



HEALTHY HABITS FOR LIFE: INSTILLING MINDFULNESS AND RESILIENCE IN ADOLESCENTS

A WEBINAR FOR EMPLOYEES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

August 14, 2024



Federal
Occupational
Health

INTRODUCTION



MINDFUL BREATHING

A mindful cup of hot chocolate





How comfortable would you be with introducing this as a mindfulness activity to your adolescent?

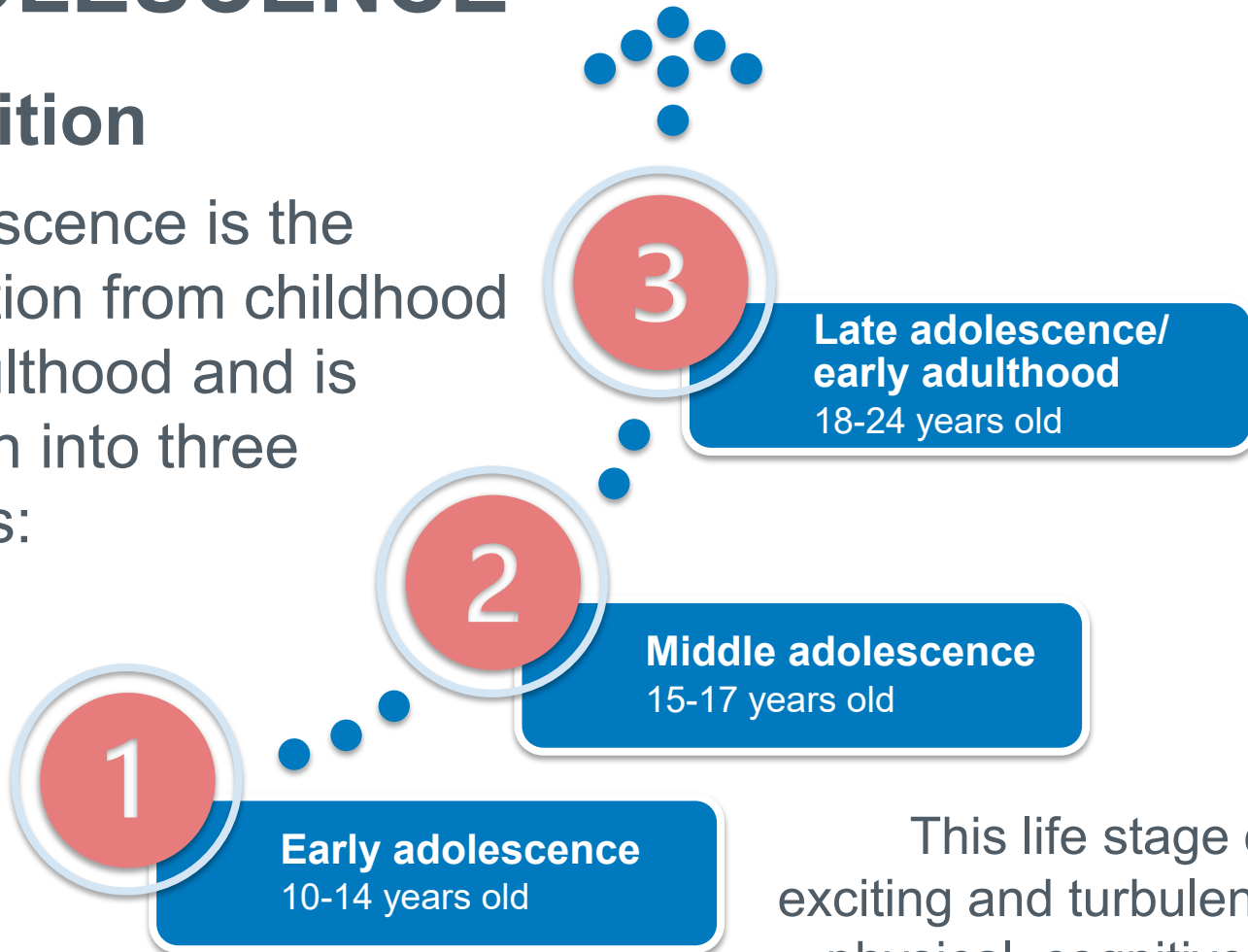
OBJECTIVES

- Review changes and challenges affecting today's adolescents
- Provide strategies for instilling a family culture of mindfulness and resilience
- Explore mindfulness strategies and resilience-building practices for tweens and teens

ADOLESCENCE

Definition

Adolescence is the transition from childhood to adulthood and is broken into three stages:

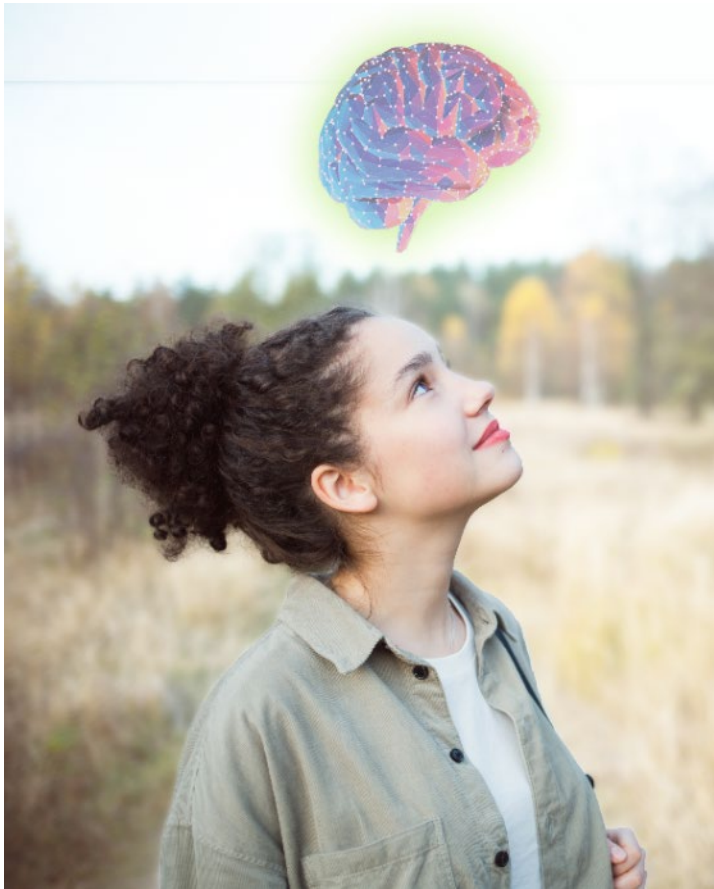


This life stage can be both exciting and turbulent due to the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that occur

SECTION 1

THE ADOLESCENT EXPERIENCE

THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

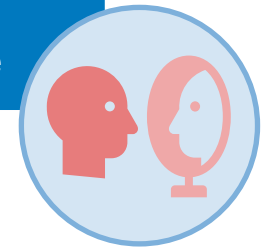


“The teen’s brain is wired for learning.” – Dr. Frances Jensen

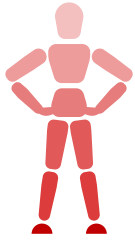


A teen’s pre-frontal cortex continues to develop and helps process emotions

Practicing mindfulness helps with resilience, self-awareness, compassion, and pause



ADOLESCENT CHANGES



Physical

- Changes to the body
- Hormonal changes



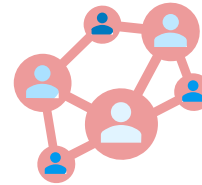
Emotional

- Awareness of feelings
- Building self-confidence



Cognitive

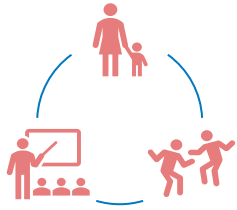
- Abstract thought
- Moral thinking
- Impulsivity
- Egocentric behaviors



Social

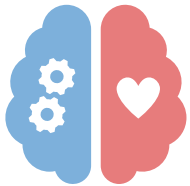
- Developing identity
- Seeking more independence
- Spending more time with friends
- Engaging in romantic relationships
- Having additional responsibilities

ADOLESCENT CHALLENGES



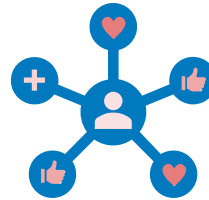
Relationship shifts

- Changing relationships with parents and conflict with caregivers
- Changes at school with friends



Internal stressors

- Hormonal mood swings
- Self-doubt
- Identity development
- Mental health



External stressors

- Peer pressure/lack of acceptance
- Risky behaviors
- Academic demands
- Environment
- Impact of COVID-19
- Family culture
- Social media

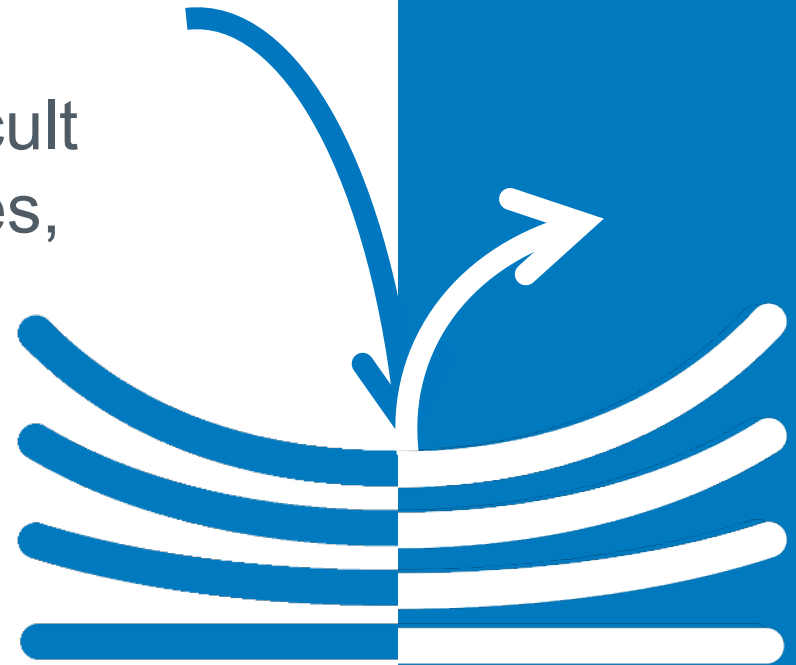
SECTION 2

RESILIENCE AND MINDFULNESS

RESILIENCE

Definition

The process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.



**Build resilience
with mindfulness**

MINDFULNESS

Definition

Maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens. It also involves acceptance, by paying attention to our thoughts and feelings in a non-judgmental way



MINDFULNESS

What it is

- Living in the present moment
- Cultivating greater curiosity
- Acceptance and allowing
- Practice-based

What it is NOT

- An emotion
- Absence of thought
- Complacency or inaction
- Experiencing only positive thoughts and emotions

INFORMAL MINDFULNESS

Breathing through discomfort



THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Increases and supports:



Awareness of self



Emotion regulation and ability to find relief in the moment



Well-being and growth



Life satisfaction



Resilience

SECTION 3

CREATING A FAMILY CULTURE OF MINDFULNESS AND RESILIENCE

TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Meet your adolescent where they are

Consider their developmental stage

2. Keep open communication and normalize

Point out that changes, challenges, and stressors are part of development

- “Can you help me understand what’s been happening?”
- “Is it okay if we talk about this a little more?”
- “How can I help?”

3. Explain why mindfulness matters

Let them decide if they would like to participate

- “We have tools to address _____”
- “Would you like to learn about them?”

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Acknowledge that mindfulness takes practice
- Create a supportive environment
- Practice mindfulness together



SECTION 4

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

NEURODIVERSITY AND MINDFULNESS

- If your teen experiences sensory overload when concentrating on specific senses, they may need modified mindfulness techniques
- Help them identify anchor points that they can focus on

Three practice choices from Mindful.org:

Sound, Movement, or Body
Awareness of Breath



TRAUMA-INFORMED MINDFULNESS

Modified techniques for trauma survivors

Goals of this approach include:

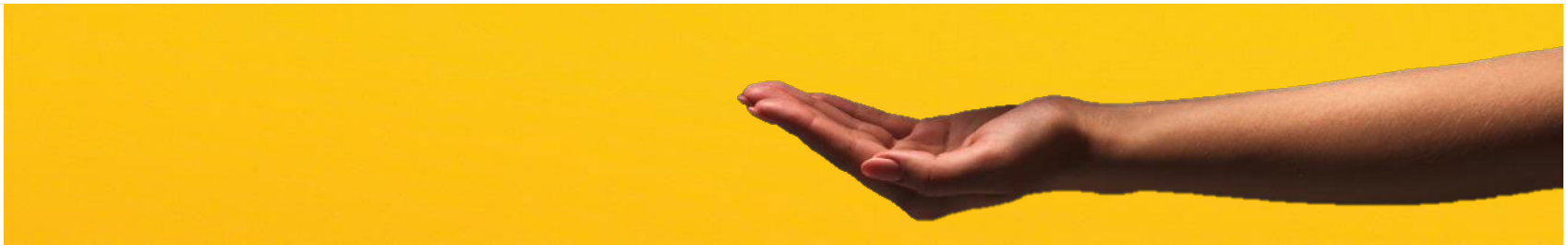
- Connecting with physical sensations in the body
- Self-regulation
- Modified versions of traditional practices

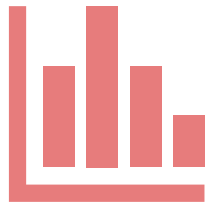
Mindful music



MINDFUL SELF-COMPASSION

Hand gestures





How do you feel after practicing this self-compassion exercise?

SUMMARY



Practicing mindfulness:

Provides in-the-moment presence and space to identify and manage thoughts, feelings, emotions, and behaviors without judgment, then accept and acknowledge the experience

Cultivates emotional regulation and resilience when stressed

Allows teens to explore what has happened, find ways to bounce back, and move forward with self-compassion



Remember

Modifying mindfulness techniques to best fit your teen improves the likelihood of cultivating greater resilience

RESOURCES

Books and Workbooks

- *Mindfulness for Teen Worry: Quick and Easy Strategies to Let Go of Anxiety, Worry, and Stress*
 - J. Bernstein, 2018
- *The Mindful Teen: Powerful Skills to Help You Handle Stress One Moment at a Time*
 - D. Vo, 2015

Video

- Guided Meditations
 - mindfulnessforteens.com/guided-meditations

Website

- ▶ mindfulnessforteens.com

Online Articles

- 3 Mindfulness Practices for Neurodiverse Meditators
 - mindful.org/3-mindfulness-practices-for-neurodiverse-meditators
- Mindfulness Activities for Teens
 - mentalup.co/blog/mindfulness-activities-for-teens
- Mindfulness for Kids
 - mindful.org/mindfulness-for-kids

Apps

- Teen Breathe
- Three Good Things
- Smiling Mind

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