

Mindfulness Assembly led by St George's Wellbeing Champions

Welcome to our Assembly on Mindfulness.

So what is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is being able to be fully present, engaged and focused on where we are and what we are doing.

To be mindful we need to be able to filter out distractions and not react or become overwhelmed by what is happening around us.

When we are practising mindfulness, we try and focus on the present moment and gently bring our minds back when we get distracted.

When we practise mindfulness we are able to improve our attention span. We are more able to pay attention and focus on a task or activity for a longer period of time.

We can also improve our brain's ability to function effectively. People who practise mindfulness can be more organised, pay attention, sort information, remember things and be more focused.

Mindfulness can help reduce stress or anxiety and help improve our mental health.

Mindfulness is a new science compared to others but lots of research is being done on the effect it has for people in a range of ways.

What studies do know is that when we ponder negative thoughts or emotions over and over, it can lead to increased stress and anxiety. When we get like this, it can be harder for our brains to get back to a state of calm. When we practise mindfulness, we get better at being able to ‘turn off’ distractions, worries, emotions or negative thoughts when we need to.

Each part of the brain is responsible for controlling different parts of the body. It manages emotions and feelings and how we respond to feelings, people and situations. When we become overwhelmed, we may experience one of the following responses:

Fight.

Our bodies become energised and we want to confront and ‘fight’ what’s going on.

Flight.

We want to escape and avoid what’s going on.

Freeze.

We feel like we are unable to move or act. Our bodies and minds ‘freeze’ and we don’t know what to do.

We are going to help you to achieve mindfulness through some Mindful Breathing exercises.

Snake: Inhale a deep breath, exhale through your mouth making a hissing sound like a snake.

Bear: Imagine a bear hibernating. Inhale through your nose. Pause and count three, two, one, and exhale again while counting three, two, one. Repeat it five times.

Elephant: Stand with your feet wide apart. Dangle your arms in front of you like an elephant trunk. Breathe in through the nose and raise your arms high above the head. Breathe out through your mouth while swinging the arms down. Repeat three times.

Bunny: Imagine sniffing like a bunny. Breathe three quick sniffs through the nose and then exhale one deep breath through your mouth while counting to three.

Monkey: Cross your legs and sit up tall. Bring your hands in front of your belly. Take a deep breath in and stretch one arm up to the sky. With a quick, powerful exhale breathe, and bring your hand back down. Switch hands. Repeat.

This last one doesn't involve animals.

Feather Breathing.

Paying particular attention to our inhales and exhales, we exhale gently up and down the sides of a feather on the palm of our hand. We want to keep the feather with us so calm breathing is key.

So, if you're feeling overwhelmed remember to practise one of the breathing techniques and remember it is ok to take a few minutes to calm yourself down before you take on a challenge or task.