

Brief Instructional Samples  
(based on content from: [Breathr: An App for Mindfulness](#))

Instructional Sample #1

**3 Breaths**

- Grade/subject(s): **5/PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION**
- Big Ideas: **Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.**
- Competency – **Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others**
- Content – **Influences of physical, emotional, and social changes on identities and relationships**
- Core Competencies: **Personal Awareness and Responsibility – Self-Regulation**
- First Peoples Principles of Learning: **Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

*This is a quick and simple mindfulness exercise that can be done regularly, once or multiple times in the course of a day (in the morning, after lunch, end of the day, end of a lesson, etc.). Breathing is a foundational aspect of mindfulness, and this exercise gets students to take 3 deep, relaxing breaths to calm themselves at any point in the day.*

*Before doing the exercise for a first time, get students to practice their breathing technique...*

- *Take a slow, deep breath until your lungs are full (around 4 secs)*
- *Slowly exhale that breath until your lungs are empty (around 4 secs)*
- *While doing so, focus on the sensations of breathing (how it feels, how it makes you feel)*

*For the exercise, get students to find a comfortable position where they're sitting or standing. Invite them to close their eyes if they're comfortable. Then, ask them to take 3 deep, relaxing breaths, focusing on the sensation of those breaths while doing so. Once they're finished, invite them to open their eyes and reflect on how it made them feel.*

Resource: <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/breathr>

Instructional Sample #2

**Energy Breathing**

- Grade/subject: **6/PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION**
- Big Ideas: **Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.**
- Competency – **Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others**
- Content – **Influences of physical, emotional, and social changes on identities and relationships**
- Core Competencies: **Personal Awareness and Responsibility – Self-Regulation**
- First Peoples Principles of Learning: **Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

*A quick exercise to refocus students, and bring some energy back into the room.*

*To begin, invite students to find a comfortable position wherever they're sitting or standing in the room. The following instructions can be provided...*

- *Pretend you have an invisible straw, and try sipping small bits of air into your lungs through the straw*
- *Once it feels like your lungs are totally full, take one more sip of air! Then another!*
- *Now let it all go, breathing out through your mouth*
- *Try pushing every last bit out before taking a breath of extra fresh air*

You can repeat this exercise a few times, depending on how the students respond. Ask students to reflect on their experience and how it made them feel.

Resource: <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/breathr>

#### Instructional Sample #3

##### Pleasant Moments

- Grade/subject: **7/PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION**
- Big Ideas: **Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.**
- Competency – **Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others**
- Content – **Influences of physical, emotional, and social changes on identities and relationships**
- Core competencies:
  - **Communication: Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments**
  - **Personal Awareness and Responsibility: Self-Regulation**
- First Peoples Principles of Learning: **Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

*This exercise can easily be made into a daily or weekly routine, giving students space to appreciate the pleasant moments in life that often get overlooked. At some point in the day, give students five minutes to think about the moments in the day that made them feel happy – the moments that they smiled. Allow them to write down those moments, or just to spend the time reflecting on what those moments were.*

*After this period of reflection, challenge students to notice those moments more often as they're happening; to appreciate the pleasant moments in their day as they occur. Creating a habit out of this exercise can boost the influence these moments have on our mood and foster a greater appreciation for them when they happen.*

Resource: <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/breathr>

#### Instructional Sample #4

##### Guided Meditation: Mindful Breathing

- Grade/subject: **8/PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION**
- Big Ideas: **Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.**
- Competency – **Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others**
- Content – **Influences of physical, emotional, and social changes on identities and relationships**
- Core competencies: **Personal Awareness and Responsibility - Self-Regulation**
- First Peoples Principles of Learning: **Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

*The recording for this guided meditation can be found at <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/mindfulness-recordings> - the recording is called Mindful Breathing (feel free to explore the other guided meditations as well). To start, invite students to find a comfortable place in the classroom, sitting or standing. Once everybody is ready, you may start the recording, and it will take care of the rest.*

*If it's the students' first time trying a guided meditation, it could be helpful to remind students to be open to the experience. There's no right or wrong way to be mindful, and it may seem a little odd at first. Just stay open to the experience and you can reflect as a class once the 5 minutes is over.*

## Instructional Sample #5

### Forming an Intention

- Grade/subject: **9/PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION**
- Big Ideas: **Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.**
- Competency – **Analyze strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others**
- Content – **Influences of physical, emotional, and social changes on identities and relationships**
- Core competencies:
  - **Creative Thinking: Generating Ideas**
  - **Personal Awareness and Responsibility: Self-Regulation**
- First Peoples Principles of Learning: **Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

*This exercise is best fit for the beginning of the day, and helps students form an attitude they want to bring to the day or situation at hand – like kindness, gratitude, focus, or understanding. Invite students to find a comfortable position wherever they're sitting or standing, and to close their eyes if they'd like. The exercise begins by taking slow, relaxing breaths in and out. Then, the following instructions can be provided...*

- *Imagine how you would like your day to unfold*
- *What are your intentions? Try to be specific and believe your vision is possible*
- *Make sure your intentions are about you and not others*
- *When you receive the signal (chime, etc.) the exercise is over, open your eyes and take a moment to reflect*

*Give 1-3 minutes for students to form their intention. Once that time is up, you can then ask students to share their intentions with the class, a neighbour, or even write them down.*

Resource: <http://kelymentalhealth.ca/breathr>

## Instructional Sample #6

### Compassion

- Grade/subject: **9/PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION**
- Big Ideas: **Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.**
- Competency – **Analyze strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others**
- Content – **Influences of physical, emotional, and social changes on identities and relationships**
- Core competencies:
  - **Critical Thinking: Develop and Design**
  - **Personal Awareness and Responsibility: Self-Regulation**
  - **Social Responsibility: Building relationships**
- First Peoples Principles of Learning: **Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

*This exercise gives students space in their day to form and feel compassion towards another person in their life. To start, invite students to find a relaxing position wherever they're sitting or standing, and to close their eyes if they're comfortable doing so. The exercise begins by taking a few slow, relaxing breaths. Then, the following instructions can be provided...*

- *To start, think of somebody you've recently come into contact with. This may be a friend, family member, or someone you just met*
- *Slowly let go of any judgements you have about this person and think about things you have in common*
- *Think of this person as their own individual with similar relationships, hopes and fears as you. Allow yourself to feel connected to this person*

- *And then send a simple silent wish for them to be happy*

*Allow 10-15 seconds between instructions, so students have the chance to take them in as they're presented. Provide a short period afterward for students to reflect on their experience.*

Resource: <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/breathr>

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### **Additional Tips and Information for Teachers**

- The concept of “mental health” is often confused with “mental illness”. The Physical and Health Education curriculum focus on “mental well-being” recognizes that everyone falls somewhere on a continuum between optimal mental health and poor mental health, independent of the presence or absence of a mental illness<sup>1</sup>. From this perspective, classroom-based and whole-school strategies can be geared to enhancing the positive mental health and well-being of all students, including those with and without identified mental health challenges.
- Teachers have an important role to play in fostering the mental well-being of their students, though they do not require specialized or expert knowledge to do so (ie. they are not expected to play the role of psychologist or counsellor). As a guide, teachers may understand their role to include:
  - supporting students to understand how to foster and maintain positive mental health and well-being, and thereby enhance their readiness to learn;
  - creating a welcoming and safe classroom/school environment;
  - highlighting methods to enhance both physical and mental well-being such as adequate sleep, physical activity, healthy eating and stress management techniques;
  - helping students to recognize the signs of common mental health concerns;
  - guiding students to trustworthy information and resources related to mental health;
  - supporting students to know how to seek assistance when needed; and,
  - challenging common stigmas related to mental health.
- There are a number of simple, everyday practices that teachers can use to supplement their instructional approaches to mental well-being. Examples include:
  - increasing opportunities for physical activity

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<sup>1</sup> Consider that “mental health” and “mental illness” can be viewed as two separate but related concepts. From this perspective, someone could have optimal mental health (feeling good about and functioning well in life) while experiencing a mental illness. Conversely, someone without a mental illness could have poor mental health.

- taking students outside, even for a short time, to help them to restore readiness to learn
  - leading a circle check-in, where every student has a chance to voice their perspective
  - intentionally strengthening their relationship with students through personal conversations
- For students who are experiencing a problem related to their mental health, sources of support include:
    - talking to a school counsellor
    - Kids Help Phone #1-800-668-6868 ([KidsHelpPhone.ca](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca))
    - [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](#)
  - Teachers are encouraged to think about their own mental well-being, and what strategies may be required to support it. A number of helpful health and wellness resources can be found on the [BC Teachers' Federation website](#).