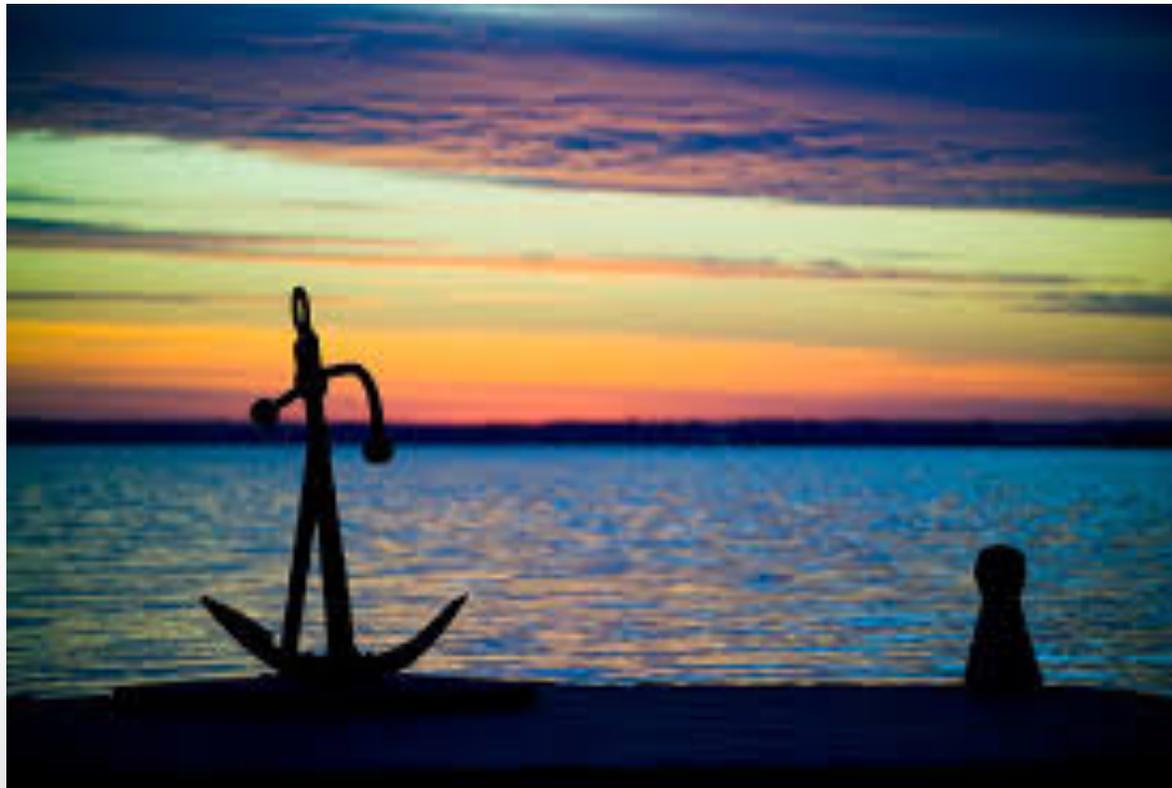


# Mindfulness: A Strategy for Building Success and Wellness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workplace

Stefanie Patterson, M.Ed., RYT  
Project SEARCH Instructor, Riverview School  
East Sandwich, Massachusetts

# Opening Meditation Anchor



# Mindfulness & Meditation Together

***Mindfulness*** is a general awareness of the world around us.

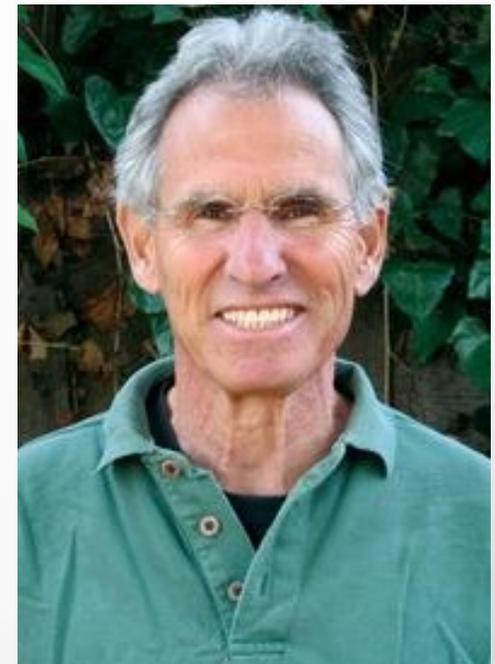
***Meditation*** is intentionally setting aside time to relax and calm the mind.

Thus, these two terms overlap in ***mindfulness meditation***, which is one of the most popular types of formal meditation.

# A Pioneer of Mindfulness

Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD is a writer, professor and founding Executive Director of the **Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.**

In 1979, Kabat-Zinn recruited chronically ill patients not responding well to traditional treatments to participate in his newly formed eight-week stress-reduction program, which we now call **Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).** Since then, substantial research has mounted demonstrating how mindfulness-based interventions improve mental and physical health.



# A Pioneer of Meditation & *The Relaxation Response*



Dr. Herbert Benson, MD has built an awareness of Mind Body Medicine and validated it through 40+years of research. Dr. Benson is the Director Emeritus of **the Benson-Henry Institute (BHI)**, and **Mind Body Medicine Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School.**

After observing the profound health benefits of bodily calm in meditation, Dr. Benson developed “the relaxation response:”

***“In order to elicit the calm response in the body, he teaches patients to focus upon the repetition of a word, phrase or movement activity (including swimming, jogging, yoga, and even knitting) for 10-20 minutes at a time, twice a day.”***

# Meditation and the Brain

## **PREFRONTAL CORTEX**

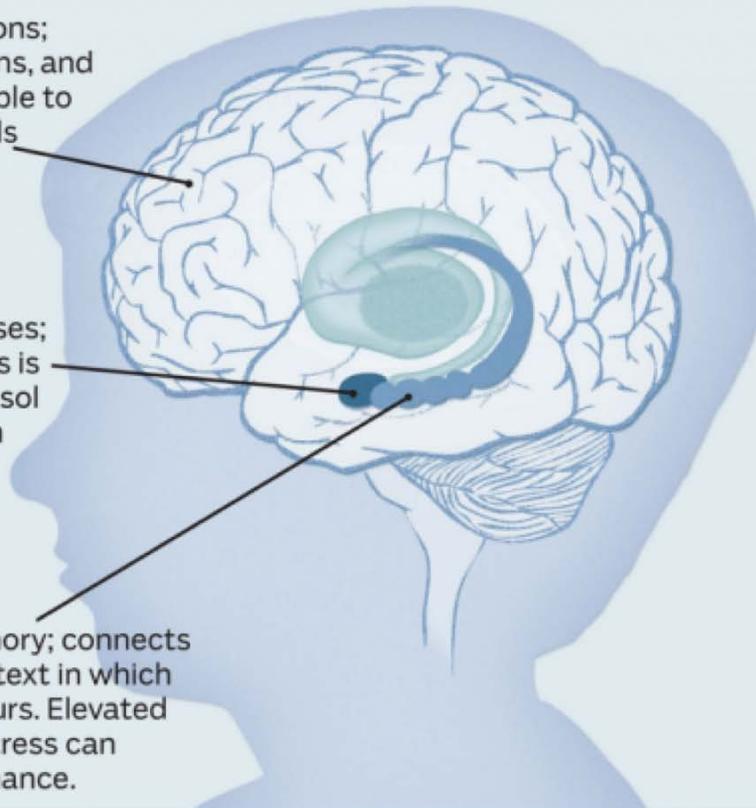
Center of executive functions; regulates thought, emotions, and actions. Especially vulnerable to elevation of brain chemicals caused by stress.

## **AMYGDALA**

Triggers emotional responses; detects whether a stimulus is threatening. Elevated cortisol levels caused by stress can affect activity.

## **HIPPOCAMPUS**

Center of short-term memory; connects emotion of fear to the context in which the threatening event occurs. Elevated cortisol levels caused by stress can affect growth and performance.



# Meditation and the Brain

## Current Research

According to world-renowned neuroscientist **Richie Davidson's recent research** [2008-present] at the Center for Healthy Minds [CHM] at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, there are three primary ways your brain may change when you practice meditation:

- ❖ **Prefrontal Lobe**: Increased grey matter density = **greater planning, problem solving and emotion regulation**
- ❖ **Amygdala Size**: Decreased in brain cell volume = **less fear and anxiety**
- ❖ **Hippocampus**: Increased thickness = **less stress and stress-related disorders like depression or PTSD**

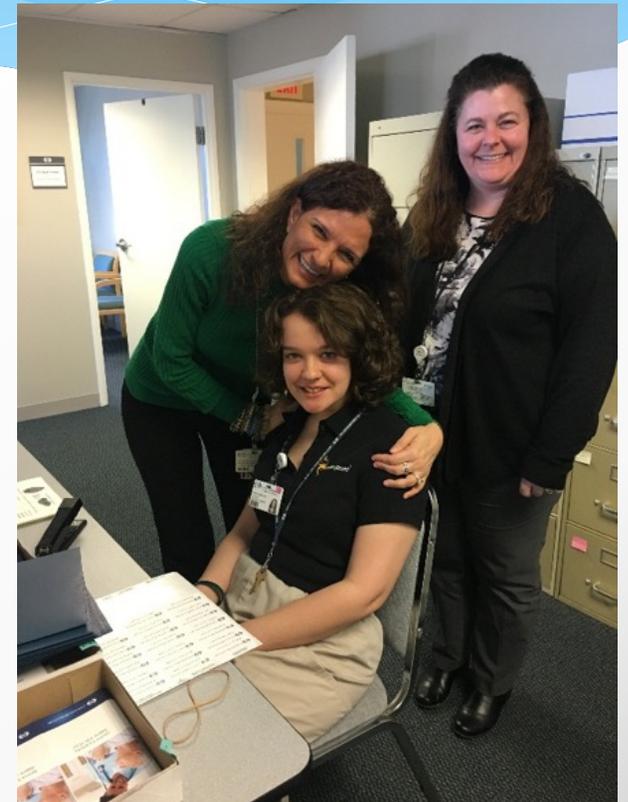
# Young People with Disabilities

## Barriers in the workplace for young people with disabilities

- ❖ **Autism** – socialization
- ❖ **ADD/ADHD** – focus, attention to detail
- ❖ **Anxiety/Depression** – stress, lack of confidence
- ❖ **Executive Functioning** – planning, organizing, problem solving, working memory

# 7 Ways Mindfulness Improves Performance and Skills At Work

- ❖ **Mindfulness Is Contagious**
- ❖ **Improve Focus**
- ❖ **Embrace Criticism**
- ❖ **Become A Better Listener**
- ❖ **Improve Relationship/Social Skills**
- ❖ **Become A Better Leader**
- ❖ **Let Go Of Stress**



<http://aboutmeditation.com/mindfulness-at-work>

# Workplace SUCCESS!

Let's look at two examples of Project SEARCH graduates who were interns at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis, MA. They have found success in the workforce and are leading healthy, empowered lives.



**Mindfulness has helped them  
overcome barriers!**

# Mindfulness in Action

Building  
Confidence  
&  
Focus

# Justin



# Cape Cod Hospital Building Confidence

## 1st Rotation at CCH September – December Occupational Health Services

- ❖ Difficulty with organization & planning
- ❖ Developed a **Mindfulness System**

**“The Bureau Box”**  
*a place for Justin to put his bus pass, wallet, badge, cell phone,  
and keys in everyday*

# Cape Cod Hospital Building Confidence

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Rotation at CCH January - March Emergency Center

- ❖ Working “out of comfort zone” in the EC department
- ❖ Increased self awareness, but negative mindset
- ❖ Implemented a daily **Mantra**

**“Stand Tall”**

*Justin’s phrase used to push out the negative, increase confidence*

# Cape Cod Hospital Building Confidence

## 3rd Rotation at CCH April - June Food Services

- ❖ Increased self-advocacy - *Food Services* interview [Servsafe]
- ❖ Increased positivity
- ❖ Applied **Positive Thinking/Intention & Goal Setting** to morning routine and to help with *Transition Planning* as graduation drew near

# Outcome

## Building Confidence

- ❖ Living in an apartment with two roommates
- ❖ Working 24 hours per week in food services at two locations, a family-owned Italian restaurant and a four star inn

# Katie



# Cape Cod Hospital Building Focus

## 1st Rotation at CCH September – December Radiology

- ❖ Difficulty with organization, planning and navigating the hospital
- ❖ Impulsive decision-making, bringing social/peer drama into the workplace
- ❖ Introduced to **Deep Breathing Techniques**
- ❖ Began using “**Mindful Walking**”  
*to build awareness and personal safety*

# Cape Cod Hospital Building Focus

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Rotation at CCH January - March Nursing

- ❖ Continued support needed to navigate the busy hospital, but this time through four different departments within Nursing
- ❖ Developed a “**Mindfulness System**”
  - setting daily reminders on phone
  - recording time on task list

# Cape Cod Hospital Building Focus

**3rd Rotation at CCH  
April – June  
Emergency Center**

- ❖ Developed more independence
- ❖ Calm, professional interactions with peers and co-workers
- ❖ Applied **Positive Thinking/Intention & Goal Setting** to morning routine and to help with *Transition Planning* as graduation drew near

# Outcome Building Focus

- ❖ Living in a house with other young adults
- ❖ Working 20 hours per week in a law firm in downtown Boston
- ❖ Takes the “T” (train) to work on her own

# Review of Mindful Practices

- ❖ Mindfulness System
- ❖ Mantras
- ❖ Breathing
- ❖ Positive Thinking Intentions

# Confident & Focused



# Other activities for use in the Classroom and at the Business Site

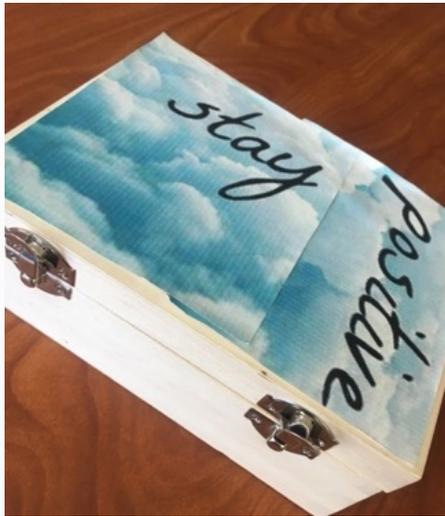
- ❖ Peace Corner
- ❖ “Stay Positive” Box
- ❖ Guided Imagery
- ❖ Mandalas
- ❖ Journaling
- ❖ Intention Setting
- ❖ Mantra
- ❖ Movement
- ❖ Touchstone
- ❖ Breathing Techniques

# Peace Corner



Create a section of your office or classroom that is filled with ***inspirational items*** - a place to sit to get centered or to relax for a few moments - include plants, encouraging books, chimes. And don't forget about the ***meditation chapel*** if you're in a hospital setting.

# “Stay Positive” Box



**The “Stay Positive” Box** Opened the hearts of our student-interns to more positivity, gratitude and kindness **each day**. Adding notes to this box in the morning helped to build a successful start to the day!



Cat was in charge of encouraging the interns to write notes, share stories or find a positive word to put into the ***“Stay Positive”*** box in the classroom each morning. Her leadership helped others feel confident and ready to work!



# Guided Imagery

## The Worry Tree

Select a tree somewhere on the interns' route/walk to work. Describe the tree as a place where interns can place their worries. As the day goes on, the wind, water and air will take care of these worries for them.



Ryan placed his negative, anxious thoughts in the worry tree on his way to work in the mornings. His self-worth and confidence in the workplace would shine when he was not overly worried.



# Mandalas

Before morning meeting, during break or at the end of the day, provide mandala coloring books and colored pencils.

Coloring can provide:

- ❖ **Stress Relief**
- ❖ **Focus and Creativity**
- ❖ **Social Time**
- ❖ **A Complement to Meditation**

<http://wellnessmama.com/77075/adult-coloring-books/>



# Journaling

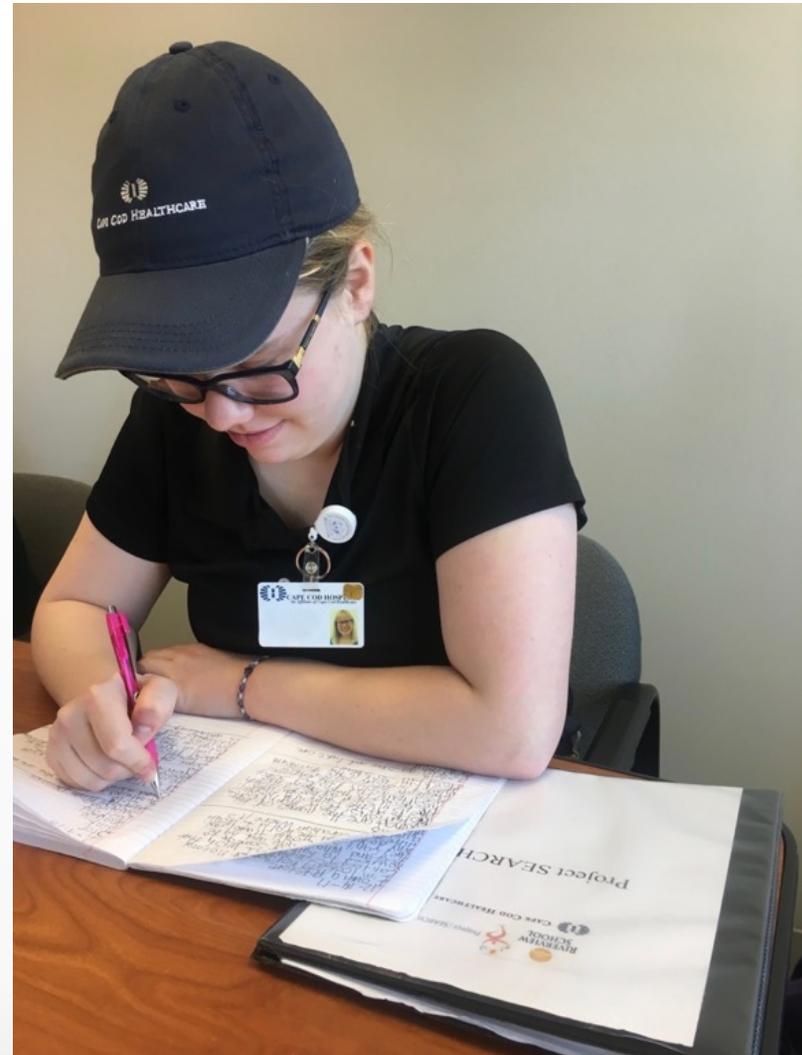
**Journaling** – provide time before morning meeting or after work for journaling

## **Journal prompt ideas:**

- ❖ **Describe** a time when you used one of your professional skills while on the job?
- ❖ **When** do you feel most successful? **Why?**
- ❖ **What** will you do today to make it the best day ever?



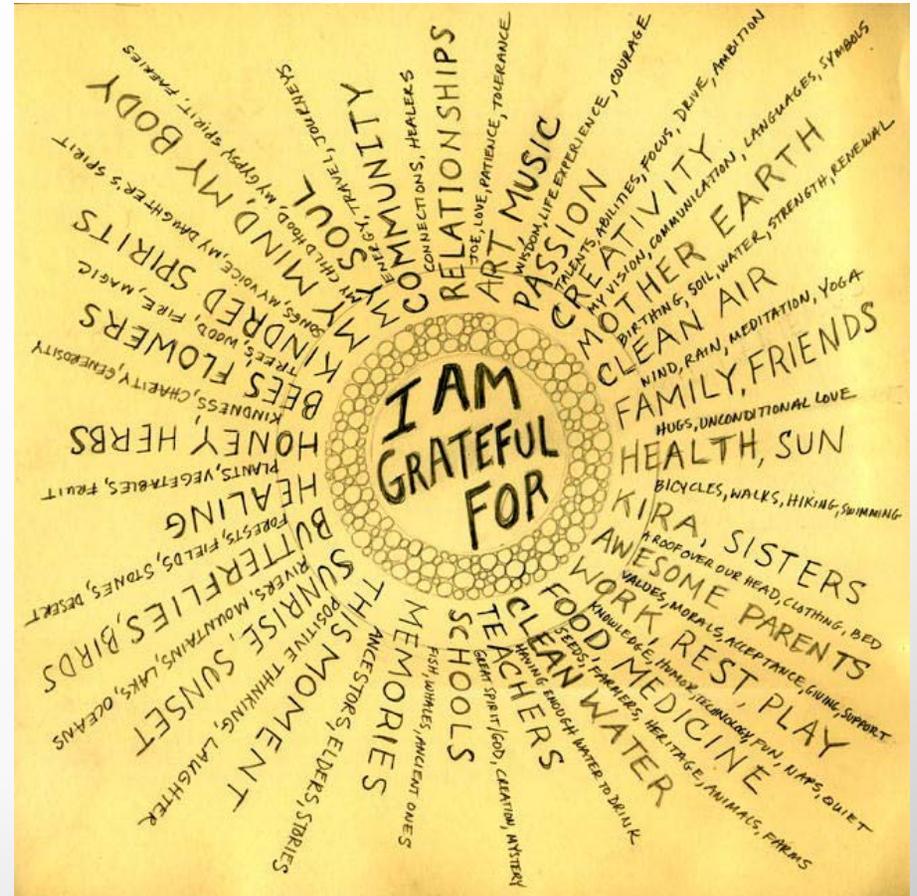
Jane writes in her ***journal*** everyday, whether it's to answer a prompt on the board or to pass the time in a “professional manner” while waiting for morning meeting to start.



# Intention

Setting an **intention** is to put forth a course of action for the day.

For example, if you wish to **focus on the positive** in your life, your intention for the day might be to show *gratitude* for what you have in your life now.



# Intentions – Monthly Themes

- ❖ September – Believe
- ❖ October – Beauty
- ❖ November – Gratitude
- ❖ December – Giving
- ❖ January – New Beginnings
- ❖ February - Love
- ❖ March – Hope
- ❖ April - Calm
- ❖ May - Joy
- ❖ June - Growth



Aaron found his **“happy place”** during morning meditation. He set an intention each morning to think of his family before going to his internship. This is **gratitude** and being a successful worker coming together!



# Mantra

**Mantra** is a word, statement or sound repeated frequently to aid in concentration during meditation



To help Caleb focus both his mind and body, to pay attention to detail and to function in settings like the Pharmacy and the OR, he created the mantra:

***“Quiet Mind, Quiet Body”***



# Movement

## 5 SEATED YOGA POSES YOU CAN DO **IN A CHAIR**



*Seated Cat  
and Cow*



*Seated Forward  
Fold*



*Chest  
Expansion*



*Seated  
Pigeon*



*Seated Spinal  
Twist*

Jason thrived in a work setting where he could be “on the move” most of the time. Teaching him ***simple seated yoga stretches*** at the end of morning meeting helped to clear the clutter of anxious feelings and support his goal of flexibility, both figuratively and literally. Here he is in a quiet, content moment after lunch!



# Touchstone

A ***touchstone*** is an small object that can be placed in your ***pocket*** and touched to provide stress relief or a reminder to breath and find your center.



Alex would sometimes get anxious if he thought too far ahead, especially about his future, so he learned to stay in the present moment with breathing techniques and using his blessing touchstone as a reminder to ***“be present.”***



# Breathing Techniques

## **Anchor Breath**

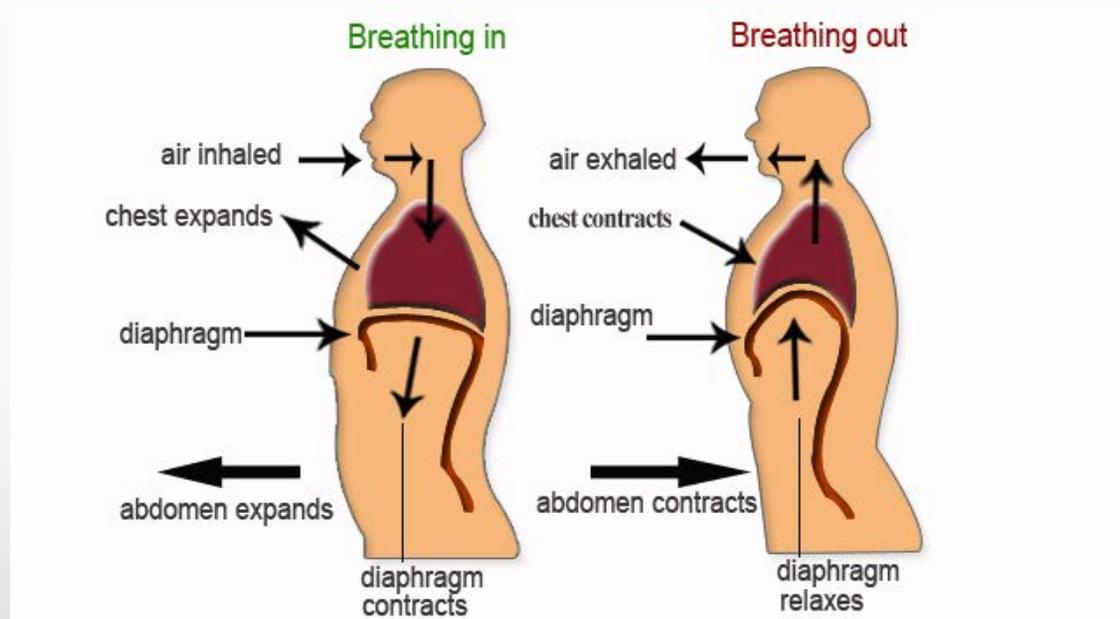
Finding the deep calm



# Breathing Techniques

## Rhythmic Breathing

1,2,3



# Breathing Techniques

**Teach the Exhale**



# Breathing Techniques

## Recycle Breathing Flip Flop



# Breathing Techniques

**CALM iPhone App >>>>>>>**

Structured breathing  
modules and meditations



# Building Your Toolkit

## Sound

use a chime, bell or singing bowl to signal a change in activity – end of class, start of daily meditation



# Building Your Toolkit

## Talking piece

find a stone, crystal or other object as a way to practice mindful turn-taking and listening



# Building Your Toolkit

**Leader** – encourage students/interns to choose and lead a meditation or a classroom activity or even to become a workplace mentor



# Building Your Toolkit

**Mindful Jobs** - assign students/interns a job to do during mindfulness activities – “light keeper” and “bell ringer”



# Building Your Toolkit

## Mindfulness Cards

make your own or buy mindfulness cards with inspirational words or phrases (mantras!)



***After I meditate, I feel ready for a long day at work – Renee***

***When I meditate, I can think of my  
“happy place” – it’s awesome - Aaron***

***I meditate on my own now at home -  
anonymous***

***Meditation helps me to feel relaxed  
and less stressed – Caleb***

***I feel so relaxed when I meditate – Mike***

***Meditation is very calming,  
and I look forward to it  
every day - anonymous***



# And remember...

## Practice the pause.

Pause before judging. Pause before assuming. Pause before accusing. Pause whenever you're about to react harshly and you'll avoid doing and saying things you'll later regret.

Lori Deschene

*Daily Vibes*

# Resources

## Books:

- Bailey, Ann, Joseph Ciarocchi, and Louise Hayes. *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life: A Guide to Living an Extraordinary Life*. New Harbinger, 2012. Print.
- Beigel, Gina. *Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness Skills to Help you Deal with Stress*. Instant Help, 2010, Print.
- Rechtshaffen, Daniel J. *The Way of Mindful Education: Creating Well-Being in Teachers and Students*. 1st edition. N.p. W.W. Norton, 2014. Print.

# Resources

## Websites:

<http://www.riverviewschool.org>

<http://www.yogainbloom.com>

<http://www.bensonhenryinstitute.org/>

<http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>

<http://www.edutopia.org/article/mindfulness-resources>

<http://www.mindful.org/how-the-brain-changes-when-you-meditate/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/use-your-mind-change-your-brain/201305/is-your-brain-meditation>

# Resources

## Websites:

<http://aboutmeditation.com/mindfulness-at-work/>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/adult-coloring-books-are-not-just-a-fad-for-some-they-are-a-lifesaver/2016/05/02/47449320-f8c2-11e5-a3ce-f06b5ba21f33\\_story.htm](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/adult-coloring-books-are-not-just-a-fad-for-some-they-are-a-lifesaver/2016/05/02/47449320-f8c2-11e5-a3ce-f06b5ba21f33_story.htm)

<http://wellnessmama.com/77075/adult-coloring-books/>

<http://www.fitwoman.com/blog/2015/08/11/seated-yoga-poses-chair/>

<http://www.ncset.org/topics/sdpse/faqs.asp?topic=7>

# Questions

