 Mindfulness and mood regulation

Duration: 30 minutes

Purpose of the task

Mindfulness is a strategy for focusing attention on the present and has been shown through research to aid in managing anxiety and depression, improving sleep and providing people with strategies for getting through tough times and achieving positive outcomes.

Course outcomes

7.3 Apply skills to take personal responsibility for their actions to protect and enhance the independence, health, safety and wellbeing of others.

What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

* Develop their understanding of mental fitness.
* Participate in a mindfulness session.

Required resources and materials for preparation

Student activities are set around:

* small group activities
* individual activities
* online
* offline
* outside/inside classroom

Equipment required:

* What is mindfulness? student worksheet
* download Smiling Mind program (12-15 years or 16-22 years program depending on the age group of student cohort)
* laptop/Tablet/Phone and speakers to play the Mindfulness program
* headphones for each student to use the BiteBack website
* [Bite Back website](https://www.biteback.org.au/Learn/Mindfulness)

Suggested content

| Learning context | Content |
| --- | --- |
| Mental health and wellbeing  Focus: Developing self-efficacy and mental fitness | Positive wellbeing   * engagement and mindfulness |
| Independence  Focus: Building self-concepts and independence | Self-management   * using mind-sets for motivation and achievement, e.g. growth mind-set * responsibility for self and actions |

Teaching notes

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audio visual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the Life Ready program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Learning experiences

Mental fitness

* Students are provided with post it notes. Students take two minutes to record their answers on the post it notes to the following questions:
  + what is mental fitness?
  + list ideas on how to stay mentally fit.
* Students place their ideas on mental fitness on a designated space, for example a wall, board, graffiti sheet or online space using a virtual post it note app. As a group, decide upon a definition of mental fitness.

What is mindfulness?

* Using the [Bite Back website](https://www.biteback.org.au/Learn/Mindfulness), students explore Mindfulness, and complete the What is mindfulness? student worksheet.
* Students complete Mindfulness 101 from the [Smiling Mind](https://www.smilingmind.com.au/) program as a whole group

Smiling Mind is a unique web and app-based program developed by a team of psychologists with expertise in youth and adolescent therapy, Mindfulness Meditation and web-based wellness programs. Smiling Mind is a free tool that will assist in improving the lives of young Australians, and is available online or as a smartphone app — see more at: [Smiling Mind](https://www.smilingmind.com.au/about-us)

* As a whole group, discuss:
  + what is mindfulness?
  + where might students find it useful to practice mindfulness? (e.g. during exams/assessments, to regulate mood, when feeling overwhelmed or down)

Note: This program can be introduced in multiple ways at school including daily mindfulness. Teachers can also encourage students to load the free app on to their phone/tablet for personal use outside of Life Ready. During this activity it is important for the teacher to remind students of where to go for help.

Student worksheet - What is mindfulness?

Explore the [Bite Back website](https://www.biteback.org.au/Learn/Mindfulness) to find out more about Mindfulness. Answer the questions below.

What is Mindfulness?

List three benefits of Mindfulness:

List two activities suggested by BiteBack that can build your mindfulness:

Choose one of the two activities to complete and report back on to your class on:

Name of the activity:

Write a brief summary:

What is the activity’s:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Would you recommend the activity to a friend? Why/Why not? Rate the activity out of 5 and write a short review (2-3 sentences).