

Session 1

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS

Topic Overview

Beginning a course and personal practice in mindfulness begins with experience more than information. Today, you will not only provide an introduction to what exactly mindfulness is and the benefits of a mindfulness practice, but you'll invite students to experience mindfulness for themselves and connect their experience to new learning—a combination known as *praxis*. In this first session, “development of insight through practice remains the central ingredient” (Brandsma, 18).


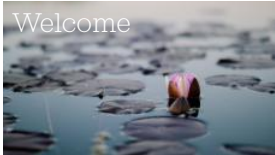
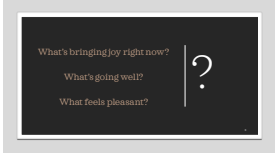
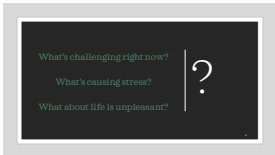
Student Goals

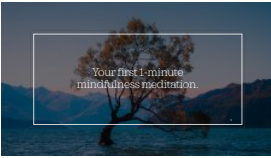
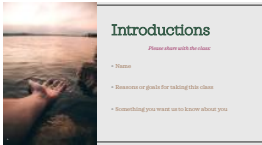
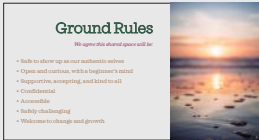

- Understand and consent to ground rules, expectations, and safety requirements,
- Understand the physical and emotional benefits of mindfulness and a mindfulness practice
- Complete a Breath Awareness Meditation
- Understand the definitions of “focused attention” and “the present moment”
- Complete a Grounding Meditation
- Complete a Feel Your Feet Meditation
- Review the importance of daily practice


Teacher Goals





- Create a safe, welcoming learning space
- Provide a thorough course overview and introduction
- Assess student comfort levels, warning signs, concerns, and abilities



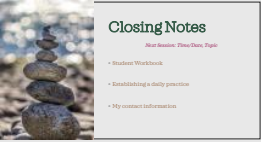
Lesson Script



Slide	Script	Min.
	<p>[You can have this slide open as students enter the room and while you complete some logistical first-day tasks like taking names, gathering contact information, and signing paperwork.]</p> <p>This would be a good opportunity to lay out your business cards or other marketing materials for students to take, and to simply greet all attendees as they arrive.]</p>	0
	<p>Welcome to <i>Everyday Mindfulness</i>. My name is _____ and I will be your instructor, guide, coach, and advocate for these 10 sessions.</p> <p>We have many topics to cover, and some meditation practices I'm looking forward to sharing with you, along with some great take-home resources.</p> <p>But, before we jump into those, I have a few questions for you.</p>	1
	<p>First, can you think about what's good right now, what's going well in your life, what brings you joy, and what feels pleasant?</p> <p>Take a moment and reflect on the good, the joyful, and the pleasant.</p>	1
	<p>[After a short 30-second pause]</p> <p>Now, consider what's challenging in life right now, what's causing stress, and what about life is unpleasant. You are welcome to close your eyes. Take a moment and let yourself think about the stress, the challenges, the unpleasant. Thinking about these issues may cause you to feel some tension, stress, or anxiety.</p> <p>[Allow 30 seconds for students to think.]</p> <p>Now, I'd like to invite you to feel your feet on the ground. Feel the ground solid beneath your right foot and your left foot. Feel your body in your chair.</p> <p>[You are now beginning their first formal practice]</p> <p>It may feel unpleasant right now. Where in your body does it feel unpleasant? Maybe your neck, your shoulders, your back? Maybe your jaw or your brow? Can you notice whether your muscles are tense or soft? Take a moment and notice your breathing. Is it shallow, rapid, deep, or slow? Just notice, without any judgement, without trying to fix anything.</p> <p>Now, try to open up to a sense of spaciousness, a sense of ease, especially in those parts that are carrying stress, tension, and life's challenges. Wish yourself well with an open heart.</p>	5

	<p>When you are ready, you can open your eyes.</p> <p>[Give students a few seconds to return to a state of alert awareness.]</p>	
	<p>Congratulations, you just completed your first mindfulness meditation.</p> <p>Would anyone like to share about how that practice felt, or what you may have noticed?</p> <p>How do you feel now, compared to when we started the meditation?</p> <p>[Invite responses and affirm students' experiences. "Yes." "Good." "That makes sense." "I've had that experience, too." "Thank you for sharing."]</p> <p>Paying attention may be pleasant and unpleasant. This is the essence of mindfulness: paying attention to our moment-to-moment experience without judgement. It's simple, but it's not easy.</p> <p>As you grow in your practice, I will be here to help you with your challenges, whatever they may be. It's my privilege to support you and your journey. I'll be sharing many science-based practices that have helped many other people, and I hope to help you find techniques that work well for you, and that you will be able to practice and develop for your own goals.</p>	8
	<p>Now, let's take a few minutes to introduce ourselves and get to know each other. We'll go around the room and share our name, some reasons or goals for taking this course, and anything that you'd like us to know about you.</p> <p>[You may invite students to wear disposable name tags to help you remember and call on individuals by name.]</p>	8
	<p>Thank you for those introductions. Let's move on to the ground rules of this course. Our intention is for this to be a safe, welcoming, and encouraging space for growth and learning. We're not experts, we're learners with beginner's mind, which involves curiosity, eagerness to try new things, and openness to making mistakes as we learn.</p> <p>[Read the list of ground rules, and feel free to add your own to fit your approach or your students' needs.]</p>	5
	<p>You may have experienced some benefits a few moments ago when we did our very first practice. Practitioners at all levels report many benefits of mindfulness, physical, emotional, cognitive, and more. Practicing moment-to-moment awareness without judgement has been proven to provide many physical and mental benefits, including the ones on this list. Take a moment and think back to your goals and reasons for being</p>	3

	<p>here today and bring it into this space as an intention for yourself and your growing practice.</p>	
	<p>Let's do a meditation practice together. This Breath Awareness Guided Meditation reminds us that throughout much of our modern way of living, we tend to forget that we're breathing.</p> <p>While the breath continues on without our conscious effort or awareness of it, drawing our attention to it can deepen our sense of peace and ease by easing the body's stress response.</p> <p>Mindful breath awareness and deep breathing practices can help to reduce cortisol levels, one of the body's primary stress hormones. So, it goes without saying that the breath is a powerful tool that is worthy of our fullest attention.</p> <p>[Slow your reading pace a bit. Be mindful of listeners who need time to absorb your instructions and experience the practice.]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin in a comfortable seated position, straightening the spine and softening the rest of the body. 2. When you feel ready, close your eyes as you draw your attention to the breath. <p>Without trying to change the breath in anyway, notice how effortlessly it flows into and out of your body.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Keep this relaxed, open attention on your breath. <p>[Pause and allow for the practice for 1 minute.]</p> <p>If the mind wanders (as it does for all of us), simply observe this movement away from the breath before compassionately inviting it back.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To move deeper into this exploration, pay attention to each subtle movement of the breath: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The inhalation</i>, beginning at the nostrils and moving slowly through to the lungs. <i>The slight pause</i> at the end of the inhalation, chest and belly expanded. <i>The exhalation</i> and the way the body contracts or 'falls' as the breath moves back out. <i>The slight pause</i> at the end of the exhalation, chest and belly relaxed. 5. Spend a few minutes observing each of these subtle phases of the breath. <p>[Allow for 4 minutes of practice]</p>	<p>10</p>

	<p>Now, expand your awareness to encompass the entire physical body. Notice what parts of the entire body move in tandem with the breath. Watch your breath move throughout the body.</p> <p>[Allow for 4 minutes of practice]</p> <p>7. When you are ready, gently shift your attention to the floor or other surface beneath you. Ground yourself into the physical world before slowly opening your eyes.</p>	
	<p>Welcome back. I'd like to hear what that breathing meditation was like for you. Everyone is welcome to share.</p>	<p>5</p>
	<p>Breath awareness has been an important part of many ancient traditions. Buddhism, for instance, has long understood the importance of the breath, noting such practices in the ancient Anapanasati Sutta.</p> <p>In other regions of the world, too, the breath has long been revered as a powerful life force that is worthy of great consideration and devotion. Though a seemingly simple movement of energy that we often take for granted, the breath holds the potential for great inner peace, personal power, and insight.</p> <p>[Ask if anyone has questions or concerns at this point. Announce the break and decide on a time to return. Mention where water and restrooms can be found.]</p>	<p>5</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Break/Transition 5-10 minutes, <i>depending on the conditions of the class</i></p>	
	<p>Welcome back. Let's turn to 2 core components of mindfulness: Focused Attention and The Present Moment.</p> <p>Mindfulness doesn't have to seem like a feat of your sheer will. You can find many ways help with attention. Focused attention is a sustained alertness or vigilance to an object of attention. It's used to bring the mind back from thoughts, sensation, noises, ruminations, fears, or other distractions.</p> <p>We call this orienting back to attention, and we can develop the skill of detecting when the attention wanders and bringing the mind back to focus.</p> <p>The "object" can be either external-a candle, a stone-or internal-a mantra, a body part.</p> <p>[Ask students to write a list of objects in their home, pieces of art, or writing that might serve as their focused attention aid.]</p>	<p>8</p>

	<p>Then, ask them to close their eyes and feel for a solid place in their body that might serve as a focused attention aid.]</p> <p>The present moment is the focus of a mindful state of awareness of both the internal and external world. Instead of rumination of the past or preoccupation with the future, mindfulness sustains the attention on the present with nonjudgmental acceptance.</p>	
	<p>It can be challenging to find and stay in the present moment. The mind rehashes the past and prepare for the future. Worries, pain, and needs float into consciousness. The mind can become a constant buzz of activity instead of a quiet, present, aware state of being.</p> <p>Simply by <i>noticing</i> the mind’s tendencies, we can create opportunity to come fully into the present. It will take practice and patience, but we can guide the mind toward <i>now</i> and help it stay there for longer. Because the present is where we fully experience ourselves, joy, calm, and growth.</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>You may feel bored, tired, and even annoyed many times as you practice guided meditations and mindfulness exercises day after day and month after month. You don’t have to like every exercise you just have to do them.</p> <p>Remember, mindfulness isn’t about <i>liking</i> the present moment. It’s not about feeling good, or pleasant, or comfortable. It’s paying attention to your experience without judgment.</p> <p>This means that you may experience doubt that mindfulness even works. This is normal and understandable. The mind typically reacts to uncomfortable, disciplined practices with agitation, annoyance, or aversion. But sometimes the practices that people have the most resistance to turn out to be the most effective and powerful for them.</p> <p>Boredom, impatience, or frustration need not be a problem at all. They’re just passing mind-states too, just like as anxiety or sadness or joy or gratitude.</p> <p>Every time you practice a mindfulness exercise or simply a mindful moment, you will grow your capacity, patience, awareness, focus, and resilience.</p>	<p>2</p>
	<p>Let’s look at your Student Workbook together and review the pages you are invited to practice during the coming week. You are welcome to try these practices on your own and to journal as much as you desire between now and our next session. There are seven options for practices, one for each day. You can, of course, repeat them as often as you like.</p> <p>[Review the worksheets for Session 1 and check for student understanding]</p>	<p>2</p>

	<p>Finally, I want to send you off with one last grounding practice. Feeling your feet can help engage the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for calming the mind and body.</p> <p>Consider how you are going to remind yourself to feel your feet throughout your day. You can put a sticky note on your computer, set a reminder on your phone, or use one of the other awareness triggers you have discovered.</p> <p>If you use a reminder or sticky note, write the simple question, "Where are my feet?" During your day, bring your awareness to the feet. Feel how they are resting.</p> <p>[Slow your reading pace to allow time for students to engage in the practice.]</p> <p>Now, close your eyes and sit with good posture in the chair. Feel the feet grounded on the floor. Scan the foot from the heel to the arch, ball, toe, and top of each foot.</p> <p>Take a few deep breaths as you continue to pay attention to the feet.</p> <p>Allow the body and mind to settle a bit. With each exhalation, allow the feet to relax.</p>	<p>5</p>
	<p>Thank you all for an excellent first session. Our next meeting will be on _____.</p> <p>[Make final reminders and announcements. You may want to stay for a few moments to answer questions, review for the next class, and close up your space.]</p> <p>Let's end by wishing ourselves and each other well as we go forward.</p>	<p>1</p>

Assessment

Student	P	D	NI
Effortful engagement and desire to understand the material. <i>Notes:</i>			
Willingness to participate in meditation practices and group sharing.			
Completion of all required forms.			
Teacher	P	D	NI
Conveyed new information with clarity, confidence, and enthusiasm.			
Answered questions with adeptness.			
Adjusted class pacing as needed to end on time.			
Created a safe, dynamic, and welcoming setting.			

P = Proficient. Attempted and completed with demonstrated mastery, success, ability, or required skill.

D = Developing. Attempted with strong effort and partially demonstrated mastery or success. The basic concept is understood, and the individual requires minimal/some additional coaching or practice to enhance ability, develop skill, and achieve mastery.

NI = Needs Improvement. Attempted with partial or incomplete understanding of the basic concept. Additional instruction, repetition, research, discussion, coaching, and/or practice is required to strengthen understanding, promote ability, confer skills, and/or approach mastery.

Journal

Session 1 reflections, questions, and thoughts.

Teaching

Students

Practice

Other