

Mindful Eating Activity

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- Get Chocolate Hershey Kisses (or similar small candies) needed for the activity.
- Tell the group what they are going to learn- a strategy for keeping ourselves emotionally safe through the practice of mindfulness. Ask them if they know what mindfulness means. Then provide the definition: Mindfulness is a process of awareness. It is paying attention in the present moment with openness, curiosity, and flexibility. Explain that this process of awareness involves paying attention to our experience in the moment rather than being caught up in our thoughts.
- Tell the group we are going to practice mindfulness through mindful eating. Pass out one Hershey kiss to each person. Explain that they are not to eat the candy until your instructions say that they can. Tell them they are going to experience the chocolate through the practice of mindfulness. Ask them to listen and follow along.
- Hold the candy in your hand- notice what you see-like the neutral eye of the camera.
- Unwrap the candy while noticing how the paper feels on your fingertips and how it sounds to your ears...
- Touch the candy and notice its texture. Is it smooth, or rough, or bumpy?
- Now smell the candy.... how does it smell to you?
- As you notice the candy with your eyes reflect with gratitude on all the people who worked to grow and harvest its ingredients...Breathe in a feeling of appreciation for all the beings that brought you this treat.
- Touch the candy to your tongue, put the candy in your mouth and just hold it gently against your tongue for a moment. How does it feel in your mouth? What textures do you feel?
- Start to slowly chew the candy. How does it feel? Is the texture changing as you chew it more? How does it taste as you swallow the candy....? Just be with the experience of the candy in your mouth.
- After everyone has finished eating the candy, process the experience by adding the following questions: What was it like to have a mindful eating experience? What did you notice about yourself and your awareness? Did you notice any changes or shifting of your feeling state? In what way? What feeling(s) came over you?
- Explain to the group they have just practiced mindful eating, and this is just one example of mindfulness.
- Practicing everyday mindfulness is good for our intelligence. Even if our experience in a moment is painful or challenging, we can be open and curious about it, instead of running from it or fighting with it. When we remain in our present moment-open, curious and aware- we're more able to tap our wisest, deepest, self and respond to hard situations in ways that reflect who we really are and who we want to be in the world.

Mindful eating activity adopted from Be Safe Curriculum, Michigan State University

