



## 2. HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT IT?

### Introduction

This workshop should ideally be held between workshops 3 and 4 in the *student* component.

### Specific workshop objectives

At the end of the workshop, the parents will be able to:

- Understand mindfulness and its benefits;
- Help their child to manage their emotions;
- Understand their role as a role model;
- Identify their child's type of intolerance.

### How the workshop works

Welcome the parents and present the workshop objectives and how it will work.

#### A. Introduction to mindfulness (20 min.)

1. In preparation for the workshop, first read the complementary sheet on mindfulness at the end of this workshop.
2. Using the following link, play this video for parents to help them better understand mindfulness (André, 2018): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_NC86pJWA7k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_NC86pJWA7k) (time: 2 min. 26 sec.). Ask the parents what they learned from the video. Ask them if they have any questions about mindfulness, if they've ever heard of it, and if they have any concerns. Complete the explanations about mindfulness using the complementary sheet.
3. Then suggest that the parents try a mindfulness exercise based on breathing. Ask them to sit comfortably and close their eyes if they want to. Remind them that if they feel uncomfortable during the breathing exercise, they can always open their eyes and shift their focus to another part of their body.
4. Play this recording: <https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/wp->

[content/uploads/2022/08/Medit\\_Mindful-Breathing.mp3](#). (Centre RBC d'expertise universitaire en santé mentale, n.d.).

5. At the end, ask parents how they felt during the exercise and how they feel now. Tell them they can find the recording at the address in their *Handy parent guide*.
6. Remind them that their child is also doing mindfulness exercises during the workshops. To increase the benefits of mindfulness, their child is encouraged to practise the exercises at home. As parents, they can encourage them to practise and even do some of the exercises with them, if they want. The best results are seen with time and practice.
7. Tell them about the different mindfulness apps that are available: *Headspace* or *Petit Bambou*. Take some time to demonstrate them and install them on the parents' phones. Let them know about the many meditation videos on YouTube; they and their child can choose the ones they like best. Also give them this link to four audio recordings and a complete mindfulness guide called *Guide de présence à soi* (Morin, Berrigan and Bélisle, 2018) : <https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/je-suis-un-parent/pleine-conscience/>

## B. Managing emotions (10 min.)

1. Explain to the parents that the students have explored the theme of emotions. Review the principles of mindfulness. As mentioned at the beginning of the workshop, mindfulness is a helpful attitude to develop in order to observe and notice what's happening inside yourself, without any judgment. In difficult situations, we sometime judge, repress or deny painful emotions... just because they're painful.
2. To explain the role of emotions, play this video *Et tout le monde s'en fout* (2017b) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_DakEvdZWLk&vI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DakEvdZWLk&vI) (3 min. 42 sec.). Ask the parents what they learned from the video.
3. Ask the parents to turn to *My emotions, needs and strategies* (attached) in their *Handy parent guide* (Ciarrochi *et al.*, 2014; Conover and Daiute, 2017; Gouvernement du Québec, 2019; Rottenberg and Gross, 2007; Silk *et al.*, 2003; The Centre for Nonviolent Communication, n.d.). Explain that their child received, or will soon receive, the same sheets to help them name their emotions, as well as the needs hiding behind their emotions. These sheets also contain strategies for what to do when they experience difficult emotions.
4. Mention that one of the important parts of being a parent is helping your child learn to manage their emotions. But you also need to set a good example by managing your own emotions. Being a parent—especially when your child is having a hard time—is a tough job that's fraught with emotion. And these emotions influence how you interact with your child. Illustrate what you're saying with this metaphor: On a plane, they say you should always put your oxygen mask on first, before putting your child's on. The same applies here. You need to check yourself and your feelings before dealing with your child—or any other person.

## C. Act like a role model (10 min.)

1. Continue with the role model theme. Show the video called *Nos enfants, de vraies petites éponges*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6Cp0-HDuTc>.



2. Lead a discussion about the video. Use the following questions as a guide:

- What did you learn from this video?
- Does any of this relate to you? If so, how?

#### D. Discussion on your experience (30 min.)

1. Briefly present the content of the student workshops so far, and the challenges and successes experienced by the group. Use this opportunity to mention the things the students need to test out.
2. Ask them about their experiences at home with their child. Did they discuss the child's comfort zone together? Have they noticed any baby steps their child has taken to step outside of their comfort zone? Did they use questions to help their child challenge some unhelpful thoughts?

#### E. Intolerances (15 min.)

1. Continue on the theme of intolerances. Share the video called *Les intolerances... des lunettes qui déforment la réalité!* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a89XHTXwu70>
2. Lead a discussion about the video. Use the following questions as a guide:
  - What did you learn from this video?
  - Do you recognize your child in any of the intolerances mentioned?

#### F. Conclusion and invitation (5 min.)

1. Wrap up the workshop by asking the parents to observe their emotions about their child's anxiety, without judging themselves, and to make connections with the way they respond to their child. Ask them to identify the needs behind their emotions and to try a new strategy for managing them.



## Complementary sheet

### What is mindfulness and how does it work?

Mindfulness is paying close attention to your sensations, thoughts, or emotions, without labelling them as good or bad, wanted or unwanted. In other words, we don't judge them, we simply observe them. Mindfulness allows us to get in touch with what's going on inside us and around us; over time, it helps us to be less critical. In general, we tend to regularly criticize and judge our environment, our family and friends, and ourselves (Baer, 2003; Broderick and Metz, 2011).

Mindfulness can be practised formally, using meditations such as body scanning, or informally, through activities such as mindful walking. There are different types of informal meditation or activities that allow you to tap into the different spheres of mindfulness (senses, emotions, perceptions, presence, etc.) (Kaiser Greenland, 2016).

Mindfulness, whether practised formally or informally, is a way to be in the present moment, to better understand what's going on inside you, and to find an anchor point, which is often your breathing. It can be a powerful tool for regulating stress (Holzel *et al.*, 2011). The important thing about mindfulness is to choose methods that you enjoy, that you're comfortable with, and that feel good.

During the workshops, the students will have the opportunity to experiment with the many forms of mindfulness, after which they can choose the ones best suited to their personal journey.

Mindfulness can have the following benefits (Keng *et al.*, 2011):

- Improve communication;
- Develop and master the senses;
- Manage stress and emotions;
- Calm the mind to become more open to learning;
- Maintain quality relationships with oneself, others, and the environment.

### Are there any precautions when it comes to mindfulness?

As with any activity, some people may love it and others may hate it. Some students may embrace it quickly and others, much later in life or never. Research shows that mindfulness can have beneficial effects in most people (Felver *et al.*, 2016; Zenner *et al.*, 2014). Conversely, other people may find it unpleasant, uncomfortable, painful, even harmful (Dobkin *et al.*, 2012). There can be risks associated with the intensity of the activity, the person's vulnerability, or the way the information is conveyed. Some of your students risk experiencing negative effects. Unfortunately, the literature doesn't let us clearly identify which students are most at risk. However, you can take some precautions. If possible, find out which students are most sensitive, emotionally and cognitively. And pay attention to the students' body language as you lead the activity:

- Let the students know that they may feel uncomfortable. This is usually temporary and



doesn't mean that mindfulness isn't right for them;

- Be prepared (you or another facilitator) to provide support to students who express discomfort or simply need to talk;
- Let the students know they can stop if they start to feel uncomfortable or uneasy. At this point, you can suggest that they refocus their attention on something else, doodle, or even read;
- Mindfulness is a lifestyle that not everyone has to follow. It's completely voluntary and can't be forced;
- Activities that involve focusing on their breathing may be uncomfortable for some students with anxiety or depression. If the students still want to learn about mindfulness or participate in the activity, they can instead focus on their heartbeat, or sounds or objects in the classroom. Gradually, they may be able to shift their focus back to their body and breathing;
- Let the students know that mindfulness leads to pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral experiences. They may experience feelings of calm, relaxation, happiness, and well-being, just as they may feel physical discomfort, sadness, agitation, and sleepiness; these are all perfectly normal;
- Remind the students that they are the best judges of what's good and not good for them. They are responsible for their own well-being—in the present moment and in the long term.

In short, your role as facilitator includes watching for the students' reactions and being aware that these can be positive, negative, or neutral, depending on the students' personalities, tolerance, and receptiveness. These reactions are all a normal part of a mindfulness practice.



## My emotions, needs and strategies



- Confidence
- Anger
- Disappointment
- Anxiety
- Discouragement
- Sadness
- Panic
- Concern
- Happiness
- Surprise
- Confidence
- Optimism
- Gratitude

(Inspired by The Centre for Nonviolent Communication, n.d.)



- Freedom, independence
- Security
- Balance
- Time
- Justice
- Trust
- Help, listening
- Affection
- Recognition
- Comfort
- Relaxation, rest
- Understanding
- Fun, entertainment

(Inspired by The Centre for Nonviolent Communication, n.d.)



- Seeing the situation differently
- Expressing my emotions
- Accepting the situation
- Comparing the situation to something worse
- Taking action
- Being kind to myself
- Asking myself what I can learn from the situation
- Distracting myself
- Asking for help
- Taking deep breaths
- Remembering my values and goals
- Using a stress management strategy

(Inspired by Ciarrochi *et al.*, 2014; Conover & Daiute, 2017; Rottenberg & Gross, 2007; Silk *et al.*, 2003).