



# **mindfulness ambassador council guidebook**

**interactive**

---

mindfulness without borders

## mindfulness ambassador council 8-week program

---

### cultivating mindfulness and social-emotional competence

#### student guidebook

##### authors

Gary Diggins  
Soren Gordhamer  
Ronit Jinich  
Theo Koffler  
Daniel Rechtshaffen  
Itamar Stern  
Jasmin Zeger

##### contributors

Terra Dafoe  
Lucius Dechausay

##### managing editor

Theo Koffler

##### consulting editor

Lucille Blainey

##### associate editor

Leah Gardiner

##### design & production

Jerarde Felipe Gutierrez

August 2013

All content appearing in this Guidebook is protected by copyright. Mindfulness Without Borders © 2013 Student Guidebook: MAC Interactive Edition.

\* \* \*

Redistribution, replication or commercial use is prohibited without express written permission of Mindfulness Without Borders which is the sole owner and copyright holder of this property.

\* \* \*

For more information on educational programs and materials, please contact us at [info@mwithoutborders.org](mailto:info@mwithoutborders.org)

\* \* \*

Mindfulness Without Borders is a non-profit organization that brings best practices in mindfulness and social-emotional competencies to youth and their communities. We offer educational programs that explore key strategies and tools to empower individuals with vital life skills they need to tackle the challenges of an increasingly complex world.  
[www.mindfulnesswithoutborders.org](http://www.mindfulnesswithoutborders.org).

\* \* \*

[www.mindfulnesswithoutborders.org](http://www.mindfulnesswithoutborders.org)

## table of contents

---

### **preface**

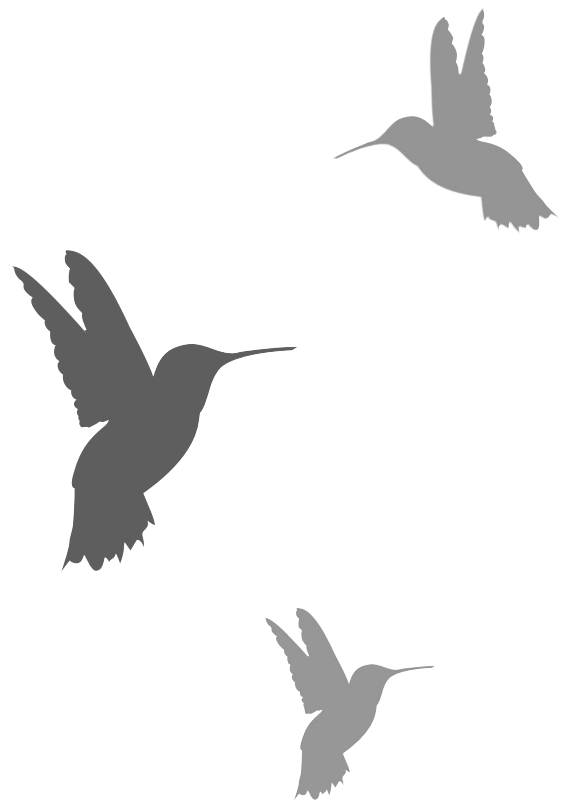
about the mindfulness ambassador council	1
about social and emotional competencies	3
present moment tools	5

### **council lessons**

meeting one: discovering inside <i>mindfulness practice: TAKE FIVE</i>	7
meeting two: mindfulness basics <i>mindfulness practice: TAKE FIVE</i>	
meeting three: paying attention <i>mindfulness practice: TUZA</i>	
meeting four: discovering inside <i>mindfulness practice: TUZA</i>	
meeting five: practicing gratitude <i>mindfulness practice: mindful eating</i>	
meeting six: noticing emotional triggers <i>mindfulness practice: TUZA</i>	
meeting seven: open-mindedness <i>mindfulness practice: body scan</i>	11
meeting eight: being the change <i>mindfulness practice: pledge for mindful living</i>	

### **appendix**

key words
TUZA tracker
pledge for mindful living



notes

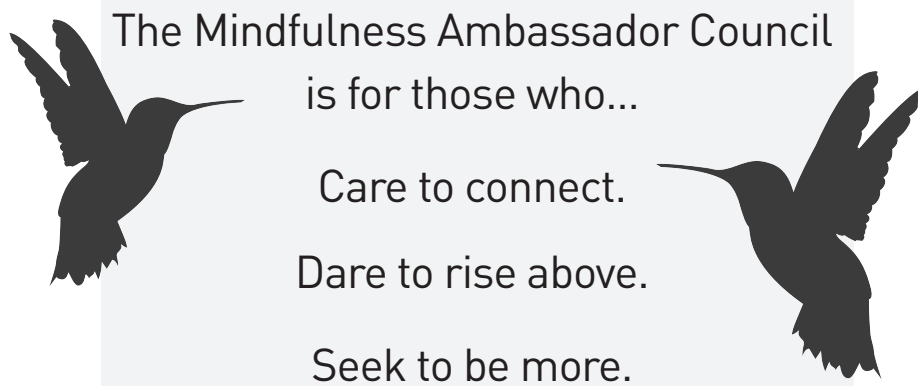
---

---

preface  
**about the mindfulness ambassador council**

**T**he *Mindfulness Ambassador Council* (MAC) program offers youth a forum to meet face to face and learn about constructive ways for addressing personal, social and community challenges. Essentially, the MAC establishes a common language based on sharing, modeling and practicing 12 principles that provide members with tools to strengthen their well-being, think critically and act with thoughtfulness and compassion. As well, council members pledge to develop the skills, knowledge and attitude to engage constructively in an increasingly interdependent world and to become messengers of mindful living within their families, schools and communities, hence *mindfulness ambassadors*.

At the heart of the MAC program are basic mindfulness practices that help young people access the wisdom within themselves and within the group. Participants are encouraged to speak from the heart, ask questions to discover their fullest potential, and explore possibilities that lead to a culture of mutual respect, collaboration and ethical concern for each other and the world.



The Mindfulness Ambassador Council  
is for those who...

Care to connect.

Dare to rise above.

Seek to be more.



notes

---

**S**ocial and emotional competencies are skillsets that can be cultivated to help us prepare for personal and professional success. The mastery of these essential skills enhances health and wellness, strong character and ethical development, caring and respectful interaction, and prepares individuals to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the larger community. By strengthening essential skills such as problem solving, conflict resolution, responsible decision-making, relationship building, goal setting, and self discipline, individuals can become effective communicators, collaborators and leaders that shape a safe, just and sustainable world.

Mindfulness Without Borders' educational content integrates the key findings of CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning), and elements of their five social and emotional learning domains, including:

**self-awareness** – accurately assessing one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths; maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence.

**self-management** – regulating one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles; expressing emotions appropriately.

**social awareness** – being able to take the perspective of and empathize with others; recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences.

**relationship skills** – establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict.

**responsible decision-making** – making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations.



notes







**L**iving *mindfully* is like being an artist: you need the right tools to practice your craft, and you need to constantly refine your technique to achieve your creative potential. In the same way, using the present moment tools below will help you to hone a consistent mindfulness practice that will in time lead to a more aware, compassionate and fulfilling way of life.

**tool 1: breathe mindfully**

Use your breath as an anchor to still your mind and bring yourself back to the present moment.

**tool 2: listen deeply**

Listen deeply to improve your understanding of how others think and feel.

**tool 3: cultivate insight**

See life as it is, allowing each experience to be an opportunity for learning.

**tool 4: practice compassion**

Consider the thoughts and feelings of others and let tenderness, kindness and empathy be your guides.

**tool 5: limit reactivity**

Pause, reflect and choose a skillful response based on ethical standards.

**tool 6: express gratitude**

Carry a spirit of appreciation into your everyday activities.

**tool 7: nurture mutual respect**

Appreciate our common humanity and value different perspectives as well as your own.

**tool 8: build integrity**

Bring forth your positive values and apply them consistently.

**tool 9: steward leadership**

Make use of your unique talents and generosity to contribute to the well-being of the whole community.

**tool 10: be peace**

Cultivate your own inner peace, becoming an agent for compassionate action.

---

notes

---





**setting the stage**

Participants sit in a circle, and the facilitator introduces the Mindfulness Ambassador Council as an 8-week program that addresses strategies to strengthen the ability to think critically, act thoughtfully and practice mindfulness. The council is a place where one sits in a circle to learn from the insights of others. It can be referred to as a 'summit of minds' and a place for sharing stories and insights.

*The facilitator introduces him/herself and shares a personal insight gained from participating in the council.*

**council guidelines**

*The facilitator explains how guiding principles help a council session to work effectively. The facilitator introduces each guideline and briefly expands on each. The council members review and agree on sticking to the following guidelines:*

- Speak only when you have the talking piece
- Listen respectfully with an openness to multiple perspectives
- Speak from the heart and use "I" statements
- Say just enough
- What is said in the council stays in the council
- Do your best to attend all meetings

**council check-in**

Participants introduce themselves by name and share one character trait they each bring to the council. For example: My name is Sam and I bring curiosity.

*A video link has been provided in the shaded box to support the educational content for each lesson.*



### **video: why mindfulness?**

In this lesson the facilitator shows the video clip to demonstrate how mindfulness is used by athletes, musicians and professionals. Please visit the url below and click on Lesson 1: Why Mindfulness to view the video.

- <http://media.mwithoutborders.org/video>

### **video dialogue**

*After screening the video, participants pass the talking piece around the circle and answer the following questions:*

- What surprised you about what you saw or heard in the video?
- How does meditation/mindfulness support the people in the video?
- After hearing what makes artists and athletes present such as a good song, taking a deep breath or coloring with their kids - share what makes you present.

*“Mindfulness is a way of being that grows out of paying attention, on purpose and without judgment, to what is happening in the present moment.”*

— Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, scientist and author

*The facilitator asks participants by a show of hands, who has sat at their desk and been distracted by something instead of listening to the class lesson? The facilitator acknowledges the students show of hands and explains that today’s lesson explores how to bring a new awareness to this experience.*

### **theme: discovering mindfulness**

**M**indfulness is our ability to pay attention to what is happening in the moment. It is present-moment awareness. Mindfulness brings us in touch with our breath, our feelings, our thinking, our bodies, our impulses and actions and their effects on others and our environment. When we learn to manage what is happening inside ourselves, we are better equipped to manage what is happening to and around us. No matter what we are doing, we can choose to do it with our full presence – with all our attention to what we are doing. This level of attention increases our ability to see things as they really are, focused on the present, rather than on the past or future. What makes mindfulness so unique is that we can all do it.

*The facilitator asks participants to name one thing that we are always doing in the present, most times without being aware of it?*

### **mindfulness practice: TAKE FIVE**

The TAKE FIVE practice directs our attention to the flow of our breath during five complete breath cycles. In this practice, a breath cycle consists of a deep, long and gentle in-breath ending in a momentary pause, followed by a deep, long and gentle out-breath that also ends in a momentary pause. Then the cycle repeats.

In this breathing practice, we use the five fingers of one hand to count each breath cycle, hence the name Take Five. We notice the body expanding with each in-breath and contracting with each out-breath. In so doing, we withdraw our attention from distracting thoughts that can cause restlessness or anxiety. Over time and with practice, our mind becomes calmer and our emotional states more balanced.

#### **TAKE FIVE**

##### **here's how:**

- Sit in a comfortable position. Allow both soles of your feet to connect to the floor and rest your hands on your lap.
- Gently close your eyes or look for a point somewhere on the floor where you can return your eyes when you get distracted.
- Turn one hand palm up to the ceiling. This will be your counting hand. At the end of each breath cycle, you will fold one finger on this hand into your palm until all five fingers are folded.
- Gently take an in-breath to fill your lungs. Notice the pause that happens naturally once the inhale is complete.
- Gently breathe out one long exhale until you notice the natural pause again. Fold your first finger. This is TAKE ONE.
- Gently take another in-breath to fill your lungs. Notice the pause that happens naturally once the inhale is complete.
- Gently breathe out until your breath comes to a pause. Fold your second finger. This is TAKE TWO.
- Breathe in again, filling up your lungs until you feel the pause. Breathe out to empty the lungs until you feel the pause. Fold your third finger. This is TAKE THREE.
- Breathe in; notice the pause. Breathe out; notice the pause. Fold your fourth finger. This is TAKE FOUR.

- 
- Now, breathe in following the whole length of the breath. Breathe out, following the whole length of the breath. This time, turn your counting hand palm down. This is TAKE FIVE.
  - Continue to breathe in and out.
  - You don't need to breathe in a special way. Your body knows how to breathe.
  - When you are ready, slowly bring your attention back to the council, and take a moment to notice how you feel.

#### **reflecting on the practice**

- Use one word to describe how you feel after the breathing practice.

#### **home assignment**

*The facilitator reviews the home assignment and asks the council members to do their best to complete the activities as they are an important part of the participant experience. In each home assignment, the mindfulness practice is referred to as **be.Mindful**.*

**be.Mindful:** Slowing down is not an easy task. To do this, we can choose to take each breath as a way to pause and notice what is happening around us and within us. In turn, each breath when taken on purpose can bring a sense of ease and ground us in the present moment. **Pause and take five mindful breaths a day.**

#### **close the council**

Council members close the council with the *I Witness Circle*. Members stand shoulder to shoulder and share a phrase, word or theme they heard or observed during the council meeting.





**open the council**

Council members sit in a circle and start with a breathing practice of TAKE FIVE. (p.9)

**council check-in**

Share one thing that took you by surprise on the way to council.

**review home assignment**

- Share one experience related to your random act of kindness and how it made you feel.

**theme: open-mindedness**

**E**veryone sees the world through their own lens – their own ideas and point of view. Often, we get set in a certain way of thinking and being. When life doesn't go exactly according to plan, we push back with resistance. When we live with set ideas, we approach new situations believing that we have nothing to learn. By contrast, when we accept that our point of view is not the only right one, we can learn to explore our everyday experiences more fully.

*Participants pass the talking piece around the circle and answer the following question:*

- Share a time when someone had a judgment or set idea about you that wasn't accurate? How did that make you feel?

When we live with an open mind, we approach life with a sense of curiosity and discovery. When we are mindful we begin to recognize that we have biases, fears, assumptions and prejudices of our own. Yet we don't let them keep us from entertaining other points of view. We notice when we dislike or are resistant to something, but we do not get stuck in

the resistance. We look for the potential in each situation, knowing that while we cannot always control what happens to us, we can choose the way in which we respond.

*Participants pass the talking piece around the circle and answer the following question:*

- In what areas of your life would you like to be more open-minded?



#### **video: Shakespeare in Prison**

The facilitator shows the video clip to demonstrate the concept of open-mindedness. Please visit the url below and click on Lesson 7: Shakespeare in Prison to view the video.

- <http://media.mwithoutborders.org/video>

#### **video dialogue**

- How do you feel after watching this video?
- What surprised you about this video?
- What in this video speaks to you about open-mindedness?

#### **mindfulness practice: body scan**

The body scan is a basic mindfulness practice. It's main intent is to train our attention to focus on the experience of the body. During the body scan, we pay attention to one part of our body at a time. While doing so, we are not trying to find anything in particular; rather we are simply taking the time to notice with openness and curiosity what is unfolding in that specific area of the body. Because our emotions are often experienced as physical sensations, practicing the body scan can help us recognize and work with those emotions and the effect they have on our body. In time and with practice, we can begin to notice what body parts are triggered when experiencing happiness, anger, fear, or sadness. This moment-to-moment attention to our physical experience invites us to befriend our emotions and accept the difficult aspects of our selves and others with empathy and kindness.



## **body scan**

### **here's how:**

- Begin lying down on your back, or seated upright with arms relaxed by your side or on your lap.
- Take a moment to settle into your body, closing your eyes or softening your gaze downwards.
- Bring your attention to the flow of your breath.
- Notice each breath coming into the body with an inhale and leaving the body with an exhale.
- With each out-breath, allow the body to relax.
- No sensation is right or wrong; the intention is to simply open your awareness to how your entire body feels.
- At the end of your next out-breath, bring your attention to focus on the back and the top of your head.
- Simply notice what sensations arise and remain open to the experience.
- If you get distracted by other thoughts, emotions or body sensations, simply and as kindly as you can, redirect your attention back to the back and top of your head.
- Now, bring your attention to focus on your face – from forehead to chin and from ear to ear. Allow all the facial muscles to soften.
- At the end of your next out-breath, shift your attention to focus on the length of your arms – from your shoulders right down to your wrists.
- Bring your attention to your hands – the palms of your hands, the back of your hands, the fingers and nails. Notice the sensation of touch between the hand and the surface where it is resting. Allow your arms to relax.
- Place your attention in the area of your torso – from the chest all the way down to the hips.
- Notice the rising and falling of the chest and belly as you breathe in and out.
- At the end of your next out-breath, bring your awareness to focus on the length of your legs – from the hips all the way down to the ankles. Allow your legs to relax.
- Bring your attention to your feet – include the soles of the feet, the tops of the feet, the toes and nails. Allow your feet to relax.
- Continue to pay attention to your breath for a few moments, allowing your whole body to relax.
- When you are ready, slowly bring your attention back to the room.

### **reflecting on the practice**

- What was this experience like for you?
- Was it difficult to remain open to the body scan?
- What sensations in your body did you experience during the body scan?

### **home assignment**

**be.Mindful:** Take time to TUZA for 3 minutes once a day, to bring your attention back to your breath and help stay in the present moment. Use the downloadable recording found in the podcast section on our website. <http://mindfulnesswithoutborders.org/podcasts>.

**Record** in the TUZA Tracker one word that best describes your experience. (see appendix)

**m.Activity:** Engage in one random act of kindness a day. Pay attention to how these acts of compassion affect others and your self-esteem.

### **Come prepared to share your findings!**

#### **close the council**

Council members are asked to stand in a circle and share one thing that they have integrated into their daily life as a result of the council meetings.

#### **note**

*The facilitator and council members should discuss creating a small celebration for the final meeting with perhaps snacks and refreshments. The facilitator should bring the Certificate of Recognition and Student Evaluations Survey to the final council meeting.*



---

*The first step toward peace-building is looking inward, cultivating your own inner peace, and then looking outward to bring peace to the world. As Mindfulness Ambassadors you are joining hundreds of council members from around the world who stand for kindness and compassion – driving positive impact in your community.*

*The Mindfulness Without Borders team would like to extend its deep appreciation to all student and teacher ambassadors who are dedicated to bringing mindful living and peace to the world.*

---

# mindfulness without borders

**[info@mwithoutborders.org](mailto:info@mwithoutborders.org) | [www.mindfulnesswithoutborders.org](http://www.mindfulnesswithoutborders.org)**

©2013 Mindfulness Without Borders. All rights reserved.