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# MENTAL NOTES



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## Did You Know?

- Over **14%** of Americans have meditated at least once.
- Meditation improves anxiety levels **60%** of the time.
- Meditation can reduce the risk of being hospitalized for coronary disease by **87%**.
- Meditation can reduce the wake time of people with insomnia by **50%**, according to mindfulness meditation stats

Source

# What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

Even though we naturally possess mindfulness, it's more readily available to us when we practice on a daily basis. Being mindful is when you bring attention to what you are experiencing either through your senses, emotions, or thoughts. There is also growing research showing that when you train your brain to be mindful, you're actually remodeling the physical structure of your brain. (Bayes-Fleming et al., 2022)



# Basic Steps of Mindfulness

1. **Set aside some time.** You don't need any kind of special equipment or space, just time.

2. **Observe the present moment as it is.** The goal of mindfulness isn't to achieve a state of eternal calm. Instead, the goal is to simply pay attention to the present moment, without judgment.

3. **Let your judgments roll by.** When you notice judgments that come up during your practice, make a mental note, and let it pass.

4. **Return to observing the present moment as it is.** Our minds often get carried away in thought. That's why mindfulness is the practice of returning, again and again, to the present moment.

5. **Be kind to your wandering mind.** Don't judge yourself for whatever thoughts creep up, just practice recognizing when your mind has wandered off, and gently bring it back.

**"MINDFULNESS IS A WAY OF  
BEFRIENDING OURSELVES  
AND OUR EXPERIENCE"  
- JON KABAT-ZINN**

# How to Meditate

Meditation is a set of techniques used to develop mindfulness, promote calmness, and increase relaxation. Many studies suggest that meditation may reduce blood pressure, relieve pain, lower the risk of depression, and enhance overall well-being. Below is an example of a simple 5 minute breathing meditation activity.

**1. Find a comfortable position.** You can either be seated on a chair or the floor. Keep your back upright (but don't force it). Notice your body and relax. Take a deep breath and focus.

**2. Feel the natural rhythm of your breath.** Notice the air temperature in and out. Let your breath flow naturally. You don't need to do anything. Your body knows how to breathe on its own—don't force it.

**3. Focus on your body**—one breath at a time. Notice how your chest expands and contracts.

**4. Don't judge yourself.** You might get distracted at some point. That's okay. Let your thoughts flow naturally. Reconnect with your breath.

**5. When the five minutes are up, focus on your breath one more time.**

Practicing this exercise daily, will improve your breathing but also bring calmness and more awareness to your life. (Gustavo Razzetti, 2019)



# Chapter Spotlight

## Manteca High School

Manteca High School was excited to become part of the Cal-HOSA Mental Health Pilot project. The students along with their advisor initiated the You Matter, Your Wellness Matters Affirming Clothespin which is a student-led and school-based program rooted in youths' engagement and commitment to promoting acceptance, inclusion, and positive well-being. You Matter means you are a change agent with the capacity to create meaningful change, and make a difference for yourself and others. Your Wellness Matters recognizes both physical and mental wellness as equally important to quality of life now and in the future. The Affirming Clothespin is symbolic and visual display of making the invisible visible.

Our students work to invest in healthy relationships among peers. They use the Affirming Clothespin to foster open conversations about mental health. Reaching out to get people connected and communicate to those students that are disengaged. It is important to the students to help others find the strength for breaking the silence associated with stigma and shame. This chapter works to create a positive, safe, and affirming educational environment centered on respecting the social and emotional well-being by connecting through positive and inclusive language and behaviors. The students utilize the I Can Make a Difference (ICMAD) leadership approach. Adopting this leadership role enables our students to become the change agents toward creating and driving change to achieve mental wellness for youths, educators and staff in our school.  
Advisor: Cheryl Behler



## **Save The Date!**

EVENTS ON HOSA, MENTAL HEALTH, & MORE

**June 15, 2022**

ILC Payment Submission Deadline

**June 22 - 25, 2022**

HOSA International Leadership Conference  
Nashville, Tennessee

**August 24-26, 2022**

NAMI CA CA 2022 Conference  
"Moving Forward with Hope and Resiliency"  
Newport Beach, Ca

**Cal-HOSA State Officers post mental health facts  
every Monday on Cal-HOSA's social media platforms**



## Resources

- [Getting Started with Mindfulness](#)
- [21 Simple Mindfulness Exercises to Improve Your Focus](#)
- [Bringing Mindfulness into Schools](#)
- [Mindfulness for Kids](#)
- [Mindfulness for Children](#)

*Cal-HOSA's MHWPEII project is funded by Kaiser Permanente*



## References

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- 21 simple mindfulness exercises to improve your focus: By Gustavo Razzetti. RSS. (n.d.). Retrieved May 12, 2022, from <https://www.fearlessculture.design/blog-posts/21-simple-mindfulness-exercises-to-improve-your-focus>