

---

# The Impact Of Mindfulness Practices To Treat Anxiety In Teenagers

Research shows the efficacy to treat many stresses in today's life that result in anxiety in Latino teenagers (Edwards, et al. 2014). Mindfulness interventions have become more popular in the last decade in working with teenagers' research (Edwards, et al. 2014). Mindfulness meditation techniques support teenagers to focus on the present helping them to recognize the trigger for their anxiety (Perry-Parrish, Copeland-Linder, Webb, and Sibinga, 2015). Research results have demonstrated that teenagers who practice mindfulness develop awareness and this reduces emotional distress, increase positive ways to cope with difficult situations and improves their well-being (Phillips, et al., 2012). Many counselors in training work together with teachers, both can develop mindfulness techniques that can also work in managing the difficult situation in the classroom that involves strong emotions among teenagers (Phillips, et al., 2012). Phillips, et al. (2012) found that a short mindfulness-based program can produce both beneficial changes in brain function and improved immune function. This study also showed that the degree of activation of the left prefrontal cortex, associated with positive mood states, predicted the robustness of immune response, providing support on the interrelation of affect and immune function (Phillips, et al., 2012). Researchers learned that by practicing 20 minutes of mindfulness a day, teenagers reported a subjective reduction in stress were correlated with decreased grey-matter density in the amygdala, a region known to regulate the human stress response (Phillips, et al., 2012).

What will be covered in your session; this is where you include the content you will be covering. This is where you fulfill what you said in the learning objectives. You said I was going to learn best-practices for working with quarantined adolescents? Then, tell me what some of those best practices are.

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common issues among teenagers and increase the risk of suicide attempts (Strawn, et al., 2015). Strawn, et al. (2015) found that anxiety disorders are common in youth at risk for developing bipolar disorder and anxious youth with a bipolar parent have three times the normal risk of developing mania. Many of these clients are prescribed with medication that includes antidepressants, and 50% of these clients present secondary adverse effects resulting in discontinuation (Strawn, et al., 2015). Researchers have found that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is an evidence-based, manualized treatment for emotional disorders that combines features of mindfulness training and cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT) (Strawn, et al. 2015). The inclusion of mindfulness in other therapeutic approaches shows promising efficacy data (Strawn, et al. 2015). Mostly importantly, and in contrast to antidepressants in youth with a familial risk for bipolar disorder, MBCT-C is associated with minimal adverse effects.

According to a study some regions of the brain can change when teenagers practice mindfulness. Students who had practiced mindfulness exercises for 27 minutes a day, the thickness cortical structure (i.e., grey matter) that is associated with attention, working memory, processing sensory input, self-reflection, empathy, and effective regulation increased (Phillips, et al., 2012). Researchers suggest that in patients with social phobia in whom amygdala activation is increased compared with healthy subjects--10 weeks of MBSR was associated with

---

decreased amygdala activation (Strawn, et al. 2015). A study found that anxiety symptoms were significantly reduced following a treatment (Strawn, et al. 2015). MBCT-C would be associated with increase in activation in prefrontal structures, which have been implicated in the pathophysiology of anxiety disorders (Strawn, et al. 2015).

Three mindfulness exercises that teachers can use in their classroom are:

1. Body scan – In a comfortable position, focus on your exhalations; exhale and relax. For several exhalations, focus on the supporting environment (e.g., bed, floor, chair) and allow it to support your body. Sink into it. Following these exhalations, allow your mind to wander through your body, in any sequence that occurs. As your mind moves through the body, identify any sensations you notice (heaviness, warmth, heartbeat, contact with the floor, gurgling in the stomach, muscle tightness, stillness). Upon identifying a sensation, mentally acknowledge it. If it is muscle tension, take a moment to relax that area, and then continue to wander through the body, passively searching for other sensations. You will notice that the number of sensations diminishes after a few minutes. As the mind continues to focus inward on the body, the mind will become quiet. This can be a very pleasant way to drop off to sleep (Awad, 2014).
2. Deep breathing – To practice, lie on your back, with one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Observe the movement of your two hands as you breathe. Now try to focus your breathing in your belly so that that hand moves while the hand on your chest stays virtually still. Allow your breathing to be calm and rhythmic rather than hurried, forced, or overly deep. As you breathe from deep in your belly, allow relaxation to flow into muscles throughout your body. You might find it useful to repeat a calming word or phrase to yourself, or to picture a calming image in your mind's eye. Experiment with what works best for you. Once you have developed some skill with daily practice, try the same techniques in other positions, such as standing, sitting, walking, or driving your car (Awad, 2014).
3. Counting breath 4-7-8 – This is an excellent quick relaxation technique. Place the tip of your tongue on the soft ridge of gum directly inside your top front teeth, a calming contact point. Inhale through your nose for a count of four, trying to breathe into your abdomen, per above. Hold for a count of seven. Exhale through gently pursed lips, still holding your tongue tip on your palate, for a count of eight. Repeat four times. Any counting rate works; it's the ratio that matters so use whatever is most comfortable for you (Awad, 2014).

I will be addressing specific issues related to Latino teenagers suffering from anxiety disorder and how they used mindfulness exercise to decrease its symptoms.

## References

1. Awad, A. (2014). *The relaxation and stress reduction workbook*. Lexington, KY: Ayham Awad.
2. Castellanos, R., Spinel, M. Y., Phan, V., Orengo-Aguayo, R., Humphreys, K. L., & Flory, K. (2019). A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Cultural Adaptations of Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Hispanic Populations. *Mindfulness*, 11(2), 317–332. doi: 10.1007/s12671-019-01210-x
3. Edwards, M., Adams, E. M., Waldo, M., Hadfield, O. D., & Biegel, G. M. (2014). Effects

- 
- of a Mindfulness Group on Latino Adolescent Students: Examining Levels of Perceived Stress, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Psychological Symptoms. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 39(2), 145–163. doi: 10.1080/01933922.2014.891683
4. Meiklejohn, J., Phillips, C., Freedman, M.L. et al. (2012). Integrating Mindfulness Training into K-12 Education: Fostering the Resilience of Teachers and Students. *Mindfulness* (3) 291–307. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-012-0094-5>
  5. Strawn, J. R., Cotton, S., Luberto, C. M., Patino, L. R., Stahl, L. A., Weber, W. A., ... Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience. (2016, May 17). Neural Function Before and After Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy in Anxious Adolescents at Risk for Developing Bipolar Disorder. Retrieved from <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/cap.2015.0054>
  6. Tatter, G. (2019, January 23). Making Time for Mindfulness. Retrieved from <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/19/01/making-time-mindfulness>
  7. Villines, Z. (2016, July 25). The Effects of Mindfulness on the Adolescent Brain. Retrieved from <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/effects-of-mindfulness-on-the-adolescent-brain-0727161>
  8. Program Guide Description (400 character limit)
  9. The program guide is very important, similar to the title. For those 50 sessions I'm choosing between, if your title captures my attention, then I will read the description to make my final decision. Make your program sound interesting!
  10. Counselors at schools are finding that more students are suffering from anxiety disorders. Studies suggest that mindfulness practices in students can reduce anxiety symptom and increase students' ability to stay engaged, helping them stay on track academically and avoid behavior problems (Tatter, 2019).