

.b [dot-be] Mindfulness course for Young People



We offer .b mindfulness workshops which have been specifically developed for students aged 11-18 for delivery in schools or other youth related settings.

.b pronounced [dot-be] stands for “Stop, breathe and be!” and is delivered across ten sessions. This simple act of mindfulness is at the heart of the approach.

At the most simple level .b is an **awareness-raising exercise** to give all students a taste of mindfulness so that they know about it and can return to it later in life if they think it might help. However, for many pupils the course can relatively quickly lead to very positive outcomes: they feel calmer and more fulfilled; they can concentrate better; they have a toolkit to deal with stress and anxiety.

The course was written by experienced classroom teachers and mindfulness practitioners as part of the Mindfulness in Schools Project and the approach has been evaluated positively by the universities of Cambridge and Oxford Brookes for its effectiveness in helping young people to overcome difficulties, thrive and flourish.

We also offer courses for teachers, to enable them to develop the skills to teach mindfulness themselves.

The benefits of .b [dot-be] for students

It aims to help young people:

- To experience greater well-being (e.g. feel happier, calmer, more fulfilled)
- To fulfil their potential and pursue their own goals e.g. be more creative, more relaxed, academically, personally
- To improve their concentration and focus, in classes, in exams and tests, on the sports field, when playing games, when paying attention and listening to others
- To work with difficult mental states such as depressive, ruminative and anxious thoughts and low moods
- To cope with the everyday stresses and strains of adolescent life such as exams, relationships, sleep problems, family issues

What .b is not

.b Mindfulness Course
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There can be misconceptions about what **.b** is. Here is some clarity on what **.b** is not, taken from the Mindfulness in Schools Programme :

- **Soft, fluffy, hippy dippy.** There is a solid evidence base for teaching mindfulness which comes from careful evaluations of interventions, including some randomised control trials, and clear support from the evidence from brain imaging and the developing findings of neuroscience. It is summarised in the paper by the Mindfulness in Schools Project the 'Evidence for the Impact of Mindfulness on Children and Young People'.
- **A disciplinary technique.** Many people experience mindfulness as calming and over time many pupils do behave better, but that is not the main point, and if pursued for its own sake is likely to backfire with some resentful pupils. Mindfulness has to be for the learner themselves to help experience what is going on for them right now (including agitation, anger, the urge to fidget etc).
- **Buddhism by the back door.** Mindfulness has been developed from a Buddhist base but it is totally secular and can be engaged in by anyone of any faith, or none.
- **Relaxation.** A sense of calm and relaxation of tension in mind and body is another frequently experienced and welcome side effect of all various types of meditation, including mindfulness, but again this is not the prime goal of mindfulness, which is to be with whatever is happening, including if necessary tension and anxiety.
- **Visualisation.** Mindfulness is about getting in touch with what is actually happening in the mind and body, not taking yourself to another place or trying to create an alternative state of mind.
- **Therapy.** **.b** is education rather than therapy, and is not designed to address serious mental health problems, although it can certainly help with some difficult emotional states. It can however provide a universal entitlement for all that provides a useful backdrop and creates a climate and ethos that supports more targeted approaches for those with more severe problems. Our facilitators can assist in signposting students to more appropriate sources of help.
- **Adult mindfulness.** The course is shorter, the messages punchier and more direct and the practices and discussions briefer. The goals are more modest, and include simply making all pupils aware of the existence of mindfulness in case they wish to explore it later.

Our Teaching Team

All our teachers have at least 5 years of personal meditation practice, appropriate qualifications and supervision to lead this course. Many of our teachers are mental health professionals. All have been trained initially at Bangor University's Centre for Mindfulness, which is a leading international centre for Mindfulness research. They have subsequently undertaken the Mindfulness in Schools Project **.b** teacher training qualification. They receive regular supervision with an approved professional and receive ongoing support from Norwich Mind.

The teachers' role is to support participants to experience for themselves the benefits of mindfulness rather than to purely tell them "how it works" in theory. Courses are therefore taught in a fun, informal, participatory style.

For further information If your school or service is interested in taster sessions, teacher training or running the **.b** programme for your students, please contact mindfulness@norwichmind.org.uk

