

A stylized sun with a smiling face, composed of concentric semi-circles in shades of yellow and orange. The sun has a simple face with two curved lines for eyes and a small upward curve for a mouth. It is surrounded by several thick, yellow, rounded rectangular rays.

MINDFULNESS

&

WELL-BEING

CLUB

BY MEGAN &
STEPHANIE

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are learning, working, and living on the traditional and unceded territory of the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc people, who have cared for and lived on these lands since time out of mind. We honor their deep connection to this land, their culture, and their ongoing contributions to the community. We recognize the lasting impacts of colonialism and commit to reconciliation by actively creating space that respects and values indigenous history, cultures, and ways of being.

Mindfulness & Well-Being Club

This is an after-school program for students in grades 3-5 focused on teaching elementary students simple strategies for relaxation and emotional regulation, such as breathing exercises, guided meditation, and gratitude journals. The initiative would introduce students to mindfulness techniques, self-care practices, and emotional wellness strategies to help them manage stress, focus better, and build resilience. It would encourage students to take care of their mental, emotional, and physical health while learning to be more present, empathetic, and aware of their feelings and the feelings of others.



Why is this initiative needed?

The Mindfulness and Well-Being Club is important because it provides students with tools to manage stress and emotions, especially during challenging times like the winter months.

According to Children First Canada, “20% of kids in Canada (1.6 million children) have diagnosed mental health challenges”

(Aurelie, 2024) such as anxiety and depression, and this program offers simple strategies like meditation, yoga, and gratitude journaling to help them build emotional resilience. It supports their mental and physical well-being, helping them focus better, regulate their emotions, and cope with everyday stress.

This program can also play a significant role in reducing stigma that exists around mental health. By

incorporating mindfulness and wellness practices into a regular after-school routine, these types of programs help normalize conversations around mental health and promotes early intervention.

When students see their peers and educators engaging in activities like meditation or stress-reduction exercises, it reinforces the idea that prioritizing mental well-being is a healthy and normal practice.

Why should youth join this club?

It's essential for youth to be part of this club because it teaches them how to manage their emotions and develop self-awareness from an early age. There are typically more resources available for students in the older grades, so this club is geared towards helping students develop strategies by beginning earlier.

The Canadian Mental Health Association states that we are waiting too long to provide access to services to youth in BC, and nearly “one-third of children are not receiving the mental health services they need.” (2023)

By practicing mindfulness, students can build better connections with themselves and others, creating a positive, supportive environment. The club also helps them understand how their physical health affects their emotional well-being, giving them lifelong skills to manage stress and stay balanced, which can improve their overall happiness and success.



Curriculum – Grade 3 Social Studies

Big Idea

Indigenous societies throughout the world value the well-being of the self, the land, spirits, and ancestors.

Curricular Competency

Students will be able to explain why peoples beliefs, values, worldviews, experiences, and roles give them different perspectives on people, places, issues, or events

Curricular Content

Students will know cultural characteristics and ways of life of local First Peoples and global Indigenous peoples

FPPL

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and ancestors

By incorporating mindfulness and well-being activities, the Mindfulness and Well-Being Club supports the Grade 3 Social Studies curriculum by teaching students about interconnectedness, a key component of Indigenous worldviews. The club also aligns with the FPPL by promoting emotional, physical, and mental well-being, which is an essential part of Indigenous teachings that value the well-being of the self, family, and community. Through the practices offered in the club, students not only enhance their own well-being but also begin to understand the broader social and cultural values that support well-being, both individually and within the larger community.

Brief History...

The elementary school years represent a crucial developmental period where children begin to experience increasing pressures, and significant emotional, cognitive, and social changes. These children are transitioning from early childhood into pre-adolescence and this time can lead to heightened stress and challenges with managing emotions. The Canadian Institute for Health Information reports that “in 2020, there were 36,708 children and youth, [as young as 5 years old], hospitalizations for mental health disorders and the Kids Help Phone reported twice as many interactions” (2021) compared to the previous year. Many students in grades 3-5 lack the necessary tools and strategies to effectively manage stress, regulate their emotions, and maintain a positive overall well-being. This program will provide students with valuable life skills that will benefit them academically, socially, and emotionally. By fostering emotional resilience, mindfulness, and an understanding of diverse viewpoints, this initiative will contribute to a positive and supportive school environment, empowering students to thrive and succeed both in and outside of the classroom.



“With good mental health literacy, we learn how to take better care of ourselves, our loved ones and our communities. We are empowered and provided with the skills that we need to help us build better lives, better systems of care and a better society.” Wei & Kutcher, 2018

What are other schools













SD83 Kwsaltktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw:

Promote health and wellness in their schools by providing multidisciplinary health and wellness centres, which are safe, culturally sensitive and comfortable settings for youth to seek care and services.



doing?

- **SD 71 (Courtenay, BC):** Developed Mindfulness Strategies to assist students in managing emotions and improving focus, including tools like 3-step calm-down routines.
- **SD73 Healthy Schools Initiative:** Access to resources to implement a Mental Health Literacy curriculum focusing on reducing stigma, understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health, understanding and identifying mental disorders and their treatments, and improving help seeking efficacy.
- **Full of Kindness (Vancouver, BC):** Provides mindfulness programs tailored for schools, aiming to help children and teenagers reduce stress, enhance concentration, and develop better social skills.

Calm Down	Calm Down	Calm Down	Calm Down
pause 	pause 	pause 	pause 
hand squeeze 	hand squeeze 	hand squeeze 	hand squeeze 
5 belly breaths 	5 belly breaths 	5 belly breaths 	5 belly breaths 

These examples demonstrate a growing commitment within BC's educational system to integrate mindfulness practices, aiming to improve students' emotional regulation, focus, and overall mental health.

Step by step process – how will students be involved

Plan the Program

- Choose a time (e.g., Wednesdays after school) and location.
- Decide on duration (e.g., 16 weeks).
- Ask for volunteers

Promote

- Advertise the club via flyers, announcements, or videos.

Gather Materials

- Prepare activities (meditation, yoga, breathing exercises).
- Create calm-down kits (journals, stress balls, etc.).

Involve Students

- Let students choose activities.
- Encourage students to become leaders to help lead sessions.
- Gather student feedback to improve activities.

Run Sessions

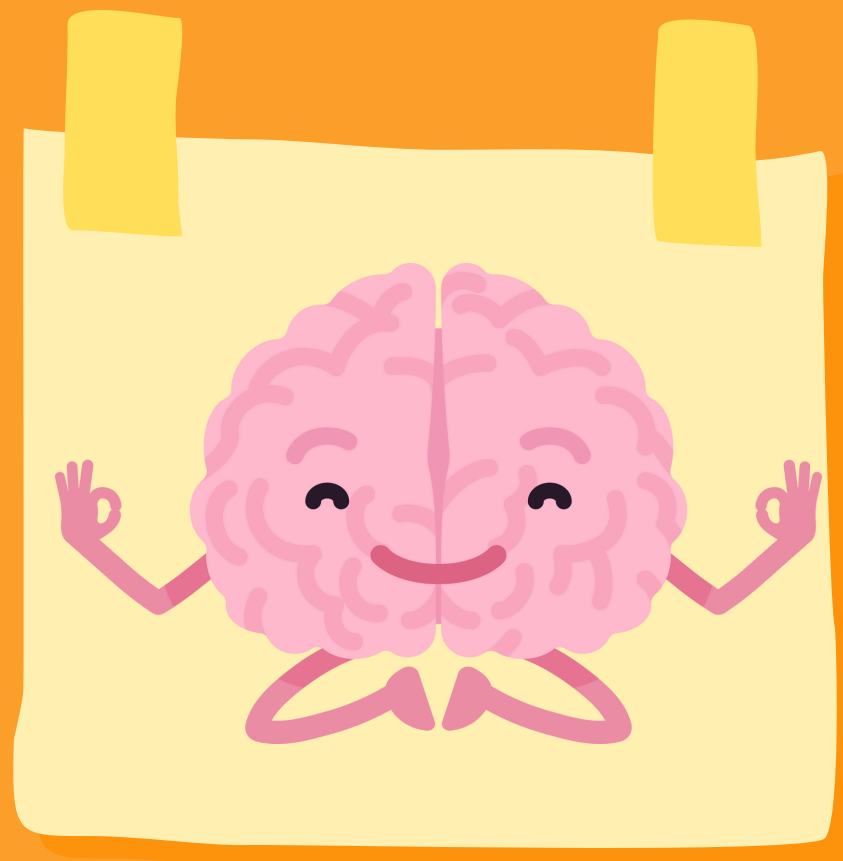
- Start with a simple check-in (how students are feeling).
- Lead activities, end with a reflection (e.g., gratitude).

Celebrate & Encourage Continuation

- Encourage students to keep practicing mindfulness at home.

IMPLEMENTATION

What does the club look like?



Club Setup:

- When & Where: Meets once a week (e.g., Wednesdays) for 16 weeks beginning in January.
- 45-60 minutes, in a quiet, relaxing space.
- Activities: Includes breathing exercises, guided meditation, yoga, gratitude journaling, and making calm-down kits.

Sessions:

- Start with Check-In: Ask students how they're feeling.
- Mindfulness Practice: Do an activity like meditation or breathing exercises.
- Reflection: Students share or write about something they are grateful for.
- Fun Activities: Sometimes include art, games, or group activities for relaxation.

IMPLEMENTATION

How to support the club during the school day



1. Daily Mindfulness:

- Morning or Break Time: Start the day or take a break with a quick mindfulness activity (e.g., 3 deep breaths).

2. Connect to Lessons:

- Link to Subjects: Use mindfulness during lessons (e.g., writing in journals or talking about mindfulness in Social Studies).

3. Calm Classroom:

- Create a Calm Corner: Set up a quiet space in the room where students can go for a moment of relaxation.
- Lead by Example: Teachers can model mindfulness to set a calm tone for the class.



Indigenous Organizations



First Nations Health Authority

- Provide education, tools and initiatives to supports peoples wellness journeys
- The FNHA drives wellness by supporting communities in developing their own health and wellness plans and then providing them health literacy support, resources, tools, and supporting them with communications and initiatives

First Nations Health Authority www.fnha.ca

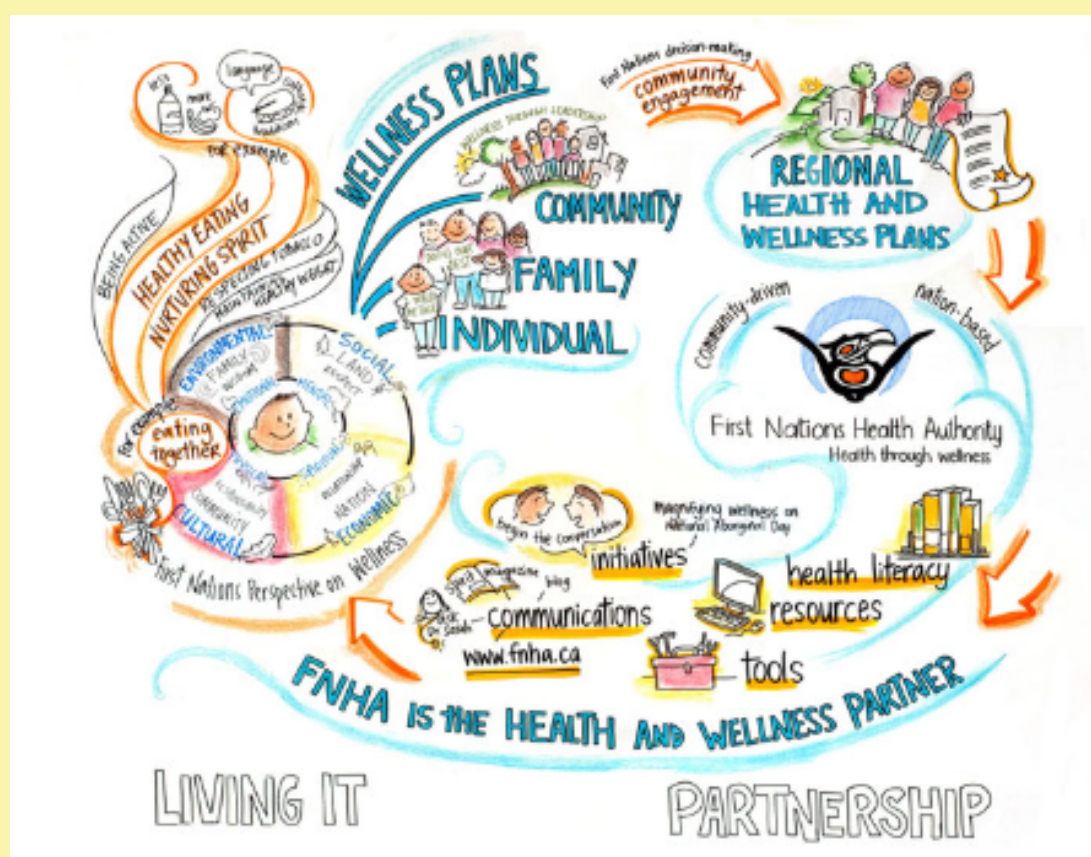
FNHA Wellness Approach

FNHA has developed a Wellness Approach to frame our Wellness Initiatives

Wellness Champions	Wellness Partner	Living it!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is a Wellness Champion • We all have circles of influence (family, work) • Sharing stories • I can! Because I AM!! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Tools • Initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading by example • Walk the talk • Indiv -> Team -> Org • Indiv -> Family -> Community -> Regional

Secwépemc Child and Family Services

- Provide Indigenous children and youth mental health services
- They work with clients on and off reserve and tailor their services to meet the individual needs of clients and their families. They offer voluntary services in a variety of locations including schools, homes, and community settings depending on what best suits those needs



Additional Resources

BC Children's Hospital - offer a variety of free services, supports and resources specifically for school communities such as:

- Support with school mental health promotion planning and implementation
- Acting as a contact point for school professionals looking for information and resources to support school and system wide changes to promote mental health and well-being
- Helping school professionals understand and move to action based on available student well-being data
- Providing evidence based mental health promotion and social emotional learning resources, information and tools to school professionals across BC
- Connecting school communities with other mental health and wellness programs and initiatives in BC
- Customized professional learning opportunities - for examples see [here](#)
- Resources and support for parents and caregivers via the Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre
- Support for school counsellors who are providing mental health and substance use care to students through the [Compass Mental Health Program](#)

YMHC student virtual workshops that address:

- Inside Out: Talking about Feelings and Coping Strategies (Kindergarten to Grade 4)
- Creating a Personal Wellness Action Plan
- Building Sources of Strength and Resilience
- Social Emotional Learning: Self and Emotional Awareness
- Building Personal and School Mental Wellness Protective Factors
- Coping Skills and Strategies
- Understanding Mental Health Challenges
- Building a Support Network
- Creating an Education Support Team
- School-Wide Strategies to Support Student Wellness
- School-Wide Strategies to Support Students with School Anxiety and Phobia

Interior Health offer various services to schools to promote health and wellness:

The Health Promoting School (HPS) Initiative provides partial funding for [HPS Coordinator positions](#) at the School District level and aims to promote and support Health Promoting Schools settings. Also provides curriculum resources for teachers.

Conclusion

In essence, an after-school mindfulness and well-being program can contribute to a shift in school culture, making mental health a part of everyday conversations and fostering a more supporting and understanding environment. By starting with the younger grades, children will become equipped with valuable tools that will serve them well throughout their lives. It will help them navigate struggles, identify when they are needing help, and result in overall better outcomes.



Kukwstsésemc



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