

The Benefits of Mindfulness

Wellness is Healthy for Everyone

What is wellness?

- The state of being well is actively making choices toward oneself enabling a healthy and fulfilling life
- Having responsibility for ourselves and others to improve the health of our community
- Balancing our physical, social, emotional health
- Responding to stress by managing it in strategic ways
- Accepting changes and being able to adapt as necessary
- Having purpose in our lives making meaningful connections and contributing to our community
- Seeking support and asking for help when we are challenged to practice healthy living

What is mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present, having an awareness of ourselves and others.
- Mindfulness is an element to practice wellness by making healthy choices
- Helps us center ourselves to focus our attention on the moment
- Processing our emotions and experiences to consider how we respond
- Encourages healthy responses to challenges
- The ability to reboot when we feel stress, anxiety, anger, or fear

How does mindfulness help our minds and bodies?

- Mindfulness helps with:
 - Understanding our feelings
 - Our hearts decreasing risks for heart diseases and heart attacks
 - Increasing memory, attention processing, and executive functioning
 - Improving bodily functions and your immune system's response
 - Reducing physical or psychological pain
 - Managing stress because of school or work
 - Reducing risk of health problems like dementia, anxiety, and depression
 - Self awareness, and being aware of your body's sensations, emotions, actions, and thoughts
 - Regulating emotions like anger, sadness, or fear

What is the vagus nerve?

- A cranial nerve that connects the brain to the body
- It travels from the brain stem down to the abdomen and connects with many major organs
- Affects many of our bodily functions such as breathing, digestion, heart rate, and many more
- It allows the brain to monitor and receive information about several of the body's different functions.
- One important way physical and emotional health are connected in the body

How does mindfulness connect to how the vagus nerve works in our bodies?

- Regulates relaxation and breathing
- Increases circulation
- Decreases inflammation
- Lowers heart rate and blood pressure
- Stress, anxiety, and fear management

What are some simple mindfulness strategies to help us be more aware of how we're feeling?

- Action
 - Doing various movements and postures, noticing sensations, and making healthy choices for our bodies
- Breathing
 - Restores your self-control, language, listening, and thinking
 - Focuses the mind on the present and calms the nervous system
 - Great way to manage stress
- Centering
 - Focusing attention on the present
 - Being aware of our surroundings, thoughts, and feelings
 - Can be meditation

The 3 ABC's offer many ways to be mindful and are most effective done together.

What other health and wellness resources are available in our community?

- **Wellness Center-AHS Room D-3**
Offer activities such as counseling, art, writing, reading as well as peer mediation, group meetings and other resources of support
- **La Clinica-San Lorenzo High School Health Center** Ages 11-21
Offer medical, mental health, and health education services
- **REACH Ashland Youth Center** Ages 11-24
Offer a variety of classes connected to the arts, recreation, and career while also providing medical, mental health, health education, and child care services