



THE 5 WS: DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

Teens learn to develop and maintain a mindfulness practice by frequently considering and asking themselves the questions from the lists below. It is not a requirement that a teen who is engaging in mindful practice needs to answer these questions each time; rather, these questions are used to minimize difficulties and distractions that arise in mindfulness practice. Educating a teen on these questions can provide a structure that will contribute to successfully developing and maintaining mindfulness practice during and after sessions.

Who

- Who is around you during a practice?
- Are you alone?
- Can you minimize the number of people around you if it would help?

What

- What practice are you doing?
- What are/were some of the successes of that practice?
- What are/were some of the barriers of that practice?
- What are you physically on (e.g., couch, bed, floor, grass, mat)?
- What thoughts came up for you during practice?
- What feelings or emotions came up for you during practice?

Where

- Explore places where you can practice (e.g., bedroom, home, school, outside, inside).
- Where are you going to do the practice?
- Where, if any, did you feel any physical pain or discomfort? If this pain was too much for you, remember to adjust yourself, move, or stop a practice altogether.

When

- When will you practice? (What day? What time of day: morning, mid-day, night? Consider making choices about when you practice. Try different times of day.)
- When can you fit this in your schedule?

Why

- Why practice mindfulness?
- Why are you deciding to do this practice?
- Why, or what, is your intention or reason for doing this practice?

How (the logistics of practice)



- How are you going to practice (e.g., lying down, sitting, walking, etc.)?
- How long are you going to do this practice for? (Consider making choices about realistic goals and lengths of time to practice. See more on titration approach below.)
- How can you minimize distractions and disturbances around you (e.g., electronics being on while practicing, telephone, other people around you, bell at school, alarm, etc.)?
- How are you going to fit this in your schedule?
- How do you feel right now? You can ask yourself this question whenever it comes to your mind—before, during, and after a practice.
- How can you (or did you) deal with difficult thoughts?
- How can you (or did you) deal with difficult feelings or emotions?

General Notes on Mindfulness Practice

- Always consider safety first.
- Use a titration approach to practice: start shorter duration practices and move up to longer practices; use more verbally guided practices first and move up to less verbally guided practices over time and when you are comfortable doing so.
- This is a lifestyle change and you need to consider how to make the time to practice and consider doing so even when you don't want to or are most stressed.
- Remember that there are no grades.
- Each day and week brings a new opportunity to practice. There is no need to beat yourself up if you didn't practice.