

## .b - Mindfulness in Schools Project

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Certified '.b' teacher by the Mindfulness in Schools Project, UK.



### *About mindfulness*

Mindfulness. It's all over the place. It made the cover of *Time* Magazine in 2014, where they spoke about the mindful 'revolution'. Today, there are mindful chefs, mindful mugs, mindful apps... Mindfulness is supposed to help relieve stress, sleep better, cope with demanding schedules; it can even improve your memory and reduce the aging of chromosomes.



### *But, really, what is mindfulness?*

Simply put, mindfulness is the training of the mind in a particular way. Mindfulness practitioners train their attention to stay focused on the present moment, with a compassionate and non-judgmental attitude towards whatever arises in the field of experience. It can also be defined as developing moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment.

By means of this practice, one develops acceptance, wisdom, and deep calm within. Calm develops because we take a break of our frantic mode of attention and learn to rest in the natural state of our mind. Acceptance means that we see our thoughts and feelings not judging them, but accepting them as they arise and disappear. Wisdom means that one sees thoughts as thoughts, not as 'truths', 'the absolute reality' of things. Simply put, one realizes that what happens in the mind is not 'what happens'. And this really helps to relieve all the stress that is created by our own fears, expectations, desires and prejudices.

### *Does it work? What science says*

Mindfulness practices taught today derive from ancient techniques developed in Asia over millennia, particularly in Buddhist and Yogic traditions. But the approach is completely secular and scientific. Jon Kabat-Zinn was the pioneer in bridging this gap between ancient contemplative practices and modern science. He founded the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts in 1979, and created the most famous mindfulness program: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction therapy (MBSR). Since then, the number of scientific articles devoted to the study of the effects of mindfulness in our brain and in our health has sky-rocketed, reaching over 550 publications in 2013.

Some of the proven facts of this research are:

- ✓ It reduces our levels of hormones such as [cortisol](#), associated with stress and anxiety. It also reduces the physical manifestations of stress, such as high blood pressure.
- ✓ It helps with depressive moods. So much so that research suggest that a [Mindfulness-Based intervention is as effective as antidepressants](#).

- ✓ It helps coping with physical pain as effectively as painkillers do.
- ✓ It literally changes your brain. The areas associated with fear and anxiety decrease, whereas regions of the brain associated with emotion regulation, memory and cognitive superior functions.
- ✓ It helps you focus for longer periods of time and in a better way, therefore compensating the increasing tendency towards distraction, speed and multitasking. This results in a healthier mind.
- ✓ It makes you feel more connected and happier.
- ✓ It even slows the ageing process!!

## *Does it for children?*

With so many benefits for adults, the question naturally arises: is mindfulness good for children? Is it safe to teach it to developing brains? Would it interfere with their learning? Wouldn't it be better to do sports, or chess, or memory training?

Evidence suggests that nowadays children and teenagers face increasing levels of stress, possibly as much as adults do.

However, boys and girls of 12, 15, 17 do not have the coping strategies that adults usually have. Mindfulness training provides teenagers with strategies to manage anxiety, stress and emotional unbalance.

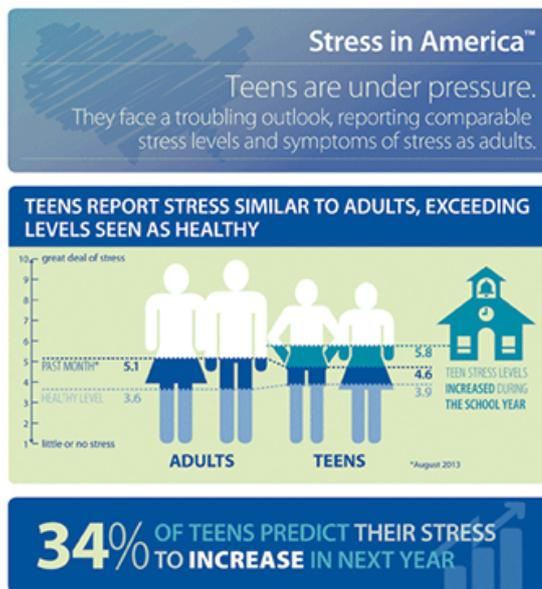
## *What is the '.b' program?*

During the 80s and 90s the main applications of mindfulness in the West took place in the clinical contexts: pain-related patients (MBSR in the USA) or psychological patients (MBCT in the UK). However, in recent years many professionals who have a long experience with mindfulness practice have been trying to adapt it to their professional contexts: law practice, prisons, even the army.

In education, the breakthrough came about in 2007, when high school teachers and mindfulness practitioners Richard Burnett and Chris Cullen developed the first mindfulness program designed to learners, in the belief that the young people in their classrooms could benefit from learning mindfulness skills. They founded the Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP), which currently has over 3000 trained teachers across the globe.

The roots of the MiSP curricula (**.b**, for ages 12 – 17; and **Paws b**, for ages 7 – 11) are MBSR and MBCT (which we saw before) but adapted to the environment of a school. The objective is to introduce young people to the potential benefits of mindfulness in the safety of the school classroom. Taught by well-trained teachers **.b** and **Paws b**, it can be conceived as a toolkit of practices, which aim to dip children's toes into mindfulness in ways which they find helpful and enjoyable.

Currently the **.b** is the most widespread mindfulness program for teenagers in the world, and is currently undergoing the largest scale scientific study ever done: MYRIAD. The study is being done by



the Oxford Center for Mindfulness, and the results will be published in 2018 and onwards. It will provide definite evidence of all the benefits of mindfulness in adolescence.

### *What are the outcomes?*

Since the '.b' program started in 2007, a number of studies have been conducted on the effects of its programmes on pupils and teachers. Some of the proven benefits of mindfulness training in learners are:

- ✓ [Lower depressive symptoms](#) and stress, and greater wellbeing.
- ✓ Improvements in resilience and wellbeing. Students [reported to feel more confident and academically competent](#).
- ✓ [Improvements in performance, attention](#), mood, and relationships.
- ✓ [Less mind wandering](#) and hypercritical self-beliefs.
- ✓ Ability to [control attention](#).
- ✓ Reduced stress and self-judgement, and [improved wellbeing](#), mindfulness, and self-kindness.

### *Who is the teacher?*

Nuño Aguirre de Cárcer (1982) is a comparative literature scholar specializing in Indian contemplative traditions and their correlations in contemporary literature. He currently teaches at the School of Languages, Literatures and Media at Wits University.

He has a long experience as a mindfulness practitioner, which started when he was 19. He has completed the MBSR training, has a postgraduate certificate on Mindfulness and Education by Almería University, and is currently doing a postgraduate course on mindfulness interventions at Stellenbosch University.

Nuño has been teaching adults since 2014, and is a certified teacher of the .b program since 2015. This means he has completed the qualifications necessary to teach the .b program.

A father of a 4 year old boy and a 2 year old girl, Nuño is very passionate about children, and has a lot of teaching experience.

### *See it for yourself*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8UhpgtSzvg>

### *Will my kid like it? Here are some testimonials*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyeyjWsubmc>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyZbE2Je\\_zc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyZbE2Je_zc)