



Empowered Mind & Body

This mini-lesson focuses on being empowered to make healthy decisions. In middle school students will learn how developing strategies to deal with stress and other emotions – as well as being kind to others and themselves – can empower them to make healthier decisions. The key message is that it's healthy to be empowered. It's important to note, the lesson plans may need to be adjusted by the teacher to accommodate the unique attributes and diversity of individual classes and students. All mini-lessons can be implemented in their entirety or added to already existing health education or physical education lessons.

Lesson Name: A Kindful Minute

Unit Name: Empowered Mind & Body

Grade Level: 6-8

Lesson Length: 15 minutes

Before beginning, teachers should offer accommodations specifically mentioned in a student's IEP to support their ability to participate in the mini-lesson. A sample list of common accommodations and modifications to aid you in selecting appropriate supports for students can be found under "Additional Resources" [here](#).

Lesson Objective(s):

Students will be able to explain how being kind can improve health.

Students will practice a Kindful Minute for 60 seconds as a tool for managing complex feelings and practicing kindness.

Essential Question (related to objective):

How can being kind help my health?

Equipment Needed:

- [How am I feeling? Emoji Rating Scale poster](#)

CASEL Core SEL Competency:

Self-awareness

- Linking feelings values and thoughts

Social awareness

- Demonstrating empathy and compassion

National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K-12 Physical Education:

Standard 3: The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.

- S3.M18 Stress Management

Standard 5: The physically literate individual recognizes the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction.

- S5.M2 Health

National Health Education Standards & Performance Indicators:

Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

- 7.8.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will improve the health of self and others.

Lesson Overview:

Teachers will reintroduce the concept of mindfulness emphasizing that being mindful is about paying close attention and slowing down to notice what you are doing. Adding to that, teachers will make the connection that practicing kind behaviors is a part of being mindful. Teachers will make the connection of being kind to ourselves as well as others.

Based on the needs of the community, teachers can replace the word mindfulness with self-awareness throughout the mini-lesson.

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Definitions:

Mindfulness is

- Paying full attention to our:
 - Thoughts, emotions, body, environment
- Focusing on the present
 - The past already happened *(Consider your students experiences and traumas they may have had before choosing to share this portion of the definition.)*
 - The future isn't here yet

Kindful Minute

A Mindful Minute while sending kind thoughts to

- Yourself
- Someone you know
- Someone you may have challenging feelings about
- Everyone in the world

Activity Progression:

This mini-lesson is a great addition to the beginning or closing of an already existing lesson.

To start the mini-lesson, have students check in using the Emoji Rating Scale.

Example script: “Before we get started let’s check-in with ourselves. It’s healthy for us to take time to see how we are feeling. So, let’s look at our Emoji Rating Scale and see how we are feeling today, right now in class.

[Give students a few minutes to think about how they are feeling. They can share out if they would like or keep their response to themselves.]

If you would like to share how you are feeling right now you can or if not, that’s okay too! I’m feeling [insert an emoji] because [then a reason you are feeling this way].

Reintroduce the concept of mindfulness to students.

Example script:

“Does anyone remember mindfulness? [Allow for students to share out.] You all have some great memories! Being mindful is when you pay full attention to what you’re doing. You’re taking your time. You’re focused and relaxed. Being kind to others and being mindful of our own feelings is an important part of Taking care of our mind and body.”

Revisit a Mindful Minute, but explain to students that this time we are going to learn a new version of a Mindful Minute called a Kindful Minute. Allow students to guess what they think would make a Kindful Minute different than a Mindful Minute.

Example script:

“A Mindful Minute is when you sit quietly with your eyes shut, clear your mind and focus on what you notice around you. We learned that a Mindful Minute can help us when we are feeling big feelings like sadness, being scared, being mad or worried. What do you think a Kindful Minute is? [Allow for students to share their guesses.] Those are some pretty good guesses! A Kindful Minute is when we send loving, kind thoughts to ourselves, to someone we know and everyone in the world! That sounds like a lot right? I’m going to help you practice a Kindful Minute.

Why do you think we would want to learn about a Kindful Minute? [Allow student responses.] Well, we are practicing being kinder people. It’s easy to be kind to people we know and love, but we want to be kind to everyone EVEN when they aren’t kind to us. This can even help us during times when we have some big feelings.”

Direct students to sit quietly with their eyes closed or in a way that’s comfortable for them. Have students focus on their breathing initially. A Kindful Minute may take longer than 60 seconds, and teachers may choose to have students only focus on sending kind thoughts to themselves and someone they know and later have students send kind thoughts to everyone. Reassure students that sometimes it can feel awkward or even weird or uncomfortable to send kind thoughts or to do this kind of Mindful Minute. That’s what makes this skill great, because it continually takes practice and eventually you will be able to do this on your own. Share how intentionally practicing being kind can make us healthier and is another way to take care of our mind and body.

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Please note, that based on some students' past experiences or cultural norms, it may be uncomfortable or may feel unsafe for them to sit with their eyes closed. In these cases, provide the option for them to sit with their eyes open.

Example script:

“Let’s try a Kindful Minute. I’m going to talk you through it. I want you to get into a comfortable position, you can close your eyes, you can sit up straight, or you can lay down. Start by listening to yourself breathe. You can breathe normally, just pay attention to sounds to hear as you breathe. Now I want you to think about how you might feel if you got a big hug from someone! Now keep that feeling and repeat after me in your head:

- May I be healthy.
- May I be happy.
- May I be loved.
- May I be safe.

Now I want you to think about someone you know. This can be a friend or family member. Repeat these phrases in your head:

- May you be healthy.
- May you be happy.
- May you be loved.
- May you be safe.

Now I want you to think about someone you may have challenging feelings about. Repeat these phrases in your head:

- May you be healthy.
- May you be happy.
- May you be loved.
- May you be safe.

Now let’s think about everyone in the world or in our community. Repeat these phrases in your head:

- May everyone be healthy.
- May everyone be happy.
- May everyone be loved.
- May everyone be safe.”

Have students share how they are feeling and reinforce why a Kindful Minute is a healthy tool.

Note: Please take into consideration the experiences of your students when explaining a Kindful Minute. Instead of using the term a “big hug from someone you love” maybe describe the “warm feeling you have when you do something nice for someone.”

Example script:

“How are you feeling right now? I’m feeling warm and fuzzy inside. I liked being able to send kind thoughts to myself and other people. It makes me feel good to be kind to others, I hope it makes you feel good too. If you don’t feel warm and fuzzy, that’s okay too! It might be hard to send kind thoughts to someone we may have challenging feelings toward, but it actually can help improve our attitude toward them. When we learn a new skill it can take a few times before we feel like we are doing it right or for us to feel the benefits, so keep practicing. Being kind and practicing a Kindful Minute is one way we take care of our mind and body and can help us feel better by improving our mood and creating positive feelings toward others.”

At the end of class have students check in with themselves again.

Additional thoughts/notes:

Teachers can also suggest using a Kindful Minute when students might feel a negative feeling towards another person. A Kindful Minute can help give individuals a mood boost and can generally improve attitude, relieve stress and help create positive feelings toward others. Teachers can create their own scripts and eventually have students create their own scripts to use or as a class create scripts and short phrases.

Modifications/Differentiation:

- Allow students to choose the kind phrases they would like to send.
- Only provide two or three phrases at first.
- Only have students start by sending kind thoughts only to themselves and someone else.
- Allow students to sit with their eyes open or walk around the room quietly during a Kindful Minute.
- Choose to replace the description of a hug with asking students to think about how they felt when they did something nice for someone or someone did something nice for them.
- Individuals with autism have difficulty understanding emotions and expressions. They learn best through concrete real-life experiences. You may show the student an emotions picture board. The teacher should show a picture to the student of the student's current emotion and allow the student to look in a mirror.

Checks for Understanding:

- Why do you think it's important to be kind to others?
- How can being kind make us healthier?