

# Mindfulness as a Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Strategy



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## Learning Objectives

- ☺ Gain a clear understanding of what is MINDFULNESS and why it is an effective tool for working with youth.
- ☺ Gain knowledge of basic mindfulness skills and strategies.
- ☺ How to create a youth friendly mindful practice/environment.

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## The NxTG Story

- ☺ NxTG has been working with youth since 2000 & has served over 1,850 youth in our community since its inception.
- ☺ Operates 1 of 3 Prevention Clubhouses funded by DBHDD in Georgia.
- ☺ Our leadership team has approximately 47 years of experience working with vulnerable youth in multiple settings.

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### Why are NxTG youth vulnerable?

- 88% Live in poverty
- 44% have a family history of substance abuse (with only 20% having received treatment)
- 41% live in a single parent home or without either biological parent
- 37% have a family history of mental health or emotional issues
- 21% have a family history of domestic violence
- 5% have a history of homelessness

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### NxTG Youth 2018-2019

#### Internalizing Symptoms

- 69.3% anxiety
- 66.6% exhibiting sleep issues
- 56.4% thinking about the past
- 43.6 % feelings of depression
- 15.4% suicide ideation

#### Externalizing Symptoms

- 77% hard time paying attention
- 72% hard time listening
- 41% lied or conned
- 31% hard time waiting their turn
- 13% physical fighting

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Our Youth are  
NOT Alone

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### National Statistics

- ☹️ 31.9% of adolescents in the U.S. ages 13-18 had an anxiety disorder.
- ☹️ 13.6% of teens 12-17 have ADHD\*\*
- ☹️ 9.4% of the U.S. population aged 12 to 17 had at least one major depressive episode with severe impairment in 2017. \*\*

\*National Comorbidity Survey Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A), National Institute of Mental Health.  
\*\*2016 National Survey Children's Health

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### Georgia Student Health Survey 2017-18 Dawson Co. 6th-12th grade

- ☹️ 12% have seriously considered attempting suicide at least once During the past 12 months.
- ☹️ 6% have attempted suicide at least once in the past 12 months.
- ☹️ 8% have felt sad or withdrawn every day during the past 30 days.
- ☹️ 7% have experienced intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities for at least 10 days in the past month.
- ☹️ 4% have felt suddenly overwhelmed with fear for no reason, sometimes including a racing heart or fast breathing every day for the past 30 days.

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HOW DO WE  
BUILD  
SOCIO-  
EMOTIONAL  
RESILIENCE?

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### The 5 Senses



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Mindfulness is paying attention,  
on purpose, in the present  
moment, non-judgmentally.

-John Kabat-Zinn

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### Volcano Breath



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“May I be safe.  
May I be happy.  
May I be healthy.  
May I live with ease.”

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### History of Mindfulness

- ☺ Mindfulness has its origins in ancient practices and traditions from thousands of years ago.
- ☺ Mindfulness integrated into modern arena due to the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn and MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction).
  - ☞ Healthcare (MBSR)
  - ☞ Mental Health (MBCT)
  - ☞ Education
  - ☞ Military (MBAT)
- ☺ 2014 U.S. DHHS with John Hopkins publish a meta-analysis study concluding that mindfulness meditation programs can improve affect, anxiety and depression comparable to antidepressants.

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### Why Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a Superpower

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This water drop is the symbol for the idea of being here and now. It is mirrored and symbolizes time. The vertical forms represent the past and the future. The water ripples represent space. The center is the here and now. **A reminder to stay centered in the present moment.**

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### Promoting Socio-emotional Resilience: **R.A.I.N.**

- ☺ **R**ecognize- recognize the emotion, feeling
- ☺ **A**cknowledge- acknowledge the emotion, allow it to be there
- ☺ **I**nvestigate- ask questions and explore the emotion, gain insight as to WHY
- ☺ **N**on-Identify- "I feel angry vs. I am an angry person."

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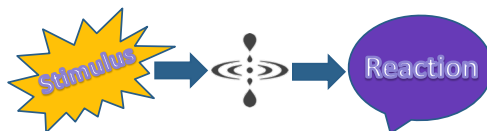
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### Mindfulness at it's Most Basic




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## SATI - smṛti (स्मृति)



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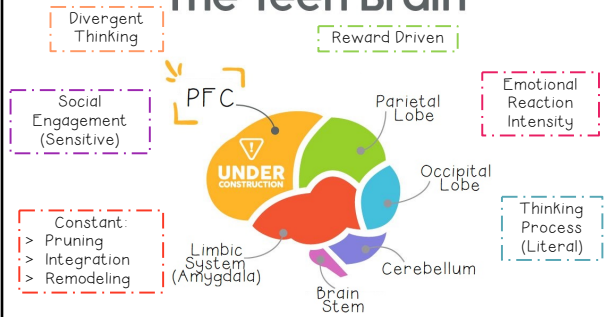
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## The Teen Brain




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## Neuroplasticity

- ☉ The brain is constantly changing in response to experiences.
- ☉ New behaviors, new learnings, environmental changes, and physical injuries may all cause the brain to grow new neural pathways or reorganize existing ones.
- ☉ These changes can fundamentally alter how information is processed.

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### Risk Factors Youth Ages 12-17

- ⊗ Poor impulse control
- ⊗ Lack of behavioral self-control
- ⊗ Anxiety
- ⊗ Depression
- ⊗ ADHD
- ⊗ Poor social skills
- ⊗ Negative emotionality
- ⊗ Disengagement, involuntary and emotion-focused coping

SAMHSA Substance Abuse Prevention Training (SAPST)  
Version 8, November 2012 – SAMHSA Reference # 277-08-0218

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### Protective Factors Youth Ages 12-17

- ⊗ Positive psychological and emotional development coping (self esteem & self regulation)
- ⊗ Positive social development (connectedness to peers, family & community)
- ⊗ Self-efficacy
- ⊗ Empathy and acceptance of other children's emotional expressiveness

SAMHSA Substance Abuse Prevention Training (SAPST)  
Version 8, November 2012 – SAMHSA Reference # 277-08-0218

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### Benefits of Mindfulness

- **Mental Health.** Mindfulness helps improve mental health by reducing depression, anxiety and stress.
- **Well-Being.** Mindfulness helps improve aspects of student well-being such as social competence emotion regulation and positive mood.
- **Physical Health.** Mindfulness helps reduce blood pressure and enhance sleep quality.
- **Attention -**Mindfulness helps improve student attention.

<https://www.yogacalm.org/about/research/>

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### Why Focus on ADHD/Anxiety/Depression?

- 14% of teens ages 12-17 in the U.S. have ADHD.
- 14% of teens with ADHD also have depression.
- 30% of teens with ADHD also have anxiety.
- Teens struggling with emotional problems turn to alcohol or drug use to help manage painful or difficult feelings.
- Untreated anxiety disorders are linked to depression, school failure and two-fold increase in risk for substance use disorder.

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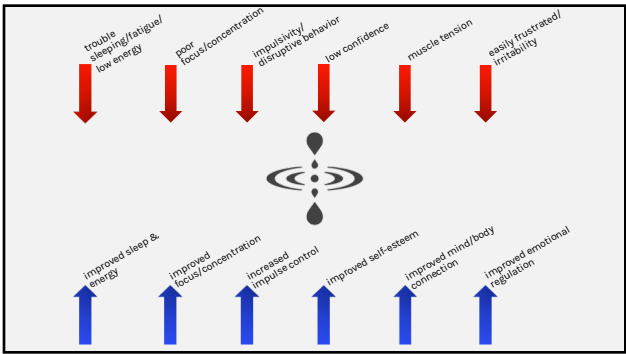
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## Benefits of Mindfulness for ADHD, Anxiety, Depression

Research points to emotional, social and mental health outcomes from mindfulness practices including:

- Improved presence & awareness
- Improved communication skills
- Enhanced overall health
- Increased empathy for oneself & others
- Decreased stress & anxiety
- Increased sense of calm
- Increased emotional resilience
- Better focus & concentration

<https://www.peaceinschools.org/mindfulness-research/>

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## 7-11 Breathing



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## Grounding Senses 3-2-1



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***I use Mindfulness to...***

- 😊 "... focus on something I'm doing at school." -S
- 😊 "...calm down after a test when I'm still feeling stressed."- JF
- 😊 "...de-stress when I think about the past." -JF
- 😊 "...go to sleep at night."- G
- 😊 "...help in social situations when meeting new people."-JB

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## Challenges of Evaluation

- ☺ CAMM
- ☺ Continue searching
- ☺ In-house assessment
  - Bloom's Taxonomy
  - Remember, understand, apply

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## NxTG Lessons Learned

- ☺ Must have your own practice
- ☺ Flexible
- ☺ "Trauma-Informed"
- ☺ Rituals
- ☺ Youth-Led
- ☺ Relationships

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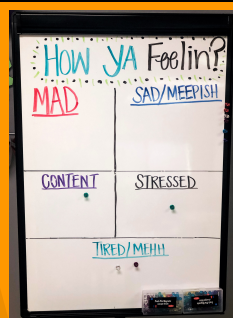
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## NxTG MOVING FORWARD

- ☺ Willing to adapt
- ☺ Define/Label Emotions
- ☺ YouTube Channel



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**BUILDING A  
YOUTH-FRIENDLY  
PRACTICE**

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**Mainstream to Your Stream**

- ☺ Teen culture= tech
- ☺ Oral culture
- ☺ No workbooks
- ☺ Focus group
- ☺ Guided, facilitated
- ☺ Write your own script

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**Texting Compassion**



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## Resources

- ☺ UMASS
- ☺ Emory University (CBCT)
- ☺ Yoga Calm
- ☺ Mindful Schools
- ☺ BeMindful Online (UK Online Program)
- ☺ NxTG Packet

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## Conclusion

- ☺ Gained an understanding of Mindfulness, it's effectiveness with youth and why it is a great prevention tool for working with a vulnerable population.
- ☺ Have gained first hand knowledge and experience of mindfulness strategies and activities.
- ☺ Provided a tool kit to assist you in creating your own youth-friendly mindfulness practice/environment.

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## QUESTIONS

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THANKS

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