Everyday Mindfulness

*Elective 2*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Author(s):** | Akiko Yonekawa |
| **summary:** | We are bombarded by stimuli from every direction at camp. We can become overwhelmed or distracted by this bombardment, which can take away from our ability to savor the moments of summer. With a few simple mindfulness practices in our back pockets, we can learn to ease our mind, be fully present, and help our campers do the same. - *Submitted by* *Akiko Yonekawa* |
| **Topic(s):** | Mindfulness and meditation techniques |
| **Learning Objective:** | Participants will gain mindfulness skills and be able to facilitate meditation and mindfulness practices for their campers. |
| **Audience:** | Anyone can do these practices, but they are better suited to those over the age of 10. They are especially good for those who suffer from anxiety or are easily distracted or overwhelmed. |
| **TIMING:** | 90 minutes |
| **AppendiCes:** |  |
| **Materials Needed:** | Video equipment for watching YouTube |
| **Set-UP DETAILS:** | You will need a space where people can move freely, go outside and come back in easily and there is floor space for people to sit comfortably. There should be some chairs for those who are uncomfortable sitting on the ground, but they should be against the wall so you can use mostly open space. |

**Session Timeline & Outline:**

00:00-00:10 Video: All It Takes Is 10 Mindful Minutes

00:10-00:20 Reflection

00:20-00:27 Noticing

00:27-00:34 Reflection

00:34-00:39 Shema ears

00:39-00:46 Reflection

00:46-00:56 Walking mindfulness

00:56-1:06 Reflection Break

1:06-1:13 Mindfulness 2.0

1:13-1:20 Reflection

1:20-1:30 Make your own Mindfulness Practice

**00:00-00:10 All it Takes is Ten Minutes**

Show the video https://www.ted.com/talks/andy\_puddicombe\_all\_it\_takes\_is\_10\_mindful\_minutes.

**00:10-00:20 Reflection**

Ask participants if they can remember any time in the summer when they did nothing. What might be the benefit of taking time out of the day at camp to do a mindfulness practice? What might be the benefit of having your campers do it? One of the best things about camp is the fact that we are constantly surrounded by awesome things to do and people to be with, but all of that stimulation can become overwhelming. Taking some time to ask campers to participate in a mindfulness practice can go a long way toward helping them focus in programs, deal with anxiety and conflict, and be fully present in the moments that camp offers.

The effects of mindfulness are highly touted in America today and many of us have probably had some kind of meditation experience. Today we will experiment with some ways to implement mindfulness with our campers.

**00:20-00:27 Noticing**

Have participants pair off and spread around the room. Ask each pair to face each other, standing about two feet apart. Ask participants to set themselves up for mindfulness. This means putting equal weight on each foot, standing up straight with shoulders back and chin down and taking two deep breaths.

Each person will get one minute to notice. They should notice out loud to their partner. This means that they will tell their partner everything they are experiencing through their senses. This can be anything they see, hear, taste, smell, or feel. When they notice something, they will just say what it is: they can say “bird” or “scratching” or “wind” or “heavy.” They do not have to explain what they are noticing; they just have to say a word for it. When they notice one thing, they can move on to another thing.

Give the first person one minute to notice. When s/he is done, his or her partner should thank their partner for sharing with them.

Have participants switch.

**00:27-00:34 Reflection**

Ask participants how it felt to notice with their partner. While they were noticing, did they become distracted by any of the things they noticed? What was the effect of moving on from one thing to the next?

In the video, Andy talked about stepping back and observing the present moment. This form of noticing is one way to do that. Instead of becoming distracted by something, a bird, maybe, and letting our minds follow that bird away from whatever we are doing, we notice it and let it be, and move on to something else.

**00:34-00:39 Shema Ears**

We get a lot of information through our eyes. We can heighten our other senses just by closing them and get deeper into our mindfulness practice.

Have participants stand in a line outside side-by-side facing out onto a field or away from a building.

Have participants cup their hands and put them behind their ears to amplify sound coming from the field. Give one minute for participants to close their eyes and silently notice every sound they hear.

**00:39-00:46 Reflection**

Ask the group to list things that they heard. Was there a point where they thought they heard every sound out there? What happened then? Did they feel distracted at any point? If so, can they pinpoint the moment that they felt distracted? Was it by a sound or a thought? How did this differ from the other exercise?

**00:46-00:56 Walking Mindfulness**

If the weather permits, venture out further with this next exercise.

Have participants spread out and give instructions that they should start walking, but with every step, they should bring their attention to the sensation of their feet on the ground. Model what that might look like: first your toe hits the ground, then the ball of your foot. Notice the feeling of your socks or your shoes. Everyone will likely have to walk VERY slowly in order to notice every sensation.

Give two minutes for walking meditation.

Ask participants if they felt distracted at any point. When did they feel distracted? Was it a thought that distracted them? Or a feeling that they followed instead of just noticing?

Do walking mindfulness again, but this time with 50% of your attention on your feet and 50% of your attention on your breath.

Give two minutes for combined walking mindfulness.

**00:56-1:06 Reflection Break**

Now that participants have had several mindfulness experiences, have them step back and reflect on what they have noticed about noticing. What has worked for them and what hasn’t?

When do they feel most distracted? What do they get distracted by? What is the nature of their distractions?

Our minds like to follow things. Mindfulness is asking our minds not to follow, and when they do, it is helpful for us to just notice that they are and release the distraction. It is helpful for us to know what a distraction feels like in order to recognize it the next time it happens.

**1:06-1:13 Mindfulness 2.0**

We have played around with ways to use our senses and stimuli around us to keep us in the moment. Now let’s bring it down and use just our bodies.

Bring participants back inside where it is quiet. Have them spread out and find a comfortable seated position.

In this exercise, participants will count their breaths. Breathe in: one, breathe out: two, breathe in: three, breathe out: four and so on. Every time they have a thought, they should go back to one and start counting again.

Give two minutes for this exercise.

**1:13-1:20 Reflection**

What was the highest number people got to? What types of thoughts did people have? Were they thoughts about the future? Thoughts about the past? Angry thoughts or worried thoughts?

As mentioned in the video, the point is not to try not to have thoughts – it is to take a step back and be with your thoughts in so that they don’t come to control you. The point here was not to get to a high number. It was to observe your own thoughts as an onlooker.

**1:20-1:30 Make your own Mindfulness Practice**

Have participants find their original noticing partners. Ask pairs to use what they now know about mindfulness to set a mindfulness practice for the next 24 hours. They can each create one, or they can create one together. They will decide what situation they will use, how long, when they will do it, etc.

Each pair will act as accountability partners for each other. They should commit to checking in with their partners to reflect on their mindfulness experience.

**Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:**