

Mindfulness Matters

Kids Activities

Below are 3 simple and fun activities, incorporating imaginative play and inclusive dialogue to facilitate exploring and sharing mindfulness ideas and practices. Through the play of these activities, children will be able to

- Discover the essence of mindfulness in their daily lives through kinaesthetic play
- Explore and discuss the importance and use of mindfulness observation and practices
- Observe and practice mindfulness techniques in everyday scenarios and situations

Mindfulness is a foundation life-skill that children can learn to empower themselves throughout their entire lives. Like with all skills, practicing little by little everyday will strengthen their focus, maintain their life balance, well-being, peace and happiness. These activities have been created to help explain the purpose and importance of mindfulness in our lives. They demonstrate practices that children can easily remember and use anytime, especially during challenging or stressful situations. Through the application of mindfulness in their daily lives, children can

- Empower themselves to consciously choose what they would like to focus their attention and energy on
- Enable themselves to feel grounded, safe, calm and centred when life situations can become stressful or chaotic around them
- Inspire themselves to be aware of their own well-being and inner-outer balance during their lives
- Strengthen their connection to their bodies and understanding its needs, working harmoniously together to achieve well-being, rather than in opposition
- Enable themselves to effectively rest their minds and release stress
- Expand their awareness beyond just their own ideas, needs or positions, and consider other perspectives, openly and without judgement
- To consider beyond self-interests, and towards the collective community
- And many more benefits...

Adults may find it fun and helpful too!

Enjoy!

Love,

Kim xx

Activity 1: Jar of Rocks

Concept: If our mind (illustrated using the Jar container) is full of thoughts (rocks), new and exciting ideas and understanding (gemstones) cannot come in or fit into the Jar, because there is no more space. Our minds can get very full of thoughts!

Activity:

- Ask the children to help you fill the jar with an assortment of rocks (from the garden or local hardware store)
- Once the Jar has been filled to the brim, bring out some lovely sparkly gemstones (can be marbles or the like, just make them different and interesting')
- Ask them to choose a few and add them into the Jar. Obviously, they won't be able to as the Jar will be full

Suggested dialogue

- *"Oh no! Well we would like to add these treasure gemstones into our Jar won't we! Hmm, but it looks like the jar is very full. What can we do?"* Allow children to brainstorm and contribute some problem-solving answers
- Suggest: *"Yes, we will need to take some of the old stones out, to fit the new gemstones!"* Help them connect that these rocks are thoughts that we no longer need. What are some real-life examples? Suggest past frustrations/hurts/anger or future worries that do not serve us but take up valuable space in our minds
- Suggest: *"How can we make sure we always have some space for new gemstones that may come along?"* Make sure our Jar always has some space. That we don't get too full in our minds.

Practice: We learn how to remove thoughts that aren't serving us (rocks) and make space for the precious gemstones (positive thoughts, creative ideas, observation, contemplation and understanding). We can also make sure there is always space in our Jar for fun new things to come along by **choosing** what stones we would like to stay in our Jar. We can do this by:

- Mindfulness meditation (there are some fabulous apps and YouTube videos)
- Observing our thoughts and being aware of them. We are not our thoughts, so we can choose to focus on them or acknowledge and simply let them pass-by (they don't stay in our Jar). We do not need to continue focusing on them. This practice helps us to keep our mind (the jar) clear and spacious.

Take-away: Children can take away a gemstone as a special reminder that fun new and exciting ideas can come along anytime, so make sure there is space in our minds.



Activity 2: The Focus-Torch

Concept: The Focus-Torch is a representation of our mind's focus. We can choose what we would like to focus our attention on – the happy-side or the sad-side*.

Activity: On one side, for example on the Right, we have an objects/images of something that evokes fear/sadness/anger/frustration etc. On the other side, the Left, we have an objects/images that evokes happiness/joy/peace/love/fun/laughter (i.e. picture of a puppy, favourite comforters, family picture).

- We shine the Focus-Torch onto the 'sad-side' and ask children how it makes them feel. What are some real like examples of sad-thoughts?
- We shine the Focus-Torch onto the 'happy-side' and ask children how it makes them feel. What are some real like examples of happy-thoughts?
- Ask which they prefer – assuming they say they prefer the happy-side

Suggested dialogue

- Shine light on sad-side again. Suggest asking them,
"Is it easy to try and feel Happy when the Focus-Torch is on the sad-side? No, it's pretty hard to make yourself to be or feel happy when your Focus-Torch is on sad things isn't it?"

Talk about momentum: The longer we Focus the Torch on sad or happy things, the stronger or more momentum it gets. Like a car, the faster and further it goes, the more time and effort is required it is to stop the car, turn it around and go in the other direction.

- Suggest: *"Rather than force happy feelings when our Focus-Torch is on sad things, what can we do?"*
- After exploring the children's ideas, discuss the following 2 options,
 - *"We can turn OFF the Focus-Torch" OR*
 - *"Shine the Focus-Torch to the Happy side"*

- ***Important discussion:**
 - We are not ignoring the Sad-side emotions (suppressing, ignoring or distracting ourselves from our emotions). Neither are we suggesting that sad-emotions is a "bad-thing". Simply, we usually prefer to Be in the happy-side, rather than the sad-side. We acknowledge the Sad-side is there and it is OK to feel sad. When we feel better, we may choose to re-focus and explore and understand why certain things made us feel sad.
 - It's OK and good to feel emotions, but we also have **control** of when and how much we feel of it (this is empowering). We can have control so that it doesn't need to overwhelm or control us because when that happens, it doesn't feel very nice, we can do things that we wouldn't normally do and it can make us feel sick/un-well
 - We can **choose**. We are in control of our Focus-Torch, not the other way around.

Practice: Mindfulness meditation to turn off the Focus Torch by quietening the mind or redirecting the focus elsewhere or internally. Mindfulness helps us consciously choose what we would like to focus our attention and energy towards. On things that make us feel happy, joy, calm, safe, fun and love.

Take-away: Children can take away a small torch as a special reminder that they can are in control of their Focus-Torch.



Activity 3: Rubik's cube

Concept: There are many angles or positions to look at the one object/idea/concept. Just because your view is "right", it doesn't mean other differing views or perspectives are "wrong".

Activity:

- Use a complete or un-jumbled Rubik's cube so each side has one single colour. If it helps with the activity, cover the coloured sides you aren't using
- Ask the children to sit opposite one another so each see a side of the cube and therefore different colour (or if just one child, you sit opposite the child)

Suggested dialogue

- *"What colour is the cube from what you can see, from your side?"* Allow children to respond with their respective viewpoint and acknowledge that each person has shared a different colour
- Suggest: *"That's interesting! Hmm, what colour IS the cube then? Who is right?"* Help them connect that they are ALL right!
- Suggest: *"So there can be more than 1 right answer - Isn't that wonderful! It is one Cube, but we all had different answers to the same question. Just because we had different answers, it doesn't mean that any answer is wrong. We can all be Right because we can all see a different side of the Cube!"* Explore discussion on how this activity applies to real life examples i.e. An incident in the playground, sharing toys, disagreements etc

Practice: We learn to understand that everyone has a perspective, a viewpoint, that sometimes is the same as ours, and sometimes may be very different which can make us feel frustrated or angry. Understanding that different viewpoints does not make one person more right, or another person wrong. It is simply that, a different viewpoint. We can practice to be more open and accepting of other peoples' viewpoints because

1. We will not feel frustrated and/or angry when other people have different viewpoints
2. We can learn a lot from other peoples' viewpoints for example: we can see the whole or bigger picture that we could not see from our side alone. Using the Rubik's cube again, we can see that there were many colours of the cube we couldn't see from our angle, but together, we could see many angles and colours and sides
3. We can achieve bigger and better things when we work with each other and acknowledge other viewpoints, rather than dismissing them as wrong

Take-away: Children can take away a Rubik's as a special reminder there are many angles of perception, understanding and Truths.

