



# Mindfulness

## Teacher Guide



**athletes  
for hope**  
champs

[www.athletesforhope.org](http://www.athletesforhope.org)  
[contact@athletesforhope.org](mailto:contact@athletesforhope.org)



**CHAMPS is a program created by Athletes for Hope to inspire the next generation of youth to learn the importance of physical activity, mental health, and leadership from athlete role models.**

# Welcome!



The program's curriculum focuses on social-emotional learning by pairing interactive exercises with leadership lessons to promote physical and mental health. There are six units with each unit of the curriculum containing on-demand videos, a student workbook, and a teacher guide. Depending on availability, we also offer the opportunity for selected schools to have athlete virtual or in-person visits.

**LEARN MORE**



# Curriculum Overview



**athletes  
for hope**  
champs

Our program is designed around the

**CHAMPS**

curriculum

**C** OURAGE

**H** ONESTY

**A** CCOUNTABILITY

**M** INDFULNESS

**P** OSITIVITY

**S** TRENGTH

	Mental Health Objective	Leadership Objective
<b>Courage</b> UNIT 1	Recognize courage is needed to understand and manage emotions	Recognize the benefits of overcoming fear
<b>Honesty</b> UNIT 2	Understand how to be truthful with how you are feeling and learn to share important information with trusted adults	Understand how to be truthful in what you say and do in your interactions with others
<b>Accountability</b> UNIT 3	Learn to take responsibility for the choices you make that can help you be at your best	Learn to take responsibility for how your words and actions affect others
<b>Mindfulness</b> UNIT 4	Learn skills and techniques to help you slow down and be present and aware of your thoughts and feelings	Learn to be aware of how others are feeling
<b>Positivity</b> UNIT 5	Foster a healthy mindset that looks at things in a productive way	Encourage the uplifting of others
<b>Strength</b> UNIT 6	Foster an understanding of resilience	Learn to lead despite adversity



**athletes  
for hope**  
champs

**Mental Health  
Pillar**

**Leadership  
Pillar**

**Physical Activity  
Pillar**

<b>C</b> <b>OURAGE</b>	Awareness of feelings and emotions	Be fearless	Begin a new sport or activity
<b>H</b> <b>ONESTY</b>	Ability to talk about emotions	Be truthful	New skills take time to develop into habits
<b>A</b> <b>CCOUNTABILITY</b>	Identify choices that lead to healthy habits	Be responsible	Consistency over time produces results
<b>M</b> <b>INDFULNESS</b>	Learn tools to regulate emotions	Be present	Embrace being in the moment
<b>P</b> <b>OSITIVITY</b>	Promote a positive mindset	Be positive	Positive self-talk helps you enjoy the process
<b>S</b> <b>TRENGTH</b>	Embrace healthy resilience	Be unstoppable	Adversity is an opportunity for growth
	Our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It refers to how we think, feel, and act and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices.	The ability of an individual or multiple people to influence, guide and inspire others. Leaders set a good example and help others when they are in need.	Any activity that involves moving your body. It includes everyday activities, physically active play, and organized sports and exercise.



# Mindfulness

## Word of the Month

### Definition

Being fully present in the moment and aware of our thoughts, feelings, and experiences

### Goals

- Learn tools to regulate emotion
- Be present
- Embrace being in the moment

### Did You Know?

Athlete Mental Health Week is February 1st-February 9th. Athletes for Hope will amplify the voices and support the wellbeing of all athletes of every sport and competition level. Check out our website and social media for actionable ways to get involved!

### Objectives

- Learn skills and techniques to help you slow down and be present and aware of your thoughts and feelings
- Learn to be aware of how others are feeling

### Core Questions

- What is mindfulness?
- Why is being present sometimes difficult?
- How do you practice or use mindfulness to improve your mental health?
- How does mindfulness help you become a better leader?

# Program Structure

## Week 1

### Watch Mindfulness Video #1

Featuring Kendra Coleman,  
USA Track and Field Athlete

→ Distribute Student Workbook



## Week 3

### Watch Mindfulness Video #2

Featuring Lacey Henderson,  
Paralympic Long Jumper



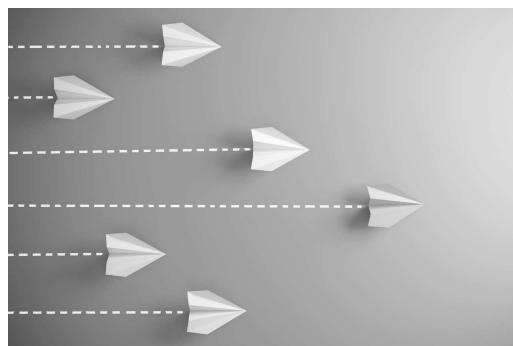
## Week 2

### Mental Health Lesson plan



## Week 4

### Leadership Lesson plan





# **Mindfulness**

**Mental Health Lesson Plan**

# Mindfulness

## Mental Health Objective

### Definition

Being fully present in the moment and aware of our thoughts, feelings, and experiences



### Objective

Learn skills and techniques to help you slow down and be present and aware of your thoughts and feelings



## Warm Up Activity: Body Scan

**5 MINUTES**

### Objective

A body scan meditation is a simple and relaxing way to check in with how your body feels. Imagine it like using a flashlight in your mind to look at different parts of your body and see how they're feeling.

#### Step 1: Get comfy!

Sit in your chair or lie down on the floor. Let your arms rest by your sides or on your lap. Close your eyes if you want, or just look at one spot in front of you.

#### Step 2: Take a deep breath.

Breathe in slowly through your nose, like you're smelling your favorite food. Hold it for a second. Now breathe out through your mouth, like you're blowing out a candle. Let's do that two more times. Nice and slow.

#### Step 3: Start at your toes.

Imagine you have a tiny flashlight in your mind, and you're shining it on your toes. Wiggle them a little if you want. How do they feel? Warm? Tingly? Or just quiet? That's okay—just notice.

#### Step 4: Move up your legs.

Now move the flashlight up to your feet, then your ankles, and slowly up your legs. Are they relaxed? Maybe you feel them touching the chair or the floor. Just notice and don't worry about fixing anything.

#### Step 5: Check your belly and chest.

Let's shine the light on your belly. Can you feel it moving as you breathe? Now check your chest. Feel the air filling it up like a balloon and letting it out. Does it feel calm or tight? Just notice.

#### Step 6: Move to your arms and hands.

Let the flashlight move down to your hands and fingers. Wiggle them a little if you want. Then check your arms. Are they resting softly, or do they feel heavy? Just notice.

#### Step 7: Go to your head.

Now let the light shine on your neck, face, and head. Is your face relaxed? Or maybe your forehead feels scrunched? Let it soften like melting butter. Notice how your head feels.

#### Step 8: Take a few more deep breaths.

Let the flashlight turn off. Now take one more big breath in, hold it, and breathe out slowly. When you're ready, wiggle your fingers and toes, and open your eyes..

How do you feel? Body scans are like giving your body a little check-up and helping it relax! You can do this anytime you want to feel calm.

## Physical Activity: Find your Feet

**5 MINUTES**

### How to Play

- First, ask students to spread out so that they have enough space to move without touching each other.
- Ask students to think about how their heartbeat changes with activity. If they aren't sure, explain how the more movement/stress/activity they experience, the faster their heartbeat goes. When they're at rest or relaxing, their heartbeat is slower. Give 1 minute of silence for students to feel their heartbeat by putting their hand over their chest.
- Now, ask students to use their feet (stomping or run in place) or hands (clapping) to mimic what they think their heartbeat would sound like in these situations:
  - When sleeping (slow)
  - When running (fast)
  - When relaxing with friends (slow)
  - When playing basketball on a hot day outside (fast)
  - When taking a really hard test (fast)
  - When being in your favorite place (slow)
- Ask students how they figured out the speed of their stomps/claps.

### Pro Tips

Some students might be more wiggly or restless than others – that's okay! If a student is extra jittery, you can validate that ("When I feel energetic, it's hard for me to sit still too. What do you notice in your body or around you when you're energetic?").

## Scenario Discussion

**10 MINUTES**

**"While playing a game at recess, you notice someone bending the rules, and it feels unfair, making you upset. What can you do to calm yourself down?"**

### Follow Up Questions

- Has anyone ever had a friend who doesn't always play fairly at recess?
  - How do you usually deal with it?
- What are some strategies to calm down?
- If the person bending the rules were on your team would you speak up?

### Takeaway

Some ways to calm yourself down can include taking a deep breath, going for a walk to cool down, or talking to someone. (Red light, Yellow light, Green light example)



# Mindfulness

## Leadership Lesson Plan



---

# Mindfulness

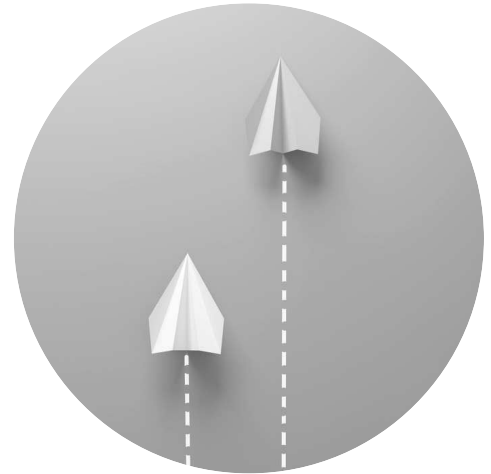
## Leadership Objective

### Definition

Being fully present in the moment and aware of our thoughts, feelings, and experiences

### Objective

Learn to be aware of how yourself and others are feeling



## Warm Up Activity: Mindful Athlete

**5 MINUTES**

### Objective

Help students practice mindfulness through visualization and light movement using sports as the theme.

### Step 1: Set the Stage (1-2 mins)

- Have students sit comfortably in a circle, on chairs, or on the floor. Ask them to close their eyes or soften their gaze.
- Say: "Today, we're going to imagine we're athletes preparing for a big game. Just like athletes need to focus and stay calm, we'll practice how to use our breathing and imagination to feel strong and ready."

### Step 2: Mindful Breathing (2 mins)

- Lead students in slow, deep breaths.
- Inhale through the nose for 4 seconds, hold for 2 seconds, then exhale slowly through the mouth for 6 seconds.
- Say: "Imagine you're about to take the first shot or step onto the field. Breathe in to gather your energy. Hold it steady. Breathe out to let go of any nervousness."
- Repeat 4-5 times, encouraging them to imagine themselves feeling more focused with each breath.

### Step 3: Sports Visualization (2 minutes)

- Guide students through a visualization: "Now imagine you're playing your favorite sport. Maybe you're shooting a basketball, kicking a soccer ball, or swinging a bat. Picture yourself moving with confidence. You can hear the sounds of the game—maybe the crowd cheering or the ball bouncing."
- Pause and ask: "What does it feel like to be in this moment? Strong? Calm? Excited? Focus on that feeling."

## Physical Activity: Musical Chairs

**5 MINUTES**

### How it Works

- **Setup:** Arrange a row of chairs in a circle or straight line, with the seats facing outward. The number of chairs should be one less than the number of participants.
- **Participants:** Players stand in a circle around the chairs.
- **Music Starts:** Someone plays music while the participants walk (or dance) around the chairs in a clockwise direction.
- **Music Stops:** When the music is abruptly stopped, everyone must quickly find a chair and sit down. Since there are fewer chairs than players, one person will be left standing.
- **Elimination:** The person left without a chair is eliminated from the game. One chair is then removed, and the game continues.
- **Repeat:** The music starts again, and the process repeats, with one chair removed each round until only one chair and two players remain.
- **Final Round:** In the last round, the two remaining participants compete for the single chair. The player who sits down first when the music stops wins.

Musical chairs is a game of anticipation, quick reflexes, and a little bit of luck, and it often leads to a lot of laughter and excitement.

## Scenario Discussion

**10 MINUTES**

**"You're having fun at recess, but you notice your friend sitting alone on a bench. Even though you're in the middle of a game, you sense something is wrong. What can you do to help your friend?"**

Discuss the scenario with the class and decide what the students would do.

### Follow Up Questions

- What would you ask or say to your friend?
- What would you ask or say to your friends you're playing the game with?
- Would you want someone to come up to you if you were alone on the bench?

### Takeaway

Being a leader means being mindful of others and yourself



# Get Involved. Be Inspired.

## We want to hear from you!

### About Athletes for Hope

Educating athletes on their potential to make a positive impact on the world, connecting them with the causes they care about & inspiring others to do the same.

### Any Questions? Want to schedule a visit?

Reach out to **Kendra Coleman** at [kcoleman@athletesforhope.org](mailto:kcoleman@athletesforhope.org)



[www.athletesforhope.org](http://www.athletesforhope.org)  
[contact@athletesforhope.org](mailto:contact@athletesforhope.org)

