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ACTIVITY 6.1

Mindful Walking

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CONCEPT

Mindfulness has several benefits to both our physical and mental health. It can improve our mood, reduce the physical symptoms of stress, improve our immune system, our heart health, and reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression. It is important that students are introduced to the idea that mindfulness has benefits, but this exercise will allow students to directly practice engaging in a mindfulness activity that they will be able to replicate outside of the classroom.

MATERIALS

- *Mindful Walking* Student Worksheet
- Timer

INSTRUCTIONS

- This activity should take students about 15 minutes to complete.
- Pass out the student worksheet and discuss the benefits of mindful walking, and have students read through the expectation of the walk.
- Find a safe space outside, and set a timer for 5-10 minutes, allowing students to engage in a mindful walk
- If safety is an issue, this could also become a homework assignment, where students could engage in the mindful walk, and then reflect on their experience.

Resources used for this activity:

Stop, Breathe & Think. *Mindful Walking.* (2017, April 26).
Sutton, J. (2020, July 15). What is mindful walking meditation and how can it impact your life? *Positive Psychology.* https://positivepsychology.com/mindful-walking

MINDFUL WALKING STUDENT WORKSHEET

Mindful walking has the benefits of both exercising and incorporating mindfulness, which can in turn promote both your mental and physical well-being. Rather than trying to hurry to get from one location to another, a mindful walk allows you to pay attention to the sensations of your body, and use these sensations to note and appreciate your surroundings.

The benefits of adding mindful walking into your week will help to enhance your mood, reduce the effects of stress, reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression, improve focus and attention, and improve your heart health and immune system.

Aim to incorporate mindful walking into each day for 5-10 minutes. If this is too much, one day of mindful walking a week is still better than none.

Goal: Go on a 5-10 minute walk and complete the following:

- Before you begin your walk, take in how your body feels.
  - » How do your feet feel in your shoes?
  - » Are you hot or cold?
  - » Is there any part of your body that is in pain or stiff?
  - » How are you currently emotionally feeling?
- Take a few deep breaths and begin walking at a slower pace than you typically would take.
- As you walk, notice how your body feels, paying attention to how your legs, feet and arms feel with every step you take.
  - » Notice the footstep as it touches the ground and moves from the heel to toe.
- You may become distracted as you are walking and lose focus. That is normal and ok. Once you catch yourself doing this, take the next step as an opportunity to start again.
- Now we will start to pay attention to all of our senses:
  - » Sense of sight: what do you see? Pay attention to details
  - » Sense of sound: what do you hear? Pay attention to details.
  - » Sense of smell: what scents can you pick up as you are walking?
  - » Sense of taste: are you able to notice any tastes as you walk? Can you taste the air?
  - » Sense of touch: note again how the ground feels on your feet. Can you feel anything on your face (e.g., sun, thick air, sweat)?
- Continue to walk.
  - » Make sure you are focusing on your breath as you are walking; slowly and deeply breath in and out.
  - » Again, note how you are emotionally feeling.
  - » Appreciate your surroundings- find beauty, notice something funny, watch someone be kind, appreciate colors/shapes sounds, and identify items as you walk.

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