

Guide to Mindfulness in FY101

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This guide is meant to offer you tips, tricks, and resources to share mindfulness with your students and incorporate mindfulness into your FY101 classes. If you have questions about this guide, you may reach out to shs-hpp@bu.edu.



Ways to bring mindfulness into your class

- Introduce/Define *Mindfulness*
 - [Video: Mindfulness as Superpower](#)
- Acknowledge the roots of mindfulness
- Understand (and share) the benefits of mindfulness
- Distinguish between mindfulness and meditation, if necessary
- Model mindfulness by developing your own practice
- Emphasize that this is a practice (e.g. mindfulness muscle)
- Incorporate short *mindful moments* (1-5 minutes):
 - At the start of class as a “grounding” tool to get students present & focused
 - At the end of class as a tool to prime students for their transition into the rest of their day

Highlights from Professional Development presentation on Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness	<p>Mindfulness is about being present in the moment</p> <p>Notice</p> <p>Without judgment</p> <p>Without immediately reacting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mindfulness is paying attention (on purpose), without judgment, and without reacting
Research-backed benefits of Mindfulness	<p>Alleviating stress, anxiety, pain, depression, insomnia & high blood pressure</p> <p>Improving attention</p> <p>Decreasing burnout</p> <p>Improving sleep</p>

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Mindfulness vs. Meditation	<p><u>Mindfulness</u> is about holding your attention in the here and now.</p> <p><u>Meditation</u> is one of the many ways that people cultivate mindfulness and get better at it.</p>
Roots of Mindfulness	<p>Mindfulness has been practiced by people in different ways for thousands of years. Mindfulness has roots in religious and secular/non-religious traditions, including (but not limited to!) Buddhism and Hinduism.</p> <p>But mindfulness itself is not a religion, nor is it specifically a religious practice. The basic principles of mindfulness are the same regardless.</p> <p>Mindfulness practice is about showing yourself compassion, which in turn helps you show up as a better/kinder version of yourself for your friends, family, and community.</p>
Building your Mindfulness muscle	<p>Mindfulness takes practice. The more you work at it, the greater impact it will have on your life. Unfortunately, just knowing mindfulness can be good for you isn't enough to get the benefits from it. We need to practice it.</p> <p>There are a number of ways to practice mindfulness & develop the skill of focusing your attention in the present.</p> <p>We're going to try a variety of mindfulness activities. You might like some, and not others, and that's okay. What's most important is that you find and do what feels good for you.</p> <p>Participation in each activity is optional. If any exercise feels unsafe or is unavailable to you for any reason, it's okay to not</p>

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	participate. You can just re-join us when you're ready and able to.
A little a day goes a long way	<i>Short mindful moments (1-5 minutes) can be used:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. At the start of class as a "grounding" tool to get students present & focusedb. At the end of class as a tool to prime students for their transition into the rest of their day

Resources

[Headspace App](#)

Free for BU students through Student Wellbeing

[Free for employees](#) through the Faculty-Staff Assistance Office

- *Everybody Headspace* - A feature on Headspace that streams meditations at the beginning of every half hour in real-time. Using the app, people from all over the world will be able to join and meditate with one another at the same time.

[Headspace's YouTube channel](#)

[Wherever You Go, There You Are](#) by Jon Kabat-Zinn

Places where students can practice mindfulness at BU

[Mindfulness Programs with Health Promotion & Prevention \(SHS\)](#) - HPP offers virtual and in-person opportunities for students to practice trauma-informed mindful movement yoga and mindfulness meditation practices.

[Mindfulness Meditation group with Behavioral Medicine \(SHS\)](#) - Based on the “Koru” model of mindfulness, this 4-week group provides a space for students to learn mindfulness meditation skills and discuss ways to incorporate the practice into their daily lives.

[Wellness & Mindfulness with Marsh Chapel](#) - Marsh Chapel provides spiritual programming including mindfulness, yoga, and Tai Chi.

[Zen Club](#) - This student organization practices meditation from the Zen Buddhist tradition. Meetings consist of mind-body exercise, a relaxation practice, a meditation, and a talk about Buddhist philosophy and practice.

[The HTC meditation space](#) - This quiet, calming room is available to everyone, and there are reflection meditations students can grab on their way in to help center your practice.



Tips for facilitating a mindfulness activity for students:

- Give students the choice to opt-in or out
 - Example: “Mindfulness makes us aware of our present moment experience. The prompts used today are all suggestions. If at any point you prefer to pause or skip the practice, feel free to do so. You can return to following along with the prompts if and when you are ready.”
- Outsource - there are tons of free resources available (many are linked below). You can simply play an audio or video clip of a meditation for your students, rather than having to lead one yourself.
- If you're leading a mindfulness activity:
 - Use your natural voice
 - Avoid the tendency to rush
 - Normalize mind-wandering
 - Example: “If your mind wanders, that's okay. Simply bring your attention back to the focus of attention (e.g. the breath)”

Mindfulness Activity Facilitator Scripts:

Five Senses:

First, notice 5 things that you can see. Look around you and become aware of your environment. Try to pick out something that you don't usually notice. *(Facilitator pause for 5-10 seconds)*

Now, notice 4 things you can feel. Bring attention to the things that you're currently feeling, such as the texture of your clothing or the smooth surface of the table you're resting your hands on. *(Facilitator pause for 5-10 seconds)*

Now, notice 3 things that you can hear. Listen for and notice things in the background that you don't normally notice. It could be the sounds outside or the sound of your own breathing. *(Facilitator pause for 5-10 seconds)*

Next, notice 2 things you can smell. Bring attention to scents that you usually filter out, either pleasant or unpleasant. *(Facilitator pause for 5-10 seconds)*

Finally, notice 1 thing you can taste. (If appropriate) Take a sip of a drink, or notice the current taste in your mouth. *(Facilitator pause for 5-10 seconds)*

Optional Debrief Question: Did you notice anything new or different?



Five Finger Breathing

I invite you to close your eyes, if you'd like.

Starting with one hand open and fingers gently spread apart, place the pointer finger of your other hand at the base of your thumb.

As you breathe in, move your finger up your thumb, pausing at the top, and breathing out as your finger comes down the other side.

Breathe in at your finger moves up your pointer finger, pausing at the top, and breathing out on the way down

(Continue guiding students through the exercise for each finger until the end)

If your eyes are closed, gently open your eyes.

Optional Debrief Question: How do you feel after doing this exercise?

Mindful Movement:

Alternate: [Play this video](#)

We're going to start by getting everyone moving for a moment. You can do this while sitting or standing, whatever feels most comfortable for your body right now. I'll be demonstrating the moves, but please go at your own pace. While we do these exercises, just notice where you feel tension or sensation and how moving this way feels.

(Use the guide below to lead exercise.)

- First let's roll our shoulders forward for 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, now the other way for 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
- Now add your elbows by placing your fingertips on your shoulders, and we roll for 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and now the other way for 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
- We'll now transition to stretching and mobilizing the neck. Slowly nod your head "yes" (up and down) for 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and now slowly nod your head "no" (side to side) for 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.
- When you're ready, bring your awareness back to the space

Optional Debrief Question: Did this movement feel different from other movement you've done recently?



Body Scan

Alternate: [Play audio](#)

Sitting comfortably, I invite you to gently close your eyes.

- First, bring awareness to your breath; experience breathing in and out; not trying to change how you're breathing, just bringing your attention to it.
- Starting at our feet, we're going to scan for any tension or sensations in each part of our body. Notice how your feet feel, grounded on the floor, releasing any tension in your toes or arches.
- Moving your attention to your legs, notice your calves, knees, and thighs; again checking in with how your muscles and joints feel, releasing any tension as you pass through.
- Now bring your awareness to your lower back and belly, drawing your breath in to fill these areas, noticing how they feel.
- Drifting into your chest and shoulders, noticing any tension and releasing it if you can.
- Now move your attention to your fingers, and then to your hands and arms; recognizing and releasing any tension you notice along the way.
- Finally, scan through your neck and up to your head and face; notice any tension you're holding in your eyes, mouth, or cheeks, giving yourself permission to release.
- Remain here for a moment... and when you're ready, gently open your eyes.

Optional Debrief Question: What did you notice in the body scan?

The Bell

We're now going to focus on the sound of a bell. Listening intentionally is another way to help us be in the present.

During this activity:

- Focus your attention on the sound of the bell, but without straining
- Stay with the sound as it fades into silence, listening for the moment when you can no longer hear the bell

I invite you now to close your eyes for this activity. (Facilitator [play this video](#))

Optional Debrief Question: What was it like to focus only on the sound of the bell?

Breath Awareness Exercise:

Alternative: Play this [video](#)

(Prompt participants to get into their “mindful posture” - eyes open or soft gaze; feet on the ground, and elongated spine; hands on lap, knees, or desk)

- As you breathe in, notice how the body expands
- As you breathe out, notice how the body contracts
- Notice where you feel the breath the most (e.g. nose, throat, chest, belly)
- Observe the rise and fall of your breath
- If you'd like, inhale on my count for 1, 2, 3, hold at the top, and exhale for 3, 2, 1, hold at the bottom. (repeat 1-3x)
- When you're ready, open your eyes and re-enter the class

Optional Debrief Question: What did you notice?