



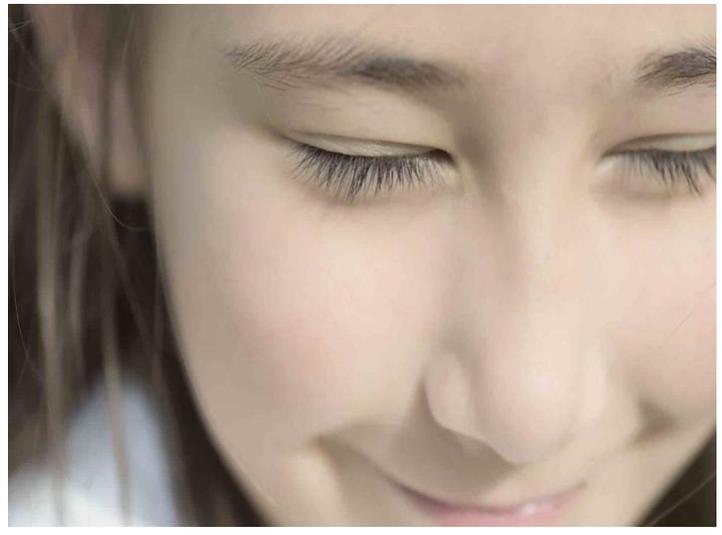
# **MBWP**

MINDFULNESS BASED WELLNESS & PEDAGOGY

# MINDFULNESS EXERCISES FOR TEACHING AND WELLBEING

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## About Us

The Institute for Mindfulness-Based Wellness and Pedagogy (MBWP) is committed to transforming the culture of performing arts and education through mindfulness. MBWP teachers use mindful awareness and related practices to help improve your teaching, personal wellness, and creative expression. MBWP teachers are experienced music educators, performers, scholars, and mindfulness practitioners. MBWP offers various opportunities for professional development, including presentations, courses, workshops, individual coaching, and consulting for educational and other institutions.

Learn more at [www.mb-wp.org](http://www.mb-wp.org).

**From the Founder and Director  
Frank M. Diaz, PhD**



On July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the teachers of the Institute for Mindfulness-Based Wellness and Pedagogy (MBWP) gathered to offer a webinar on using mindfulness to promote wellbeing and social-emotional learning for teachers and students. The webinar focused on general principles that guide MBWP practice, including positive intention, purposeful attention, non-judgmental awareness, and decentering, and described how these principles might be applied in education, artistic performance, and everyday life. As an extension of the webinar, the Institute's teachers have compiled some sample exercises that they use in order to promote mindfulness in their work as educators and musicians. We offer these exercises to you in appreciation for attending the webinar and hope that they might help bring creativity, kindness, and wellness to your life as well as to the lives of your students.

With gratitude,

*Frank M. Diaz*

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## Mindfulness in the Applied Studio

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Being mindfully present during lessons can have great benefits for you and your students. When teaching within the present moment, you see and hear more accurately, conducting lessons with greater productivity and deeper meaning. Here are a few easy ways to bring mindfulness and wellness into your studio:

1. **Check in with the student.** Understanding what your student is bringing with them to their lesson will help you move through the lesson with kindness and intentionality. Ask them how their day is going!
2. If necessary, begin the lesson with a **Breath and Sound Awareness Exercise**. Reserving a few minutes for this practice at the beginning of the lesson is an excellent way to help students quiet their minds and improve their mental focus throughout the remainder of their time with you:
  - Spend a few minutes sitting with your student in mindful breath awareness.
  - While holding that mental space, begin playing very simple exercises back and forth, with the intention that the student's focus remain gently anchored to sound alone throughout the process.
  - After five minutes or so (I recommend keeping a timer handy), ask them to describe the sounds they heard, along with how their thoughts may have wandered during the activity.
3. **Promote awareness of bodily tension.** When you notice your student's playing is inhibited by unnecessary tension in the body, ask them to play a passage or exercise while maintaining an awareness of the body part in question. The student will usually notice the tension on their own, without being prescriptively directed to do so. With an awareness of the issue, the tension quite often leaves of its own accord. You could take this one step further by asking if they notice any thoughts or feelings associated with the experience. Anxious thoughts or judgments can manifest themselves as tension in the body. By helping students understand the root causes of physical tension, you are helping them understand themselves in ways that extend far beyond the practice room.
4. **Come back to the breath.** When you notice that your student's focus has drifted, if they are getting frustrated or irritated, or if they are generally not mentally engaged, take a moment, with kindness, to help them come back to the present moment. There are many quick exercises (4-7-8, STOP, knuckle-breathing, etc.) that can help you and your student "reset" and get back on track for the remainder of the lesson. **Use your best judgment when applying these.** If they are not yet receptive to mindful techniques, forcing a student to do them can be counterproductive. Remember: each student is unique and must be taught as such!

# Mindfulness in the Choral Classroom

M. Kaitlyn Burke  
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## Ensemble Pitch and Vowel Match

Each student starts on a different pitch and any vowel. They use mindful listening skills to end up singing the same pitch and vowel. If necessary, review how to produce high and low pitches and how to make each vowel sound with the shape of their lips, tongue, and soft palate. Some students confuse high/low with loud/soft. Make sure students understand that singing a high note doesn't mean singing forte. "Listen louder than you sing."

## Singing with the Senses

This activity is based on the "Wheel of Awareness" meditation by Dan Siegel.

[https://drdansiegel.com/resources/wheel\\_of\\_awareness/](https://drdansiegel.com/resources/wheel_of_awareness/)

While students sing through a familiar song, short section of a song, or warm-up, lead them through the following:

### **Teacher Script:**

The first time through, bring your awareness to your breathing:

- Focus on Your Breathing, put a hand on your stomach and a hand on your back. Feel your mid-section expand and contract.
- Focus on the feeling of air going into your mouth or nose as you breathe in and the air moving back out slowly as you sing.

The second time through, bring your awareness to physical sensations:

- Focus on your feet. Feel all ten toes, feel your arch, feel your heels and push them into the floor. Feel which foot your weight is on, is it evenly distributed, are you leaning to one side or forward or backward? Feel a sense of grounding with the earth. Notice your shoulders, relax them if they feel tense.

The third time through, bring your awareness to your mouth:

- Focus on the shape of your mouth. Feel your soft palate lifting as you breathe. Feel the space between your teeth as you create tall vowels. Feel the placement of your tongue as you create each different vowel. Notice your teeth as you use them to articulate different consonants.

The fourth time through, bring your awareness to what you see:

- Look at the mouth shape of someone across the room. Does it match your own? How is it different? Do you think they need to adjust, do you need to adjust, or do you both need to meet in the middle?

The fifth time through, bring your awareness to what you hear:

- Listen to your voice carefully. Think about how loud it is. Are you singing with tall vowels, are you using crisp consonants to create good diction? Now listen carefully to the singers to your right and left. Are you matching their volume, vowels, and consonants? Extend your listening to all of the singers in your section. Are you matching their volume, vowels, and consonants? Extend your listening to another section of the choir. Are you matching their volume, vowels, and consonants? Extend your listening to the whole choir. Are you matching their volume, vowels, and consonants?

Great job using your senses to bring your awareness to the music and how it relates to your body. Now...bring your awareness to our choir community:

- Think about your intention for this choir class period. What have you accomplished so far this year? Congratulate yourself on what you've learned.
- Think about someone else in the class that you know has been working hard. Send them a silent congratulations. You can tell them after class if you want.
- Think about something that we've accomplished together as a class. Send out a silent congratulations to everyone in the room.

### **Body Scan for Singing Posture**

Sit or stand with an elongated singing posture.

Let the muscles and bones fill your awareness.

Now move your attention to the muscle and bone in the back of the scalp and the head.

Move your attention to your neck and throat area.

Let attention move to muscles and bones in the shoulders. (are your shoulders rolled back and down.

Move your attention to the muscles and bones down toward the elbow, wrist, and fingertips

Move your awareness to your upper back and chest

Next, your Lower back and abdomen

Now, move your attention down to hips. Is your posture aligned or are your hips leaning to one side?

Next, move your awareness to your knees. Make sure they have some bounce.

Next, direct your attention to your feet. Wiggle your toes.

Feel your feet firmly pressing into the floor.

Continue to feel that you are grounded to the floor, and expand your awareness to your diaphragm.

See if you can maintain this proud posture while we sing in class today.

# Mindful Exercises for Young Studio Strings

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## Sensory Bottle

*Fantastic for children and teenagers, but adults love it too!*

- Ask students to find a clean, clear bottle and some baby oil. You can also use water and clear glue. The more glue you use, the slower things will fall.
- Have students bring their favorite glitter. They can also use rice or any other creative material. The thinner the better as it will make the mix look clearer.
- Mix the glitter and oil inside the bottle. If using a water-based solution, add water first, and then slowly add the clear glue. Shake the bottle and see if you like the speed at which the glitter falls. If you want the glitter to fall slower, add more glue.
- When you are satisfied with your sensory bottle, seal the lid with hot glue. Wait overnight to let it dry entirely.
- Let your students know that whenever they feel frustrated, stressed, upset, sad or any other feeling that they dislike during practice or rehearsal, that they can shake the bottle.
- After students shake the bottle, ask them to imagine that their negative feelings are like the glitter in the bottle. Given time, it all falls to the bottom, clearing the mind. Make sure they are focusing on the bottle and breathing deeply as they do this exercise.
- At the beginning students will use the bottle a lot, because they will love it, and will feel they need it. However, overtime, they will learn to use it exclusively whenever they actually need it. Make your own bottle and use it whenever you feel you need it. You and your students will laugh a lot and enjoy being mindful through using the glitter as a focus point.

## Mindful Pitch Focus

- While sitting on a chair, ask your students to sit tall and breathe out all their tension.
- Ask your students to drop their jaw with their mouths close (to help them release any leftover tension).
- Then, select a pitch to play for students, and ask them to listen for that pitch as you play a scale.
- Play a scale that includes the selected note.
- Ask them to stop every time you play the selected pitch and remind them to breathe whenever they stop.
- After this, asked them what they felt like when they heard the pitch. Was it in tune? Was it flat? Was it sharp? Ask them if they noticed any tension during the exercise. Were they distracted by something else besides the pitch?

It usually takes a couple of trials for them to begin noticing where their attention goes during this exercise.

# Mindfulness in the Music Classroom

Jenny Hoye  
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## Exercise Example for Performers - Mindfulness "PASTA" Warmup Sequence

- Choose one classroom warmup per letter that focuses on:
  - P: Posture
  - A: Air
  - S: Support
  - T: Tone
  - A: Articulation
- Direct students' attention to rest on different objects throughout the warmups such as their feet flat on the ground, different areas of their body that might be tense so they can work on relaxing them, their breath moving in and out of their body, the tone of their voice or instrument, the tone of the person next to them, etc.
- Let them know that if their mind wanders elsewhere, that is fine! Just try to direct it back to the object you prompted them with
- You don't HAVE to use the PASTA letters - you could turn any warmup into a mindful warmup by doing the rest of the steps. I just personally like the PASTA letters because I think it helps the students learn the building blocks for a well-rounded warmup and they can use the letters on their own

## Exercise Example for General Music - Mindful Music Listening

- Encourage students to find a comfortable position in the room, either on the floor or in a chair
- Invite them to attend to their body and notice any sensations, etc.
- Turn their attention to their breath, taking a minute or so to allow them to feel their breath coming in and out of their bodies
- Prompt them to rest their attention on the music you're about to play - let them know that their mind might wander and that's okay, but to do their best to return to the music
- You can play whatever piece of music you would like
- You can discuss what they experienced through writing notes, small group sharing, or sharing as a whole class (or a combination of those)
- Plenty of opportunities for extension through writing, focusing on specific music elements you're studying in class, adding breathing exercises to the activity, etc.

## Example of Classroom Management - Glitter Jar

- Take a mason jar and fill it with water, several squeezes of liquid glue, and colored glitter
- Keep in your classroom and instruct students on how to use it - shake it up, practice deep breathing as you watch the glitter swirl until it settles, repeat as needed
- Can use it as a whole class re-centering activity, or can allow students to use it individually if they need a "cool down" moment during class

# Mindfulness in the Horn Studio

Kevin Miescke, D.M.

Dallas Brass

## My Mindfulness Practices

Before practicing or playing, these are my go-to exercises:

### **Breath awareness (5-10 minutes)**

- Set aside your instrument (or step away from piano or practice spot)
- Take a few deep breaths, then allow your breath to return to normal and close your eyes (if comfortable)
- Rest your awareness on your breathing, no need to change anything about it. You can count your breaths or add some simple noting such as, "In...out" or "breath"
- When you get distracted, let go of the distraction without judgement and return to the breath

### **Body scan**

- Set aside your instrument (or step away from piano or practice spot)
- Take a few deep breaths, then allow your breath to return to normal and close your eyes (if comfortable)
- Start at your toes and work your way up through all parts of your body (legs, torso, arms, shoulder, head, etc.) noticing any sensations that might be present
- When you get distracted, just being again in the last spot you remember scanning
- Caution: if you have chronic pain or a lingering injury, you may get stuck on this during a body scan. You can either avoid these spots, or do your best to allow the sensation (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral) to be as they are without trying to change them.
- There are also LOTS of body scan guided meditations available online. I recommend ones from Sharron Salzburg or Joseph Goldstein.

### **Directing awareness in students**

These are some of the elements I have found students have an easier time focusing on.

- Bodily sensations - directing awareness to legs, arms, back, seat, etc.
- Feelings of the air (wind players/singers) or tactile sensations in the fingers or arms
- Listening - directed listening to tone, articulations, character, etc.

All of these awareness directives are easier to achieve after some kind of mindfulness practice (breath awareness or body scan or other).

## **MBWP Private Studio Exercises**

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### **I. Arriving Exercise**

#### **Potential Outcome**

- Physiological, mental and emotional state regulation: help the student transition from whatever happened before the lesson into a more receptive state for learning.
- Physical tension awareness and potential release
- Students learn a way to build awareness and acceptance of the present moment.
- Establish a model for dealing with performance anxiety or generalized anxiety

#### **Script**

- "Find a safe spot to put your instrument aside and then find a comfortable seated position. This could be on a chair or on the floor."
- "Take three deep breaths, perhaps inhaling more deeply than you might normally, feeling your belly and your chest fill with air. Breathing out, let it all go and exhale fully, noticing your body rising and falling with each breath."
- "For the next breath, exhale slowly, more slowly than you inhaled, allowing yourself to settle into your chair or sink into the floor. Feel where the chair touches your body. Imagine the bottom of your feet melting into the floor beneath them. Feel held by the floor, the chair."
- "Let your breath return to normal. Allow your attention to move outward from your breath to include your entire body. Scan your body and notice where your attention is pulled: is it to a particular sensation? A feeling? A thought? What happens as you watch it? Does it stay the same? Or, does it have a flow to it: a beginning, a middle and an end? Rather than label it as 'good' or 'bad,' what happens if you just let it be as it is? If you feel yourself trying to control it or judge it, return to your breath. Breathe in and let it all go on the exhale. It is ok. This belongs, too."
- "Can you feel what this sensation trying to tell you? What does it need? Imagine feeling the answer in your body. Feel it through this inhale. And this exhale."
- "Our thoughts, our feelings, our sensations all come and go. We can always return to this place of simply breathing and noticing, where we can let everything be as it is. Where everything is ok. Where we can say 'yes' to what is happening right now and feel safe and calm."

### **II. Noticing Warm-Up Exercise**

#### **Potential Outcomes**

- Physiological, mental and emotion state regulation
- Increased awareness of sensory aspects of technique
- Enhanced intuitive understanding of technical elements of playing
- Sense of ownership of learning process for student: noticing and experimentation leads to increased creativity in considering elements of playing and performance.
- Model for dealing with performance anxiety

- Model for attainment of peak performance mindset
- Increased sense of connection to audience and to music

## Script

- *(Student is standing)* "Before you start, I invite you to take three deeper-than-usual breaths."
- "Let's take one more, and on the exhale, let the air out slowly."
- "Feel yourself settling into the space around you, feeling every part of the bottom of your feet in touch with the floor."
- "Feel your breathing come back to normal. Notice where in your body you can feel your inhalations. How do the exhalations feel in your arms? In your back? In your legs?"
- (FIRST SCALE REPETITION: BREATH AWARENESS): "Let's move to your scale. As you play, notice your breathing and where you feel it in your body."
- (SECOND SCALE REPETITION: SENSORY PERCEPTION): this can be varied depending on the pedagogical needs of the student.
- *Sound Production/Bow Awareness Example:*
  - "This time notice how your bow hair touches the string as you play the scale. What do you feel through the hair? What do you notice about your bow hand? What do you see as the bow hair moves on the string? What do you hear as it moves across the string in different ways?"
- *Left-Hand Position/Tension Awareness Example:*
  - "This time notice what your fingers feel when you touch the string to play. Can you feel the fingerboard? The string vibrating? What part of your fingertip touches the string? What part of your hand touches the neck?"
  - *Intonation Example:*
    - "This time notice all the pitches that correspond to an open string. Can you hear the sympathetic vibrations?"
    - "This time notice all the tonic notes/dominant notes/fourth and fifth scale degrees/leading tones. What part of your fingers touch the string when they sound open and ringing?"
- (THIRD SCALE REPETITION: INTERIOR OF THE BODY): this can be varied depending on the pedagogical needs of the student.
- *Tension Awareness:*
  - "On this repetition, notice your right shoulder blade as you play. Does it move or sit still? How does it move?"
  - "This time notice the muscles of your hand/left arm and how they feel as they contract and lengthen around your bones. Can you sense the swiveling of your left radius bone as you shift into higher positions?"
  - "This time notice your heartbeat as you play."
  - "This time notice your weight on your feet as you play. Does it shift? Can you feel inside of your feet? Inside of your hands?"
- (FOURTH SCALE REPETITION: MENTAL ACTIVITIES): "On this repetition, stay in touch with your breath and open your awareness to include anything that arises. This might be a thought, a feeling, or a sensation. As it arises, label it, "thought" or "feeling" or "sensation" and let it be, returning to noticing your breath."
- (FIFTH SCALE REPETITION: INTERCONNECTEDNESS): adjust to fit the student's comfort level.
  - "For this repetition, I'd like for you to imagine playing for someone very dear to you."
  - "Imagine playing for your favorite composer and this is the scale that they wrote, just for you."
  - "Find a character (from a book/movie) and play your scale as that character, imagining that you are doing so for an audience of adoring fans."
  - "Imagine you are playing this scale for a group of people who need to feel hope/happiness or for a group of people who need a good cry."
  - "Play the scale with a feeling or mood in mind and imagine that you are sharing this with your audience through your scale."

### III. Tension Exercise

#### Potential Outcome

- Develop non-judgmental awareness of physical connection to the instrument
- Regulate physiological, mental and emotional state
- Practice shifting direction of attention

#### Script

I am on the lookout for tension issues (both physical and mental) in every lesson with my students. I find they communicate tension verbally (mounting frustrations), visually (obvious tightness/grabbing/uncomfortable positioning) or sonically (missed shifts, sound production flaws, intonation issues). In this instance, I will address left-hand tension related to violin/viola performance, which often causes issues in intonation, shifting accuracy and sound production.

- "I can see that you are getting frustrated with that passagework. Let's take a second away from the music and take a few deep breaths. Imagine blowing out all the aggravation and frustration. Tension is something we all confront and without a little tension, we would be useless blobs of skin: it is just a matter of finding a balance of release and stability."
- "Moving back to the instrument, try playing one measure at half-tempo with your focus on what you feel through your fingertips. Whatever you feel, let it be there—we aren't trying to get rid of anything. We are just noticing what is happening."
- "This time play the same measure even more slowly, but only using the smallest possible amount of weight to stop the string. It might sound pretty rough, and that is ok! Direct your attention to what it feels like to do this. What do you notice in your fingertip? Your hand? Your arm?"

*Hopefully, on this pass, they will notice how they can feel the vibration of the string through their finger. This is usually a novel experience if they have been playing with tension as their norm. Often, they also will notice that they have tension in other places of their hand and arm (thumb, base knuckles, left shoulder, left forearm, left bicep), as they let go of the tension through their fingers. If so, we do a few rounds of noticing these locations of tension and watching it before continuing to the next step.*

- "Now let's take each note by itself, holding each one as long as we need to apply just enough weight to make the sound resonant. Start with no weight (ghost note) and add a little at a time."
- "Can you notice the vibration of the string through your finger despite the amount of weight you add?"
- "It is ok if you feel tension coming back in, because playing with tension is familiar and comfortable and I am asking you to experiment with something new. Let go of worrying about the tension or trying to get rid of it and simply notice the sense of your fingertip on the string."

*We will add more notes of the passage and/or shift the object orientation to other points of tension (thumb, arm, shoulder), working to notice and describe the sensation. I like to have them at some point watch the string vibrate as they play as I think this reinforces the idea of keeping the string alive with the finger weight rather than deadening through excessive tension. We play with various apertures of awareness, working to stay curious and detach from the idea that we are going to eradicate the tension.*

### IV. Sticky Thought Exercise

#### Potential Outcome

- Cognitive reframing of limiting beliefs
- Increased self-compassion and compassion
- Reduction in anxiety
- Physiological, mental and emotional state regulation

When frustrated, students will often return to a set of limiting beliefs in an attempt to deal with their discomfort. As teachers, we can help by being on the lookout for statements that highlight these faulty beliefs. How many of these gems have you heard in lessons?

- "I can never get this right!"
- "I always fall short in performances. This sounded great in the practice room!"
- "I'll never learn this piece."
- "I don't have any talent. I just work hard."
- "I'll never be as good as \_\_\_\_\_."
- "If I miss one note, everything will fall apart."
- "I'm not prepared enough for a lesson."
- "If I mess up, everyone will realize the fraud that I am."

If these beliefs pass by unchallenged or simply negated ("that's not true!"), they stick and by sticking, can severely cripple a student's ability to enjoy making music. Perfectionists often get trapped by a familiar litany of cognitive thinking errors that will slow their progress when otherwise, by virtue of their work ethic and commitment, it seems they should be advancing quickly.

By bringing mindfulness to these thoughts and encouraging self-compassion, we can help our students move past them. I have adapted Tara Brach's RAIN to use in these moments with my students.<sup>1</sup>

### Script

- *R: Recognize*
  - "WOW! You seem really \_\_\_\_\_ (emotion exhibited by student) right now by that shift! You said that you don't think you will ever be able to shift proficiently: that is quite a statement! Can we slow down for a second?" (Pause) "What if you take a moment just to take three deep breaths?" (Breathe together)
- *A: Allow*
  - "Ok. That is a tricky shift, isn't it? You've practiced it a ton and it is frustrating not to get it the way you want it, right? You know, it is OK to be frustrated. It shows that you care, and caring is a great thing for an artist. For now, could we just be OK with being frustrated? Focusing back on your breathing, just say a big 'yes' to the whole frustration thing and let it be, as it is. No worries about trying to get rid of it."

*Allow time for the student to take some deep breaths.*

- *I: Investigate*
  - "Still breathing deeply, when you feel frustrated, what does your body feel like? Do you notice anything in your hands or arms? Does your sound change as you are playing? What does your breathing do? Do other emotions come up for you? What do you think all of this is trying to tell you? What do you think you need in that moment of feeling frustrated?"

*Use some or all of these questions, paced appropriately. Allow the student a pause to breathe and let these settle in.*

- *N: Nurture*
  - "I wonder if we could rephrase your first statement into something that might help you the next time you feel frustrated? Let's take a few deep breaths and if you feel comfortable, place your hand on your heart as we do. (Breathe together) I'll start the sentence for you...'I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_ because I \_\_\_\_\_ (care about playing well/whatever the student has discovered from the Investigate portion of RAIN), and that's ok.' (Breathe together) 'This shift is tricky, but I will find another way to practice it and will keep trying.'"

*For most students, I will write out their personal version of 'I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_ because I \_\_\_\_\_' in their lesson journal, Google Doc or even on a post-it note they can keep on their stand while practicing.*

<sup>1</sup> Tara Brach, "Resources ~ RAIN: Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nurture," Tara Brach, 2020, <https://www.tarabrach.com/rain/>.

## Some Ideas for Mindful Rehearsals

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### 4-4-8 breathing and/or stretching

- Breathe in for 4, hold for 4, breathe out for 8.

As you lead the students through these cycles, direct their attention to the physical sensations of breathing. For example:

- "In for 4...notice the air moving through your nose."
- "Feel your lungs expanding your rib cage."
- "Where do you feel the breath the most?"
- "Hold for 4...notice your body stretching out around the air."
- "Out for 8... relax your shoulders and notice the tension melt away."
- "Feel your body against the seat or your feet pushing down against the floor."

### Triangle Listening

- Have the students sit in chairs in an upright but relaxed posture with their eyes closed. Instruct them to quietly raise their hand when they can no longer hear the triangle. When the room settles, strike the triangle and wait for most (or all) of the hands to raise.
- This exercise helps to bring the energy of the room down and prepare students for the next task.

### Drone Tuning/Tuning through their fingers and body

- Using an organ synthesizer (for overtones) or a sine wave, play a B<sub>b</sub>3 through a loud speaker and start by asking students to notice where they can hear/feel the note in their body or in the room. Then, have them join the tone at your direction (section by section) while they notice their tone in their fingers (or wherever that tone shows up in their bodies). The goal is to get their tone, the tone of those around them, and the tone of the drone to meld together.

# Mindful Listening and Dispositions in the Music Classroom

Brent Williams

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## **Teacher Disposition**

- R.A.I.N.
  - Recognize what is going on
  - Allow the experience to be there, just as it is
  - Investigate with kindness
  - Natural awareness, which comes from not identifying with the experience

I have these four simple steps taped onto my music stand and office desk for a daily reminder and practice.

## *Example Exercises:*

- *Intentional and Critical Listening for Students*
  - Triangle Listening and variations
    - Use a percussion, wind, or string instrument to create a sound that will generally last beyond seven seconds.
    - Ask the student(s) to close their eyes and bring their attention to the sound that you play.
    - Ask the student(s) to quietly raise their hand when they hear the end of whatever sound that you play.
- *Performance Anxiety Management with Imagery*
  - Begin with controlled breathing to set the atmosphere.
  - Continue with a practice of embodied physical grounding (essentially a scan of your body as you prepare for the lesson including all physical sensations, from the feelings of their fingers on the valves or strings, to where their feet connect with the ground)
  - Ask students to imagine a physical place in which they would typically perform. It is important to prompt students to notice any feelings of stress that arise in association with that space, but to also let those physical and emotional sensations pass.
  - To create a more realistic scenario, the student is then asked to describe the imagined space with great detail, including the physical sensations that may accompany this change in location.
  - It is important to note that during any self-inquiry lesson, it is important for teachers not to use judgmental words or language with the students. Instead, replace this type of language with prompts such as "notice, explore, be curious about, etc."

# General Mindfulness

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## Exploring mindfulness in your daily routine

- Use transition time as an opportunity to pause, process, and reflect
- Consider doing nothing before you do something
- Celebrate the power of uni-tasking
- Use constructive rest: take breaks with intention
- Threshold concept: what is my intention in this space?
- Cultivate appreciation for the unique nature of each moment
- Practice gratitude and self-compassion daily
- Personal practice → classroom practice

## Setting intention for practice

- What is reasonable?
- What is sustainable?
- What practices complement your needs and interests?
- What is comfortable, and what pushes your comfort level?

### 4-7-8 Breath

Dr. Andrew Weil recommends this simple breath regulation exercise, which promotes mindfulness and relaxation. It doesn't take long, making it easy to incorporate into your routine:

1. Exhale completely through your mouth
2. Inhale through your nose to a count of four
3. Hold your breath to a count of seven
4. Exhale fully through your mouth to a count of eight
5. Repeat above cycle three more times

### Self-Compassion Exercise

Sometimes we can be hard on ourselves. In moments where you experience difficult emotions toward and within yourself, consider exploring a self-compassion exercise. Dr. Kristin Neff suggests holding your hand over your heart and repeating the following words to yourself:

May I feel safe  
May I feel peaceful  
May I be kind to myself  
May I accept myself just as I am

# MBWP in the Elementary Setting

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## **Drop-In Exercise**

*To be used at the start of small group lessons*

- Follow your normal classroom routine for setting up instruments and equipment
- Once students are seated, invite the students to focus on their feet
  - Are their feet flat on the floor?
  - \*For percussion\* Do they feel sturdy (or grounded) in their stance?
- Then move to contact points with the chair
  - Are their backs away from the back of the chair?
  - Do they feel balanced in their position?
  - \*For percussion\* Are their wrists/hands relaxed?
  - \*For percussion\* Do you have a firm grip on your sticks?
- Next move to the shoulder and head area
  - Are your shoulders raised or dropped?
  - Can your head move freely?
  - Invite students to make a couple of small circles with their head
- Finally end with a moment to focus on the breath
  - Remind students to breathe normally as they have been and to avoid altering their breathing pattern in any way

## **Knuckle Breathing**

*To be used in conjunction with warm-up procedures at large ensemble rehearsals*

- Follow your normal routine for setting up rehearsal
- When ready to begin playing, play through your warm-up selection(s)
- After playing through your selection once or twice invite students to put their instruments down
- Ask students to practice focusing their airstream so it hits the middle knuckle of their pointer finger, placed 2-3 inches away from their mouth
- Once students have felt the sensation of the air and understand how to direct their airstream guide students through breathing in a pattern of 4 counts in and 4 counts out
  - While students are doing this, you may join in with them or provide reminders to them
  - For example, "If you become distracted, that is okay. Return to focusing on your breath."
  - Try to maintain the same tempo as your warm-up for the breathing so the transfer back to playing will be smooth
- After several rounds of 4 in, 4 out (recommendation of 8 rounds at the most) ask students to play through the warm-up selection with a focus on pitch and rhythmic accuracy
- As students progress with their pitch and rhythmic accuracy try switching the object of focus while playing, for example:
  - Breath and Articulation
  - Breath and Dynamic Contrast
- Switches of focus can be catered to your overall rehearsal goals for the day, week, etc.
- Exercise can be referenced throughout remainder of rehearsal as needed to regain attention
- Exercise can also provide a time to "reset" before retrying a section that is difficult to play

# Mindfulness and Elementary Health

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## Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) 5 competencies

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Social-awareness
4. Relationship skills
5. Responsible decision making

**SEL** you learn from the **outside** world through repetitive experiences that become part of what you are on the **inside**.

**Mindfulness** you explore from the **inside** and how it affects the **outside** world.

### **Take Note:**

- Some schools, parents, guardians may think that mindfulness is a religious practice. IT IS NOT!!
- You could rename the activity anything you want:
  - Attention Activities
  - Brain Cleanse
  - Calm Connection
- Make sure directions are clear and consistent.
- Establish a routine of practice
  - During morning work
  - After recess
  - Transition times
  - End of day

## Mindfulness Practices for the Classroom

1. **Breath Reset:** Slow, deep in-breath, hold. Exhale as slowly as possible.
2. **Emotions Journal:** Have a place and a procedure that if students are angry or upset about something they write or draw about their emotions.
3. **What's on your mind:** Students are given a picture of a brain and asked to write down whatever pops into their head. This could be something that you do as a morning routine so students can "clear" anything that may have happened before school started.
4. **Guided Imagery:** Tell students a story. Encourage them to shut their eyes and paint a picture of the story in their heads. Include in your story sensory descriptive words.
5. **Turkey Breathing:** Have students extend their hand as if they were tracing it to make a turkey like they did in preschool. Have students trace their hand with their other index finger. When they travel up they inhale and down they exhale. The idea is to slow down our breath and be curious about the sensation of touch.

6. **Spaghetti Body:** Students tense as many muscles as they can: feet, hands, legs, belly, face, stomach, etc., as they inhale. They are rigid like uncooked spaghetti. Then you could say cooked spaghetti and students slowly exhale and relax their muscles.
7. **Super Hero:** Have students envision themselves as a superhero. What would their power be? What would their power pose be? What would their good deed be? How would that make you feel?
8. **Rainbow Breathing:** Imagine a color that makes you feel happy or positive. Inhale the positive color. Imagine a color that makes you feel a negative emotion. Exhale that color.
9. **Rainbow Guided Imagery:** Guide students through the colors of the rainbow. Have students notice what comes to mind when they imagine the taste, smell, shape, feel, and sound of each color.
10. **Farthest Sound:** Gently close your eyes and listen to the noises around you. Name that sound, let it go, and focus on another sound. Keep repeating until you don't notice any new sounds.