



## MINDFULNESS – FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

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**The best way to capture moments is to pay attention. This is how we cultivate mindfulness. Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing.” —**

**Jon Kabat-Zinn**

Mindfulness is an attribute of consciousness long believed to promote well-being. Mindfulness has been defined as -A state of active, open attention on the present. When one is mindful, one observes his or her own thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience. Mindfulness is now being examined scientifically and has been found to be a key element in happiness.



The concept of mindfulness has roots in Buddhism and other contemplative traditions where conscious attention and awareness are actively cultivated. Most religions include some type of prayer or meditation technique that helps shift your thoughts away from your usual preoccupations toward an appreciation of the moment and a larger perspective on life. It has also been found that practice of mindfulness meditation into mainstream medicine and demonstrated that practicing mindfulness can bring improvements in both physical and psychological symptoms as well as positive changes in health attitudes and behaviors.

Mindfulness has been shown to enhance self-insight, morality, intuition and fear modulation, all functions associated with the brain's middle prefrontal lobe area. Evidence also suggests that mindfulness meditation has numerous health benefits, including increased immune functioning (Davidson et al., 2003; see Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004 for a review of physical health benefits), improvement to well-being (Carmody & Baer, 2008) and reduction in psychological distress (Coffey & Hartman, 2008; Ostafin et al., 2006). In addition, mindfulness meditation practice appears to increase information processing speed (Moore & Malinowski, 2009), as well as decrease task effort and having thoughts that are unrelated to the task at hand (Lutz et al., 2009). Some more advantages of Mindfulness are as follow:

Mindfulness improves well being

- Increasing ones capacity for mindfulness supports many attitudes that contribute to a satisfied life.
- Being mindful makes it easier to savor the pleasures in life as they occur, helps you become fully engaged in activities, and creates a greater capacity to deal with adverse events.
- Practicing mindfulness helps one to get away from the worries about the future or regrets over the past, and are better able to form deep connections with others.

Mindfulness improves physical health

- help relieve stress
- treat heart disease
- lower blood pressure
- reduce chronic pain
- improve sleep
- alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties

Mindfulness improves mental health

Mindfulness meditation is an important element in the treatment of a number of problems like

- depression
- substance abuse
- eating disorders
- couples' conflicts
- anxiety disorders
- obsessive-compulsive disorder

**According to the recent Survey in Mental Health** it was found that more than 70 percent of youth are stressed. This stress is a result of academic pressures, busy schedules, constant input from multiple sources of media, worries about the future, as well as all the interpersonal drama and negotiation that takes place with family and peers. Increasing stress may result in anger, anxiety, depression, and externalizing behaviours as well as lowered self-esteem and self-confidence which can negatively influence students' performance by disrupting their thinking and hindering their learning. These stressors, combined with a lack of knowledge about healthy stress-reducing practices, has led to a climate in which "a concerning number of youth are engaging in maladaptive behaviours such as risk-taking, non-suicidal self-injury, and

problematic video game use to manage their stress” (*Education Canada Magazine online, March 2014*).

This has also been supported by other researches that Children and adolescents are experiencing stress at unprecedented levels (Barnes, Bauza, & Treiber, 2003; Fisher, 2006; Mendelson et al., 2010). Increasing stress may result in anger, anxiety, depression, and externalizing behaviours (e.g., conduct disorder), as well as lowered self-esteem and self-confidence (Barnes et al., 2003; Mendelson et al., 2010; Smith & Womack, 1987). Thus if efforts are put in for cultivating mindfulness then it will be beneficial to students and youth. Keeping this in mind the researcher felt the need to test the mindful attention of the youth.

A research study was undertaken to find out the mindfulness of the students. 80 students from Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's Smt. Surajba College of Education.

**Thus the objectives of this study were:**

1. To determine the Mindfulness of the students on the Mindful attention awareness scale
2. To Compare the Mindfulness of the students on the basis of gender
3. To compare the Mindfulness of the Graduate and Postgraduate students

**Hypothesis of the study:**

1. There is no significant difference in the scores obtained by the male students and the female students on the Mindfulness Awareness Scale.
2. There is no significant difference in the scores obtained by the Graduate students and the Postgraduate students on the Mindfulness Awareness Scale.

**Research Design:** The method used in this research is descriptive method by using survey technique. The study includes survey data collection, processing, and then analysis of the data obtained.

**Sample:** 80 students from Smt. Surajba College of Education

**Technique:** The incidental sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample for data collection.

**Tool:** The researcher used the standardized Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, a 15-item questionnaire developed by Brown and Ryan (2003) which measures dispositional mindfulness of the students wherein they reported how often they believed they had experiences referenced by each item on a 6-point Likert scale from “almost always” to “almost never”.

**Collection of Data:-** The tool was administered 80 students. The sample consists of 15 male students and 75 female students in the average age group of 23 years. which the researcher met incidentally.

### **Scoring**

The responses were on a Likert6 point scale, Almost Always, Very Frequently, Somewhat frequently, somewhat infrequently, very infrequently, almost Never. Wherein the scores were 1, 2,3,4,5,6. Respectively. The measure of Mindfulness was calculated by adding the scores and calculating the mean.

### **Analysis of the data:**

The scores obtained were subjected to Descriptive analysis in which the mean median, mode and standard deviation and kurtosis was computed and the ‘t’ test was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table 1.1: Descriptive Analysis of the Total Sample**

<b>SAMPLE</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>MEDIAN</b>	<b>MODE</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>SK</b>	<b>K</b>
80	4.13	4.2	4.4	0.499	-0.185	0.165

The mean, median and mode of the total sample of students on mindfulness awareness scale are close to each other. This shows that the skewness is -0.185 which is negative. The Kurtosis is 0.165 which means the distribution is leptokurtic.

Mean of the total sample was **4.13** whereas the maximum score to be obtained on the standardized Mindful attention Awareness scale is 6 which indicate that the students are not completely Mindful.

### **Testing of Hypothesis- 1**

There is no significant difference in the scores obtained by the male students and the female students on the Mindfulness Awareness Scale.

**Table 1.2: Testing of Hypothesis- 1**

<b>SAMPLE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Sdm</b>	<b>'t'</b>
Male	18	4.129	0.703		
Female	62	4.132	0.786	0.713	<b>0.985</b>

**Conclusion:** It was found that there is no significant difference in the scores obtained by the male students and the female students on the Mindfulness Awareness Scale.

### **Testing of Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the scores obtained by the Graduate students and the Postgraduate students on the Mindfulness Awareness Scale.

**Table 1.2: Testing of Hypothesis-2**

<b>SAMPLE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Sdm</b>	<b>'t'</b>
Graduate	50	4.032	0.752		
Post graduate	30	4.293	0.608	0.254	<b>1.886</b>

**Conclusion:** It was found that there is no significant difference in the scores obtained by the Graduate students and the Postgraduate students on the Mindfulness Awareness Scale.

**Implications:** The youth of today are not Mindful. Mindfulness can be cultivated through mindfulness meditation, a systematic method of focusing ones attention. Mindfulness is made up of a number of skills, which require practice. These skills include awareness, nonjudgmental/non-evaluative awareness, being in the present moment. Some of the skills are:

**Mindful Awareness of one's own Breathing** : Focusing on each and every breath is an excellent way of beginning to increase your awareness of the present moment. This basic mindfulness exercise helps one to learn how to be more mindful of your breathing.

**Being Mindful of Sounds** : Practicing Mindfulness of sounds is an excellent exercise for getting in touch with the present moment The mindfulness skill of non-judgmental observation is developed. This exercise increases ones non-evaluative awareness of sounds in the present moment environment.

**Sitting Meditation** : Sitting meditation is an excellent way of practicing mindfulness, as well as learning how to bring acceptance to your thoughts and feelings. This increases the acceptance of one's internal experiences.

**Eating Mindfully**: We often eat our meals quickly without even paying attention to the rich experience of eating. This mindfulness exercise is designed to help promote mindful eating.

**Beginner's Mind**: Beginner's mind, a skill of mindfulness, focuses on being open to new possibilities. It also refers to observing or looking at things as they truly are, as opposed to what we think they are or evaluate them to be. This easy mindfulness exercise is designed to help foster beginner's mind.

**Mindfulness of Thoughts** : Mindfulness can be a wonderful skill to practice when it comes to coping with Post traumatic Stress Disorders. People with PTSD may struggle with unpleasant thoughts and memories of their traumatic event. These thoughts can take control over a person's life. Mindfulness can be used to take a step back from your thoughts and reduce their power to impact one's life. This simple exercise will help you learn how to be mindful of your thoughts.

**Conclusion**: The potential benefits of integrating mindfulness-based training into educational settings are significant in regards to effects on cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual domains. Research reviewed have suggested that

mindfulness-based practices can have a positive impact on academic performance, psychological wellbeing, self-esteem, and social skills in children and adolescents. Thus mindfulness-based training in schools and colleges will help students in life so as to manage stress and improve their wellbeing. Thus efforts should be made by educators and administrators for integrating mindfulness-based practices into the educational setting.

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