

Mindfulness Lesson - Listening

*"We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak."
-Epictetus (Greek Philosopher)*

Lesson Domain - Mental Literacy

Lesson Objectives: Executive Functions, emotional self-regulation, focused attention, stress reduction, cognitive flexibility, metacognition, open-mindedness, developing memory

Preparation:

Prepare a musical instrument that makes a long, sustained gentle sound. (Bells, rattles, Tibetan singing bowls, etc). If there is no instrument available, you can use a prerecorded song.

Lesson:

- 1) Let students know that we will use our ears to focus and introduce them to the instruments that will be used.
- 2) Have them sit tall and relaxed in mindful bodies to listen to the sound of the instrument. We listen to the full duration of the sound and then lift a hand up when we can't hear it anymore.
- 3) Then have them close their eyes and be very still and quiet to see if they can hear the sound even longer.
- 4) Next, listen to the sound but they won't raise their hands when they stop hearing the instrument. Instead, they will listen to other sounds that are far away, such as airplanes and distant cars.
- 5) Next, have them focus on sounds close to them such as the clock ticking or the creak of a chair.
- 6) Remind students that if a thought comes into their heads, they should let it rise up like the balloon floating into the air and then come back to listening.
- 7) Extension: we can make this into a game by having students listen to the room with their eyes closed. Then, the facilitator can make some noises in the

middle of silence - tapping fingers, rubbing hands together, shaking keys - and have the students guess what the sounds are.

Lesson Reflection Questions:

- 1) How do you feel after practicing the exercise?
- 2) What did you notice about your mind as you tried to pay attention?

Journal Prompts:

- 1) Drawing: Draw a picture as if you could see the sounds you are hearing right now.
- 2) Write what you notice about your attention when you try to stay focused on sound.

Mindful Practice:

Throughout the week, ask students to keep their mindful ears open and see if they notice any noises they usually miss. Ask students to come into class with three sounds they heard in their everyday life they had not noticed before.