'s outbursts at school seemed to be an external manifestation of the emotional turmoil he was experiencing at home. His aggressive behavior in school settings, especially fights with classmates, was a cry for help, as he struggled with managing his emotions and often felt misunderstood. E.P. was referred for 1:1 support to help him regulate his anger and find healthier coping strategies.

#### **Presenting Issues:**

E.P. exhibited frequent physical altercations with peers, often escalating to fights. His teachers reported that he struggled with impulse control, particularly when faced with situations that triggered frustration. E.P. had a tendency to act out without considering the consequences, and his emotional outbursts were often followed by feelings of guilt and regret. He expressed a sense of not being understood by his parents, particularly by his father, and struggled to communicate his emotions in a healthy way.

When speaking about his home life, E.P. reported feeling overwhelmed by the emotional instability in the household due to his mother's bipolar disorder. He also expressed frustration

with his father's inability to engage with him emotionally, feeling like his emotions were dismissed. This lack of emotional support and understanding contributed to his difficulty in regulating anger and his heightened aggression in social situations.

### **Intervention:**

Our work together focused on helping E.P. identify his emotional triggers and teaching him effective ways to manage his anger and aggression. A combination of mindfulness techniques, physical outlets, and communication strategies was used to give E.P. the tools he needed to cope with his emotions in a more productive way. Additionally, we worked on developing healthier emotional expression and self-regulation strategies that would reduce the impulse to engage in violent behavior.

E.P. was also encouraged to engage in physical activities that could serve as outlets for his anger. Boxing and running were introduced as positive ways to release built-up frustration, while mindfulness practices such as breathing techniques, counting, visualization, and meditation were taught to help E.P. stay calm during moments of anger or stress.

### **Mindfulness Tools and Techniques:**

1. **Breathing Techniques:** One of the first mindfulness techniques we introduced to E.P. was deep breathing. We practiced deep belly breathing, where E.P. would inhale for four counts, hold for four counts, and exhale for four counts. This practice helped E.P. slow down and focus on his breath, which in turn helped him break the cycle of escalating anger. We used the breathing technique as a way for him to center himself before reacting impulsively, especially in situations where he felt triggered.
2. **Counting and Visualization Techniques:** We used counting as a technique to interrupt impulsive behaviors and give E.P. space to regain control of his emotions. When E.P. felt anger rising, he was encouraged to count slowly to 10 or 20, allowing him time to calm down before responding. In addition, we introduced visualization as a way to calm his mind during moments of frustration. E.P. was guided to imagine a peaceful place, such as a calm beach or a quiet forest, and to visualize himself in that environment, which helped him de-escalate intense emotions.
3. **Meditation for Emotional Regulation:** Meditation was introduced as a tool to help E.P. gain better control over his emotions. We practiced short, guided meditations, focusing on body awareness and relaxation. E.P. was taught to observe his thoughts and feelings without judgment, which gave him a sense of emotional distance from his anger. Over time, E.P. was able to meditate on his own, using it as a tool to center himself when he was feeling overwhelmed.
4. **Boxing as a Healthy Outlet:** A key breakthrough in E.P.'s development came when we discovered his interest in boxing. E.P. enjoyed the physicality of boxing, and it provided him with an outlet to release pent-up frustration and anger in a controlled environment. Boxing allowed him to channel his aggression into something productive and focused. It also helped E.P. develop discipline and a sense of accomplishment, which in turn

contributed to improved self-esteem. The physicality of boxing provided a safe way for E.P. to express his anger, while also promoting a sense of empowerment.

5. **Running as an Outlet for Stress:** Running was introduced as an additional outlet for E.P. to manage stress and frustration. Running allowed him to burn off excess energy and helped regulate his mood. We encouraged E.P. to incorporate running into his routine, whether through short jogs after school or as part of his overall self-care strategy. The combination of physical movement and mindfulness techniques provided a holistic approach to managing his anger and aggression.

### **Progress and Outcomes:**

1. **Reduction in Fights and Aggressive Behavior:** Over the course of the year, E.P. made significant progress in reducing his aggressive behavior. The frequency of fights decreased dramatically. Instead of engaging in physical confrontations, E.P. learned to use breathing techniques and visualization to manage his emotions when he felt triggered. He reported that he felt more in control of his reactions and less impulsive. His teachers and peers also noticed a positive shift in his behavior, with fewer conflicts and a greater willingness to engage in positive interactions with classmates.
2. **Improved Emotional Regulation:** E.P. became more attuned to his emotional state and was better able to identify when he was feeling frustrated or angry. Through meditation and mindfulness practices, E.P. developed a heightened awareness of his emotions, which allowed him to address them before they escalated. He learned that anger didn't have to lead to a physical reaction, and he began practicing emotional regulation techniques regularly. As a result, he became more confident in his ability to manage difficult emotions in a healthier way.
3. **Engagement in Healthy Outlets:** Boxing and running became regular outlets for E.P., helping him to channel his aggression and stress in productive ways. These activities provided structure and focus in his life, giving him an alternative to getting into fights or turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms. E.P. reported feeling more satisfied and proud of himself when he completed boxing sessions or went for runs, which also helped to build his self-confidence.
4. **Improved Relationships at School:** As a result of his improved behavior and emotional regulation, E.P. began to develop more positive relationships with his peers and teachers. He was no longer seen as the student who was always getting into trouble, and he started participating more actively in class discussions. E.P. also began to build stronger friendships, as he became more approachable and less reactive to stressful situations.
5. **Improved Self-Esteem:** As E.P. practiced mindfulness and developed healthier coping mechanisms, his self-esteem improved. He began to see himself as capable of managing his emotions and making better choices. The positive reinforcement from his success in boxing, as well as the reduction in conflict at school, contributed to a sense of accomplishment and pride. E.P. started to feel more empowered and more in control of his life.

### **Conclusion:**

E.P.'s case demonstrates how mindfulness techniques, combined with physical outlets like boxing and running, can help a student manage anger and aggression while fostering emotional regulation. Through consistent practice of breathing exercises, counting, visualization, meditation, and engaging in healthy physical activities, E.P. was able to significantly reduce his aggressive behavior and improve his emotional well-being.

The integration of mindfulness practices helped E.P. become more self-aware and proactive in managing his emotions. His ability to recognize and control his anger led to fewer fights, better relationships at school, and improved self-esteem. By providing E.P. with the tools to manage his emotions in a healthy way, he was able to break the cycle of aggression and move toward a more positive and balanced approach to life. This case underscores the importance of using both mental health strategies and physical outlets to address emotional regulation and improve overall well-being.

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#### **2019-2020 Student Profile:**

- **Name:** S.L. (pseudonym)
- **Age:** 16
- **Grade:** 10th
- **Gender:** Female
- **Background:** S.L. is a 10th-grade student who was struggling with a heavy load of family responsibilities. As the oldest child, she took on significant roles at home, including cooking, cleaning, and caring for her younger siblings. This burden became especially stressful due to ongoing conflicts between her parents. The home environment was marked by tension and frequent arguments, which contributed to S.L.'s emotional distress.

S.L. began to miss a significant amount of school, and her grades began to slip as a result of the added stress and emotional strain she was under. She expressed feelings of being overwhelmed by the responsibilities at home and the constant pressure to manage both family obligations and academic expectations. With her emotional well-being at risk, S.L. was referred for 1:1 support to help her manage her stress and develop healthier coping strategies.

#### **Presenting Issues:**

- **Emotional Stress:** S.L. experienced high levels of stress and anxiety due to her parents' fighting and the weight of her family responsibilities.
- **School Attendance:** Due to the pressures at home, S.L. was missing school frequently, which led to declining academic performance.
- **Low Self-Care:** S.L. had little time for self-care, and when she did attempt self-care, she often felt guilty or unable to set aside time for herself.

- **Feelings of Overwhelm:** She expressed feeling like she had to do everything at home, which left her emotionally drained and unable to focus on her schoolwork.

### **Intervention:**

The intervention focused on helping S.L. build emotional resilience, set boundaries with her family, prioritize self-care, and establish a regular mindfulness practice. We used a combination of practical tools, including mindfulness meditation, boundary-setting exercises, and emotional regulation strategies. The goal was to reduce S.L.'s stress, improve her attendance, and help her regain a sense of balance between her family responsibilities and her personal well-being.

### **Mindfulness Tools and Techniques:**

1. **Setting Healthy Boundaries with Family:** A key part of our work together was teaching S.L. how to set healthy boundaries with her family. She often felt responsible for everything at home and struggled to say "no" to additional tasks. We discussed the importance of asserting her needs and learning how to communicate her boundaries without feeling guilty. We practiced role-playing conversations with her family to build confidence in expressing her feelings and needs. S.L. was encouraged to delegate tasks at home when possible and to ask for help from her parents and siblings, so she wasn't carrying the entire burden herself.
2. **Self-Care Practices:** We worked on creating a self-care routine for S.L. that she could realistically incorporate into her life. This involved identifying small, manageable ways she could take care of herself, such as setting aside time for hobbies, taking short breaks, or engaging in relaxation techniques. We also discussed the importance of not feeling guilty for taking time for herself and how self-care would help her manage stress and be more present for her family and schoolwork.
3. **Mindfulness Meditation:** Meditation was introduced as a tool to help S.L. manage her anxiety and stress. We started with short guided meditations that focused on breath awareness and body relaxation. S.L. practiced these sessions during our meetings and was encouraged to continue practicing at home. The goal was to help S.L. feel more grounded and able to manage her emotions when faced with stressful situations. Over time, she found that meditation helped her feel calmer and better equipped to handle the emotional challenges she faced at home and school.
4. **Breathing Exercises:** To help S.L. deal with moments of anxiety or overwhelm, we practiced deep breathing techniques together. S.L. learned to use the "4-7-8" breathing technique (inhale for 4 counts, hold for 7, exhale for 8) when she was feeling stressed. This technique helped her reset and regain control over her emotions when she was feeling overwhelmed by her responsibilities.
5. **Emotional Regulation:** We worked on emotional regulation strategies to help S.L. process her feelings of anger, frustration, and sadness. We discussed how to identify emotions in the moment and how to respond to those emotions in a way that was constructive rather than reactive. S.L. practiced journaling to express her feelings, which allowed her to release emotional tension in a healthy way.



## **Progress and Outcomes:**

1. **Improved School Attendance:** After several months of working together, S.L. started to show noticeable improvements in her school attendance. She reported feeling less overwhelmed by the pressures at home, which allowed her to focus more on her studies. As her emotional well-being improved, she was able to manage her responsibilities at home and still prioritize her education. Her attendance improved significantly, and she started attending school regularly, which had a positive impact on her academic performance.
2. **Increased Academic Performance:** As S.L. began to implement mindfulness practices and set boundaries at home, her focus and energy improved, leading to a rise in her grades. She felt less distracted by stress and more capable of managing her schoolwork. By the end of the year, S.L. had significantly improved her grades, returning to her previous academic standing and exceeding expectations in some subjects.
3. **Development of Self-Care Routine:** S.L. became more consistent in practicing self-care, regularly setting aside time for activities that rejuvenated her, such as reading, listening to music, and journaling. She no longer felt guilty about taking time for herself and recognized that her well-being was critical to managing her responsibilities and maintaining her mental health.
4. **Taking Initiative with Family Therapy:** One of the most remarkable outcomes of our work together was S.L.'s proactive approach to addressing her family's issues. She took it upon herself to seek out a therapist for her parents, demonstrating a level of maturity and responsibility beyond her years. This initiative helped reduce some of the emotional tension at home and allowed her to feel more supported as her family began addressing their issues with professional guidance.
5. **Reduction in Family Stress:** As S.L. began to set clearer boundaries and practice emotional regulation, she noticed a decrease in the overall stress in her home environment. She felt more able to communicate her needs and manage her role in the family without feeling as overwhelmed. While her parents' challenges were still present, S.L. was better equipped to handle the situation with a sense of calm and resilience.
6. **Increased Emotional Resilience:** Through mindfulness and emotional regulation practices, S.L. developed a greater sense of emotional resilience. She became more aware of her emotions and learned how to respond to them in a healthy way. She began to feel more in control of her life, able to navigate the challenges at home and school without letting them take a toll on her mental health.

## **Conclusion:**

S.L.'s case demonstrates the power of mindfulness and self-care in managing emotional stress, improving attendance, and enhancing academic performance. By learning to set boundaries, prioritize self-care, and use mindfulness tools like meditation and breathing exercises, S.L. was able to significantly reduce the impact of her family's struggles on her emotional well-being and school life.

Her increased attendance and improved grades were clear indicators of the positive changes she made over the year. Most notably, S.L. took the initiative to seek out therapy for her parents, showing her growing emotional maturity and commitment to improving her family dynamic. Through our work together, S.L. learned valuable life skills that not only helped her cope with the challenges of being the oldest child in a stressful home environment but also gave her the tools to thrive academically and personally.

This case highlights the importance of mindfulness practices in helping students manage stress, set boundaries, and develop emotional resilience, ultimately leading to improved well-being and success in school.