



**Mindfulness and Adverse Childhood
Experiences (ACE'S)**



What is mindfulness?

- Paying attention to the moment.
Focusing on feelings and sensations.
 - No judgment or deep interpretation.
 - Has roots in meditation and Buddhist practices.
 - Isn't exclusive to spiritual people.
 - 1990's Jon Teasdale and Phillip Barnard. "Doing Mode" and "Being Mode".
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Goals of mindfulness?

- Increase self awareness.
- Increase calmness.
- Decrease stress.
- Centre yourself and be more capable of dealing with decisions and negative emotions.



Goals of mindfulness?

Specifically in children it looks at:

- Emotional regulation.
 - Decrease in emotional outbursts.
 - Strategies to self soothe.
 - Group mindfulness activities increasing social mindfulness.
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Mindfulness -Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)



- Pioneered by Jon Kabat in the late 1970's.
- Structured program.
- Meditation.
- Body Scans.
- Yoga.
- Tai Chi
- MBSR and depression.
- Less formal form of treatment.



Mindfulness -Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)



- Combines Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and mindfulness.
- Can be delivered one to one or in a group.
- Development of skills for life.
- Handy for children and young people.
- Appropriate for school setting.
- Focuses on changing perception on thoughts and feelings.
- Barnard and Teasdale's (1991).,
- Based on their model.
- Switch modes of the mind freely.

ACE's and Their Influence on Children.

- Lee et al (2020): ACE's more likely to develop depression and anxiety.
- Elmore et al (2020): ACE's associated with much higher odds of depression and anxiety in 8-17 year olds.
- Chapman et al (2004): ACE's increase likelihood of depression in adulthood.
- Desch et al (2023): Further supports this, ACE's have lasting effect on depression throughout adulthood.
- Gilford et al (2020): Addressing this early can seriously help mitigate negative health outcomes.
- Strong evidence suggesting that school age is an important stage when it comes to the prevention of the psychological effects of ACE's

Mindfulness Research

- Brown et al (2007): Mindfulness has proven useful in combating negative mental and physical health. It addresses a lot of the maladaptive thoughts other therapies deal with.
- Mckeen et al (2021): Negative cognitions associated with ACE's harm one's ability to identify and describe feelings as well as the ability to be in the moment.
- Zhihua et al (2025): ACE's are associated with lower levels of mindfulness and social mindfulness in early adulthood.
- Huang et al (2021): Mindfulness can partially reduce and mediate the negative effects of ACE's
- Whitaker et al (2014): Found that greater mindfulness is associated with fewer health issues and better health behaviour.

Mindfulness Research

- Josset et al (2024): Mindfulness based intervention linked specifically to reduced ACE's symptoms in children and benefits can last up to 12 months without a refresher course.
- Bether et al (2016): Found mindfulness skills can strengthen familial bonds and greatly increase child resilience.
- Tang et al (2015): Mindfulness can improve physical, mental and cognitive performance in children.
- Borges et al (2025): Attention to one's body, thoughts and emotional state is a strong predictor of resilience and mental health

Mindfulness Research

- Ortiz et al (2017): Mindfulness can reduce negative effects of stress.
- Dolbier et al (2021): Mindfulness can weaken the relationship between ACE's and anxiety. Useful in treatment and prevention.
- Moyes et al (2022): Targeted mindfulness based intervention especially at key stages, useful for helping with mood and anxiety.

Strengths of Mindfulness

- Can be done anywhere.
- Numerous different forms and methods.
- Qualified individuals not required.
- Low cost.
- Life long and transferable skill.
- Lots of research supporting its effectiveness.

Weaknesses of Mindfulness

- Not everyone can do it.
- It takes practice.
- Its something you must keep up.
- Limited research looking at more severe conditions.
- Loses effectiveness with more severe cases.

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