

Mindful Eating

Simplified

Mindful eating is noticing **how, what, where, when and why** we eat. It connects physical, emotional and mental well-being, and increases awareness of the social and environmental factors influencing our eating habits and choices. It is a great way to delve into **mindfulness compassion** and to have an immersive, holistic, mindfulness experience.



Mindful Eating



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Mindful Eating

Why is it important?



Mindful eating can help us enjoy food more, understand our bodies better, and **improve positive feelings** about ourselves.

- It helps us use all of the senses to consciously select and enjoy foods that are both healthy and satisfying.
- It helps us acknowledge the physical and emotional response to specific foods (whether positive, negative or neutral) and the general experience of eating without judgement.



It helps **build compassion** and have better understanding of our interchangeable relation with nature - where our food comes from and how to take care of our soil and nature in return.



Develops greater awareness of how portion size and quantity influences our food choices, eating habits, and it impacts our patterns and later choices in life.



It helps us **deepen our mindful senses** to identify physical hunger and fullness cues as they arise.

What is not Mindful Eating?



1. Mindful eating is not a weight loss strategy.
2. Mindful eating is not a way to start eating less.
3. Mindful eating is not a method to criticize food choices.
4. Mindful eating is not a an unhealthy preoccupation with food.

But, rather a deep rooted appreciation to the food, where it came from, and an understanding of how it nourishes our bodies and how we can enjoy it (have a wholesome holistic experience) that makes us more aware, conscious and environment-friendly.

Study

Mindful Eating



Babies are born with the natural ability to know when they are hungry and when they are full. However, as we grow up, factors such as expectations of appetite from adults or distractions while eating, and other picked up social factors can interfere with our innate ability to regulate hunger. Practicing mindful eating connects physical, emotional, and mental well-being, as well as increases awareness of the social and environmental factors influencing eating habits. **Research has shown a positive relationship between mindful eating and overall mental well-being**

The study found that students who took part in a mindfulness-based program, which included a mindful eating component, had better social adjustment, academic performance, and stress management. (4)

Pre-Lesson

Mindful Eating

M.E is the practice that supports a more peaceful relationship with food, our bodies, and the environment as a whole.

Kids, prior to the Mindful Eating lesson, visited the garden and got to know where their food comes from and the ripple of effects of their kind hands planting the seeds earlier in the year.



Introduction

To Mindful Eating

The lesson will be introduced in a very fun, engaging way, where **kids will be active participants** in all the activities. This, to ensure kids don't get bored, gradually build their knowledge and long term interest/+ commitment to the subject.





Exercises of M.E. Lesson

1. **Little riddles**
2. **Scavenger Hunt**
3. **Mystery Food Item**
4. **Mindful Eating**
5. **Mindful Food Preparation**

Foods:

Apple
Carrot
Cucumber
Grapes
raisins

Derivatives of foods:

organic coconut sugar + lemon
(for natural caramel sauce made
from fresh apples)
organic apple cider vinegar. (for
pickled carrots and cucumber).
Making carrot juice.

What is drying, fermentation
how it helps us create more
foods and breads. E.G. (dried
apple chips).

Forms of food: solid, liquid.



Building

Fundamental Skills

Mindful Eating is a lesson that presents an opportunity to build several fundamental skills:

- * Soft and gross **motor skills** - from picking ripe veggies, washing the fruits and vegetables, setting the table to using kids (safe slicer) to cutting the vegetable and mixing the ingredients.
- * **Activating senses**; examining, touching, smelling, and tasting the food.
- * Learning virtues that are deeply rooted in mindfulness such as **patience**: for plants to grow & become fruits/veggies + patience to prepare food. And **awareness and self-compassion**: how do we regulate, to stop before we are completely full. Listening to cues from our body. And learning how can we share? (Picking our brain and thinking of ways to share our blessings with people who are not presented with the same opportunities as us in the community), how do we give back and replant the seeds from our fruits and veggies.





Topics we will address:

1

- **Hungry vs Full.** When we are hungry, our stomach may start to make noises, it may hurt a little and feel empty and we may become preoccupied with thoughts about food. We may start to feel tired, grumpy, have little energy, and not be able to focus or concentrate as well.

When we are starting to feel full, our stomachs may now feel full and will start to tell our **brains** to stop eating food. It is important to **get curious** about **how our bodies signal that we have had enough** food. If you eat too much, you may get a stomach ache or feel sick, you may also feel sluggish.



Everyone's- experiences hunger and fullness signals differently. It is normal to sometimes eat more than you are hungry for, and at other times to not eat enough. The most important thing is to get curious about our bodies and all the amazing things it does for us.



2

• Ways to enjoy our food:

Food can be enjoyed in many different ways. We may enjoy the taste of our food **by being mindful while we eat**, or taking time to admire / enjoy the texture and smell of our meals. We may also enjoy our food by preparing cultural dishes, or simply having discussions about family food traditions and cultural foods.

Eating our food with others vs alone: By eating our meals with others. **Witnessing** how **our appetite shifts** when we are eating alone vs with others.

3

It's fun when we **prepare our own foods**; knowing where our foods come from, **learn new skills**; rely less on highly processed foods/ fast food; the more we practice, the better we get and the tastier food will be!



For little toddlers they can learn a lot by observing us preparing our food, taking them to Co-op (jam3iya) and having that discussion about what to pick? Where it comes from? And how we can prepare it at home and make it yummy.



Mindful Eating

Instigate a Conversation



During this lovely weather, if you decided to go to Wafra or visit a farm - take the chance to discuss and introduce your child to the importance of planting and knowing where our foods come from.

Kids have the ability to understand and entertain big conversations; you will witness that they start raising big questions and drawing from their own observation.

Little toddlers: it can be as simple as discussing food colors. E.g. "Look at the green baby tomato, once it turns red it means it is ripe and it is time to pick it, wash it, and eat it."
"Let's think together of ways we can help baby tomato grow, do you have any ideas?"



Mindful Eating

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Older kids: If you are in a farm and got a chance to see/hear a chicken cluck, you can discuss with your child how these wonderful chickens gives us our yummy eggs that we have for breakfast. And how we can be truly kind to them by giving them a free range & an open space for them to live and feed off - because once they live cage-free (humanely raised) they tend to have a healthier/ more natural food and this reflects on the quality of eggs they give us - they give us **golden healthy eggs**. Now, the next time you're in Co-Op with your child point out the difference in color between organic eggs (golden eggs and their orange hues) and between other mass produced eggs.



Using Our Mindful Senses

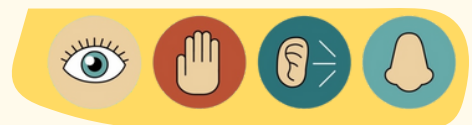
We will be delving more into mindful senses in the process of teaching mindful eating. Having toddlers enjoy a full vivid experience:

We can always consolidate that at home by simply asking the child:

1. Look—at the colour, size, texture and shape. And how this makes the dish more appetizing.
2. Taste—flavour(s): salty, sweet, sour, bitter, savory, And how do they change over time? (e.g. how when you first taste a lemon it gradually the sour taste develops).
3. Touch—texture, moisture, temperature.
4. **Listen x2 —to the sounds made by the food and also listen to your body (Are you hungry? Thirsty?)**

Helpful Tactic

Smell—provides the first clue to taste.



Strategies that Helps

Create a positive eating experience

- The more often a kid is exposed to a food, the more inclined they are to like it. Offer easily accessible foods rather than speciality foods.
- No pressure or reward for trying new foods. Research shows that children who are pressured or rewarded when trying a new food are less likely to go back to it than children who are simply exposed to the food and allowed to decide on their own whether or not to eat it.
- When doing mindful eating, we will discuss each food and its derivatives. E.G. apples and how we can make natural apple sauce, how we can prepare one item with different recipes to get different kinds of food. It is advisable to discuss with the child what different foods are made of, and to discuss what are natural ingredients and what is unnatural.



It presents an opportunity for you to discuss what is available at home and accessible and what can you create different recipes out of it.

Strategies that Helps

Create a positive eating experience

- No distraction during eating time. We live in a world that is filled with distractions, whether it is screen time or having TV on while eating. It all takes away from the mindful eating experience, and it quiets the mind's connection to our physical body. So, in many instances, we are unaware that we are full as we are consumed in what we are watching or distracted by other factors.
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- It is advisable not to move, play and jump as we are eating. As it takes away as well from the mindful eating experience.



Note



Any food recipe we create will not be consumed during school hours, but rather sent in a jar to be tried under the supervision of parents.

Some kids may not want to taste the vegetable in the food item. There is no pressure, they have the choice to pass. They can still practice using their senses to explore the food in a mindful way.

They can go home with the food if they chose to, to try it at home.

It is important to note that this is a gradual process and there is no pressure. Children will decide for themselves - it is their choice to eat—or not eat—the food item, and they can still participate in most of the activity.





ABOUT LAMA AHMED

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Mental Health **FIRST AID**®

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Lama has engaged in a **disciplined personal mindfulness practice for over 8 years** and transformed her knowledge through **Mindful Leader®** to businesses in which she trained hundreds of Professors, faculty members, CEOs and business executives. Lama is trained in Mindfulness Self Compassion, Mindfulness of Emotions and Stress-Reduction **MBSR**.



BROWN



ABOUT LAMA AHMED

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Lama is a Communication Specialist by profession, trained in **Mindfulness of Emotions** directly under Suvas Vajracharya – Chair, Founder, and WELLKIND's executive board of directors. Lama is trained in **Mindfulness- Based Stress Reduction - MBSR** from Brown University NY. A program by Dr. John Kabat Zen. Lama is trained in **Trauma Informed Practice** and has 20h of training Trauma Center TCTSY + 20 supervised hours – from Justice Resource Institute- JRI in MA Boston (Trained under the supervision of the EU division with Esther VD Sande – Somatic Psychotherapist – EMDR Clinician). And **Emotional Intelligence Facilitator** by SkillPath a program by Daniel Goleman, Ph.D. Lama is a **Registered Yoga Teacher** certified with Yoga Alliance organization.

Lama created **Mindful Leader**® based on her diverse background working with a vast community of adults in leadership roles, young adults in the workforce, and the knowledge gathered from using different scientific evidence-based disciplines. With an intent to create program that is effective, applicable to our region, and most importantly empowering (doesn't require individuals to be co-dependent but rather independently know how to use the tools they have at their disposal with the liberty to shape them as they see fits. Part of which is **Mindful Happy Childhood**® Curriculum that was created after working 4 years with children with focus on the early years and mindfulness.