

What Is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is all about learning to direct our attention to our experience as it unfolds, moment by moment, with open-minded curiosity and acceptance. Rather than worrying about what *has* happened or *might* happen, it trains us to respond skilfully to whatever *is* happening right now, be that good or bad.



Brain imaging studies show that mindfulness practice alters the structure and function of the brain in ways that appear to be linked to improved concentration, mood regulation and ability to choose appropriate responses, as well as improved immune function.

How do people learn mindfulness?

Mindfulness is always learned in a highly practical way, through experience rather than talk. We gradually learn to direct our attention in a more focused way to whatever is actually happening - whether it be our breathing, the sensations in our body, thoughts and feelings, or everyday activities such as walking and eating.



What's the point of mindfulness?

In adults, mindfulness training has been shown to improve health and wellbeing. People of all ages report after taking a mindfulness course that they are able to learn more effectively, think more clearly, perform better and they feel calmer, less anxious and less depressed. Mindfulness is now recommended by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence and GPs are referring adults on 8 week courses to reduce stress and help prevent recurrent depression. It is increasingly being used in business to improve staff wellbeing and satisfaction, in sports training to improve performance, and with children and young people and in schools to enhance wellbeing and learning.



Is it difficult?

At first the mind wanders constantly, but with practice we learn to sustain our attention and direct it more skilfully. This helps break the grip of unhelpful mental habits, judgements and impulses, making way for greater calm, and for more helpful, kinder and rational thinking about all aspects of life. However, it takes practice!



What mindfulness IS

- Paying attention to things as they happen
- A life-skill
- For some, a whole way of being
- Evidence-based

What is Paws b ?

Paws b is a twelve session mindfulness course for primary schools, based on six themes, and ideally taught to 7 – 11 year olds. It is adapted from the **.b** mindfulness curriculum for secondary schools, as well as influenced by adult mindfulness courses such as MBSR, MBCT and **.b Foundations**. It is currently being evaluated by the University of Bangor in the UK.



What makes Paws b distinctive?

Paws b was carefully crafted by classroom teachers and mindfulness experts to engage young children. It is taught with striking visuals, film clips and activities that bring mindfulness to life without losing the expertise and integrity of classic mindfulness teaching.

What are Paws b's objectives?

Paws b aims to give students mindfulness as a life-skill. Students use it ...

- to feel happier, calmer and more fulfilled
- to get on better with others
- to help them concentrate and learn better
- to help cope with stress and anxiety
- to support performance such as music and sport.

Who can teach Paws b?

Paws b has to be taught by teachers who themselves practise mindfulness regularly. An adult 8-week MBCT, MBSR or **.b Foundations** mindfulness course is a good start, followed by 6 months of developing a minimum daily practice of at least 20 mins. Then, if you also have some experience of working with 7-11 year olds, sign up for the **Paws b** Certification Course, which gives the skills, confidence and materials to teach **Paws b** to young people.

I am pleased I have been taught mindfulness because I feel that it gives me more control in my life now and as I get older.

Mindfulness has helped my story-telling mind which worries about what will it be like? It has helped me be in the here and now, enjoy it and not worry about what might happen.

What Paws b ISN'T

Boring • Hippy dippy • Yoga • Religious • Therapy

For further information email enquiries@mindfulnessinschools.org
or visit www.mindfulnessinschools.org