



RECOGNIZING ANXIETY IN YOUTH

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of focusing on the present moment while calmly acknowledging feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.

Why Mindfulness matters

Practicing mindfulness helps by:

- **Improving grades—students who practice mindfulness before tests perform better**
- Reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress
- Improving quality of sleep
- increasing overall well-being



How to Practice Mindfulness

- **Breathing Exercises**
 - Sit comfortable with both feet on the floor. Close your eyes and take deep breaths. Count to four while you inhale and count down from four while you exhale. Do this until you feel calm.
- **Body Scan**
 - Sit somewhere quiet and without distractions. Take a deep breath and, starting at your feet, consciously relax every muscle in your body. Try to focus only on your breath and how it feels when your muscles start to relax.
- **Stairway Exercise**
 - Imagine you are standing at the top of a staircase with ten steps. With each breath, visualize yourself walking down the stairs, becoming more relaxed with each step.
- **Empty Room Exercise**
 - Imagine that you are in an empty room. Notice how you feel. Now imagine adding people, objects, decorations until you have filled it to your satisfaction. Pay attention to how satisfied, happy, and safe you feel.