**Mindfulness explained for younger children.**

Mindfulness is simply… ***noticing what is happening right now.***

Mindfulness is taking notice of how your body feels and what you see, smell and taste. Maybe you even feel emotions in your body, perhaps through a tightness somewhere, or a good sensation.

Mindfulness is also noticing what your mind is doing.

When you notice what is happening around you, you focus more deeply, and that attention to your own senses will help you improve in many areas of your life.

Improving concentration and focus can help you in school, at home and with friends and family

But there’s more…

When you notice what is happening around you, it can help you to calm down when you’re sad, angry or frustrated. Mindfulness helps you deal with tough emotions, and mindfulness can make you happy and feel good.

**Explaining mindfulness to teenagers**……….

Mindfulness is a basic life skill that can benefit us in many ways.

**Mindfulness is about paying attention in a particular way – on purpose, in the present moment and without judgment.**

The non-judgment part means that we simply have an experience without worrying if the experience is good or bad. By doing this, we develop more self-awareness, emotional balance, and impulse control. It’s about recognising our inner and outer experiences and understanding how they affect our well-being.

**How does mindfulness work?**

At times we can all be reactive and say or do things without thinking about the consequence. For example, when someone says something we don’t like to hear, we react. Sometimes *we* say something that we would like to take back the moment after we blurt it out. Or we are knocked down by a heavy emotion and it can take days to bounce back, sometimes even weeks.

Mindfulness helps us create space between a strong emotion or feeling and our actions. We learn to deal with positive and negative experiences more calmly and make better decisions.

When we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings, we can respond in a more appropriate way, without hurting our own feelings or the feelings of others.

As we create more emotional balance, we are less easily knocked down by our emotions, but in moments when we *are* knocked down, we bounce back faster. This is sometimes called resilience.

Pretty awesome, isn’t it?

## What is the goal of mindfulness practice?

**“*Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom”***

*Victor Frankl*

Mindfulness helps us sustain our awareness more often and for longer periods. We can begin to practice mindfulness by adding many brief moments of awareness into our lives on a daily basis.

This awareness comes with lots of benefits.

**Good things mindfulness can bring to your life:**

* Mindfulness helps us create the space between the emotions we have and the actions we use to respond to them.
* Mindfulness helps us to focus and improve.
* Mindfulness can make us feel better emotionally and physically.

There are thousands of studies that have documented the physical and mental health benefits of mindfulness. Benefits such as;

* decreased stress and anxiety,
* improved health,
* better sleep,
* improved focus and awareness,
* better problem solving,
* improved impulse control (being less reactive),
* increased compassion and kindness,
* stronger, positive relationships and friendships,
* altruism (where the person does an unselfish act of kindness without need or wish for recognition or reward)

**A word of caution…..**

We have to recognise that mindfulness will not solve every problem we have. Even if we practice mindfulness, we will still experience difficult feelings and mental chatter. However, with mindfulness, we can change our relationships with our emotions, thoughts and negative self-talk.

We don’t have to believe every thought we have, or be knocked down so often by our emotions. Sometimes we can let our thoughts drift by and then disappear, just like a cloud in the sky.